The GEF Evaluation Policy 2019

Unedited

May 2019

Recommended Council Decision

The Council, having reviewed document GEF/ME/C.56/02, "The GEF Evaluation Policy":

(1) Approves the proposed GEF Evaluation Policy contained in Section 2 of this document, which supersedes the 2010 Policy on Monitoring and Evaluation as it relates to evaluation (Council document GEF/ME/C.39/6/Rev.1)."

(2) Authorizes the GEF Independent Evaluation Office to proceed with its dissemination and implementation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLES AND FIGURES

TABLE

FIGURES

SECTION 1

Background

1. In May 2014, the GEF Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) recommended an update to the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy to the GEF Council, to ensure its continued relevance in the context of the evolution of the GEF partnership since 2010.[1] In October 2015, the IEO analyzed all GEF Council decisions taken since the last M&E Policy was issued in 2010. This analysis identified several gaps in the 2010 Policy including gender and safeguard standards, and program level evaluation, among others.[2]

2. Based on international good practice standards among organizations including global partnerships and multilateral development banks, the 2010 M&E Policy has been split into two separate policies, one addressing monitoring, and the other evaluation. An Evaluation Policy defines the core principles, criteria, and the governance structure (key roles and responsibilities) of an organization's evaluation function. The monitoring and reporting function is an integral part of an organization's operations, which is consistent with its project cycle, and defines clear roles, responsibilities, and milestones on the provision of information and data for reporting.

3. The next section of this document presents the revised GEF Evaluation Policy that would supersede the provisions for evaluation contained in the 2010 M&E Policy. This policy has been prepared with engagement of stakeholders across the GEF partnership. A separate GEF Monitoring Policy has been prepared by the GEF Secretariat. The IEO and the Secretariat have consulted to maintain continuity and coherence between the provisions of the two policies.

4. The main updates to the GEF Evaluation Policy include:

(a) Introducing the principle that evaluation in the GEF should apply a gender-responsive approach

(b) Introducing the requirement that terminal evaluations of GEF projects and programs should report on the GEF's additionality using the evaluative approach provided by the GEF IEO [3]

(c) Introducing the requirement that program evaluation should assess the coherence between program and child project theories of change, indicators, and expected/achieved results

(d) Establishing the principle that program evaluation should measure and demonstrate program value added over the same level of investment made through comparable alternatives

(e) Clarifying evaluation responsibilities for jointly implemented projects

(f) Introducing a requirement to collect (1) socio-economic co-benefits data, (2) sex-disaggregated and gender sensitive data, and (3) geographic coordinates of project sites whenever available/possible

[1] GEF IEO, "Work Program and Budget of the GEF Independent Evaluation Office," GEF/ME/C.46/01/Rev.01
[2] GEF IEO, "Semi-Annual Evaluation Report of the GEF Independent Evaluation Office: October 2015, GEF/ME/C.49/01
[3] GEF IEO, "An Evaluative Approach to Assessing GEF's Additionality", GEF/ME/C.55/inf. 01

SECTION 2

The GEF Evaluation Policy

KEY TERMS

Agency fee: the financing provided to a GEF partner Agency in connection with a GEF project or program

CEO Approval: the approval of a fully developed medium-sized project or enabling activity by the GEF CEO

CEO Endorsement: the endorsement of a fully developed full-sized project by the GEF CEO

Child project: a project that forms part of a program, as set out in a program framework document

Co-financing: financing additional to GEF project financing, and that supports implementation of a GEF-financed project or program and the achievement of its objectives

Evaluation: Evaluation is the systematic and impartial assessment of planned, ongoing, or completed activities, projects, programs in specific focal areas or sectors, policies, strategies and their implementation, or other topics relevant to the GEF partnership and organization[1]

Full-sized project: a project with GEF project financing exceeding US$2 million

GEF additionality: the additional effects (both environmental and otherwise) that can be directly associated with a GEF-supported project or program

GEF Agency: an agency eligible to request and receive GEF resources directly for the design, implementation, and supervision of GEF projects and programs

GEF Instrument: Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility, effective July 7, 1994, as amended

Gender-sensitive indicator: an indicator that can be used at various levels to monitor and report on socioeconomic and gender-sensitive changes over time

GEF-financed activity (or intervention): any programmatic approach, full-sized project, medium-sized project, or enabling activity financed from any GEF-managed trust fund, as well as regional and national outreach activities

GEF Operational Focal Point: nominated by the recipient country, the GEF Operational Focal Point ensures that GEF proposals and activities in the country are consistent with country priorities and the country commitments under global environmental conventions; identifies project ideas to meet country priorities; endorses project proposals; facilitates broad based in-country consultations on GEF operational matters; and provides feedback on GEF activities, including implementation of projects[2]

---

[1] Adapted from the OECD DAC *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management* (https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/2754804.pdf).

[2] GEF, "GEF Focal Points" (https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/C.8.Inf_.5_5.pdf), GEF/C.8/Inf.5

Global Environmental Benefits: these relate to international conventions and commitments the GEF is mandated to serve. GEF projects must demonstrate that the project activities are delivering global environmental benefits

Goal: a higher-order objective to which a GEF-financed project or program is intended to contribute

Knowledge Management: the process by which organizations within the GEF partnership generate value and improve performance from their intellectual and knowledge-based assets

Impact: the positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a project or program, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended

Indicator: a quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect the changes connected to a project or program, or to help assess the performance of an organization

Lead Agency: The Agency that coordinates all activities under a program

Medium-sized project: a project with GEF project financing of up to US$2 million

Midterm review: an assessment of a project or program's performance and results carried out for adaptive management purposes at the midpoint of a project or program's intended duration

