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Evaluation of Institutional Policies and Engagement at the GEF

(Prepared by the Independent Evaluation Office of the GEF)

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I. Background and Context

a. Introduction

1. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is a multilateral financial mechanism established on the eve of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, to help tackle our planet’s most pressing environmental problems. Since then, the GEF has provided \$14.5 billion in grants and mobilized \$75.4 billion in additional financing for almost 4,000 projects. The GEF has become an international partnership of 183 countries, international institutions, civil society organizations, and private sector to address global environmental issues. The GEF serves as financial mechanism for the five key international conventions and provides grants and concessional funding to cover the "incremental" or additional costs associated with transforming a project with national benefits into one with global environmental benefits in – Biodiversity, Climate Change, Chemicals & Waste, Land Degradation, International Waters and Sustainable Management of Forests and REDD +. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) guide GEF work on forests, biodiversity conservation, and land degradation.

2. Since inception, the GEF has been explicit about the importance of involving stakeholders, initially described as “the public”, in GEF-financed interventions. This is stated in the original GEF Instrument and reflected in a series of policies, guidance, and strategies that have evolved over time to ensure that GEF Agencies are applying a uniform approach inclusive of a diverse set of stakeholders across the GEF Partnership. The initial focus of engagement centered on information disclosure, and consultation and participation around GEF-financed activities. Since then, the approach has evolved from a focus on risk mitigation—i.e. “do no harm”, to language that speaks to inclusion and participation in recognition that this can lead to better development results—i.e. “do good”.

3. This evaluation focuses on three policies at the GEF – the Stakeholder Engagement Policy, the Gender Equality Policy, and the Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards. The common thread between these policies is that they address the people part of the human-environment nexus that is commonly referenced at the GEF and in the broader development community. The underlying issues addressed by these policies (empowerment of women, inclusivity and stakeholder engagement, and safeguarding against risks) have received increasing attention over the past decade within the GEF. With the aim of ensuring engagement, inclusion, and avoidance of harm to people the environment, these policies set forth: 1) a number of minimum standards for the GEF Agencies, requiring that they demonstrate the necessary policies, procedures, system, and capacity to meet these standards and 2) a number of minimum requirements for all GEF-financed activities.

4. For all three policies, the evaluation will assess: the internal and external coherence of these policies, the consistency between them, and their alignment with GEF strategy; and their operational relevance including the level of buy-in across the partnership and support for implementation. Because the Stakeholder Engagement Policy has never been evaluated by IEO, the evaluation will also do a ‘deep dive’ on the effectiveness and impact of this policy, asking whether there is any evidence of improved

outcomes associated with more stakeholder engagement at the project/program level, and whether this has changed over time.¹

b. Background

5. The GEF relies on engagement and interaction among its stakeholders to deliver global environmental benefits. Policies, guidelines, and strategies have evolved over time to support, encourage, and in some cases mandate engagement with stakeholders across the Partnership. The current definition of a ‘stakeholder’ from the GEF Stakeholder Engagement Policy is “...an individual or group that has an interest in the outcome of a GEF-financed activity or is likely to be affected by it, such as local communities, Indigenous Peoples, civil society organizations, and private sector entities, comprising women, men, girls and boys.² This definition includes the stakeholders outside the partnership, but equally relevant are the internal stakeholders at the GEF: Council, Secretariat, STAP, IEO, international environmental convention staff, Operational and Convention Focal Points, the Civil Society Network and the Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group.

6. The GEF Instrument reflects the importance of public participation, stating that “GEF Operational Policies [...] shall provide for full disclosure of all non-confidential information, and consultation with, and participation as appropriate of, major groups and local communities through the project cycle” (GEF 2019b pg. 8).

7. The *Public Involvement Policy* (PIP) (GEF 1996) was approved by the GEF Council in 1996 at the 7th Council Meeting. The policy included a rationale for public involvement, describing it as critical to the success of GEF-financed projects.³ The policy mentions both women and indigenous peoples (as disadvantaged populations) as part of a definition of stakeholder participation. The PIP remained in place for close to 20 years with reviews of its efficacy carried out in starting in 2014, as described in the following section. During the intervening time period, policies and guidance for safeguards, gender, information disclosure, monitoring and evaluation, and other topics build on and refer to this foundational document.

8. The GEF Partnership expanded in 2010, after a decision by the 39th Council to broaden the partnership through the accreditation of GEF Project Agencies. As the Partnership grew there was a need to ensure that all GEF Agencies were consistent in their policies and approaches for GEF-financed

¹ Previous IEO evaluations looked at the effectiveness of the previous Safeguards and Gender Equality policies, the current evaluation will build off and follow up on previous evaluations but will not do a ‘deep dive’ of the portfolio to examine effectiveness or impact for these two policies.

² This is the definition from the 2017 Stakeholder Engagement Policy, the Guidelines expand upon this definition, adding: “They can include, among others, relevant ministries, local governments, and locally-affected people, national and local NGOs, community-based organizations (CBOs), Indigenous Peoples organizations, women’s groups, private sector companies, farmers, and research institutions, and all major groups identified, for example, in Agenda 21 of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit and many times again since then”.

³ According to the policy rationale, this was to occur through four mechanisms: 1) enhancing country ownership of an accountability for, project outcomes; b) addressing social and economic needs of affected people; 3) building partnerships among project executing agencies and stakeholders; 4) making use of local skills experience and knowledge.

activities, including, inter alia, measures for safeguarding against environmental and social risks, ensuring adequate attention to gender and sufficient stakeholder engagement.⁴

Stakeholder Engagement

9. After the 1996 *Public Involvement Policy* was issued, 18 years passed before the corresponding guidelines were published. In 2013 – 2014 the GEF CSO Network conducted a review of the *Public Involvement Policy* and issued a report to Council in 2014 (GEF 2014b). In addition, IEO conducted a sub-study on CSO Engagement in the GEF as part of OPS5 (GEF IEO 2013a). Recommendations from both documents are reflected in the *Guidelines for the Implementation of the Public Involvement Policy* (GEF 2014d) which was presented as an information paper to the 47th Council Meeting in October 2014. The guidelines provide detail on steps to achieve and implement the principles stipulated in the policy. They reference the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, highlighting the importance of country ownership for GEF-financed projects.

10. In 2014 the *GEF2020 Strategy* was approved and included “mobilizing local and global stakeholders” as a core operational principle (GEF 2014a). The strategy describes roles and responsibilities for national and local governments, the private sector, and civil society stakeholders and highlighted cross country partnerships and dialogue processes as critical processes. There is an emphasis on stronger engagement with CSOs and indigenous peoples to develop knowledge and mobilize public action leading to increase effectiveness of GEF-financed activities. Gender mainstreaming and women’s empowerment are also highlighted.

11. In 2015 the Working Group on Public Involvement was established to review and update the Public Involvement Policy with a view to achieving more effective stakeholder engagement in GEF operations. The Working Group, led and facilitated by the GEF Secretariat, presented to Council a series of recommendations to update the Public Involvement Policy at the 51st Council meeting, after a 2-year participatory and consultative process.⁵⁶

12. The *GEF Policy on Stakeholder Engagement* (GEF 2017b) establishes mandatory requirements for stakeholder engagement that apply to all projects, irrespective of their level of social or environmental risks. The policy was approved by the Council in 2017 and came into effect on July 1, 2018 for new-GEF financed activities. For activities under implementation the policy became effective on July 1, 2019. The new policy differed from the Public Involvement Policy in the following ways:

- It was written exclusively in mandatory language, providing clarity for application and accountability;

⁴ In December 2019 a compliance assessment was presented to Council (GEF 2019c).

