Evaluation Update

GEF Council meeting 63

November 2022

Presentations in this Council

1 Review of the GEF Management Action Record

2 Evaluation of the Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on GEF Activities

3 Information documents

4 Knowledge Management

The GEF Management Action Record

1

Background

Tracks the implementation of the **recommendations** of **the IEO evaluations endorsed by the GEF Council.**

KEY QUESTIONS

1.

Principal Themes and the GEF record in adoption and implementation

2.

Sufficiency for assessing the implementation progress of follow-up action

3.

Current practices across multilateral organizations

Background

METHODOLOGY

Classified **186 GEF IEO evaluation recommendations**, covering **59 evaluations** (presented between 2006 and 2021).

Assess the level of agreement with evaluation recommendations.
435 records of management's self-assessments of the adoption of recommendations.

Interviewed **key stakeholders** involved in the GEF MAR process.

Compared the MAR systems of **nine peer multilateral organizations** with independent evaluation functions.

Key Findings

Types of recommendations

GEF IEO evaluation recommendations

61% operational

32% strategic

7% policies

Output-oriented

56%

operational recommendations

Outcome-oriented

90%

strategies recommendations

71%

policy topics recommendations

A few important issues are repeated in IEO recommendations

Key Findings

Management response to recommendations

Management response rate

pre-reform | 89% | 100% | *AfterMAR reform*

GEF management agreement with IEO recommendations

in GEF-3 when MAR introduced | 76% | 89% | *After MAR reform*

Level of detail in management responses

include specific actions with timelines | 31% | 63% | *After*

Concurrence between management's self-assessment ratings and IEO validation
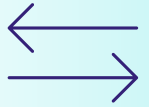
in GEF-3 | 41% | 68% | *In GEF-7*

Key Findings

Factors that affect the adoption of recommendations

Win-wins more likely to be adopted than those that involve trade-offs
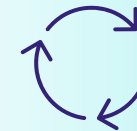
Alignment with GEF Secretariat's work plan on **corporate-level policies**

Time

Response rate

Specificity of follow-up actions

8

Key Findings

Lessons from the institutional comparison

GEF shares some of the good practices in institutions with independent evaluation units.

Identified gaps in the GEF MAR system

- *Limited time* for management to develop detailed action plans with timelines
- *Unclear articulation* on the level of agreement with each recommendation
- Management responses do not always include *action plans* with timelines
- Absence of an *online platform* to record and monitor implementation of recommendations

Conclusions

Recommendations adopted with full or substantial status: **74%.**

1

Unclear articulation on the level of management agreement with recommendations

2

Management responses prepared after the MAR process reform provide a greater **level of detail** in action plans.

3

The concurrence in management's self-assessment and the GEF IEO's validation ratings has improved.

4

Addressing existing gaps in system would make MAR an improved accountability and learning tool.

5

Recommendations

Action plan included in the management response should list **specific actions** with timelines where appropriate.

MAR process and reporting should be improved through a more participatory approach involving GEF Agencies.

Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on GEF Activities

Key Questions

1

How has the **COVID-19 pandemic affected GEF activities** including preparation, design, implementation, and results of GEF projects?

2

How did the **GEF Secretariat and Agencies respond to the pandemic?**
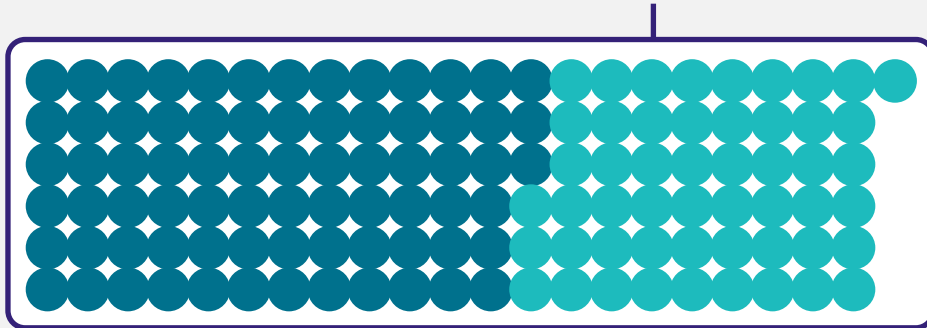
3

To what extent do GEF projects incorporate **resilience and adaptive management** elements into their design?
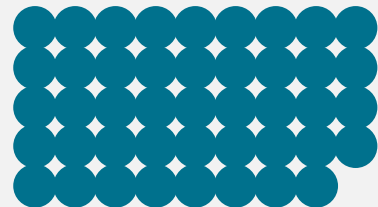
Methodology 🔍

