



Global Environment Facility Evaluation Office

1818 H Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20433 USA
Tel: (202) 473-0508 - Fax: (202) 522-3240 / (202) 522-3245

OPS5 draft approach paper

March 15, 2012

Introduction

1. The negotiations for the sixth replenishment of the GEF will be informed by an Overall Performance Study of the GEF, as has been the case for every replenishment period so far. Furthermore, the Fifth Overall Performance Study (OPS5) of the GEF will become a working document of the Fifth Assembly of the GEF, which will be held in 2014. This approach paper starts up the process of identifying what OPS5 will report on, what the key issues are that it will tackle, and how it will be implemented.

2. The GEF Council in its November 2011 meeting has requested the GEF Evaluation Office to prepare draft Terms of Reference for OPS5 for approval at the Council meeting in June 2012, taking into account comments made during the Council meeting. Several Council members indicated issues they would like to see included in OPS5: an in-depth look at the focal area strategies, reform processes, involvement of the private sector, innovative financial mechanisms, programmatic approaches and knowledge management in the GEF. Adaptation issues would need to be addressed, but specific findings and recommendations would need to be directed to the LDCF/SCCF Council. Sufficient stakeholder consultations would need to take place and more comprehensive reporting on the involvement of civil society organizations and the private sector in GEF projects.

3. The Progress Report of the GEF Evaluation Office Director to the November GEF Council contained an outline of the work that would be done to prepare the OPS5 Terms of Reference. This approach paper will be posted on the Evaluation Office website. It will be shared with Council members in March 2012 and Council members will be invited to comment. These comments will be taken into account into the draft terms of reference and budget of OPS5, which will be a working document of the June 2012 Council meeting.

4. A consultative process with stakeholders has started, but will be broadened in the coming months. Key issues for OPS5 have been raised and will be raised with GEF and convention focal points in Extended Constituency Workshops in 2011 and 2012. Furthermore, the draft approach paper for OPS5 will be posted on the Evaluation Office website, with an invitation to send in comments and suggestions, and GEF constituencies and partners will also be approached directly to send in their comments.

5. Some initial work has already started for OPS5: the Office has joined an initiative to learn lessons from recent comprehensive evaluations of funds, agencies and global programs, to ensure that OPS5 will be managed and implemented according to the best international standards. This initiative will lead to a workshop in June 2012 in which lessons from several case studies will be discussed, which should lead to the identification of best practices. These can be incorporated into the second phase work of OPS5 when undertaking the special studies that will be included in the final report.

Context of the sixth replenishment of the GEF

6. The sixth replenishment of the GEF takes place in an international context that is increasingly difficult to predict and to navigate. While global environmental trends seem to continue on a downward slide, the recovery of the global economy from the financial crisis of 2008 in the developed countries is still slow and has led to budget cuts in public funding in many countries. Given the fact that environmental benefits tend to be global public goods, the challenge to find adequate funding involving both the private and the public sector remains of vital importance. At the same time the international environmental architecture of conventions, funds, programs and donors is showing increasing fragmentation, making it more difficult to coordinate and harmonize funding and approaches.

7. In this context the sixth replenishment needs both an adequate perspective on the international developments and solid evidence on the actual achievements, results and performance of the GEF. Member countries of the GEF have many means available to discuss the international context; furthermore, within the GEF STAP has a special role to play in informing the GEF on scientific developments and insights in environmental problems and trends. The Secretariat will of course provide strategic information to the replenishment. These contextual factors will need to be taken into account in OPS5 in order to better understand the results and achievements of the GEF. This means that although the focus of OPS5 will be on the results and achievements, this will be with proper attention for the context in which the GEF and its Agencies and partners had to perform, and will need to perform in future. This follows the outline of OPS4, which presented “the GEF in a changing world” as an overview chapter on international developments and trends in which the GEF had to be placed.

8. The fifth Overall Performance Study differs from the fourth in one important aspect: many of the key issues that were explored in OPS4, such as impact, country ownership, key aspects of performance, the catalytic role of the GEF and many others, have been integrated into the regular work program of the GEF Evaluation Office, with full support and encouragement of the Council. This means that OPS5 can depend to a much larger extent than OPS4 on existing evaluative evidence, as emerging in the years 2009-2012. OPS5 thus partly changes in nature: a major element will be a *meta-evaluation* of existing evaluative evidence – which will look for evidence that emerges out of aggregate data of the evaluations that the Office has produced.