⁵ The Working Group included representatives of the GEF Secretariat, the CSO network, the Council, GEF Partner Agencies, the GEF Indigenous People’s Advisory Group, the IEO and GEF Operational Focal Points.

⁶ An associated Council Document had more specific recommendations which included the following: 1) Policy requirements regarding stakeholder engagement should apply to ALL projects; 2) Require development of stakeholder engagement plans; 3) Ensure stakeholders have access to full project information at the Agency-level; 4) Revise GEF’s templates, review and tracking systems for stakeholder engagement in GEF project development and approval 5) Strengthen GEFSEC access to information policies and practices; and 6) Develop a plan for revising GEF’s Public Involvement Policy.

- Clear minimum requirements were identified for Agencies, with an emphasis on using agency systems. These new minimum requirements build on and complement those already established through safeguards and fiduciary standards;
- Clear requirements were established for project and program level monitoring and reporting by Agencies, and portfolio-level monitoring and reporting by the Secretariat;
- Specific, mandatory documentation requirements were set out for the project cycle, including a stakeholder engagement plan or equivalent at the CEO Endorsement/Approval stage.

13. The Policy sets out mandatory requirements in three areas: a) project and program cycles; b) activities led by the Secretariat; and c) Agency policies, procedures and capabilities.

14. The *Guidelines on the Implementation of the Policy on Stakeholder Engagement* were issued in December 2018 (GEF 2018b). This document provides information on how Agencies and the Secretariat should identify and adopt practical approaches to achieve the principles set forth in the Policy. Specific guidance is provided on the following: meaningful consultation (including key elements); effective and inclusive engagement; incorporating local knowledge and viewpoints; ensuring gender equality and women's empowerment (with reference to the Gender guidance); culturally appropriate consultations and Free Prior and Informed Consent (with reference to the Safeguards policy); access to information; and meetings and multi stakeholder dialogues. Detailed guidance on mandatory requirements at each stage of the GEF project cycle, including stakeholder engagement plans, is also provided.

Gender

15. The *Policy on Gender Mainstreaming* was approved by the Council at the 40th Council Meeting in May 2011 (GEF 2011). The Policy was initially adopted as an annex of the *GEF Policies on Environmental and Social Safeguards Standards and Gender Mainstreaming* but was later issued as a stand-alone Policy.

16. IEO conducted a sub-study on the GEF's Policy on Gender Mainstreaming (GEF IEO 2013). Some of the recommendations from this sub-study were reflected in the *Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP)* (GEF 2014c), approved at the 47th GEF Council in October 2014. The GEAP covered the time period FY 15 – 18 and aimed to operationalize the *Policy on Gender Mainstreaming*, including a workplan with concrete steps and key actions and outputs addressing five key elements: project cycle; programming and policies; knowledge management; results-based management; and capacity development. To implement the activities under the GEAP, a GEF Gender Partnership was established, and remains active to date. The GEAP called for a review and, as necessary, an update of the *Policy on Gender Mainstreaming* by July 2018.

17. In 2017 the IEO presented its *Evaluation of Gender Mainstreaming* in the GEF to Council (GEF IEO 2018b). This evaluation recommended revising the Gender Mainstreaming Policy, developing an action plan for implementing the policy during GEF-7, and ensuring adequate resources are made available for gender mainstreaming activities.

18. An updated *Policy on Gender Equality* (GEF 2017a) was approved by the 53rd GEF Council in November 2017. The policy effectiveness date for new activities was July 1, 2018 and July 1, 2019 for activities under implementation. The updated policy refers to increased attention to gender by the

conferences of the parties to the multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) as well as the SDGs. The Policy explicitly recognizes “GEF’s ambition to better seize the strategic opportunities to address gender inequality and support women’s empowerment where these can help achieve global environmental benefits”. There is a marked shift from a risk mitigation approach to a proactive gender responsive approach. Changes to the policy include:

- Clarification of GEF’s approach to mainstream gender and promote gender equality and the empowerment of women;
- Formalization and clarification about GEF requirements for addresses gender equality in GEF-financed activities; and
- Introduction of a clearer focus on results, including requirements for project and program-level monitoring and reporting on gender by Agencies, and portfolio-level monitoring and reporting on performance and results by the Secretariat.

19. The *Gender Implementation Strategy* (GEF 2018a) was approved at the following Council Meeting in June 2018. The Strategy describes three specific inequalities and gaps that are relevant to GEF’s work, namely: unequitable access to and control of natural resources; unequal opportunities in environmental decision-making and leadership; and uneven access to socio-economic benefits and services. Strategic entry points to address these gaps for GEF-7 are identified in the strategy and so are priority action areas, including:

- Gender-responsive approaches and results are systematically promoted in GEF programs and projects;
- Strengthened capacity of GEF’s Secretariat and its partners to mainstream gender and seize strategic entry points to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment;
- GEF’s connection with partners to generate knowledge and contribute to learning on links between gender and the environment are improved; and
- GEF’s corporate systems for tracking and reporting on gender equality results are enhanced.

20. The Strategy also includes roles and responsibilities for implementing the Policy on Gender Equality and the Strategy for the GEF Council and the Secretariat. Finally, the Strategy presents a GEF-7 Results Framework on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment with indicators, baseline data (if available), and verification methods for two outcome areas: Gender-responsive GEF program and project design and development and Gender-responsive program and project reporting and results.

Safeguards

21. The *GEF Policy on Agency Minimum Standards on Environmental and Social Safeguards* (GEF 2011) was approved in November 2011 at the 41st Council Meeting. The provisions for the GEF Minimum Standards were established in the guideline document *Application of Policy on Agency Minimum Standards on Environmental and Social Safeguards*. The GEF Minimum Standards had the objective of preventing and mitigating any unintended negative impacts to people and the environment that might arise through GEF operations. According to the policy, the new minimum standards used the

approach and criteria contained in the World Bank's safeguards policy⁷ as a starting point. It also builds on the GEF's *Public Involvement Policy*. There were seven GEF Safeguard Standards approved in 2011: Environmental and Social Assessments; Natural Habitats; Involuntary Resettlement; Indigenous Peoples; Pest Management; Physical Cultural Resources; Safety of Dams.

22. In 2017, the IEO presented its *Review of the GEF Policy on Agency Minimum Standards on Environmental and Social Safeguards* (GEF IEO 2018c). The Review identified a range of gaps in thematic coverage of GEF Safeguards that appeared germane for the risks present in the GEF portfolio. Consequently, one of the recommendations of the evaluation was to review and potentially update the GEF Safeguards policy. Another finding from the evaluation was the GEF agencies would welcome increased opportunities for knowledge sharing and capacity building regarding challenges in addressing safeguards issues, leading to the recommendation for support to capacity development, experiment convening and communications regarding safeguards. Finally, the evaluation recommended improvements in how the GEF tracks and reports on social and environmental risks at the portfolio level, ensuring a flow-through of monitoring information on the implementation of safeguards.