Analysis of **GEF Portal data.**

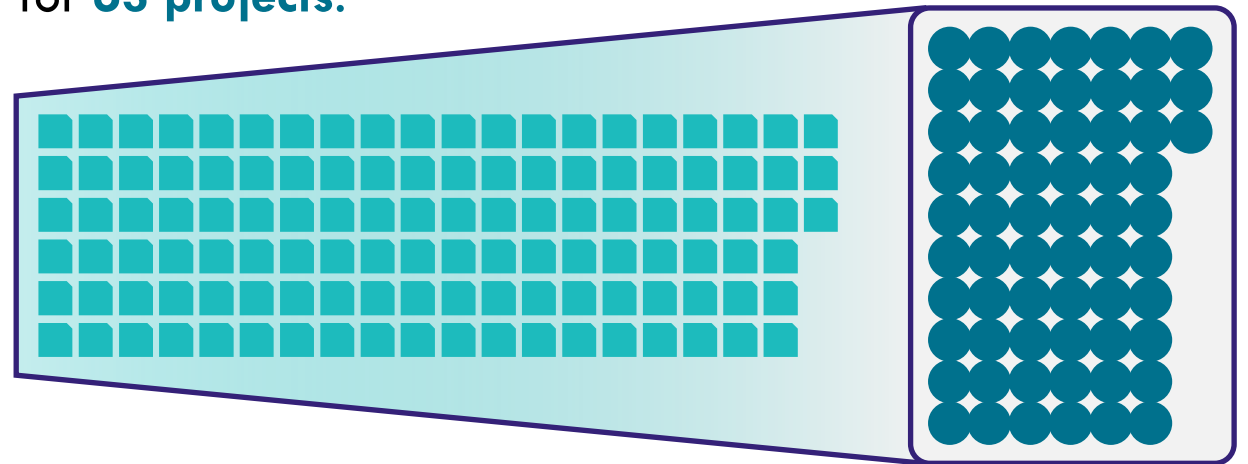Review of project design in **127 FSPs.**

75 projects CEO endorsed in FY2022.

52 projects CEO endorsed in FY2019.

Analysis of the impacts on **44** GEF-supported Protected Areas.
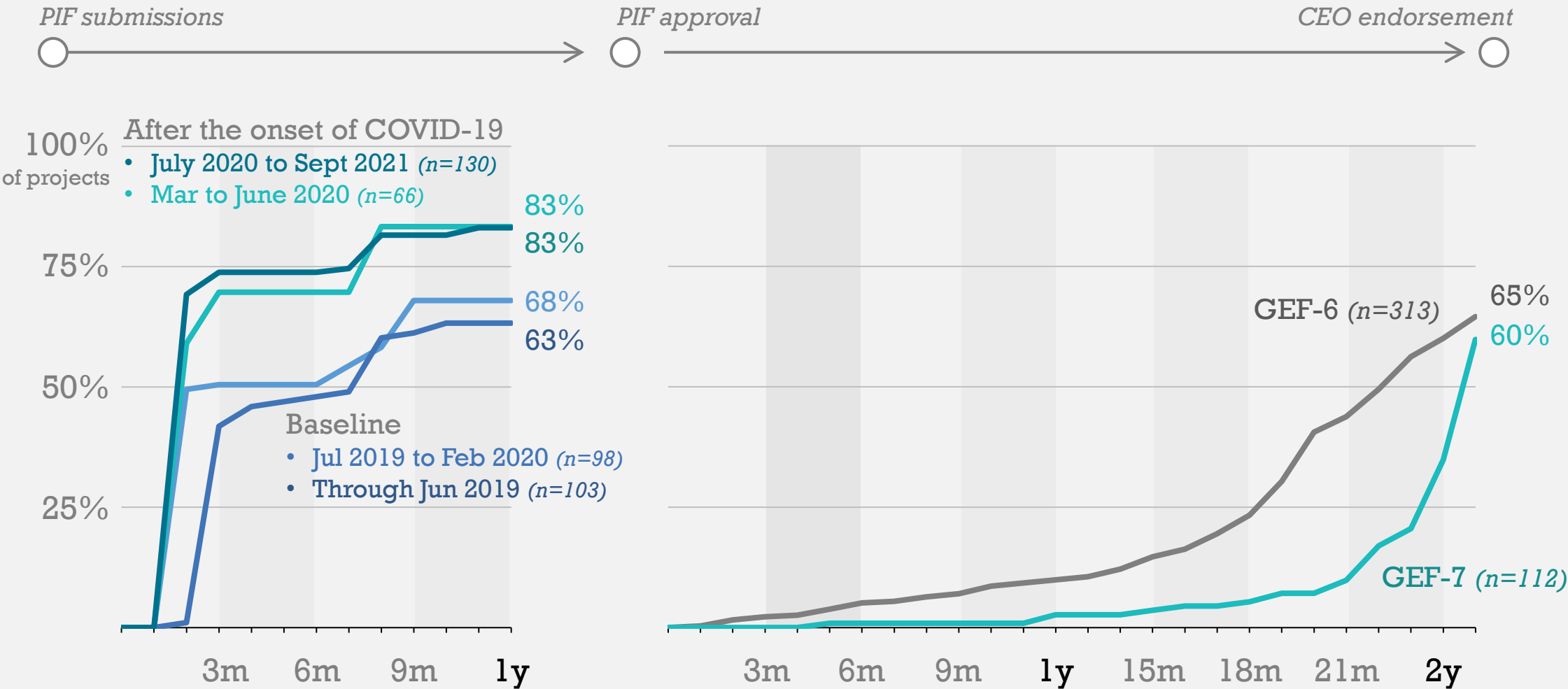

Analysis of **117 terminal evaluations** completed from May 2020 onwards, mid-term reviews and project implementation reports for **63 projects.**

Analysis of the effects of COVID-19 within **GEF intervention areas** and in **neighboring areas** on vegetation productivity, and nighttime lights.

