



The GEF's concern and support for sound management of chemicals and waste have greatly evolved, as shown in this first comprehensive study of its efforts to date.

## KEY FINDINGS

**1. Highly relevant.** The GEF's chemicals and waste focal area has evolved to remain highly relevant, expanding its coverage of new global priorities such as mercury, and embracing synergies between chemicals issues. Ambitious Sustainable Development Goals related to environmentally sound management of chemicals and waste make the focal area of increasing relevance and importance. Numerous reviews—including this study—have found this focal area to cohere with the Stockholm and Minamata Conventions for which the GEF serves as a financial mechanism. It also supports the goals of related agreements, including the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, the Basel and Rotterdam conventions, and the Montreal Protocol.

**2. Satisfactory performance.** Most GEF projects in the chemicals and waste focal area have performed on par with projects in other focal areas in

terms of outcomes and quality of implementation and execution. Performance data indicate potential challenges for sustainability of results on persistent organic pollutant (POPs) projects, and the outcomes, sustainability, and quality of implementation of multicountry projects.

**3. Scaling-up results need improvement.** Chemicals and waste projects are paying increased attention to financial and institutional mechanisms for scaling-up in GEF-6, but lessons learned from terminal evaluations suggest this is an area for continued diligence and innovation. Overall, chemicals and waste projects have not sufficiently focused on scaling-up or replicating successes, particularly at the national level. Many completed projects have reduced POPs and environmental stresses in a relatively straightforward manner, but have not succeeded in setting sustainable strategies and financial mechanisms for scaling-up their results. As the GEF's

**PURPOSE AND METHODS:** This study aimed to provide insights and lessons for GEF-7 on its chemicals and waste strategy. It assessed the relevance of the strategy to convention guidance; synthesized results and progress toward impacts; assessed its approaches and mechanisms by which results have been achieved; assessed the portfolio's efficiency and performance; and identified lessons learned and scaling-up opportunities. The study used both quantitative and qualitative analytical methods and tools, including meta-analysis, portfolio analysis, 6 case studies, and 20 stakeholder interviews.

**WEB PAGE:** <http://www.gefio.org/evaluations/chemicals-and-waste-cw-focal-area-study>

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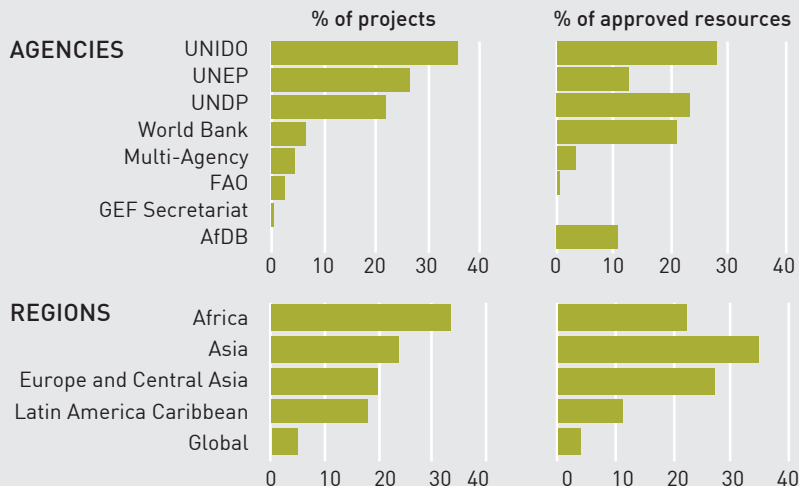
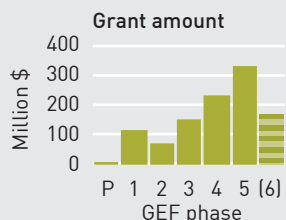
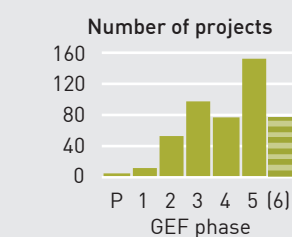
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## PORTFOLIO HIGHLIGHTS

**382**  
projects

**\$1.1 billion**  
in grant  
funding

**\$3.1 billion**  
in cofinancing



portfolio looks toward unintentional POPs, mercury, and other emerging chemicals issues, it is critical to ensure that a strategy for legacy POPs be articulated.