23. The 55th GEF Council approved an updated *Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards* (GEF 2018c) in December 2018. The policy effectiveness date was July 1, 2019 for new activities and for ongoing activities the policy will be effective on July 1, 2020. The updated policy reflected specific recommendations from the IEO Review, and from the IEO *Evaluation of GEF Support to Indigenous Peoples*. Guidelines for the Policy (GEF 2019a) were presented as an information document to Council in December 2019.

24. The updated policy focuses on minimum standards for Agency policies, procedures, systems and capabilities, and outlines a process for monitoring compliance (see GEF 2019c). The policy sets out minimum standards in nine areas including: labor and working conditions; community health, safety, and security; climate and disaster risks; disability inclusion; disadvantaged or vulnerable individuals or groups; and adverse gender-related impacts, including gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse. The policy strengthens protections for indigenous peoples, requiring agencies to ensure that Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of affected Indigenous peoples is obtained under certain conditions. It also adds new requirements for documenting and reporting on environmental and social risks and potential impacts, and their management, and roles and responsibilities for Agencies and the Secretariat.

c. Previous Evaluations

Stakeholder Engagement

25. This is the first IEO evaluation to on the Stakeholder Engagement Policy, however there are IEO evaluations that cover engagement with specific groups (see Appendix 4: Civil Society, the CSO Network and Indigenous Peoples). Due to the cross-cutting nature of this topic it is likely that there are relevant findings across the portfolio of IEO evaluations, these will be explored.

⁷ Operational Policy 4.00: Piloting the Use of Borrower Systems to Address Environmental and Social Safeguard Issues in Bank Supported Projects

26. In February 2020 the Climate Investment Fund published an independent evaluation on local stakeholder engagement in the Climate Investment Funds (CBI 2020). The CIF evaluation focused on three learning questions about local stakeholder engagement: 1) How was local stakeholder engagement envisioned in the CIF’s design?; 2) How has it been implemented in each of these areas of CIF’s work (governance, investment planning, project design and implementation and program monitoring and evaluation)?; 3) What lessons can the CIF and other climate investment funds and their stakeholders learn from the CIF’s experiences with local stakeholder engagement? There were several findings that are salient for the planned IEO evaluation. The CIF evaluation found variation in effectiveness of local stakeholder engagement during investment planning, identifying factors that led to more effective engagement such as existing institutions and norms, and processes that built on effective stakeholder engagement in country forums. In terms of project design and implementation, the CIF evaluation found that local stakeholders have benefited from their engagement in CIF projects through enhanced individual and community capacities, improved livelihoods and market opportunities and greater energy access, with the caveat that evidence is preliminary. The findings from this evaluation, especially the third learning question, can be used to help the evaluation team shape criteria to use when assessment engagement in GEF-financed interventions.

27. In 2018, the World Bank’s Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) conducted an evaluation of citizen engagement at the World Bank Group (World Bank 2018). This evaluation describes the long history of citizen engagement at the WBG, noting that the concept of “engagement” evolved from risk management (with the introduction of environmental and social safeguards) to proactive engagement in projects, policies, and strategies. The evaluation assessed the extent to which citizen engagement activities incorporate four quality principles: aiming for results, closing the feedback loop, ensuring inclusion, and building citizens’ and government’s capacity to engage. Findings included, inter alia, the following: there was awareness and buy-in of the citizen engagement agenda among senior management and staff; the number of projects with a citizen oriented design and citizen engagement indicators had increased but the applications of quality standards in the design, implementation and monitoring, has been limited that aspects related to quality of engagement are given insufficient attention at design and monitoring stages; and indicators rarely tracked results, and reporting was insufficient; the insufficient attention to quality and an emphasis on tools rather than results risks undermining the objective to mainstream citizen engagement to improve development outcomes; and more focus on capacity building and learning is warranted. A number of these findings are relevant for the current evaluation and have been reflected in the evaluation questions. These include: the extent to which there is buy-in for the policies; the quality standards used during the review process; the extent to which indicators used to track progress are adequate; and an examination of capacity development to support implementation of the policies.

Gender

28. As part of OPS5, IEO commissioned a sub-study on GEF’s Policy on Gender Mainstreaming in 2013 (GEF IEO 2013a). This sub-study assessed trends in gender mainstreaming as well as implementation progress and appropriateness of the policy. Building on this sub-study, the IEO undertook an Evaluation of Gender Mainstreaming in the GEF for OPS6 and presented to the Council in May 2017. The evaluation covered three areas: 1) the extent to which the Policy had been implemented

by means of the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP); the appropriateness of the policy for the GEF and its implementation in line with international best practices; and the trends of gender mainstreaming in the GEF since OPS5.

29. Main findings of the evaluation included the following:

- According to the 2017 IEO Evaluation, trends in gender mainstreaming in the GEF showed modest improvement over the previous OPS period (OPS5).
- Very few projects conducted gender analyses despite it being one of the minimum requirements of the Policy on Gender Mainstreaming. For a cohort of projects from OPS6, only 13.9 percent of medium-size projects and full-size projects in a quality at entry review and 15.7 percent of completed projects had done a gender analysis prior to CEO endorsement/approval. Those projects that did conduct a gender analysis achieved higher gender ratings.
- The Policy on Gender Mainstreaming increased attention to and performance of gender in GEF operations, but there was a lack of clarity around its framework and certain provisions and implementation. The 2017 evaluation found that the policy left too much room for interpretation on gender analysis and on the responsibilities of the GEF Agencies vis-a-vis the GEF Secretariat regarding its implementation.
- Institutional capacity to implement the policy and achieve gender mainstreaming was found to be insufficient within the GEF Secretariat.
- The 2017 evaluation found that the Gender Equality Action Plan has been a relevant and effective framework for implementing the Policy on Gender Mainstreaming. The GEAP facilitated implementation, annual reports provided by the Secretariat were seen as useful and the evaluation emphasized that a strong action plan facilitates strategic priority setting and can promote the agenda on gender mainstreaming.

Safeguards

30. In response to a Council request, IEO conducted a *Review of the GEF Policy on Agency Minimum Standards on Environmental and Social Safeguards* (GEF IEO 2018c). This evaluation focused on four questions: 1) The extent to which the GEF Safeguards have added value to the GEF Partnership; 2) The degree to which they are aligned with relevant international best standards and practices; 3) How the GEF is informed of safeguard related risks in supported operations; 4) Recommendations on how the GEF Safeguards might evolve in coming years. The review found that the GEF Safeguards served as an important catalyst to strengthen policies among some GEF Agencies, however there was a range of environmental and social risks in the portfolio. The evaluation recommended a review of the GEF safeguards, improvements to the tracking systems in place for monitoring and reporting on safeguards, and support for capacity development, expert convening, and communications.

II. Purpose, Objectives, and Audience

a. Purpose

31. The purpose of this evaluation is to provide evidence on the relevance and application of three GEF policies that promote inclusivity, engagement, and avoidance of undue harm to stakeholders: the Stakeholder Engagement Policy; the Gender Equality Policy; and the GEF Policy on Agency Minimum Standards on Environmental and Social Safeguards. The evaluation will also look for evidence linking the Stakeholder Engagement Policy with project and program outcomes.

b. Objectives

32. The objective of the evaluation is to assess the coherence, operational relevance and implementation of the following GEF policies: The Stakeholder Engagement Policy, the Gender Equality Policy, and the Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards. The evaluation will include an in-depth analysis of stakeholder engagement at the GEF since GEF-5. The analysis of stakeholder engagement will look at changes over time in GEF-financed activities, as well as any evidence on outcomes associated with stakeholder engagement.

c. Audience and Stakeholders

33. The primary audience for this evaluation is the GEF Council, the GEF Secretariat, and the GEF Agencies. Other important stakeholders include the executing agencies, operational focal points (OFPs), country governments, the Civil Society Network, the Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group, other environmental funds (for example the Adaptation Fund, CIF, GCF), staff at international environmental conventions, civil society organizations, and community members affected by GEF-financed interventions.