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After the onset of COVID-19, PIF submissions took less time to achieve PIF Approval. PIF approvals took more time to achieve CEO endorsement

PIF submissions → PIF approval → CEO endorsement

After the onset of COVID-19
- July 2020 to Sept 2021 (n=130)
- Mar to June 2020 (n=66)

83%
83%
68%
63%

Baseline
- Jul 2019 to Feb 2020 (n=98)
- Through Jun 2019 (n=103)

100% of projects
75%
50%
25%

3m 6m 9m 1y

GEF-6 (n=313) 65%
60%
GEF-7 (n=112)

3m 6m 9m 1y 15m 18m 21m 2y

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Findings

Projects endorsed after pandemic incorporate features associated with risk mitigation, adaptive management; use of climate risk screening and scenario-based planning low

44% of activities paused or put on hold.
In **19% project** at least one or more activities dropped.

Achievement of results affected in at least
28% of the projects.

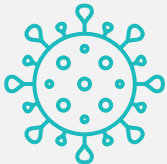**Climate change projects** were more likely to experience procurement-related challenges.

Project M&E: agencies faced difficulties
in conduct of **terminal evaluation** and **mid-term reviews.**

Positive Outcomes

Use of new technologies

→ remote sensing to collect **better-quality forestry data**, shift to **online platforms**

COVID-19–related concerns

→ **In 1/5 of projects**, activities became opportunities to respond to COVID-19–related concerns such as **food security, safety**, and **sanitation**, while promoting environmental interventions.
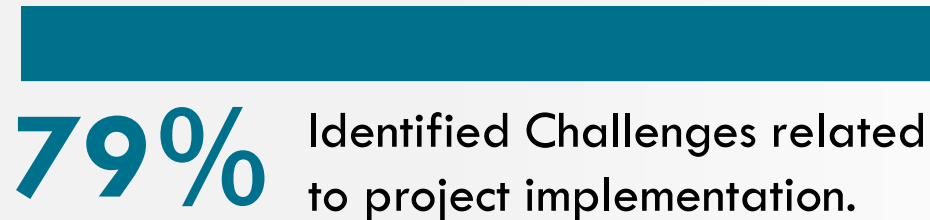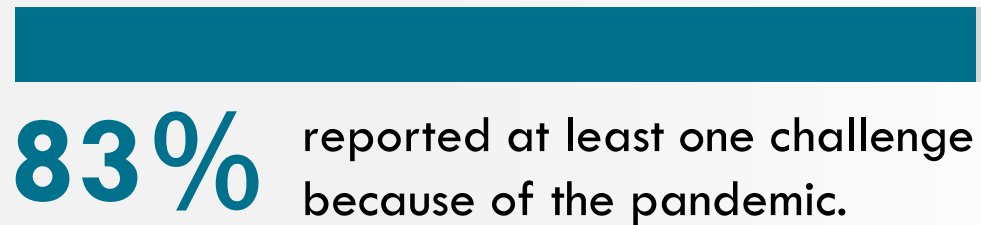
Factors influencing COVID-19 effects on project outcomes

→ **Outcomes** more likely to be reduced in projects with internal challenges prior to the global lockdowns.

→ **Negative COVID-19 effects** mitigated with highly adaptive project management team and collaborative partners.

Key Findings

Challenges from COVID-19

83% reported at least one challenge because of the pandemic.

79% Identified Challenges related to project implementation.