### 4. Challenges in sectorwide approaches.

Promoting sectorwide approaches for chemicals and waste has proved a challenge for the GEF, given its mandate to address POPs and mercury, but no other heavy metals and toxic chemicals. Some multifocal area projects, such as the Sustainable Cities Integrated Approach Pilot, have more broadly focused on solid waste management, with benefits for climate change mitigation and other toxic substances.

### 5. Need for better results tracking.

As a first attempt at comprehensively assessing the results of the chemicals and waste focal area, this study faced some difficulties. Reliable data were often lacking on the aggregate impact of closed chemicals and waste projects on tons of POPs, ozone-depleting substances (ODS), mercury, and other chemicals and related wastes that were phased out, reduced, or disposed. This shortcoming in the GEF monitoring system deserves more attention. Also, long implementations and frequent delays in completing projects have made for a significant lag in tallying results and lessons learned.

**6. Improved partnership.** The partnership between the GEF Secretariat, the GEF Agencies, and the convention secretariats is generally seen as improved since the Fifth Overall Performance Study (OPS5). However, resource scarcity in GEF-6 has highlighted some concerns about bias, including excessive management of the GEF pipeline by the GEF Secretariat; perceived preferential treatment of countries by GEF management; and a lack of transparency in the early stages of the GEF project cycle. These concerns suggest the need for further improvement in communications among the partner organizations. Such improvement may be particularly important in the event of continued resource scarcity and a move toward more programs and integrated approaches.

## BACKGROUND

The GEF's support for sound management of chemicals and waste has evolved significantly. The 1995 GEF Operational Strategy included an ozone program, serving as the basis for ozone programming for GEF-1 and GEF-2. In GEF-3, the GEF introduced a dedicated program for POPs. GEF-4 marked the beginning of explicit, strategic support for sound chemicals management. Mercury, for example, was addressed—if to a limited extent—in the international

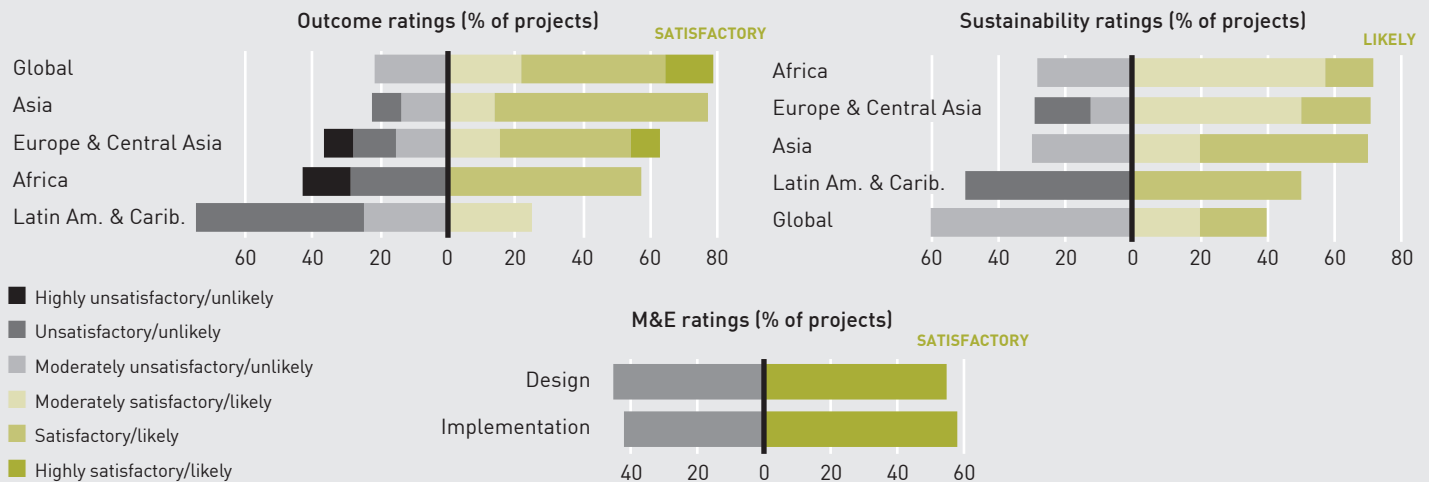
waters focal area. In GEF-5, a chemicals strategy unified support for the POPs and ODS focal areas, which were replaced in GEF-6 with a single chemicals and waste focal area.