34. In line with IEO's standard approach, the evaluation will form a Reference Group, composed of representatives from the GEF Secretariat, GEF Agencies (including UN agencies and an NGO Agency), and civil society representatives. The Reference Group will: (i) provide feedback and comments on the preliminary findings and the evaluation report; (ii) help ensuring evaluation relevance to ongoing as well as future operations; iii) help identifying and establishing contact with the appropriate individuals for interviews/focus groups; and iv) facilitate access to information.

III. Evaluation Questions and Coverage

a. Key Evaluation Questions⁸

- **Coherence/Strategic Alignment:** To what extent is there strategic alignment and consistency between the Stakeholder Engagement, Gender Equality and Safeguards policies?

⁸ See Appendix 1 for the evaluation design matrix

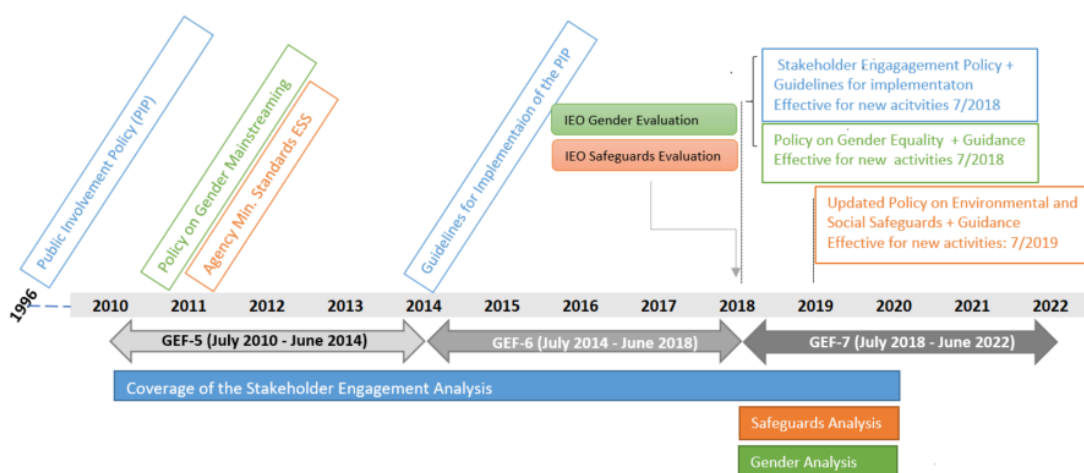
- **Operational Relevance:** To what extent is there buy-in across the Partnership and support for implementing these policies?
- **Effectiveness:** To what extent do GEF supported activities promote inclusive and meaningful stakeholder participation in GEF governance and operations? To what extent are the updated policies (Stakeholder Engagement, Gender Equality, and Safeguards) being applied to new GEF-financed activities and are there any lessons from early implementation of these policies?
- **Impact:** To what extent is there evidence linking stakeholder engagement with project and program impacts?

35. This program of work will build upon and provide updates to two previous IEO evaluations that assessed engagement with and support to specific stakeholder groups. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the recommendations from the *Evaluation of the GEF–Civil Society Organization Network* (GEF IEO 2016) and the *Evaluation of GEF Engagement with Indigenous Peoples* (GEF IEO 2018a) have been taken up, with an emphasis on recommendations that relate to how the GEF supports meaningful and inclusive with these stakeholder groups. Appendix 4 has more information about these evaluations.

b. Coverage

36. The timeline covered by this evaluation for the ‘deep dive’ on stakeholder engagement includes interventions financed under GEF-5, starting in July 2010 through those approved before July 1, 2020. The focus will be on MSPs, FSPs, Enabling Activities? and programs. The coverage for the updated Gender Equality and Safeguards Policy will cover the time period since the respective IEO evaluations, which generally coincides with the issuance of the new policies. Figure 1 below shows the key milestones for these policies, relative to the GEF periods.

Figure 1. Key Milestones and Evaluation Coverage



37. The GEF Small Grants Programme is an important financing mechanism for Indigenous Peoples and CSOs, however because it is the subject of a separate IEO evaluation it falls outside the scope of this work.⁹ The Country Support Program is a key mechanism for engagement at the country and regional level, this is also the subject of a planned IEO evaluation and therefore falls outside of the scope of this work.¹⁰ Findings from both of these planned evaluations will be incorporated into the final report. Also relevant is the evaluation of Impact Programs. Complementarities will be sought with both the CSP evaluation and the SGP evaluation, and relevant findings will be incorporated but these topics will not be a focus of this evaluation. A case study on stakeholder engagement in the Impact Programs is planned.

IV. Evaluation Design, Quality Assurance, and Limitations

a. Evaluation Design

38. The evaluation will use a mixed methods approach, and is expected to include the following elements:

- **Document and literature review:** To answer questions about coherence and strategic relevance, the evaluation team will review council documents, GEF policies, guidance, and strategies as well as policies, guidance and strategies from other climate finance mechanisms. Project/program documents (especially at the PIF/PDF approval and CEO endorsement phase), terminal evaluation reports, and document templates will be reviewed to answer questions about effectiveness and impact. The Implementation Modules in the GEF Portal will be reviewed as a key source of monitoring and reporting data for GEFSEC.

⁹ The approach paper and associated information can be found here: <https://www.gefio.org/evaluations/joint-gef-undp-evaluation-small-grants-programme-sgp-2020>