9. Furthermore, independent evaluations from GEF Agencies will be analyzed for OPS5 as well. Both UNDP’s Evaluation Office and the Independent Evaluation Group of the World Bank have produced several reports that look at the involvement of their institution in environmental issues. Other GEF Agencies have also produced similar reports and these will provide an additional perspective on the role that the GEF plays in these agencies on supporting the

environmental agenda and mainstreaming of environmental issues in development and transition policies and support.

Objective and Audience

10. The Fifth Overall Performance Study of the GEF, bearing in mind articles 14a and 15 of the instrument, and following the overall objectives of previous overall performance studies, will aim:

To assess the extent to which the GEF is achieving its objectives, as laid down in the GEF Instrument and reviews by the Assembly, as developed and adopted by the GEF Council in operational and policies and programs for GEF financed activities, and to identify potential improvements.

11. OPS5's audience consists of the replenishment participants, the GEF Council, the Assembly and through the Assembly the members of the GEF. While OPS5 will not be directed primarily to stakeholders of and parties in the GEF, such as the GEF Secretariat, GEF Agencies, STAP, the NGO network, and project proponents ranging from Civil Society Organizations to private and public sector entities to the academic community, the findings where relevant will be presented to these audiences as well, especially through existing channels such as the Extended Constituency Workshops, NGO network meetings and so on.

12. Council has discussed OPS5 several times in the context of the Four Year Work Plan and Budget of the GEF Evaluation Office, given the integration of key issues of OPS4 in the regular evaluation planning of the Office. These discussions have confirmed that the Fifth Overall Performance Study will deliver two concrete products to the replenishment process: a **first report** that will provide a synthetic overview of trends in performance, achievements, results and impact of the GEF as evident in the four evaluation streams of the Office. The second and **final report** will be presented in the final stage of the replenishment and will contain additional studies that tackle specific questions and issues that Council would like to see in OPS5, for example following up on key questions that were present in OPS4 or on issues that would be specially relevant to the replenishment process.

Objective and key questions for the first report

13. The objective of the first report of OPS5 is to provide a solid understanding of the current results, achievements and performance of the GEF as emerging from the evaluative evidence gathered by the GEF Evaluation Office up to the end of 2012. The following key issues that will be included in the first report have been identified so far:

- a) Relevance of the GEF to the guidance of the conventions, as emerging from the evaluations in the period 2009-2012 and compared to the relevance judgments of OPS4;
- b) Ratings on outcome and sustainability of finished GEF projects, both for the period 2009-2012 and for the full cohort of all finished GEF projects for which terminal evaluations are available;

- c) Ratings on progress toward impact of finished GEF projects for the period 2009-2012 and for the full cohort of OPS4 and OPS5 finished projects;
- d) Trends in the catalytic role of the GEF, as characterized by projects that focus on foundation, demonstration and/or investment;
- e) Trends in ownership and country drivenness, as emerging in the country portfolio evaluations of the Office;
- f) Better understanding of the longer term impact of the GEF as emerging from impact evaluations in the period 2009-2012;
- g) Trends in performance issues, including for example co-funding, management costs and fees, quality at entry, supervision, in the GEF as emerging from the annual performance report and related performance evaluations in the period 2009-2012, as well as in other evaluations of the Office;
- h) Trends in the implementation and achievements of the focal areas of the GEF, synthesized from thematic, country portfolio and impact evaluations in the period 2009-2012.

Meta-evaluation approach for the first report

14. A meta-evaluation is defined as an evaluation “designed to aggregate findings from a series of evaluations”.¹ It is hoped that aggregate findings allow for additional analysis (sometimes called meta-analysis) that would lead to new insights that were not obvious in the individual evaluations that are used as building blocks for the meta-evaluation. In general a meta-evaluation consists of taking the primary data from several evaluations, judge them on their reliability and comparability and perform an analysis on the resulting data. This can be a cumbersome and difficult exercise if the evaluations are derived from many different sources, as it will be difficult to establish the validity, reliability and credibility of the data gathering methods and comparison may be difficult or even impossible.