36% identified management challenges.
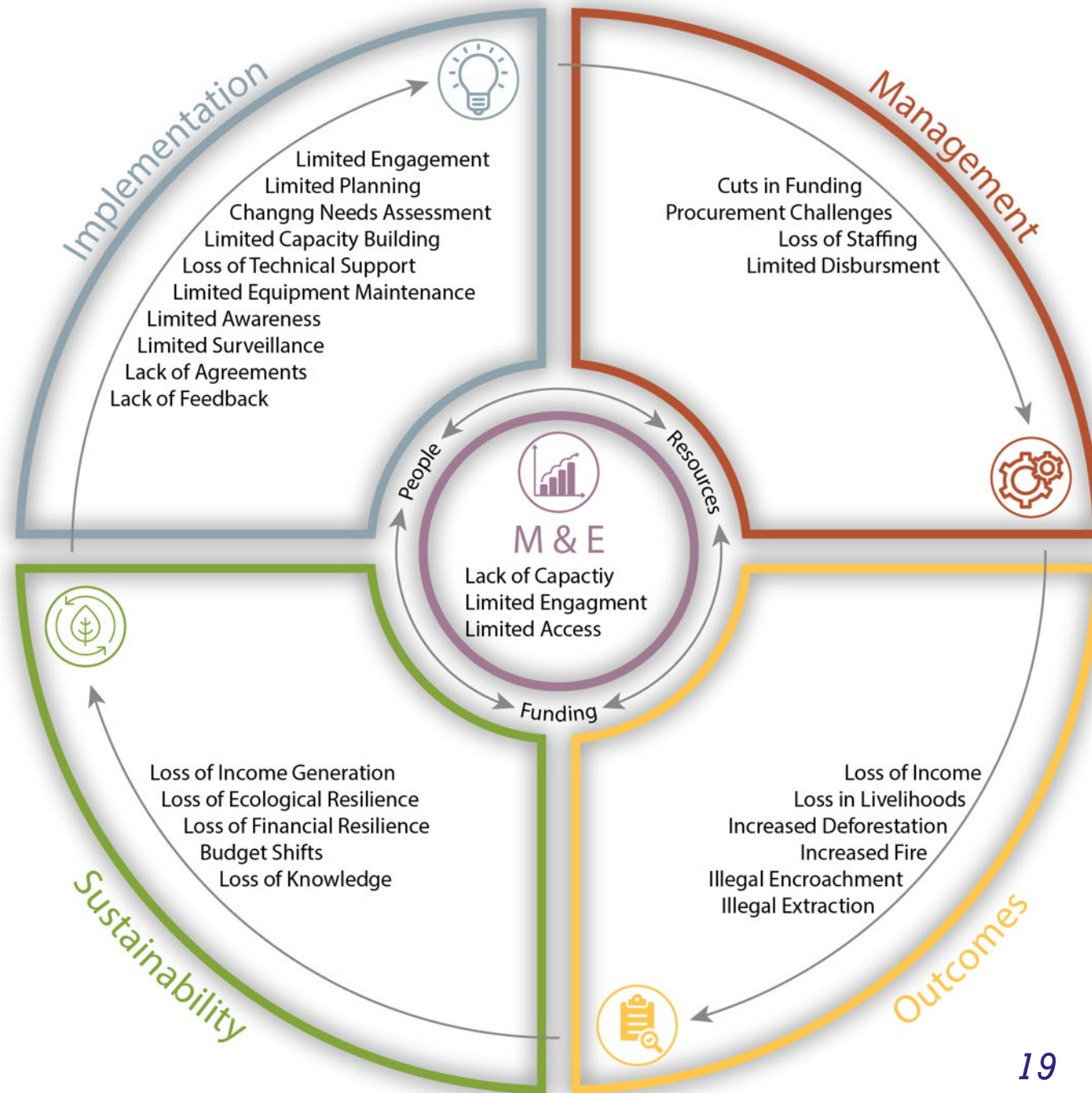
Implementation challenges
— stakeholder engagement
— conducting needs assessments
— preparation of work plans
— capacity building
— and technical assistance

Fewer law enforcement patrols and reduced community participation in environmental monitoring.

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COVID Effects on GEF-supported protected areas

Key Findings

Challenges from COVID-19

Implementation
Limited Engagement
Limited Planning
Changng Needs Assessment
Limited Capacity Building
Loss of Technical Support
Limited Equipment Maintenance
Limited Awareness
Limited Surveillance
Lack of Agreements
Lack of Feedback

Management
Cuts in Funding
Procurement Challenges
Loss of Staffing
Limited Disbursment

M & E
Lack of Capactiy
Limited Engagment
Limited Access

People Resources Funding

Sustainability
Loss of Income Generation
Loss of Ecological Resilience
Loss of Financial Resilience
Budget Shifts
Loss of Knowledge

Outcomes
Loss of Income
Loss in Livelihoods
Increased Deforestation
Increased Fire
Illegal Encroachment
Illegal Extraction

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Key Findings

Fire and Land Cover from Satellite

The majority of GEF-supported PAs experienced fire frequency and deforestation rates within the predicted range.

Mont Peko National park example: increase in fire frequency

-414 fire observations from 2012–19 to average of 850 fires in 2020-21despite stable precipitation.