¹⁰ The approach paper for this evaluation is forthcoming

- **Benchmarking Exercise:** The three policies will be reviewed and compared with similar policies at other development organizations and with other climate finance institutions. This assessment will help answer the evaluation questions on strategic relevance of GEF policies and coherence with best practice and approaches used by the broader development community.
- **Interviews/Focus Group Discussions and Stakeholder Workshops:** This evaluation will rely heavily on feedback from stakeholders across the partnership. Interactions will take place with staff and volunteers from the following stakeholder groups: GEF Council; GEF Secretariat; GEF Agencies; executing agencies; GEF Focal Points; the Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group; the GEF Small Grants Programme; the GEF Gender Partnership; the GEF CSO Network; Focal convention staff; and project level stakeholders including local communities and direct project beneficiaries. Input from these stakeholders will be used to answer questions about operational relevance, effectiveness of the application of policies, and the impact of the policies on GEF-financed interventions.
- **Online Surveys:** An online survey will be conducted with different modules targeted at specific stakeholder groups (Operational Focal Points, Council Members, CSO Network, CSO members, Agency staff).¹¹ The evaluation team will coordinate survey efforts with other IEO evaluations to ensure efficiency and avoid over taxing respondents. Perceptions from stakeholders are an important input that will be used across the evaluation.
- **Stakeholder Mapping Exercise:** The GEF Partnership is a complex entity, comprised of 183 countries, 18 Agencies, Civil Society Organizations, Indigenous Peoples and the private sector. The evaluation will conduct a stakeholder mapping exercise which looks at the needs/yields for each actor relative to the implementation of the policies. This will be used as a tool to better understand how the GEF functions relative to the policies, and as a starting point for interviews with stakeholders. This tool will allow the evaluation team to refine and hone interview and survey questions and could provide information relevant to the portfolio review.
- **Theory of Change Exercise:** Using the Stakeholder Engagement Policy, the evaluation will conduct a theory of change exercise, mapping out the activities, outcomes and impact as described in the policy documents. Upon validation with GEFSEC, this will be used as a means to frame evaluation sub questions and inform instrument design.
- **Field Visits:** If possible, the evaluation will carry out field visits to project sites to conduct interviews with project stakeholders to gain an in-depth understanding of whether these policies, when applied holistically, have intended or unintended impacts. The selection of countries and intervention types will be informed by the portfolio analysis, network analysis, and stakeholder interviews and be guided by the following criterion (in addition to current status regarding the COVID-19 pandemic): GEF Agency, type of executing agency, geographical distribution, and GEF focal area.
- **Portfolio Analysis:** The evaluation will conduct a portfolio review based on data from PMIS and the GEF Portal. An in-depth review of stakeholder engagement from July 2010 to the present (including

¹¹ One challenge will be identifying names of CSOs that have been involved at the project level, as there is currently no database that exists with this information. There are two approaches that could be considered to generate this information: 1) An email to Agencies asking for CSO contacts and 2) extracting this information during a portfolio review.

a quality at entry review for activities subject to the new policy) will include projects from GEF-5, GEF-6, and GEF-7. A review of recently approved activities that are subject to the updated Gender and Safeguards policies will also be conducted. A database will be compiled including basic project information such as GEF activity cycle information, financing (including co-financing), implementing institutions involved, focal areas, countries, main objectives, key partners, and implementation status. A Project Review Template (PRT) will be developed to assess the programs in a systematic to ensure that key evaluation questions are addressed coherently and allow for aggregation. Using the review template, the evaluation team will rate projects along criteria related to application of the policies and look for any relationship between these ratings and project performance (as reflected in terminal evaluation ratings). A sample of projects will be selected to ensure coverage of the following criteria: i) Agency, ii) type of project (FSP, MSP)¹², while also ensuring broad coverage of executing agency type, geographic distribution, and GEF focal area. Portfolio composition and considerations are discussed in Appendix 3.

b. Quality assurance

39. In line with IEO's quality assurance practice the evaluation secured two Peer Reviewers, one internal and one external. Internal IEO review will be provided by a Senior Evaluation Officer (Carlo Caruggi). Chris Nelson, Manager, World Bank Independent Evaluation Group is the external Peer Reviewer. The role of the Peer Reviewers is to advise throughout the evaluation process on: (i) the soundness of evaluation design, scope, questions, methods and process described in the approach paper; and (ii) implementation of the methodology and implications of methodological limitations in the formulation of the conclusions and recommendations in the draft and final reports. On March 19, 2020, Mr. Caruggi and Mr. Nelson provided multiple insights into the scope, evaluation questions, and methods during a review meeting with IEO staff. These inputs have been incorporated into this approach paper. This approach paper was circulated to GEFSEC and all comments have been addressed and posted in an audit trail on the IEO website.

40. Triangulation of the qualitative and quantitative information gathered will be conducted at completion of the data analysis and gathering phase to determine trends and identify the main findings, lessons and conclusions. Stakeholders will be consulted during the process to test preliminary findings. The approach paper will be circulated to the GEF Secretariat, the CSO Network, the Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group, and implementing agencies and the evaluation report will be shared with the same stakeholders plus relevant executing agencies and other stakeholders consulted for the evaluation. In addition, the evaluation team met with the Secretariat for an initial meeting on evaluation ideas and will continue to request feedback on evaluation design, theories of change, and other issues/ideas that arise.

c. Limitations

41. The first draft of this Approach Paper was completed in late February 2020, in the intervening time period the COVID-19 pandemic has emerged as a major global challenge. Like other independent

¹² This evaluation will cover MSPs and FSPs, there is a separate evaluation of Enabling Activities planned.

evaluation organizations, IEO has thought extensively about the adjustments that need to be made to ensure that strategically important evaluation work continues (including our commitment to deliver OPS 7), while ensuring both quality and credibility of the work and that we act in an ethical manner. A framework described by the World Bank’s Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) in a recent blog closely aligns with the approach discussed at IEO and therefore is presented here alongside the responses related to the planned evaluation. The framework focuses on four questions addressing ethical, conceptual and methodological challenges associated with the pandemic and includes with recommended actions aligned with how one responds to the questions.¹³ The four questions and the responses for this evaluation are included in the table below.

<p>1) Should you adapt your evaluation questions and scope?</p>	<p>In answering this question, IEO determined that the target audience (Council and GEFSEC) are likely to listen and act on the findings, especially as we approach the next replenishment process. The stakeholder engagement policy and related activities are well defined, and coherent enough to allow for evaluation at the present time. The only area of concern under this question is about the likelihood of having well substantiated evaluation findings. This concern relates to whether country and on the ground stakeholders will be accessible and is addressed in the next section.</p>
<p>2) Can you improve what remains feasible?</p>	<p>Most of the planned evaluation work is still feasible. The ability to conduct a rigorous portfolio review is not impacted by the pandemic, it is a central component in this evaluation. The evaluation team will explore other desk-based methods to supplement the portfolio review. These might include content analysis using a theory-based approach (in a consultative manner with GEFSEC and other stakeholders) and conducting a stakeholder mapping exercise that carefully examines the needs/yields relationship between each stakeholder group through the lens of the stakeholder engagement policy and associated activities.</p> <p>This evaluation covers many stakeholders at the GEF that are currently accessible via virtual communication. Preliminary discussions with GEFSEC counterparts indicate that the evaluation team can (virtually) access most of the key stakeholders including: GEF Council; GEF Secretariat; GEF Agencies; executing agencies; GEF Focal Points; the Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group; the GEF Small Grants Programme; the GEF Gender Partnership; the GEF CSO Network; and Focal convention staff. The main area here where some concern is warranted is the ability to reach country level and project stakeholders who could provide valuable information about their experience engaging with GEF operations and governance. Approaches to address this concern are discussed in the next section.</p>
<p>3) Can you find ways around what is infeasible?</p>	<p>As described in the previous section, IEO was informed that many of the key informants are accessible via remote communication. The country and project level stakeholders, especially vulnerable, poor, or inaccessible communities,</p>

¹³ <https://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/blog/adapting-evaluation-designs-times-covid-19-coronavirus-four-questions-guide-decisions>