15. In the case of OPS5 a meta-evaluation of evaluations of the GEF Evaluation Office should be relatively easy. Since all evaluations were undertaken in-house and have used similar methods and approaches, data can be aggregated within the evaluation streams of the Office in a reliable way and further analysis is possible. The main approach to make this possible and to ensure that the analysis is sound is to build up a portfolio database that can provide a solid basis for further work.

16. Currently the GEF has a project management information system that is underperforming. Up to 2007/2008 the project database used to be unreliable and not reflect the correct status of projects. In early 2009 a new database, the current PMIS, emerged and this started off with solid basic information. However, over time this database has deteriorated and this process may have turned into a vicious cycle. The Secretariat is currently working on

¹ OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management, p. 27 – Paris: OECD, 2002. A meta-evaluation can also refer to an evaluation of (an) evaluation(s), which is not the meaning that is used in this paper.

improvements, but in any case the Evaluation Office will need a full portfolio database and analysis as a basis for OPS5 – a database that will reflect the current situation and can be updated up to the “cut-off” time of OPS5, which should be June 30, 2013.

17. The database of GEF interventions will provide the foundation for the meta-analysis. This will lead to identification of the cohort of projects for OPS5. It will allow for an analysis of trends in GEF support in terms of modalities, focal areas, countries and regions covered and in terms of results and achievements as far as terminated projects are concerned. Table 1 presents an overview of issues that will be tackled in the meta-evaluation on the basis of integrated evidence from various sources.

Table 1 – Key issues, evaluation questions and approach for the first OPS5 report			
<i>Key issue</i>	<i>Evaluation questions</i>	<i>Sources of evaluative evidence</i>	<i>Scope and limitation</i>
Relevance of the GEF to the conventions	Extent to which the guidance from the conventions has been followed	Validated terminal evaluations of projects Country Portfolio Evaluations Thematic and impact evaluations	Focal area strategy evaluations will consolidate relevance information per focal area as emerging from other evaluations CPEs, thematic and impact evaluations have limited coverage on countries and regions
Achievements of the GEF at project level	Extent to which the GEF has been able to meet the international benchmark of 75% successful outcomes of finished projects and has been able to ensure sustainability	Validated terminal evaluations of projects Country Portfolio Evaluations Impact evaluations	High level of coverage and confidence as terminal evaluations reviews are quality assured and trends can be established from 2004
Progress toward impact at the project level	Extent to which the GEF has been able to maintain or improve upon the ratings for progress toward impact in OPS4	ROtI analysis of validated terminal evaluations of projects Field ROtIs as incorporated in impact evaluations and CPEs	High level of coverage on finished projects Lower level of coverage on field ROtIs which should be compensated for by increased investment in impact evaluations
Catalytic role of the GEF	Extent to which the GEF has been able to fulfill its catalytic role	Classification of GEF portfolio in foundation,	Better coverage than in OPS4, due to further analytic and

	in countries and focal areas	demonstration and investment Role of the GEF as evident in CPEs and thematic and impact evaluations	impact work on the catalytic role
Trends in ownership and country drivenness	Extent to which the GEF portfolio is owned by countries and regions; Extent to which new projects are developed within countries and within national priorities and policies	In-depth evidence in CPEs Validated terminal evaluations of projects Thematic and impact evaluations	Main evidence will come from CPEs, but additional evidence from terminal evaluations and other EO evaluations will increase geographical coverage
Longer term impact of the GEF	Extent to which longer term and programmatic GEF support has led to threat reduction and substantive changes in environmental trends	In-depth evidence in impact evaluations	Coverage is mainly focused on biodiversity, international waters and ozone depletion Evidence on climate change will be gathered from various sources, including the ECG and Climate-Eval
Trends in performance issues, including co-funding, management costs and fees, quality at entry, supervision	Extent to which performance in the GEF has improved, especially on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project cycle • Co-funding • Management costs and fees • Quality at entry • Supervision 	Project cycle: GEF portfolio analysis, CPEs Co-funding: validated terminal evaluations Management costs and fees: GEF portfolio analysis Quality at entry: APR Supervision: APR	GEF portfolio analysis and existing evaluative evidence will not deliver in-depth insights but will indicate changes in trends that may indicate where additional work is needed for final OPS5 report
Trends in focal area achievements	Extent to which the focal area strategies have been able to achieve their objectives	Focal area strategies meta-evaluation, based on CPEs, thematic and impact evaluations, as well as validated terminal evaluations	Evaluative evidence on projects is not fully reflective of the current focal area strategies, as many projects have been formulated under older strategies, so evidence cannot be