The GEF-6 chemicals and waste strategy gives increased attention to mercury, which is covered under four of its six programs and is consistent with the Minamata Convention on Mercury. In particular, Program 1 puts renewed emphasis on developing and demonstrating new tools and approaches; Program 6 provides new, explicit support for regional approaches in least developed countries and small island developing states.

## RESULTS

**Performance trends.** Fifty-four chemicals and waste projects with terminal evaluations were reviewed. Of these, 78 percent—accounting for 81 percent of the GEF's chemicals and waste funding—have satisfactory outcome ratings, which is similar to ratings reported across all focal areas. On average, projects executed by government agencies had stronger outcome performance ratings (82 percent satisfactory) than those by multilateral organizations (68 percent satisfactory ratings). Outcome ratings have improved over time, with satisfactory

## PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS



ratings rising from 60 percent of GEF-1 projects to 83 percent of GEF-4 projects.

Sixty-two percent of chemicals and waste projects, representing 64 percent of the GEF's chemicals and waste funding, were accorded outcome sustainability ratings of moderately likely or above. This is slightly lower than the 67 percent so rated across all focal areas. The outcomes of 75 percent of ODS focal area projects were rated as likely to be sustained, compared to only 57 percent of POPs projects.

Seventy-one percent of chemicals and waste projects received satisfactory ratings for quality of implementation, with 84 percent of projects so rated for quality of execution. In comparison, 72 percent of all GEF projects are rated as having satisfactory execution. While execution ratings have stayed relatively constant across the GEF periods, ratings on quality of implementation have improved, from 50 percent of projects receiving satisfactory ratings in GEF-1, to 85 percent so rated in GEF-4.

Fifty-one percent of chemicals and waste projects received satisfactory ratings for quality of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) design; a slightly higher percentage (59 percent) were thus rated for quality of M&E implementation. This performance is similar to ratings reported across all focal areas.

**Progress toward impact.** Fifty-six percent of chemicals and waste projects showed evidence of environmental impact—specifically, stress reduction, which was primarily achieved through the disposal of PCBs and PCB-containing equipment, and of POP pesticides; reduction of DDT production and use; introduction of best available techniques and practices to address unintentional POPs; and remediation of dioxin-contaminated hotspots. The majority of projects that did not show evidence of stress reduction were focused on capacity building, strategy or guideline development, or institutional strengthening. Projects showing evidence of impact were, on average, rated higher on outcomes and likelihood of sustainability. All projects showing evidence of stress reduction included a demonstration or implementation component as part of the GEF's contribution.

**Broader adoption and strategies for scaling-up.** Less than a third of terminal evaluations mention or evaluate such strategies. Among those discussing scale-up, half do not elaborate on specific strategies or identify successes on this front. Sixty-eight percent of chemicals and waste projects showed some evidence of broader adoption, most commonly as mainstreaming. About a quarter of projects showed

evidence of scale-up, often achieved through demonstration effects. Twelve percent of projects showed some evidence of transforming markets; a few showed evidence of replication. It is possible that terminal evaluations are conducted too early to see much evidence of a broader adoption pathway.

**Country ownership.** The terminal evaluation review showed that all chemicals and waste projects are appropriately aligned with national priorities, policies, and strategies. Recipient country governments have provided more cofinancing to such projects than any other entity. Many projects with higher ratings for outcomes and sustainability identified strong country ownership and cofinancing as drivers of success.