Observed Fire Frequency

> = predicted <

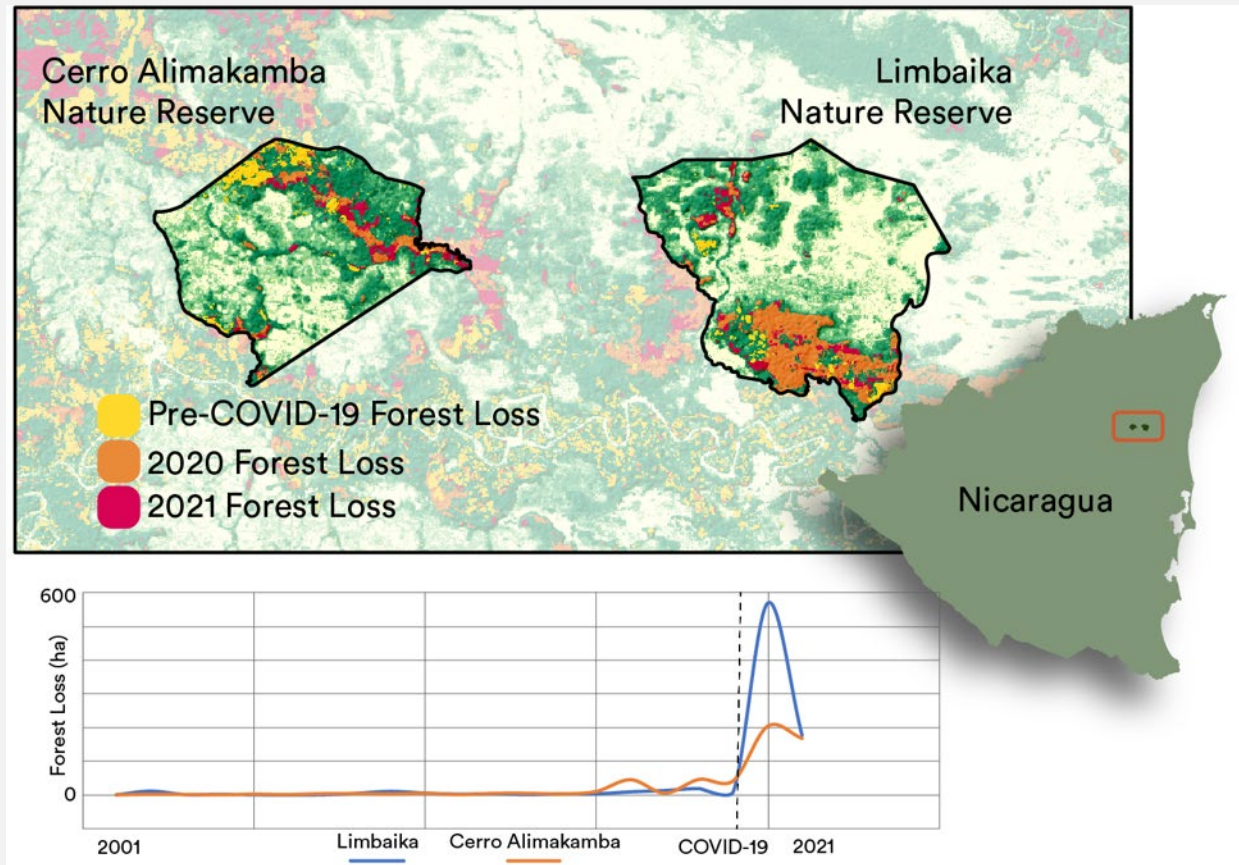*Global distribution of PAs and predicted vs. observed fire frequency for the post pandemic period.*

Key Findings

Fire and Land Cover from Satellite

- Post-COVID-19 deforestation rates over 2020/21 within **expected range for most of the 234 protected areas**

- **65 protected areas (28%)** experienced higher-than-expected rates of deforestation

Cerro Alimakamba Nature Reserve

Limbaika Nature Reserve

Pre-COVID-19 Forest Loss
2020 Forest Loss
2021 Forest Loss

Nicaragua

Forest Loss (ha)

2001   Limbaika   Cerro Alimakamba   COVID-19   2021

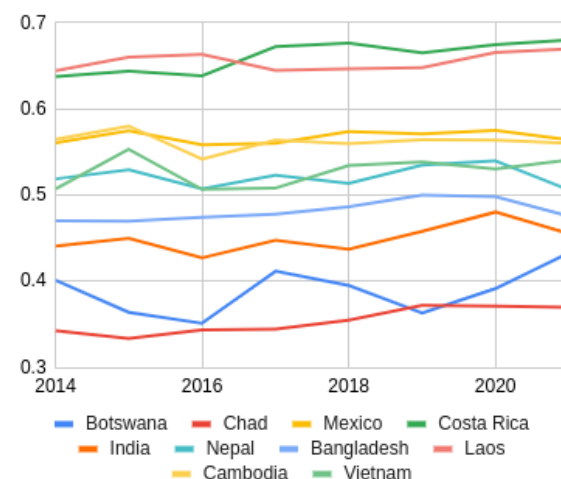# Effects in countries based on satellite data

GEF intervention areas tended to improve local conditions of vegetation in **9 of the 10 study countries.**

Positive increases in vegetation in areas neighboring GEF interventions
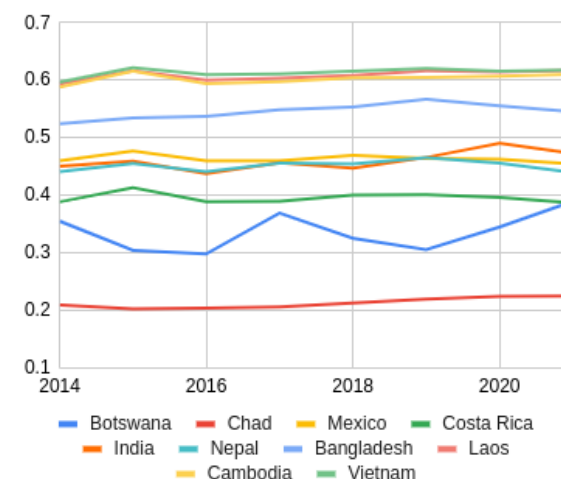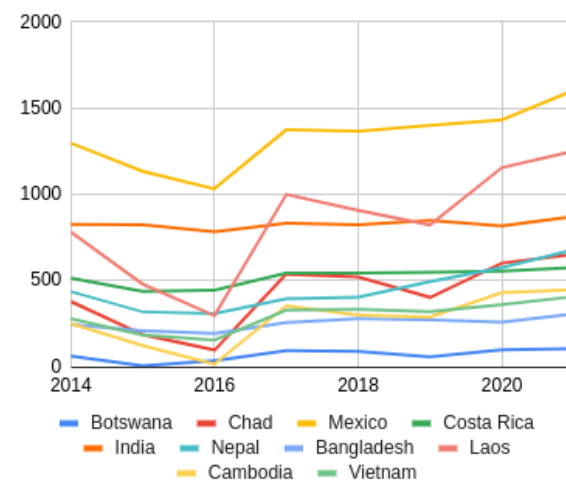
Increase in lights slowed within GEF areas.
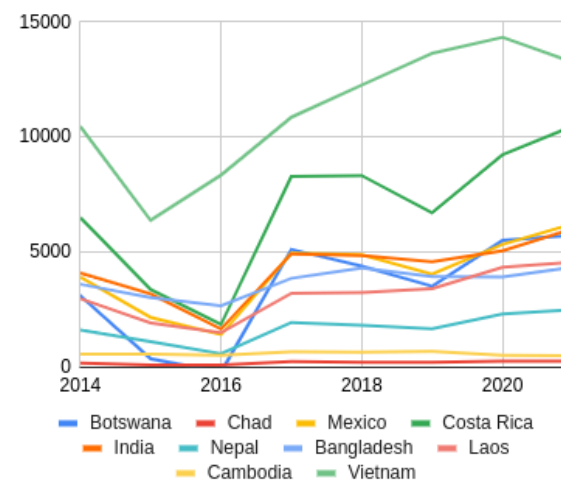