			taken one-on-one but has to be carefully considered
--	--	--	-----------------------------------------------------

Final report of OPS5 and key questions

18. The final report of OPS5, which is envisaged at an appropriate moment near the end of the replenishment process, possibly at the end of 2013 or early 2014, will contain additional information on:

- a) Trends in global environmental problems and the relevance of the GEF to these problems, as well as the emergence of new financing channels;
- b) A more in-depth look at focal area strategies, including sustainable forestry management and including impact evidence where available;
- c) The reform processes in the GEF, focusing on the STAR and the support for National Portfolio Formulation Exercises and reporting to the conventions (for which two mid-term evaluations will be presented to Council separately as well), but also identifying progress in improving the activity cycle as well as improvements in modalities (such as direct access) and operational guidelines;
- d) Governance of the GEF, donor performance and resource mobilization;
- e) Special attention for the role of the private sector and of civil society organizations;
- f) Attention for cross-cutting policies like gender, participation, as well as for information and knowledge sharing strategies;
- g) An update of the SGP evaluation: trends and developments in SGP since 2009.

19. These issues will be tackled through separate and concrete evaluation studies that will focus on the aspects that need to be incorporated. This approach paper presents how each of these issues would be translated into specific studies to be undertaken – if these would become part of OPS5. The level of effort on each of these issues will also be guided by cost implication in order to remain within the overall budget perspective.

Approach for the final report

20. The final report of OPS5 will aim to answer additional questions that cannot be answered through the available evaluative evidence that the Office gathers in its regular work program. The key issues will be tackled through sub-studies, some of which can be combined, which will put emphasis on literature reviews, interviews, data analysis and a limited amount of field work that would address specific hypotheses emerging from the reviews. Table 2 provides an overview of the key issues, evaluative questions, how the study will be tackled and its scope and depth.

Table 2 – Key issues, questions and approaches for the final OPS5 report			
<i>Key issue</i>	<i>Evaluation questions</i>	<i>Sources of evaluative</i>	<i>Scope and limitation</i>

		<i>evidence</i>	
Trends in global environmental problems	Extent to which problems have deteriorated or are on the mend	This sub-study will depend on scientific insights as related by STAP and other scientific bodies	Scope: existing insights and perspectives through literature review and interviews
Emergency of new funding channels	Extent to which the global architecture fragments or tends to harmonize	This sub-study will review existing documentation from the UN, WB, DAC and relevant forums such as G8/G20 as well as Rio+20	Scope: existing insights and perspectives through literature review and interviews
In-depth look at focal area strategies	Extent to which focal area strategies are good or need to be strengthened	Focal area strategies evaluation will deliver in-depth strength and weakness analysis	Linkage of evidence on the ground to strategy will be a challenge and may limit evidence base
Reform processes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STAR • NPFE • Art. 28 expansion • Project cycle update • Modalities update 	Extent to which the major reform processes of the GEF have achieved their objectives and are strengthening the results on the ground	Mid-term evaluations on STAR and NPFE will run in parallel with OPS5. The portfolio analysis of the meta-evaluation will be extended to the end of the OPS5 period to ensure up-to-date assessments of the other reform processes. Programmatic approaches and global and regional projects should be included.	The mid-term evaluations have not yet been scoped but sufficient funding is available in the multi-annual budget to ensure solid evaluative work. The update of the portfolio analysis should not pose any problems
Governance of the GEF	Extent to which the governance of the GEF continues to follow best international practice	A sub-study will look at the OPS4 conclusions and where necessary update them for OPS5	No additional work is foreseen beyond updating existing insights
Donor performance in the GEF and resource mobilization	Extent to which the GEF is capable of mobilizing resources and whether donors are meeting their obligations	A sub-study will update the findings of OPS4 in light of the developments since then.	No additional work is foreseen beyond updating existing insights
Role of STAP	Extent to which the	A sub-study will look	This sub-study may