**Stakeholder engagement.** Most terminal evaluations found stakeholder engagement to be sufficient for achieving project objectives. Case studies suggest that broad and meaningful engagement of stakeholders can contribute to successful outcomes.

**Private sector engagement.** More than 80 percent of chemicals and waste projects with terminal evaluations engaged the private sector in some manner. Thirty-four percent of all such projects were cofinanced by the private sector. The GEF's ODS portfolio has been

characterized by strong private sector engagement from project design through implementation, and private engagement was found to be a strong driver of success. GEF Agencies view the private sector as a core constituency for chemicals and waste projects, and important to sustainability. The types of private sector entities engaged vary by project focus, but are primarily larger national and multinational corporations. Capacity building has been the dominant mode of engagement for private actors, evident in about three-quarters of projects.

**Gender considerations.** The GEF's gender mainstreaming policy was not in force during implementation of any of the chemicals and waste projects for which terminal evaluations were reviewed, and more than 60 percent of the terminal evaluations do not address gender. None of the terminal evaluations include lessons learned on gender. Terminal evaluations suggest that more education and awareness may be needed to increase the relevance and importance of gender in chemicals and waste projects.

**Multicountry projects.** Compared to single-country projects, multicountry projects show lower rates of stress reduction (15 percent) and broader adoption (less than 40 percent for mainstreaming and 15 percent for scaling up). This finding partly reflects the fact that many multicountry projects have focused on capacity building, strategy development, and civil society participation, which may be seen as precursors to achieving impact. Terminal evaluation performance ratings suggest that sustainability is a particular challenge for multicountry projects.

**Multifocal area projects and integrated approaches.** With only 11

multifocal area projects with chemicals and waste components approved since GEF inception (none yet completed), experience in this area is limited. In general, as other GEF IEO evaluations have pointed out, some institutional disincentives and other challenges remain in pursuing multifocal projects. Also, Agencies continue to raise concerns regarding the burden of reporting requirements for such projects.

## CONCLUSIONS

**Early involvement of the Secretariat.** Agencies and convention secretariats noted improvements in the partnership with the GEF Secretariat since OPS5, including increased communication and clearer guidance. In GEF-6, the GEF Secretariat is strongly guiding resource use, including more consultation with Agencies and countries to identify viable concepts. Some Agencies welcome this stronger management as a means of limiting time spent to develop concepts that may not be approved. On the other hand, some Agency and convention secretariat staff felt that the GEF Secretariat might at times be overmanaging the pipeline—e.g., approaching an Agency to demonstrate a country-specific activity, rather than letting needs flow from the countries; or selecting those countries that may most need support. While the actions of the GEF Secretariat do not go beyond its mandate, they may contribute to perceptions of bias. Similar concerns were voiced about the Secretariat's increasingly active engagement at the country level, reflecting its reorganization into regional teams. Agencies felt that GEF management has occasionally made promises at the country level that have led to specific activities which, given the reduced

resources in GEF-6, are perceived as preferential treatment.

### **Transparency of the project cycle.**

Interviews revealed concerns about the transparency of the project cycle chemicals and waste activities. These concerns are amplified by the increased competition for scarce resources during GEF-6. On the first stages of project development, staff of the Stockholm Convention Secretariat expressed concern about the political consequences of Agencies filtering requests and choosing projects. Some countries complained they could not access the GEF, or that their priorities were ignored. On the other hand, it is the Agencies' role to help determine which country needs are consistent with the chemicals and waste strategy, and which offer global environmental benefits and incremental costs that might be funded by the GEF. Agencies felt the criteria were insufficiently clear for determining which submitted projects to include.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Scale-up strategies—particularly financial mechanisms to support private sector engagement and sustainability—should be better addressed during project design and implementation.
- The GEF may want to consider providing more support for broad-based regulatory reform and sectorwide approaches.
- The GEF should not forget its ozone-depletion program.
- GEF monitoring procedures deserve more scrutiny.
- Communication among the GEF partners needs continued attention. ■