A. NDVI Average - Intervention Areas

B. NDVI - Neighboring Areas

C. NTL Average - Intervention Areas

D. NTL - Neighboring Areas

Legend: Botswana, Chad, Mexico, Costa Rica, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam

Key Findings

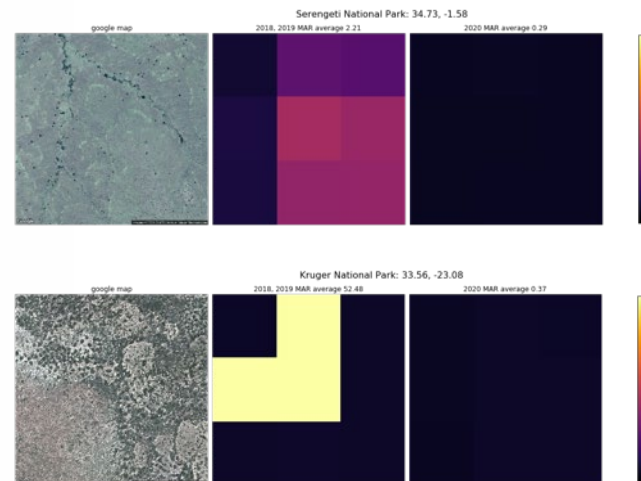## Nighttime Lights from Satellite

Decrease in light intensity in:

75% of **protected areas** in Africa.

40 **protected areas** in the GEF-supported Global Wildlife Program (GEF ID 9071).

Serengeti National Park: 34.73, -1.58

google map | 2018, 2019 MAR average 2.21 | 2020 MAR average 0.29

Kruger National Park: 33.56, -23.08

google map | 2018, 2019 MAR average 52.48 | 2020 MAR average 0.37

Proportion of PAs with Decreased Light Intensity

≤20 | ≤40 | ≤60 | ≤80 | ≤100

0 500 1000 2000 Kilometers

Credits: ESRI, FAO, NOAA

Measures taken by the GEF Partnership

GEF Partnership

- White Paper on a **GEF COVID-19** Response Strategy.

- The GEF-8 Programming Directions include **implications of the pandemic** for the GEF's work.

- **Deadline extended by three months** for CEO Endorsements and **approvals for projects** approved after the new GEF Policy (2019).

- *"Project Design and Review Considerations in Response to the COVID-19 Crisis and the Mitigation of Future Pandemics"* (2020) issued by the GEF Secretariat.

- Changes to the PIF template to **facilitate discussion on the topic in the proposals**.

GEF projects and Agencies

- Adapted to **minimize the effects of the shutdowns** — technology and virtual platforms.

Recommendations

GEF Secretariat

GEF Agencies

GEF Agencies

GEF Secretariat

GEF Agencies

Incorporate important features associated with systems thinking, resilience, and adaptive management in all project proposals

Include a broad suite of **livelihood options** and support diverse **income-generating activities**