	<p>may not be reachable via remote communication. The situation on the ground varies from country to country and is in flux.</p> <p>The evaluation is proposing a two-phased approach. <u>Phase one</u> focuses on desk-based approaches including document review, designing and starting a rigorous portfolio review, drafting an online survey, and conducting a preliminary round of virtual stakeholder interviews and potentially focus groups. These interviews will focus on key, accessible informants to address evaluation questions, but also gather their firsthand knowledge about the current status of country and program level stakeholders. After phase one, the evaluation team would assess whether it's feasible to move forward with phase two, which could include sessions during national dialogues, and ECWs (if possible), and country case studies with field visits. The use of local consultants will be explored, but the overall priority guiding whether the country level field work moves forward is whether local or national authorities are allowing movement, and whether it is ethical to carry out the activities. Alternatives to fieldwork and in-person attendance at national dialogues or other GEF events include desk-based case studies, interviews with local implementing NGOs, online focus group discussions and additional online surveys. Any limitations associated with the inability to travel will be presented in the final evaluation report.</p>
<p>4) Can you tap into alternative sources of information?</p>	<p>The framework suggests using big data where possible. It's unclear right now whether an analysis of big data would be useful for this evaluation, however this is something to consider moving forward.</p>

42. Beyond the challenges associated with conducting an evaluation during a global pandemic, there are a few additional limitations. For the recently updated policies, the portfolio of projects approved or under implementation is small, and there are no completed projects. This limits the ability to look at higher order impacts of the new policies. The evaluation will review the small portfolio that falls under the new policies to conduct a quality at entry assessment and look for compliance with the new policy requirements, however the sample size is a limitation and therefore the results from analysis of the small portfolio will be reported with this caveat.

43. Another limitation is related to the unreliability of PMIS/GEF Portal data on projects and programs, which will be addressed through cross-checking data with the Secretariat and with GEF Agencies. Finally, given the large and heterogenous nature of the Partnership and the implementation contexts for GEF-financed interventions and assuming that field visits will be possible, another limitation is the number of field visits that can be carried out within the resource envelope (time and finances) for this evaluation. This could be mitigated, to the extent possible, by conducting field missions jointing with other evaluations or by using local consultants.

V. Deliverables and Dissemination

44. Preliminary evaluation findings will be drafted by December 2020. The evaluation report will be finalized by March 1, 2021 for presentation as an information document at the June 2021 GEF Council

Meeting. A formatted, finalized version will appear on the GEF IEO website soon after. A four-page evaluation brief with the main messages will be published for the evaluation. The evaluation brief and the final evaluation report will be posted on the IEO website and included in the IEO newsletter. The evaluation team will make every effort to ensure that stakeholders consulted as part of this work receive the evaluation outputs or are informed of where to find the evaluations. As requested or relevant, external presentations will be given to support broader dissemination of the work.

VI. Resources

a. Timeline

Table 1. Gantt chart of project activities.

	Team Member	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	
Evaluation Design																		
Approach paper	KS																	
Data gathering																		
Document Review	KS/C/C																	
Stakeholder Mapping	KS/C																	
Interviews ¹⁴	KS/C/C																	
Policy analysis																		
Online surveys	KS/RA																	
Field visits ¹⁵																		
Portfolio Review																		
Deliverables																		
Data analysis	KS/RA/C																	
Preliminary findings																		
Draft report	KS																	
Review process	KS																	
4-page brief	KS/C																	
Final report	KS																	
Presentation to Council	JU/GB																	

¹⁴ If possible in the context of COVID-19, interviews will be planned to take advantage of times when there are planned stakeholder gatherings – for example Council Meetings and the Agency Retreat (March). ECWs may also be used as an opportunity to conduct interviews.

¹⁵ If possible – see section on limitations for an explanation of the COVID-19 considerations

b. Team and skills mix

45. Kate Steingraber, Evaluation Officer, will lead the design and implementation of the evaluation with oversight from Geeta Batra, Chief Evaluation Officer. Anna Viggh, Senior Evaluation Officer, will support the review of the Gender Equality Policy. Other IEO staff will support different components of the evaluation, time permitting.

46. The evaluation team will include two expert consultants (C) who have deep knowledge of GEF policies and engagement. Phil Cox, a core team member from the previous evaluation, will work on the updates to the evaluations that cover engagement with two groups – CSO Network and Indigenous Peoples. Bruce Jenkins will lead the work on strategic alignment and coherence of the policies. IEO staff will conduct the review of the updated gender policy. A research analyst consultant (RA) will support the portfolio review and online survey data collection and analysis.

47. Additional information on engagement with country level stakeholders will come from the planned IEO evaluation of the Country Support Program evaluation. These include questions related to activities covered under the Stakeholder Engagement Policy under the category of GEF-Secretariat Led activities (National and Multi-Stakeholder Dialogues).

VII. Appendix 1: Evaluation Design

Key Questions	Indicators/basic data/what to look for	Sources of information	Methodology
Coherence/Strategic Alignment			
KQ 1: To what extent is there strategic alignment and consistency between the Stakeholder Engagement, Gender Equality and Safeguards policies?	- Alignment of GEF Policies with GEF strategy documents, over time	-GEF Policy and Guidelines/Guidance, -Strategy Documents	-Desk Review
	-Stakeholder perceptions on strategic relevance of the policies	- GEFSEC Staff, Agency Staff	-Interviews -Online Surveys
	-Consistency within and between policies (cross-referencing, harmonization across the policies, etc.)	-GEF Policy and Guidelines/Guidance, Strategy Documents	-Desk Review
	-Stakeholder perceptions on policy consistency and clarity	-GEFSEC Staff, Agency Staff	-Interviews -Online Surveys
	-Similarities/differences of the policies compared to other international organizations, including climate finance mechanisms, based on international standards ¹⁶	-Policy documents, -GEFSEC Staff -IEO evaluations	-Benchmarking exercise -Desk Review
	-Stakeholder perceptions regarding the degree of shared understanding on the limits/roles of Agencies and GEFSEC to demonstrate compliance with the policies	-GEFSEC Staff, Agency Staff -Policy documents	-Stakeholder mapping exercise -Interviews -Desk Review
Operational Relevance			
KQ 2: To what extent is there buy-in across the Partnership and support for implementing these policies?	-Stakeholder perceptions on how realistic, culturally attuned, operationally relevant and efficient the policies are, and on the extent to which they add value to the implementation of GEF financed activities	-GEF Agency Staff, GEFSEC Staff, Council Members, OFPs, CSOs	-Interviews -Online Surveys
	-Magnitude of resources allocated to ensuring uptake/ application of the updated policies (staff time, dedicated financing, training, etc.).	-Administrative data	-Desk review
	-Stakeholder perceptions on activities undertaken by the GEF to increase knowledge and capacity to apply policies, and associated outputs (e.g. online and in-person training, one-on-one support, guidelines and guidance issued, communities of practice, etc)	-Documents -Online learning -GEF Agency Staff, GEFSEC Staff, Council Members, OFPs, CSOs, IPs	-Interviews and Surveys -Document Review -Stakeholder Mapping
	-Existence of review processes and quality assurance mechanisms to track the application of policies	-Templates for document review and PIF-CEO Endorsement -GEFSEC Staff	-Document Review -Interviews
	-Perceptions on how holistically these policies are applied	-GEF Agency Staff, GEF Secretariat Staff, Council Members, OFPs	-Interviews -Online survey

¹⁶ There will be an in-depth review for the Stakeholder Engagement policy which has never been evaluated by IEO. For the other two policies, the review will assess whether recommendations from previous IEO evaluations are reflected in the updated policies.