Monitoring: a continuous or periodic function, carried out by project or program management, that uses a standardized and systematic process of collecting and analyzing data on specific indicators to provide decision-makers and management of a GEF-financed activity with information on progress in the achievement of objectives and in the use of allocated funds

Outcome: an intended or achieved short- or medium-term effect of a project or program's outputs

Output: a product or service that results from the completion of activities implemented within a project or program

Portfolio: a subset of projects focusing on a specific theme, GEF focal area, geographic region, country, or GEF Agency

Program: a coherent set of interventions designed to attain specific global, regional, country, or sector objectives, consisting of a variable number of child projects

Program's added value: the additional results brought in by the GEF funding delivered as a program compared with either a pre-existing or a hypothetical set of stand-alone full- and/or medium-sized projects or other comparable alternatives

Program framework document: the document that sets forth the concept of a program that is proposed for GEF financing

Result: Include intervention outputs, outcomes, progress toward longer-term impact including global environmental benefits, and should be discernible/measurable

Stakeholder: an individual or group that has an interest in the outcome of a GEF project or program or is likely to be affected by it, such as local communities, indigenous peoples, civil society organizations, and private sector entities; stakeholders may include national project or program executing agencies, or groups contracted to conduct activities at various stages of the project or program

Stakeholder engagement: a process that begins with stakeholder identification and analysis, and includes planning; disclosure of information; consultation and participation; monitoring, evaluation, and learning throughout the project cycle; addressing grievances; and ongoing reporting to stakeholders

Terminal evaluation: evaluation of a project or program's design, performance, and results carried out at the end of implementation

ABBREVIATIONS

CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CSO	civil society organization
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
NGO	non-governmental organization
OFP	operational focal point
SMART	specific, measurable, attributable, relevant, and time-bound
STAP	Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel

I. EVALUATION IN THE GEF

1. **This Policy sets out the guiding principles and minimum requirements for evaluation across the Global Environment Facility (GEF) partnership and for all GEF-financed activities**. This Policy is aligned with the GEF Instrument, which provides that "the Council shall…ensure that GEF policies, programs, operational strategies and projects are monitored and evaluated on a regular basis."[1]

2. **This Policy explains the concept, role, and use of evaluation within the GEF.** It defines the institutional framework and responsibilities of stakeholders; and establishes the requirements for how projects and programs funded by the GEF should be evaluated in line with international principles, norms, and standards. The policy is designed to provide clarity on evaluation in the GEF. Revisions will be made when major changes in the GEF occur, affecting the evaluation function. In addition, to ensure that the Policy remains relevant to evolving circumstances and continues to conform to international principles, norms, and standards, it will be periodically reviewed and updated as necessary. Any proposals for changes in the Policy will be presented by the GEF Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) to the Council for decision after consultation with stakeholders.

3. Evaluation helps the GEF to become more effective in its pursuit of global environmental benefits. Evaluation in the GEF has the following two overarching objectives:

(a) Promote **accountability** for the achievement of GEF objectives through the assessment of results, effectiveness, processes, and performance of the partners involved in GEF-financed activities; GEF results are evaluated for their contribution to global environmental benefits.

(b) Promote **learning**, feedback, and knowledge sharing on results and lessons learned among the GEF and its partners as a basis for decision making on projects, programs, program management, policies, and strategies; and to improve performance.

4. **The broader framework of GEF Policies are consistent with this Policy.**[2] The evaluation sections of GEF Policies are in full alignment with the standards and minimum requirements of this Policy.

5. **Monitoring and evaluation are two distinct, yet interconnected functions in the GEF.** Monitoring, conducted as a systematic management function, informs whether a project, program,

---

[1] GEF, *Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility* (http://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/GEF_Instrument-Interior-March23.2015.pdf).

[2] "Fee Policy for GEF Partner Agencies," FI/PL/03 (http://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/Agency_Fee_Policy.pdf); "Minimum Fiduciary Standards for GEF Partner Agencies," GA/PL/02 (http://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/GA.PL_.02_Minimum_Fiduciary_Standards_0.pdf); "Operational Guidelines for the Application of the Incremental Cost Principle," GEF/C.31/12 (http://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/C.31.12_Operational_Guidelines_for_Incremental_Costs-2007_0.pdf); "Policy on Cofinancing," FI/PL/01 (http://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/Cofinancing_Policy.pdf); "Policy on Gender Equality," SD/PL/02 (http://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/Gender_Equality_Policy.pdf); "Policy on Stakeholder Engagement," SD/PL/01 (http://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/Stakeholder_Engagement_Policy.pdf); and "Project and Program Cycle Policy," OP/PL/01 (http://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/Project_Program_Cycle_Policy_OPPL01.pdf).

policy implementation, or the organization is achieving its intended objectives as planned. Evaluation is a systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, program, or policy, its design, implementation, effectiveness and results. Evaluation provides information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of both recipients and donors. Evaluation verifies and uses monitoring data in its analyses as one of its sources of information. Evaluation also provides evidence on how changes are taking place, and the strengths and weaknesses of the design of the projects, programs, or operational strategies embedded in the GEF results frameworks.

6. **This Policy discusses monitoring only in its interrelations with evaluation.** A separate GEF Monitoring Policy contains the basic provisions, standards, and requirements for monitoring in the GEF partnership.

1. Background

7. The GEF is a financial mechanism for international cooperation based on a partnership. It provides new and additional grant and concessional funding to meet the incremental costs of measures to achieve agreed global environmental benefits in five focal areas. These are biological diversity, climate change mitigation and adaptation, [3] international waters, land degradation, and chemicals with sustainable forest management cross-cutting relevant focal areas—in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. In addition, the Integrated Approach Pilots in GEF-6, and the Impact Programs introduced in GEF-7, also use focal area allocations in an integrated manner for systems change. The GEF Council provides strategic and policy direction in these five focal areas, taking into account guidance from the conferences of the parties to the relevant global environmental conventions.