Strengthen remote supervision by using a variety of appropriate tools and methods to identify areas which **require priority attention**
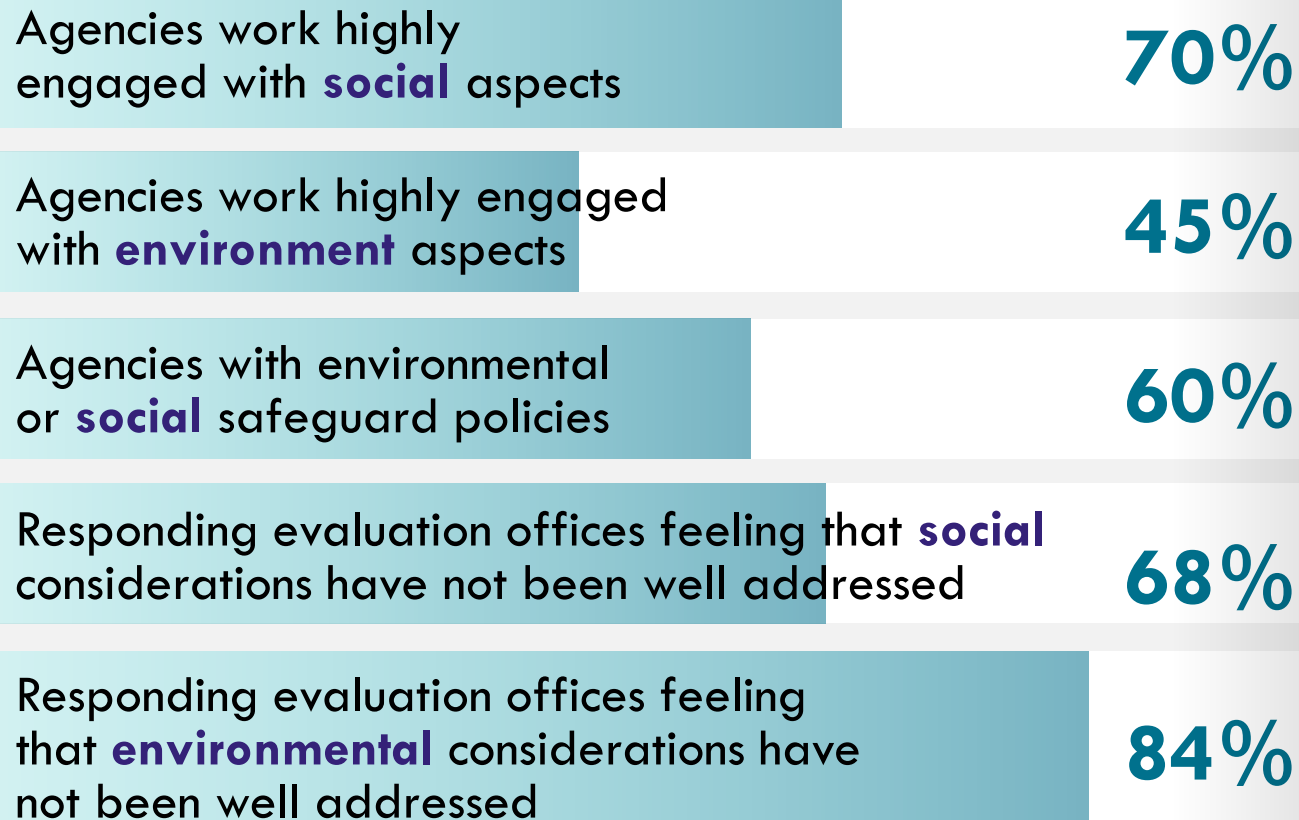
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Promoting Integration of Environmental Impact into Evaluations in the UN System

Promoting Integration of Environmental Impact into Evaluations in the UN System

Implementation challenges

Agencies work highly engaged with **social** aspects
70%

Agencies work highly engaged with **environment** aspects
45%

Agencies with environmental or **social** safeguard policies
60%

Responding evaluation offices feeling that **social** considerations have not been well addressed
68%

Responding evaluation offices feeling that **environmental** considerations have not been well addressed
84%

A broad range of agencies realize that their activities may have unanticipated environmental effects.

Agencies welcome guidance as done for gender

Promoting Integration of Environmental Impact into Evaluations in the UN System

Advantages of UNEG developing guidance

- Its **institutional neutrality**
- Can be more detailed in **specific areas** than most agencies would be able to produce
- Can address **common needs** identified by a **broad range of agencies**

Guidance should:

- **Outline process** for agencies to map out connections between their types of intervention and environmental considerations
- **Promote strong coverage** of environmental considerations through the use of Theories of Change.
- **Provide Guidance** to ensure that environmental considerations are included in intervention design.
- **Match environmental considerations** to DAC criteria to raise their profile in evaluations
- **Ensure coherent evaluation** of environmental considerations through evaluation of inter-agency interventions

Promoting Integration of Environmental Impact into Evaluations in the UN System

Steps

1.

Development of the **guidance** supported by the UN Working Group.

2.

Adoption by UN General Assembly of a **resolution enshrining the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment** as a universal human right.

3.

Ensure coherent **evaluation of environmental considerations** through inter-agency interventions.

Conclusion

More needs to be done.

Opportunity to align **evaluation** with the overall **UN environment management** standards and systems.

Knowledge Management

Conferences and events

gLOCAL 2022
Using GIS for Evaluating in Context of Fragility, Conflict, and Violence

IDEAS Conference 2022
Power of Evaluation: Influencing Decision Making for a Better and More Equal World

Evaluating for Sustainability Transitions
Workshop with CLEAR South Asia

Asian Evaluation Week

Wilton Park
Transformational change towards a sustainable future

GCF IEU Virtual Talk
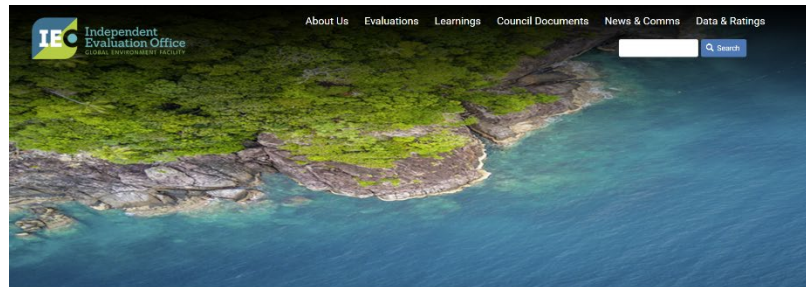Programmatic approaches in environment and climate