	-Evidence that the policies are well understood by stakeholders across the partnership	-Document review templates -GEF Agency Staff, GEF Secretariat Staff, Council Members, OFPs	-Interviews -Online survey
	-Use of evidence-based reporting on the application of policies in the corporate scorecard	-GEFSEC Annual Monitoring Report data and corporate scorecard: Gender, Stakeholder Engagement, Safeguards	-Document Review
	-Perceptions about the effectiveness of monitoring and reporting on applications of policies	-GEFSEC Staff, GEF Agency Staff, Council Members, OFPs, CSOs, IPs	-Interviews -Online survey
Effectiveness			
KQ 3: To what extent do GEF supported activities promote inclusive and meaningful stakeholder participation in GEF governance and operations? ^{17 18}	-Presence of the minimum requirements of the Stakeholder Engagement Policy (and the precursor Public Involvement Policy) at key stages in the project and program cycle (Identification, Design, Implementation, Completion) -Representation of stakeholder interests (Indigenous Peoples, Women, CSOs, local communities) in project and program documents	-Project Documents: PIFs, CEO Endorsement, MTRs, Implementation Reports and Terminal Evaluations	-Portfolio Review Template
	-Stakeholder perceptions on the extent to which policies have resulted in substantial inclusion (with case examples showing “better” practices)	-GEF Agency Staff, GEF Secretariat Staff, Council Members, OFPs	-Interviews -Online survey -Case study
	-Evidence of an increased allocation of resources for application of policies (e.g. number of people trained or specializing in safeguards, gender equality and/or inclusion initiatives) in Agencies. -Evidence of catalytic effect of the policies: Do GEF Agencies report that they changed their internal policies or approaches based at least in part on the GEF policies?	-GEF Agency Staff, GEFSEC Staff -Administrative data	-Desk review -Interviews -Online survey
	-Integration of the core principles of the stakeholder engagement policy in the policy and decision-making processes and platforms of, <i>inter alia</i> , the CSO Network and the Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group - Consistency between activities taken post 2017 evaluation of GEF Engagement with Indigenous Peoples ¹⁹ and the requirements of the Stakeholder Engagement Policy -Consistency between post 2016 evaluation activities of the CSO Network ²⁰ and the requirements of the Stakeholder	- Project Documents -GEF Secretariat Staff, Council, GEF CSO Network Coordination Committee, CSO Network member representatives, Non-Network member representatives, IPAG membership, IPFPs	-Desk review -Interviews -Online survey

¹⁷ This question focuses explicitly on the Stakeholder Engagement Policy but will likely include findings relevant for gender and safeguards due to the connected and sometimes overlapping coverage of these policies.

¹⁸ One GEF-financed activity that supports stakeholder engagement at the GEF is the Country Support Program. This will not be covered as part of this evaluation, as there is a separate, standalone evaluation on the CSP that is being conducted at the same time as this evaluation. Findings from the CSP evaluation will be incorporated into the final evaluation report.

¹⁹ GEF IEO 2018a

²⁰ GEF IEO 2016

	Engagement Policy, including actions taken within GEF to strengthen the link between the CSO Network and the CSOs		
KQ 4: To what extent are the updated policies (Stakeholder Engagement, Gender Equality, and Safeguards) being applied to new GEF-financed activities and are there any lessons from early implementation of these policies?	-Quality at entry review for policy compliance for the portfolio of new GEF-financed activities after the updated policies became effective.	-Project Documents: PIFs, CEO Endorsement,	-Quality at Entry Review
Impact			
KQ 5 (Stakeholder Engagement Deep Dive): To what extent is there evidence linking stakeholder engagement with project and program impacts?	-Patterns of evidence showing a correlation between stakeholder participation and project/program outcomes.	-Project Documents -TE Ratings	-Portfolio review -Review of terminal evaluations
	-Changes in organizational behavior within the GEF regarding its development of policies, guidelines and strategy that are commensurate with the policy	-GEFSEC, Council, GEF Agency Staff, CSOs, IPs	-Interviews

VIII. Appendix 2: References

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IX. Appendix 3: Portfolio Composition

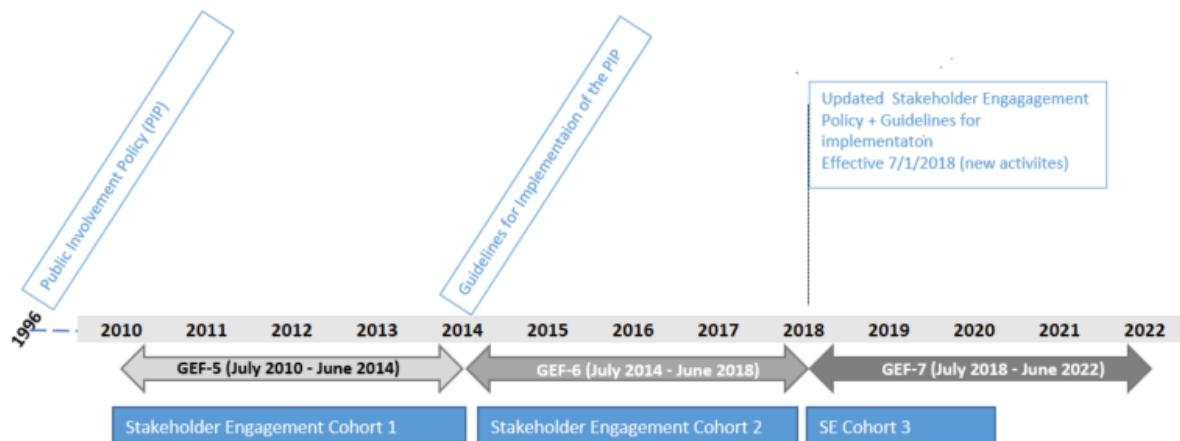
Stakeholder Engagement

48. The stakeholder engagement portfolio review will cover GEF-financed activities that were CEO endorsed or approved from July 1, 2010 to July 1, 2020. Covering a ten-year period allows the evaluation to look at the application of the policy at the project/program level for three cohorts:

- 2010 – 2014: Projects that were CEO endorsed/approved under the 1996 Public Involvement Policy, prior to issuance of the guidelines (quality at entry and review of completed projects)
- 2014 – 2018: Projects subject to the 1996 Public Involvement Policy, after guidelines were issued (quality at entry and review of completed and ongoing projects)
- 2018 – 2020: Projects that were CEO endorsed under the updated Stakeholder Engagement Policy (quality at entry review only)²¹

49. The approach divides the portfolio into cohorts aligned with milestones (policy updates, issuance of guidance). These changes occurred at different points of time over the past decade, therefore the proposed portfolio review reflects this, as demonstrated in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. Stakeholder Engagement policy milestones and portfolio cohorts



50. The Stakeholder Engagement portfolio review will have two components:

1. **Quality-at-entry Review.** This assessment will review documentation from a sample of projects at CEO Endorsement, this may include Project Framework Documents (PFDs), Project Identification Forms (PIFs) and supporting documentation (e.g. gender analysis, socioeconomic analysis or similar, safeguards documentations and any gender plan, stakeholder engagement plan or risk mitigation plan). All projects will be reviewed using a Project Review Template (PRT) to assess the interventions in a systematic manner to ensure

²¹ The Stakeholder Engagement Policy came into effect for new activities in July 2018, and for activities under implementation (implementation reports, midterm reviews, and terminal evaluations) in July 2019.

that key evaluation questions are addressed coherently and that results can be aggregated. Review criteria will be set by the evaluation team after preliminary interviews and document review (some examples could include inclusiveness, level of engagement of stakeholder groups, documentation of consultations, risks identified, etc). The review template will reflect the mandatory requirements under each respective policy (which changed over time) but will also look for evidence of a more holistic application of the topics the policies address. This analysis is being carried out to assess whether the policies have changed the identification and design of GEF-financed interventions over time.