8. **The GEF Instrument requires the GEF Council to ensure that GEF projects, programs, policies, and operational strategies are monitored and evaluated on a regular basis.** Meeting this requirement entails feedback to the GEF decision-making processes at the institutional, policy, program, and project levels. Corporate monitoring and evaluation in the GEF is based on regular reporting for internal management purposes to the GEF Council, in support of decision making, policy making, and accountability (figure 1).

[3] The incremental cost principle does not apply to the Least Developed Countries Fund (LCDF) and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF).

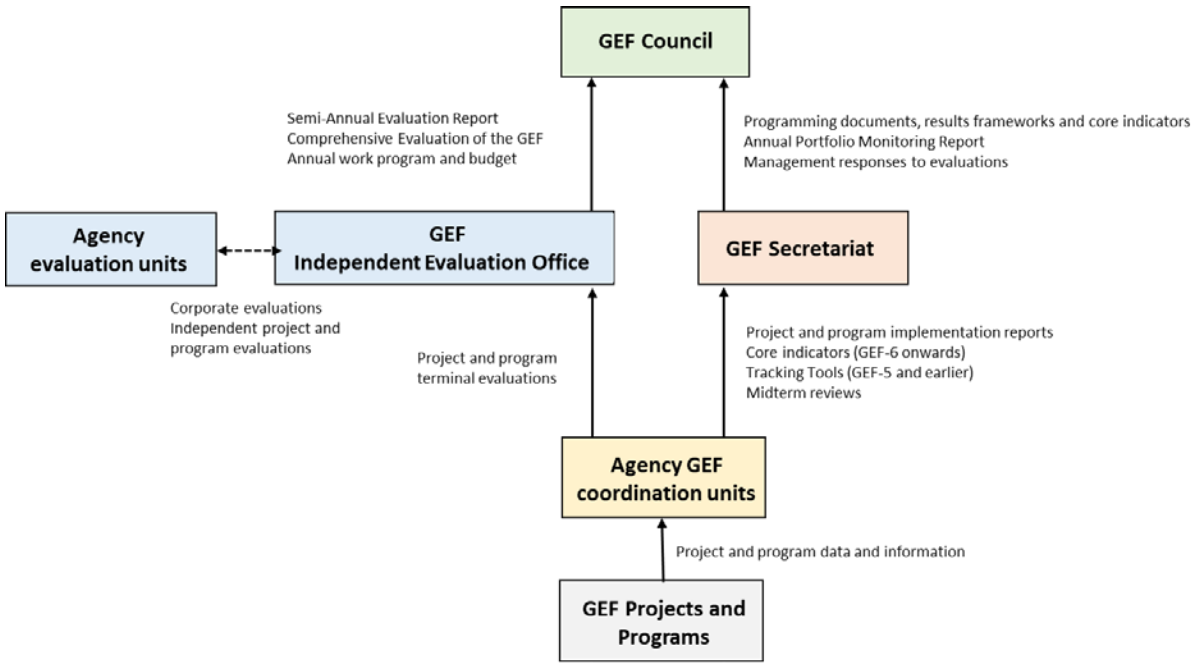

Figure 1: Simplified Flowchart of Monitoring and Evaluation Reporting in the GEF

9. **Evaluation allows the GEF to track progress in fulfilling its mission of delivering global environmental benefits.** GEF projects and programs are more likely to capitalize on their innovative and catalytic role when they are fully integrated with the GEF results frameworks and where management activities as well as post-completion decision making are informed by comprehensive and relevant evaluative evidence. Evaluation strengthens the GEF partnership and encourages ownership of GEF projects and programs, all of which are essential principles of GEF operations and policies. The GEF emphasizes the quality of its evaluation function and ensures that evaluation findings are disseminated widely. The Independent Evaluation Office of the GEF (IEO) is directly accountable to the GEF Council and has the mandate to report on the performance and effectiveness of GEF projects and programs. In addition, the evaluation units of the Agencies are responsible for the conduct of project and program terminal evaluations in compliance with this policy and in accordance with the terminal evaluation guidelines.

10. **The Policy shall be operationalized through guidelines on specific issues and standards developed by the IEO in consultation with partners.** The IEO is authorized to publish and revise such guidelines, as required, in line with this Policy. The Policy and related guidelines will be shared with the GEF partners and the public through the IEO website.

2. Evaluation: Purposes, Use, and Types

11. **Definition**. Evaluation is the systematic and impartial assessment of planned, ongoing, or completed activities, projects, programs in specific focal areas or sectors, policies, strategies and their implementation, or other topics relevant to the GEF partnership and organization. In case of activities, projects, and programs, it aims at determining the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and

sustainability of the interventions and contributions of the involved partners. An evaluation provides evidence-based information that is credible, reliable, and useful, enabling the timely incorporation of findings, recommendations, and lessons into decision-making processes. In the context of the GEF, the evaluation function aims at assessing the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and—where feasible—sustainability of GEF interventions in the context of their contribution to global environmental benefits in GEF focal areas at the local and global levels.

12. **Purpose.** The purposes of evaluation include understanding why, how, and the extent to which intended and unintended results are accrued, and their impact on stakeholders. Evaluation is an important source of evidence of the achievement of results and institutional performance and contributes to knowledge and organizational learning. It serves as a driver of change and plays a critical role in supporting accountability. Evaluation can be used to improve the design and performance of a planned or ongoing project or program (a formative evaluation); to make an overall judgment about the effectiveness of a completed project or program, to ensure accountability; and to generate knowledge about good practices. Evaluation differs from other oversight mechanisms such as investigation and audit, which focus on the adequacy of management controls; compliance with regulations, rules, and established policies; and the adequacy of organizational structures and processes.