	GEF has benefitted from STAP's advice and involvement	at changes in the role of STAP as well as aim to assess client satisfaction with STAP's products, as well as an assessment of the state of the art of these products	include a self-assessment of STAP and a survey, as well as desk study. If it would include a "state of the art" assessment, this should be done through a Delphi methodology – given the potential usefulness of this for STAP itself this could potentially be co-funded by STAP.
Role of private sector	Extent to which the private sector is involved in the GEF and whether this strengthens results on the ground	The update to the portfolio analysis will include a more in-depth look at to what extent and with which results the private sector and civil society organizations are involved at the project level – a sub-study will link this to the findings in the focal area strategy evaluations	The portfolio analysis and the sub-study together will provide solid indications of trends and achievements – the trend analysis will however be limited to the last two GEF periods
Role of civil society organizations	Extent to which civil society organizations are involved in the GEF and whether this strengthens results on the ground		
Cross-cutting policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender • Indigenous peoples • Participation • Communication • Knowledge Management 	Extent to which cross-cutting policies have achieved their objectives and whether this strengthens results on the ground	A sub-study will identify the evidence on these cross-cutting policies in the portfolio as well as existing evaluations – some emerging hypotheses may be tested in the field	Desk study plus field evidence, coupled with existing evaluative evidence should enable solid conclusions
Update of the SGP evaluation	Extent to which the SGP has managed to increase coverage while maintaining levels of achievement	A sub-study will look at trends, network issues, management issues and aim to link these to achievements on the ground	Desk study plus field evidence – if this evaluation would be useful to SGP, partial co-funding could be achieved if this sub-study could also serve as the independent terminal evaluation

			for an SGP phase.
“Health” of the GEF Network and Partnerships	Extent to which the network and the current partnerships support achievements of the GEF	A sub-study will look at trends in network and partnership relations and link these to developments in the GEF	This will involve an electronic survey and interviews with stakeholders and partners

21. OPS5 will not address all the issues that were raised in OPS4. OPS4 included an independent professional peer review of the GEF Evaluation Office, which validated the independence of the Office and the quality of the work undertaken, while identifying issues that could be improved. Upon request of the Council these issues have been taken up in the revision of the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy in 2010. Given the fact that this policy is now two years old, it does not seem prudent to include a professional peer review of the policy and the Office in OPS5. The current Director of the Office serves until September 2014. It is proposed that a professional peer review will take place in the first half of 2014, so that its conclusions can be taken up by the new Director who would take up the position in September 2014.

22. The governance work for OPS4 was undertaken by an independent external consultant, given the fact that the GEF Evaluation Office would be biased to evaluate the Council, to which it reports and which approves its budget. OPS5 does not include such an independent study but would update the main findings of the OPS4 sub-study through a desk review of Council documents and other relevant documentation. If new issues would emerge (which is not expected), OPS5 would recommend doing another independent study rather than to present judgments and recommendations.