2. **Review of Completed/Ongoing Projects.** This portfolio review will look at a sample of completed and ongoing projects through a review of project documents including midterm reviews, implementation reports, and terminal evaluations. There will also be a PRT that will review closed and ongoing projects along the same criteria. This analysis will contribute to an assessment of whether the policies have changed the implementation and evaluation of GEF-financed interventions over time. Closed projects that are reviewed for quality at entry will also be assessed at closure to determine whether the planned stakeholder engagement activities were carried out and reported on.

Portfolio Universe

51. The stakeholder engagement portfolio universe is comprised of all projects that have been received by the GEF on or after 2010. The portfolio excludes Small Grants Programme and the National Portfolio Formulation Exercise (NPFE) projects, in addition to excluding any dropped/withdrawn/rejected projects. The portfolio was narrowed down further to include only medium and full-sized projects that have been CEO endorsed or approved, under implementation, or completed, with a CEO Endorsement/Approval date between 2010 and 2019. Table 3 below shows the number of projects in the portfolio under study by agency. Table 4 shows the distribution by Focal Area.

Table 3. Distribution of projects by Agency

AGENCY	NO. OF PROJECTS	%
ADB	28	2%
AFDB	39	3%
BOAD	2	0%
CAF	3	0%
CI	25	2%
DBSA	3	0%
EBRD	10	1%
FAO	125	9%
FECO	1	0%
FUNBIO	1	0%
IADB	33	2%
IFAD	30	2%
IUCN	13	1%
UNDP	554	39%
UNEP	239	17%
UNIDO	123	9%
WORLD BANK	166	12%
WWF-US	9	1%
TOTAL	1404	100%

Table 4. Distribution of projects by Focal Area

FOCAL AREA	NO. OF PROJECTS	%
BIODIVERSITY	257	18%
CHEMICALS AND WASTE	41	3%
CLIMATE CHANGE	535	38%
INTERNATIONAL WATERS	71	5%
LAND DEGRADATION	61	4%
MULTI FOCAL AREA	355	25%
OZONE DEPLETING SUBS.	3	0%
POPS	81	6%
GRAND TOTAL	1404	100%

Recently Updated Policies – Quality at Entry Review

52. This analysis will consist of a quality at entry review of new GEF activities that were initiated after the effectiveness dates of the updated policies (July 1, 2018 for Stakeholder Engagement and Gender and July 1, 2019 for Safeguards). The current size of the portfolio for the recently approved policies as of July 1, 2018 and July 1, 2019 is displayed below.

Projects received²² on or after July 1, 2018 – to be reviewed for Stakeholder Engagement and Gender²³

PROJECT STATUS	FSP	MSP	PFD	TOTAL
PENDING APPROVAL	94	23	5	123
PIF/PPG APPROVAL OR CLEARANCE	60	34		95
COUNCIL APPROVED	52		8	62
CEO APPROVED / ENDORSED	19	7		49
TOTAL	225	64	13	329

Projects received on or after July 1, 2019 – to be reviewed for safeguards

PROJECT STATUS	FSP	MSP	PFD	TOTAL
PENDING APPROVAL	67	21	5	94
PIF/PPG APPROVAL OR CLEARANCE	10	5		15
CEO APPROVED / ENDORSED	4	3		12
TOTAL	81	29	5	121

²² Project dates were normalized to capture the earliest date available for each project (PIF Submission/Entry into system, Entry into Work Program, Council Approval Date, and CEO Endorsement/Approval Date). Projects with earliest date available on or after July 1, 2018 and July 1, 2019 were then selected for the Stakeholder Engagement and Gender review and Safeguards review respectively.

²³ This data will be updated and finalized after June 30, 2020.

X. Appendix 4: Previous IEO Evaluations – CSO Network and Engagement with Indigenous Peoples

53. The evaluation of policies will be supplemented with information from updates of two previous evaluations described briefly below. The evaluations will serve as a starting point to analyze engagement with two important stakeholder groups: indigenous peoples and the CSO Network.

Civil Society Organizations

54. For OPS 5, IEO published a technical document, *Civil Society Organizations Engagement* (GEF IEO 2013a), which looked at tendencies and trends in civil society engagement by the GEF. It found that the Public Involvement Policy was outdated, not systematically implemented and largely ineffective, and that guidelines to strengthen existing mechanisms were lacking. The study also found that a systematic approach to monitor CSO engagement in the GEF was lacking. Investment by civil society (reflected through the FSP/MSP and SGP portfolios) in the GEF was described by the evaluation as “stop(ing) short of being meaningful”. Recommendations included, *inter alia*, updating policies and guidance, incorporating practical indicators for measuring CSO engagement at multiple phases in the project cycle, and a regular review of the CSO Network as a the main GEF link to civil society.

55. The CSO Network was first evaluated in 2005, a second evaluation followed up on recommendations and actions stemming from the first review and explored new elements. The *Evaluation of the GEF-Civil Society Organization (CSO) Network* (GEF IEO 2016) covered two key evaluation questions:

- To what extent is the GEF-CSO network meeting its intended goals and strategic objectives and adding value to the GEF partnership and its members?
- How are Network features contributing to the effective and efficient functioning of the Network?

56. The 2016 evaluation found that the GEF-CSO Network received good to excellent marks regarding progress against its objectives. As well, the CSO Network was found to be relevant and delivering results to the GEF partnerships. However, the Network’s activities were found to be distant from the country level where GEF projects make their mark and from where the majority of Network CSOs operate. Four recommendations were issued: 1) a contemporary vision for the Network should be created, including a modality to finance Network activities; 2) clear rules of engagement should be developed to guide cooperation and communication; 3) the Network should continue to build itself as a mechanism for strengthening civil society participation in the GEF and 4) the Network should strengthen its governance.

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities

57. *The Evaluation of GEF Engagement with Indigenous Peoples* (GEF IEO 2018a) was an input into OPS 6. The purpose of the assessment was to assess the GEF's engagement activities with Indigenous Peoples and provide lessons and insights leading to recommendations to strengthen GEF collaborations. This evaluation found that significant steps have been taken by the GEF to increase engagement and participation of Indigenous Peoples in the GEF and provides an overview of the history of the mechanisms that emerged to support this engagement. The evaluation reviewed the performance of the Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group, and found that while there were some significant accomplishments, progress was hindered by constraints on performance including communication issues (language barriers), lack of capacity, staffing capacity in the Secretariat and the Agencies, and coordination. The evaluation also looked at the applicable safeguards minimum standard, and the GEF portfolio. The evaluation issued the following recommendations: 1) Establish and Strengthen dedicated funding opportunities for indigenous peoples projects/organizations; 2) Update relevant policies and guidelines to reflect best practice standards concerning indigenous peoples, including a right-based approach to engagement; 3) Review the IPAG's role for operational constraints; 4) Facilitate dialogue between indigenous peoples and local communities and government focal points; 5) Monitor application of Minimum Standard 4 and the indigenous peoples portfolio.