13. **Use**. Evaluation feeds into management and decision-making processes regarding the development of policies and strategies; and the programming, implementation, and reporting of activities, projects, and programs. Thus, evaluation contributes to institutional learning and evidence-based policy making, accountability, development effectiveness, and organizational effectiveness. It informs the planning, programming, budgeting, implementation, and reporting cycle. It aims to improve the institutional relevance and achievement of results, optimize the use of resources, and maximize the impact of the contribution provided.

14. **Types**. Within the context of the GEF, project/program level terminal evaluations relevant to the Agencies interventions are conducted by the Agencies. Agencies also conduct mid-term reviews of projects, and sometimes carry out impact evaluations. The IEO validates the terminal evaluations of GEF projects from all Agencies, and conducts a spectrum of evaluations covering thematic issues, focal areas, institutional policies and programs, and the comprehensive evaluation of the GEF, all of which cut across the entire GEF partnership. The main types of evaluations in the GEF include, but are not limited to the following:

(a) **Project evaluations** at the completion of the project implementation (terminal evaluation), mainly conducted by GEF Agencies.

(b) **Program evaluations** of a coherent set of interventions to attain specific global, regional, country, or sector objectives; these include evaluations of the GEF focal areas, programmatic approaches, and GEF corporate programs.

(c) **Performance evaluations** of the GEF's portfolio of completed projects to assess the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness in delivering the expected results.

(d) **Country and country cluster evaluations** of one or more Agencies' portfolio of projects and activities, and the assistance strategy behind them, in a country or cluster of

countries. Strategic cluster evaluations focus on a limited set of strategic issues across country portfolios.

(e) **Process evaluations** of the functioning of participating organizations, instruments, mechanisms, and management practices; these include evaluations of institutional and procedural issues across GEF focal areas and assessments of experience with GEF policies, criteria, and procedures. Process evaluations could be conducted during the design or implementation of an intervention.

(f) **Impact evaluations** of the long-term effects produced by an intervention, intended or unintended, direct or indirect. Impact may be assessed at the project, program, portfolio, ecosystem, or country level, and includes global environmental benefits.

(g) **Thematic evaluations** of a selection of interventions addressing a specific theme, issue or focal area across the GEF portfolio; these include evaluations that assess cross-cutting issues.

(h) **Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF**, previously the Overall Performance Study (OPS), informing the GEF replenishment cycles, and addressing performance and results in terms of global environmental benefits of GEF projects and programs, as well as GEF institutional arrangements, policies, strategies, and priorities. The evaluations referred to in a–h, above, feed into the comprehensive evaluations.

3. Follow-up to IEO Evaluations

15. **All evaluation reports presented to the GEF Council by the IEO require a management response.** The GEF Chief Executive Officer (CEO) coordinates the preparation of the management response with Agency stakeholders for GEF Council consideration, in response to the recommendations of each evaluation report. Management responses should clearly indicate whether management accepts, partially accepts, or rejects the IEO evaluation recommendations, and explain the reasons. The IEO may comment on the management response to ensure recommendations have been addressed. The GEF Agencies ensure that recommendations from IEO evaluations that are relevant and/or apply to them are considered for decision making and action within the Agencies. The Council discusses and reviews the evaluation reports, the recommended actions, and the management responses; takes any necessary decisions on the recommendations; and gives guidance to the GEF and Agencies on policies or on action plans with specific time frames.

16. **There is systematic follow-up to the implementation of evaluation recommendations through the Management Action Record.** There is also systematic follow-up on implementation of the evaluation recommendations accepted by management and/or the GEF Council, with periodic review and follow-up on their status. In consultation with the appropriate GEF partners, the IEO reports to the Council on the follow-up of Council decisions related to evaluation recommendations; these decisions and follow-on actions are compiled in its Management Action Record (MAR) and are provided to the Council on an annual basis in the Annual Performance Report.

4. Knowledge Sharing from Evaluations

17. **Evaluation contributes to knowledge building and organizational improvement.** Findings

and lessons must be made accessible to target audiences in a user-friendly way. Evaluation reports must have a dissemination strategy tailored to the audience of each specific report; the strategy must be described in the relevant evaluation approach paper and in the terms of reference.

18. For the purposes of this Policy, knowledge management is the process by which organizations within the GEF partnership generate value and improve performance from their intellectual and knowledge-based assets. Knowledge sharing enables partners to capitalize on lessons learned by gaining insight and understanding from experience, and by applying this knowledge to generate new knowledge. Knowledge management helps the GEF create and transform knowledge into action, innovation, and change. Knowledge management is closely linked to performance enhancement.

19. The main purposes of knowledge creation and sharing of information from GEF evaluations are to:

(a) **Promote learning** through better outreach to the project, program, and country levels by providing easily accessible learning products;

(b) **Promote the application of lessons** learned to improve the performance and impact of GEF activities; and

(c) **Promote feedback** to improve the development of projects and programs.

20. **Knowledge creation and sharing from evaluation supports policy making by building a comprehensive body of evidence, lessons learned, and good practices.** Evaluation is closely linked to policy making, more informed management, and decision making for strategic planning. Evaluations could provide an effective way to improve the performance and impact of policies, programs, and projects, especially when they are conducted at the appropriate time and focus on issues of concern to policy makers and managers.

21. **Lessons from evaluations should be made available to stakeholders directly involved in project and program formulation and implementation for improved effectiveness.** GEF partners are expected to seek out adaptive and interactive ways of disseminating findings from evaluations to a wide audience, including within and across GEF Agencies and the GEF partnership, environmental entities, academia, research institutions, civil society, and the general public. When lessons and findings are shared widely, evaluations have the potential to increase awareness of the importance of global environmental benefits, confidence in GEF work, and leverage support.