UNEG Evaluation Practice Exchange

Training

- Evaluation at the Nexus of Environment and Development: International Program for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET)
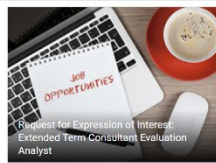- Development of an online training course on Environmental Evaluation

with Juha Uitto & Geeta Batra

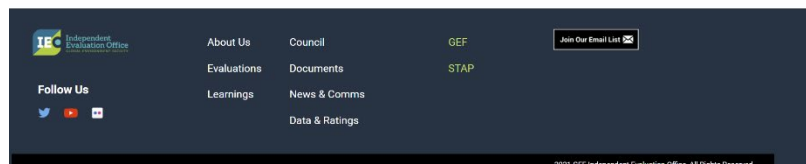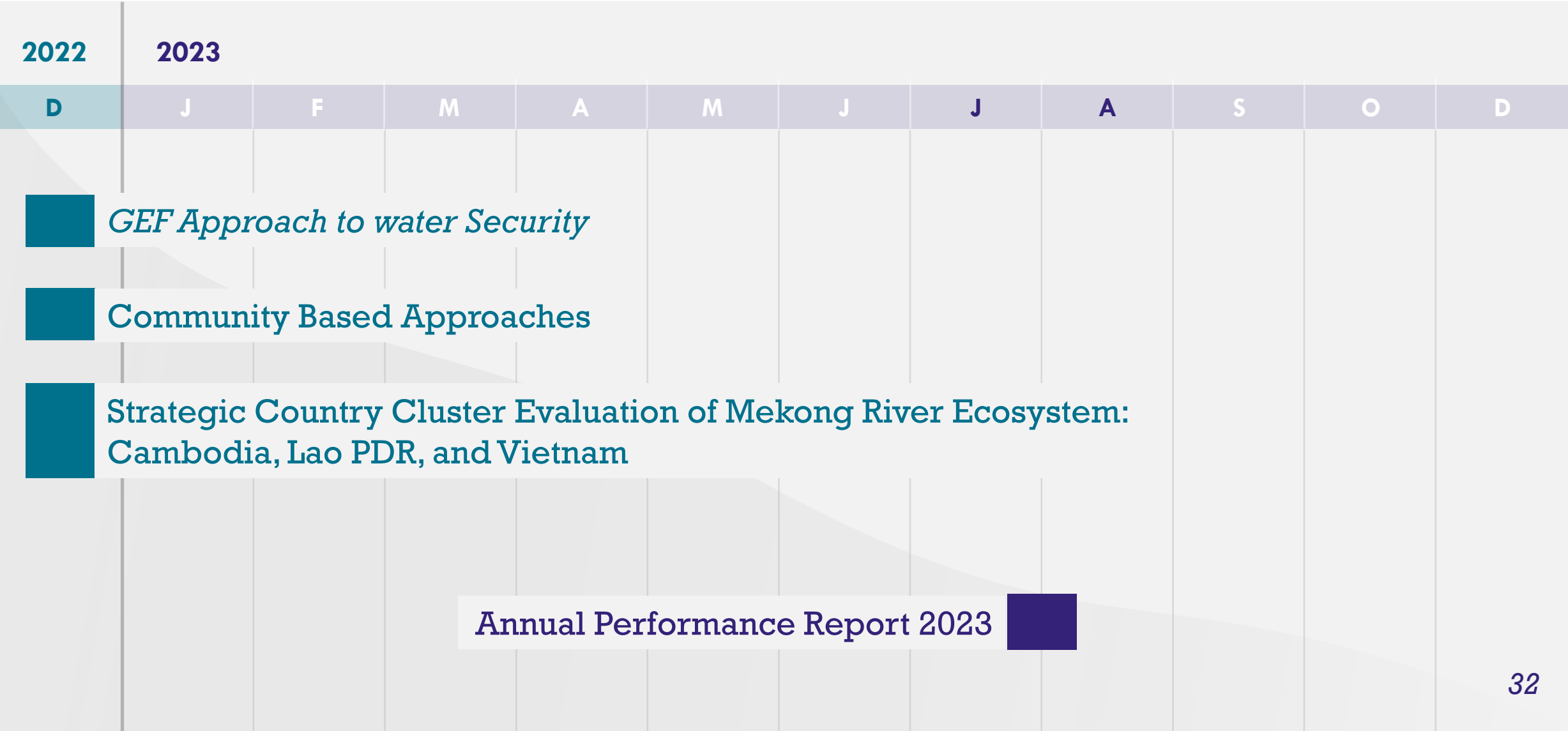# Website Enhancements

- Data & Ratings section: **country profiles and updated filters options**

- **New section:** Blogs and Multimedia

- Terminal evaluations and reviews and performance data for **1806 projects** available for download

- Content **re-indexed**

- **188 evaluations** currently available

Website visits: **23, 728** (July - November 2022)

Evaluation work under way for June

2022	2023										
D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	D

GEF Approach to water Security

Community Based Approaches

Strategic Country Cluster Evaluation of Mekong River Ecosystem: Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Vietnam

Annual Performance Report 2023