Methodological considerations

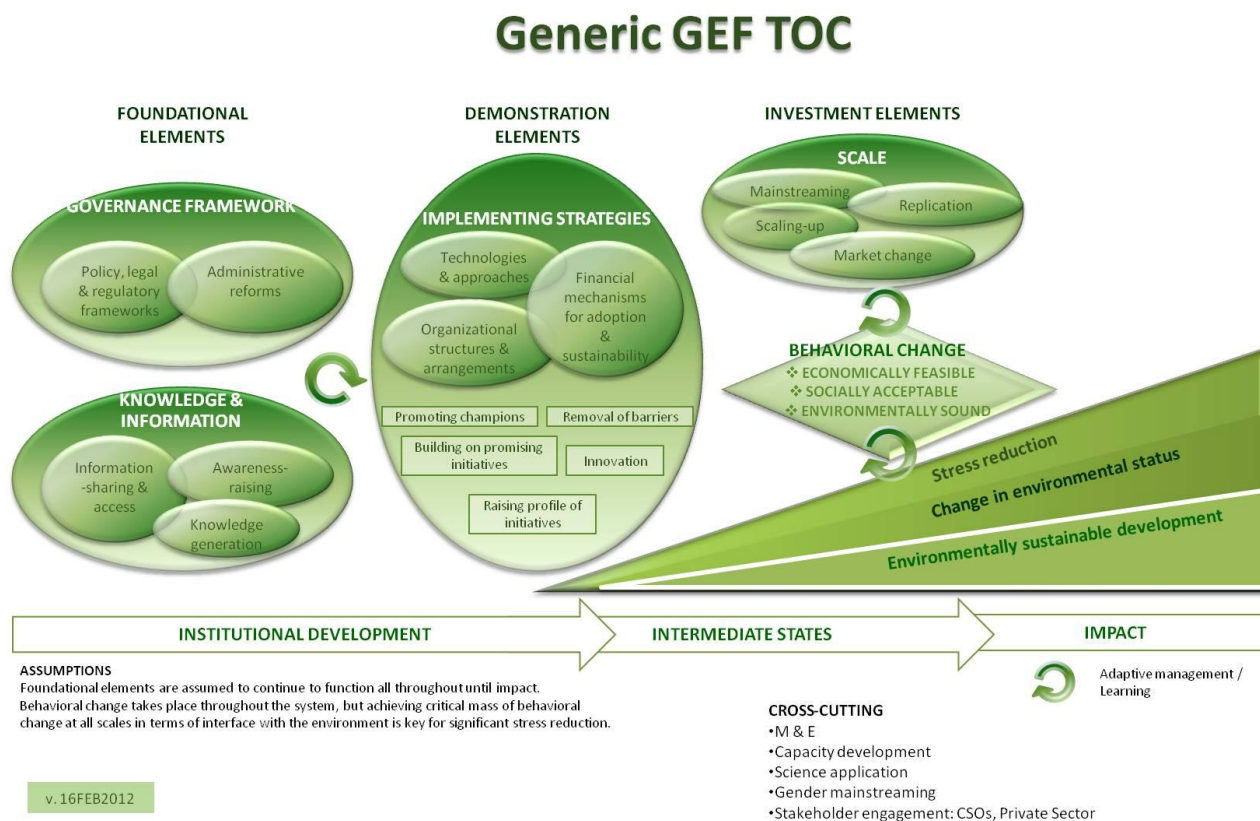
23. The GEF Evaluation Office has over time distilled from evaluative evidence the overall approach that the GEF has developed to achieve impact. OPS4 has extensively reported on the catalytic role of the GEF and on progress toward impact. Further methodological development in the Office has led to the formulation of a generic “theory of change” that identifies why the GEF and its partners are supposed to achieve global environmental benefits. This theory of change incorporates assumptions about causal pathways in focal areas, country programs and modalities of the GEF and how these interact.

24. The generic GEF theory of change, as shown in figure 1, draws on a large amount of evaluative evidence gathered over the years by the Evaluation Office. It is not presented and used by the Office as a representation of an objective reality, but as a symbolic representation and a heuristic² device, an exploratory tool to help understand the causal pathways between GEF support and global environmental benefits. The purposes of the generic GEF theory of change are to: 1) help place GEF support contributions in a chain of causality leading to the generation of global environmental benefits; 2) help establish links between different elements of GEF

² The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines **heuristic** as “involving or serving as an aid to learning, discovery, or problem-solving by experimental and especially [trial-and-error](#) methods <*heuristic* techniques> <a *heuristic* assumption>; also : of or relating to exploratory problem-solving techniques that utilize self-educating techniques (as the evaluation of [feedback](#)) to improve performance.

support, and identify mechanisms of change put into place by GEF support; 3) assess progress towards global environmental benefits; and 4) identify gaps or constraints on further progress towards global environmental benefits. Thus, the generic theory of change is **not** meant to be a standard against which GEF support is to be measured.