II. EVALUATION: NORMS, PRINCIPLES, CRITERIA, AND MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

22. **Evaluation in the GEF context is guided by internationally recognized principles, norms, and standards.** Specifically, the GEF and its Agencies refer to those principles, norms, and standards produced by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD-DAC), and the Evaluation Cooperation Group (ECG) of the Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs). Although there is general agreement around internationally recognized norms and standards, there is also a divergence resulting from the diverse goals and objectives of the individual Agencies. These differing goals lead to differences in emphasis and differences in the application of standards across Agencies. Guided by international norms and standards, the GEF Evaluation Policy considers these differences and establishes a set of key principles and criteria common across the GEF partnership. The Policy also establishes four mandatory minimum requirements Agencies must follow in conducting evaluations for GEF-financed activities.

23. **Evaluation must be an explicit part of planning and budgeting of GEF-financed activities.** A key international norm concerns the adequate provision of resources to enable evaluation functions to operate effectively. In line with this norm, the costing and budgeting of evaluation activities are addressed, as appropriate, in the budgetary planning of the IEO, the Agency fee system, and project and program budgets. This includes any additional financial implications of addressing the minimum requirements and responsibilities of this Policy. All GEF Agencies receive project/program allocations and Agency fees, to be used according to the provisions contained in the Fee Policy for GEF Agencies. Project allocations cover the requirement for monitoring and evaluation, including terminal evaluations. Consistent with good practice, budgetary resources should be allocated separately for monitoring and evaluation activities.

1. Principles

24. **Evaluation in the GEF context is guided by internationally recognized principles.** The principles below are internationally recognized professional standards that should be applied in all evaluations of GEF-financed activities:

(a) **Independence**. Evaluations must be conducted independently from both the policy-making process and from the delivery and management of assistance. Evaluation team members should not have been personally engaged in the activities to be evaluated or have been responsible in the past for the design, implementation, or supervision/mid-term review of the project, program, or policy to be evaluated. Where evaluations are financed and/or managed by the GEF coordination units in GEF Agencies, these Agencies should ensure the behavioral independence of the evaluators. Behavioral independence requires that even if the evaluator is contracted by the Agency operational unit whose project or program is being evaluated, the unit should not interfere with or influence the process, or the interpretation and reporting of the evaluation findings.

(b) **Credibility**. Evaluations must be credible and based on reliable data and observations. Evaluation reports should reflect consistency and dependability in data, findings,

judgments, and lessons learned, with reference to the quality of the instruments, procedures, and analysis used to collect and interpret information.

(c) **Utility**. Evaluations must serve the information needs of intended users. Partners, evaluators, and units commissioning evaluations should endeavor to ensure that the work is well informed, relevant, and timely, and that it is clearly and concisely presented so as to be of maximum benefit to intended users. Evaluation reports should present the evidence, findings, issues, conclusions, and recommendations in a complete and balanced way. They should be both results- and action-oriented.

(d) **Impartiality**. Evaluations must give a comprehensive and balanced presentation of the strengths and weaknesses of the project, program, policy, strategy, or organizational unit being evaluated. The evaluation process should reflect impartiality at all stages and consider the views of all stakeholders. Units commissioning evaluations should endeavor to ensure that the selected evaluators are impartial and unbiased.

(e) **Transparency**. An essential feature at all stages of the evaluation process, transparency involves clear communication concerning decisions for the program of work and areas for evaluation, the purpose of the evaluation, the criteria applied, the evaluation approach and methods, and the intended use of the findings. Documentation related to evaluations must be freely available, easily accessible, and readable for transparency and legitimacy.

(f) **Integrity**. Evaluations must provide due regard to the welfare, beliefs, and customs of those involved or affected, avoiding or disclosing any conflict of interest. Evaluators must respect the right of institutions and individuals to provide information on the facts confidentially. Evaluators must honor the dignity, well-being, and self-worth of individuals and acknowledge the influence of culture within and across groups. If evidence of wrongdoing is uncovered, the evaluator or manager shall report such cases discreetly to the IEO Director, who will take appropriate action such as informing the investigative body of the relevant Agency. Integrity requires that management and/or commissioners of evaluations communicate clearly, remain open to the findings, and do not allow vested interests to interfere with the evaluation.

(g) **Participation**. GEF evaluations must be inclusive, so that the diverse perspectives and the values on which they are based as well as the types of power and consequences associated with each perspective are represented. Evaluation teams should interact with representatives of all the stakeholders involved in the project, program, or topic being evaluated. The participation of in-country stakeholders, including the GEF operational focal point (OFP) as well as other stakeholders such as project managers and civil society organizations (CSOs) involved in project implementation, and project beneficiaries should be ensured.

(h) **Gender equality.** Gender equality and women's empowerment is a strategic and operational imperative for the GEF. As a gender-responsive approach is applied throughout the GEF project cycle, it also applies to evaluations, as clearly stated in the 2017 GEF Policy on Gender Equality. Evaluations must assess whether and how men and women are affected by changes to natural resource use and decision making resulting from GEF outcomes. Wherever feasible, evaluations should provide sex-disaggregated and

gender-sensitive data. Units commissioning evaluations should strive for gender balance in the composition of evaluation teams.

(i) **Competencies and capacities**. GEF evaluations require a range of expertise that may be technical, environmental, cultural, or within a social science or the evaluation profession. Units commissioning evaluations are responsible for selecting evaluators with sufficient experience and skills in the appropriate field/s, and for adopting a rigorous methodology for the assessment of results and performance. Evaluations of GEF activities shall make the best possible use of local expertise, both technical and evaluative.

2. Criteria

25. Evaluations in the GEF explore four major criteria, in line with recent OECD-DAC guidance:

(a) **Relevance**—the extent to which the intervention design and intended results were consistent with local and national environmental priorities and policies and to the GEF's strategic priorities and objectives, and remained suited to the conditions of the context, over time.

(b) **Effectiveness**—the extent to which the intervention achieved, or expects to achieve, results (outputs, outcomes and impacts, including global environmental benefits) taking into account the key factors influencing the results.

(c) **Efficiency**—the extent to which the intervention achieved value for resources, by converting inputs (funds, personnel, expertise, equipment, etc.) to results in the timeliest and least costly way possible, compared to alternatives.

(d) **Sustainability**— The continuation/likely continuation of positive effects from the intervention after it has come to an end, and its potential for scale-up and/or replication; interventions need to be environmentally as well as institutionally, financially, politically, culturally and socially sustainable.

26. Other criteria may be considered on a case by case basis, depending on the specific evaluation as well as new developments in the international good practice standards for evaluation.[4]

3. Indicators

27. In the context of the results frameworks (and related core corporate indicators) introduced in each replenishment of the GEF, projects and programs shall adopt monitoring and evaluation systems with indicators that ensure evaluability. Indicators should be SMART—specific, measurable, attributable, relevant, and time-bound. These indicators will be reported in the terminal evaluations to assess performance against objectives and should have the following characteristics:

(a) **Specific**. The indicator measures only the design element (output, outcome, or impact)

[4] OECD-DAC is currently reviewing the evaluation criteria in light of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Agenda.

that it is intended to measure and captures the essence of the desired result by clearly and directly relating to the achievement of an objective, and only that objective.

(b) **Measurable**. There are practical ways to quantitatively and/or qualitatively measure the indicator, i.e. the indicator has the capacity to be counted, observed, analyzed, tested, verified, or challenged.

(c) **Attributable**. The indicators identify what changes occurred or are anticipated as a result of the intervention and whether the results are realistic. Attribution requires that changes in the targeted environmental and developmental issues can be linked to the intervention.

(d) **Relevant**. The indicators establish levels of performance that are likely to be achieved in a practical manner, that reflect the expectations of stakeholders, and are plausibly associated with the activities, or the indicator is valid in describing the underlying issues and processes followed to tackle those issues.

(e) **Time-bound, timely, trackable, and targeted**. The indicators track progress in a cost-effective manner at appropriate intervals for a set period, with clear identification of the stakeholder group(s) to be affected by the intervention.

28. Results in the GEF are measured by global environmental benefit indicators, according to the results frameworks approved in each replenishment phase. Social and economic co-benefits achieved while contributing to global environmental benefits are also measured. As per the GEF Policy on Gender Equality, the collection of sex-disaggregated data and information on gender, and the use of gender-sensitive indicators, sex-disaggregated targets and results, as relevant, are to be regularly incorporated in monitoring and evaluation. Wherever possible, the geographic coordinates of project sites should be collected and used in monitoring and evaluation.

4. Minimum Requirements

29. **Four minimum requirements must be applied to evaluation at the project and program levels (Boxes 1, 2, 3, and 4).** Minimum Requirements 1 and 2 must also be applied to monitoring, as confirmed by the GEF Monitoring Policy. The objectives and intended results of GEF-financed activities should be specific and measurable, so as to make it possible to monitor and evaluate the project and program effectively. Baseline data should be developed for the key results indicators. Agencies should ensure timely monitoring and evaluation planning at the project preparation stage.

30. **Terminal evaluations of programs and full- and medium-sized projects are to be conducted according to Minimum Requirement 3.** Once in full compliance with the provisions contained in Minimum Requirement 3, Agencies are expected to apply their internal arrangements to the conduct of terminal evaluations and their cost to ensure that evaluation reports of GEF-financed activities conform to GEF evaluation principles. Evaluations should provide lessons learned and recommendations for future projects, programs, or policies.

Box 1

Minimum Requirement 1: Design of Monitoring and d Evaluation Plans

All projects must include a concrete and fully budgeted Monitoring and Evaluation Plan by the time of CEO endorsement for full-sized projects and CEO approval for medium-sized projects. Program Monitoring and Evaluation Plans describing the intended approach to monitoring and evaluation across the program, program rationale, the theory of change, results frameworks and indicators, and ways to ensure coherence across the child projects, must be included at program framework document (PFD) approval. Concrete and fully budgeted Program Monitoring and Evaluation Plans must be further detailed in the child project which supports the coordination, knowledge sharing, and monitoring and evaluation activities of the program, where applicable.

Logical frameworks and/or theories of change should align, where appropriate, to the GEF's results frameworks. Program Monitoring and Evaluation Plans must ensure coherence between program and child project objectives, indicators, and outcomes. Monitoring and evaluation Plans build in the possibility to adapt to changing conditions, if needed. Project and Program Monitoring and Evaluation Plans should contain the following:

- SMART indicators for results and implementation linked appropriately to the GEF results frameworks, and including the following:
  - Applicable GEF indicators on global environmental benefits identified at each replenishment cycle
  - Socioeconomic co-benefits and sex-disaggregated / gender-sensitive indicators (where relevant)
  - Project site geographic coordinates (where feasible and appropriate)
  - Additional process and/or performance indicators that can deliver reliable and valid information to management
- Project and program baselines, with a description of the problem to be addressed and relevant indicators
- Periodic implementation reports, midterm reviews, and terminal evaluations
- Organizational set-up and budgets for both monitoring and evaluation, where the budget for evaluation should be explicit and distinguished from monitoring activities

Box 2

Minimum Requirement 2: Application of Monitoring and Evaluation Plans

Project and program monitoring will include implementation of the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, comprising the following:

- The identified indicators are actively measured, or if not, a reasonable explanation is provided
- The baseline for the project or program is fully established and data are compiled to review progress, and evaluations are undertaken as planned
- The organizational set-up for monitoring and evaluation is operational, and its budget is spent as planned