Figure 1 – Generic Theory of Change of the Global Environment Facility support



25. Building on the findings of OPS4 on the catalytic approach of the GEF, the generic theory of change distinguishes between interventions that are foundation, demonstration, and investment in nature. **Foundational** elements include support to the generation of knowledge and information, as well as to the governance framework that will enable the necessary changes to take place. These are meant to contribute to an enabling environment, and by themselves are not expected to cause any direct changes in environmental status.

26. **Demonstrations** are meant to test approaches that directly contribute to stress reduction or removal of threats and that, if adopted on a broader scale, could lead to significant environmental benefits. Typically, GEF-supported demonstrations involve the testing of technologies, organizational structures or arrangements, and financial mechanisms, or a combination of the three. Demonstrations are also frequently accompanied by specific regulatory reforms and the generation of specific knowledge and information related to the approaches being demonstrated. Demonstrations can lead to environmental stress reduction or barrier removal at a relatively small scale, benefits may also vary with regards to their durability.

27. **Investments** normally seek to expand the reach and scale of lessons and approaches tested through demonstrations, or to sustain and expand foundational activities. Investments are oriented as systemic and more durable transformations that contribute to environmentally sound behavioral changes. Paths to expand reach can vary, but four paths are often found in GEF projects, which may happen sequentially or simultaneously. The first is *mainstreaming*, whereby information, lessons, or specific outputs of GEF support are incorporated in a broader policy or administrative reform. The second is *replication*, whereby a demonstrated technology or approach is reproduced at a comparable scale, often in different areas or regions. The third is *scaling-up*, where an activity is expanded to address concerns operating at larger geographical, ecological or administrative tiers (or scales). The fourth, *market change*, pertains to market transformation, which might encompass technological changes, policy and regulatory reforms, and financial instruments that increase demand for goods and services likely to contribute to global environmental benefits.

28. The generic GEF theory of change assumes that mainstreaming, replication, scaling-up and market changes will gradually result in behavioral change that leads to greater environmental stress reduction, and eventually in the removal of threats and improvement of environmental status, or in the reduction of the rate of environmental degradation. The model assumes that, for positive environmental change to continue, these processes will also have to result in an increasing shift to development approaches that meet people's needs in ways that are environmentally sustainable. Typically, GEF support is concentrated in the foundational and demonstration elements that seek to contribute to an enabling environment and to the development of institutions. Intermediate states refer to situations in which there is evidence of progress towards systemic changes, while in some cases early intermediate states take place by the end of GEF support, these states take place mostly after GEF support and progress in this realm depends mainly on actions taken by countries.

29. These concepts provide a methodological framework for OPS5. The generic theory of change will be used as a common framework during the meta-evaluation to organize and classify evidence and to carry out broad comparative analysis of data derived from different sources and techniques. The specific methods that are used to gather data, to analyze these data and to validate findings and evaluative judgments are the usual standard methods that will be applied following best international practice: literature and document reviews, portfolio analysis, (semi-structured) interviews, surveys, stakeholder consultation and analysis, country and field visits, statistical analysis and qualitative analysis and case studies.

30. Counterfactual analysis will be made explicit in OPS5 where appropriate. The GEF is rich in counterfactual analysis, as its basic premise is the additionality of global environmental benefits that can be achieved if an alternative to "business as usual" is followed. For almost all GEF activities counterfactual argumentation is at the core of the funding proposal and scenarios "with" GEF support and "without" GEF support are available. However, due to the lack of baseline data in older projects the terminal evaluations have often been unable to verify the counterfactuals. In OPS5 the available evidence on counterfactuals will be made explicit, including where such evidence remains unverifiable. Given the long time horizon of causal pathways to global environmental benefits this is to be expected.

Quality assurance

31. The previous overall performance studies have benefitted from various quality assurance processes. The third overall performance study was followed by a high level advisory panel, composed of five members. This panel interacted at key moments with the evaluation team of ICF Consulting. Quality assurance was also provided by the GEF Evaluation Office to the team through peer reviews. At no time did this reduce the independence of the evaluation team which maintained full responsibility for the final OPS3 report.

32. OPS4 was implemented by the GEF Evaluation Office. Two quality advisors, Mr. Shekhar Singh of India and Mr. Bob Picciotto of the UK, provided extensive comments and suggestions on the on-going work as provided their final comments to the replenishment process and the GEF Council. Furthermore, peer reviews on specific work for OPS4 were provided by staff of the independent evaluation offices of GEF Agencies. These arrangements did not reduce the independence of the GEF Evaluation Office in undertaking OPS4 and the Office maintained full responsibility for the final report of OPS4.

33. The lessons from quality assurance of OPS3 were incorporated into the arrangements for OPS4. Similarly, the lessons from quality assurance of OPS4 will now need to be integrated into OPS5. First of all, the two quality advisors provided excellent and very welcome comments during and at the end of OPS4. They would have liked to have been involved at an earlier stage. This can be accommodated, by asking the GEF Council for an early approval of the quality assurance team that would accompany OPS5.

34. It is proposed that this time a team of three quality assurance advisors is appointed. For OPS4 two quality advisors represented the developed and the developing nations in the GEF. With a team of three advisors, the representation could be from three categories of nations: the developed, the newly emerging group of BRICS, and the developing nations in general. The quality advisors need to be recognized international experts with a solid background in the environment, development and evaluation.

35. The peer review mechanism for OPS4 through involvement of staff of the independent evaluation offices of GEF agencies did not work as well as it should and could have. In general two key moments for peer reviews were identified: when sub-studies of OPS4 delivered products that could be reviewed and when the final report was prepared. However, it turned out that the time-frame of OPS4 was too short to allow for the peer review work that staff of the GEF agencies evaluation offices had volunteered to do – if a peer review has to be done within a week, it may not be fully satisfactory neither to the staff member involved or to the GEF Evaluation Office.

36. For OPS5 a similar process of undertaking peer reviews with staff from the independent evaluation offices of the GEF agencies is foreseen, but care needs to be taken to ensure a timely production of interim material that will enable a fruitful peer review. This may be helped by a reduced number of sub-studies that will be undertaken as well as a more stepped approach through a first meta-evaluation report and a later full report. A reference group will be set up with the evaluation offices of the GEF agencies to ensure that the process will be better guided and have a stronger peer interaction for OPS5.

Organizational issues

37. The Team for Thematic Evaluations will coordinate the work for OPS5. The Director will take personal responsibility for OPS5 and manage the study. Each team in the office will contribute especially on the subjects that are in line with the work of the team. Thus the current office structure will ensure a strong support for OPS5. The Operations and Knowledge Management Team will ensure budget oversight, contracting additional expertise where needed and will support the communication and dissemination strategy for OPS5.

Stakeholder interaction

38. OPS5 will include a stakeholder consultation process. The possibilities for a more structural exchange with stakeholders have increased over time. In the Third Overall Performance Study stakeholder consultations had to be budgeted and implemented by the OPS3 team. During OPS4 a lower number of meetings needed to be budgeted as sub-regional meetings of GEF focal points had emerged as an important means to interact directly with the Evaluation Office. With the current Extended Constituency Workshops the Evaluation Office could have an even broader interaction with stakeholders in the GEF and no special meetings would need to be budgeted in OPS5.

39. On top of the ECW workshops, special interaction will need to be set up with representatives of civil society organizations, the private sector, and representatives of staff and beneficiaries involved in projects. The Evaluation Office will consult with partners (most notably the NGO network) to ensure that a broad and inclusive interaction will take place during OPS5. However, the expectation is that new media, like skype and adobe connect, as well as instruments like surveymonkey.com will be sufficient to ensure wide engagement.

Timeline

40. If the same process and timeline is followed as for the fourth replenishment of the GEF, the first meeting of the replenishment could conceivably take place in March 2013, whereas the last and concluding meeting could be held at its earliest in November 2012 and at its latest in February or March 2013. This means that the first synthesis report should be available to the first meeting of the replenishment and should be finalized end of February 2013. The second report should be available to the replenishment at the latest in November 2013.

TORs and budget approved	June Council meeting					
Work for meta-evaluation		June to Dec 2012				
First OPS5 report				Early 2013		
Sub-studies for OPS5			Nov 2012 to Sept 2013			
Final OPS5 report						November 2013