31. **Terminal evaluations will assess results (outputs, outcomes, and impacts) according to the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency (cost-effectiveness), and sustainability, as applicable.** Terminal evaluations will also assess GEF additionality, defined as the additional outcome (both environmental and otherwise) that can be directly associated with the GEF-supported project or program. To do so, Agencies will apply the evaluative approach for assessing GEF's additionality approved by the GEF Council in December 2018. [5]

Box 3

Minimum Requirement 3: Terminal Evaluation of GEF-Financed Activities

All full- and medium-sized projects and all programs will need to be evaluated at the end of implementation. The evaluation will have the following minimum requirements:

- The evaluation will be undertaken independent of project management, or if undertaken by project management, will be reviewed by the evaluation unit of the GEF Agency or by independent quality assurance mechanisms of the Agency
- The evaluation will apply the international standards and minimum requirements set forth in this Evaluation Policy
- The evaluation will assess at a minimum:
  - Achievement of outputs and outcomes, and provide ratings for targeted objectives and outcomes, for projects. For programs, aggregated results will be reported.
  - Likelihood of sustainability of outcomes at termination for projects and the overall program
  - Whether Minimum Requirements 1 and 2 were met
  - An assessment of GEF additionality
  - An assessment of whether and how men and women are affected differently by changes to natural resource use and decision making resulting from GEF outcomes

In addition, for programs, the terminal evaluation will provide an assessment of the coherence between program and child project theories of change and objectives, indicators, and programmatic results achieved; these results must demonstrate the program's added value over comparable non-programmatic alternatives.

- The terminal evaluation report will contain at a minimum:
  - Basic data on the evaluation, indicating when it took place, who was involved, its key questions, its methodology, including application of the four evaluation criteria (set forth in Subsection 2, above)
  - Basic data on the project or program, including actual GEF and other expenditures
  - Lessons for broader applicability
  - Evaluation terms of reference (in an annex)
- The terminal evaluation report will be sent to the IEO immediately when ready, and at the latest, within 12 months of completion of project or program implementation

[5] IEO, "An Evaluative Approach to Assessing GEF's Additionality", GEF/ME/C.55/inf. 01 (https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF.ME_C.55.inf_.01_Additionality_Framework_November_2018.pdf).

32. **Terminal evaluations of programmatic approaches, which are by nature designed as a set of coherent and synergistic interventions to achieve broader and longer-term results, must also assess the added value of implementing interventions as a program rather than as stand-alone projects or other comparable alternatives.** Results must be measured according to Minimum Requirement 3.

33. The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for programs shall, at PFD approval, include arrangements for program-level as well as child project–level terminal evaluation. Agencies participating in the program will conduct the terminal evaluations of the child projects they have implemented within the program. The Lead Agency will be responsible for submitting the terminal evaluation for the program, consistent with Minimum Requirement 3.

Box 4

Minimum Requirement 4: Engagement of Operational Focal Points

Except for those GEF-financed activities for which OFP letters of endorsement are not required, all other projects and programs will engage the Operational Focal Points (OFPs) in monitoring and evaluation related activities. The following requirements shall be met:

- The monitoring and evaluation plan will specify how the project or program will keep the relevant OFP informed and, where applicable and feasible, involved, while respecting the independent nature of evaluation
- During implementation, the Agencies will inform the OFPs on monitoring and evaluation activities in the projects and programs that belong to their national portfolio
- The OFPs will be informed of midterm reviews and terminal evaluations and will, where applicable and feasible, be briefed and debriefed at the start and at the end of evaluation missions. They will receive a draft report for comment, will be invited to contribute to the management response (where applicable), and will receive the final evaluation report within 12 months of project or program completion
- The GEF Agencies will track application of the conditions specified here in their GEF-financed projects and programs.

34. **The evaluation plan of jointly implemented projects must include the evaluation arrangements agreed upon by the Agencies at CEO endorsement.** Partners' responsibilities in ensuring evaluation of jointly implemented projects need to be discussed and agreed upon at the time of preparation to ensure cost-effectiveness, synergy, and avoidance of duplication in evaluation reporting. It is the responsibility of the Lead Agency of the jointly implemented project to guide this discussion and reach an agreement with all the other participating Agencies at design.

5. Access to, and Disclosure of, Information

35. **The IEO follows the World Bank Policy on Access to Information**.[6] The GEF Policy on Access to Information states that "The Ethics Committee, the Ethics Officer, the Independent Evaluation Office, the Secretariat, and the Trustee are subject to the World Bank Policy on Access to Information."[7]

36. **The IEO shall be provided access by the Agency to the documentation and information it needs to conduct its evaluations of GEF-financed activities.** Staff of the IEO shall have access to the Agencies' official records to enable their work as evaluators, in accordance with applicable Agency policies and rules governing such access. IEO staff shall also have access to Agency staff during evaluations. Relevant Agency representatives shall facilitate visits by IEO staff to project sites and meetings with stakeholders and government representatives.

37. **Evaluations shall be disseminated in accordance with widely accepted international standards**, by establishing effective feedback loops to policy makers, operational staff, beneficiaries, and the general public. The disclosure of evaluation reports shall be ensured through posting on websites and dissemination of findings through knowledge products and events. GEF-related evaluation reports should be broadly and freely shared, and findings and lessons learned made available to project management. Evaluation reports should provide transparent information on data sets, sources, methodologies, and approach.

[6] World Bank, "Bank Policy: Access to Information," EXC4.01-POL.01 (https://policies.worldbank.org/sites/ppf3/PPFDocuments/Forms/DispPage.aspx?docid=3693).
[7] GEF, "Policy on Access to Information," GEF/C.55/06 (https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF.C.55.06_Policy_on_Access_to_Information.pdf), para. 4.

III. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

38. Different partners and stakeholders within the GEF have different roles and responsibilities with respect to monitoring and evaluation. The GEF Council provides the overall framework for enabling monitoring and evaluation, starting with an agreement on the overall objectives and the corporate and focal area results frameworks. The GEF Secretariat develops and submits the plans and framework for monitoring progress against these objectives to the Council, and the IEO presents the overall evaluation work plan to report on the overall performance and effectiveness of the GEF, to the Council. The GEF Council approves the IEO work program and budget, receives the evaluation reports, and decides on the management actions to respond to the evaluation recommendations. The IEO prepares a Semi-Annual Evaluation Report every six months and a comprehensive evaluation of the GEF every four years. Based on this information, the Council makes strategic and policy-level decisions. The GEF Agencies and their partners execute project, program, and portfolio monitoring and evaluation plans. The GEF Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) provides advice on indicators and targets at the stage when policies, strategies, programs, and projects are prepared, as well as evaluation approaches in response to specific requests by the IEO. Figure 2 and table 1 provide the broad framework of the main roles and responsibilities of the key partners for monitoring and evaluation in the GEF.

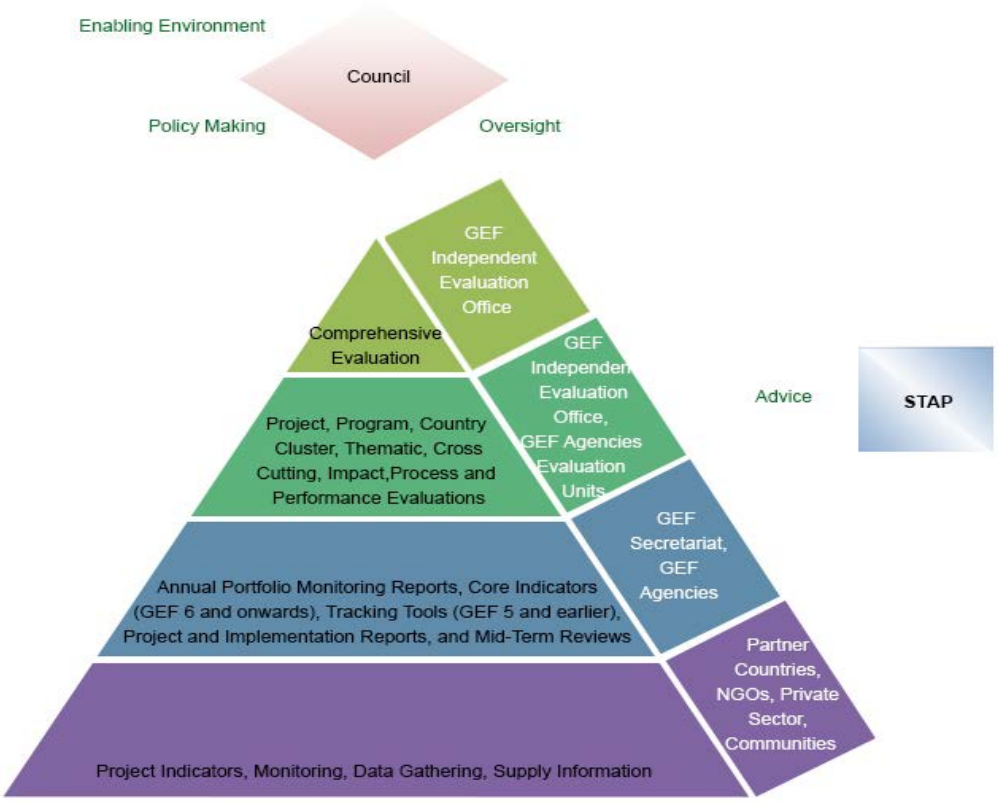

Figure 2: Monitoring and Evaluation Levels and Responsible Agencies in the GEF

Table 1: Key Roles and Responsibilities of GEF Partners in Evaluation

Partner	Key monitoring and evaluation roles and responsibilities
Council	◦ Develop the overall policy on monitoring and evaluation ◦ Provide an enabling environment for monitoring and evaluation ◦ Oversee the evaluation function and guarantee IEO independence ◦ Receive independent evaluation reports and decide on follow-up actions to implement evaluation recommendations
IEO	◦ Conduct independent GEF evaluation ◦ Validate terminal evaluations prepared by Agencies ◦ Undertake post completion evaluation for a sample of projects ◦ Assess the quality of project and program evaluations ◦ Set minimum requirements for evaluation ◦ Prepare the Management Action Record ◦ Share and disseminate evaluative knowledge
Secretariat	◦ Set results frameworks at focal area and corporate levels ◦ Monitor the GEF portfolio across Agencies and focal areas ◦ Report on and incorporate lessons from portfolio monitoring ◦ Review monitoring and evaluation requirements in project and program proposals
GEF Agency - operational units	◦ Monitor the Agency GEF portfolio ◦ Report Agency project, program, and portfolio progress, results, and learning ◦ Ensure monitoring at the project and program levels, as appropriate ◦ Manage project and program implementation adaptively ◦ Systematically involve national partners and share project monitoring and evaluation information at the national level
GEF Agency - evaluation units	◦ Conduct and/or validate terminal evaluations of projects and programs ◦ Conduct corporate Agency evaluations ◦ Mainstream the GEF into relevant Agency evaluations
STAP	◦ Advise on scientific/technical matters in monitoring and evaluation ◦ Provide support on scientific and technical indicators
GEF OFPs	◦ Collaborate on monitoring and evaluation at project, program, and portfolio levels
Other stakeholders (CSOs, private sector, communities)	◦ Participate in monitoring activities ◦ Provide views and perceptions to evaluations

39. **Each GEF Agency has its own system of governance and rules and regulations governing the implementation of activities, as well as the evaluation of these activities.** The GEF Council can adopt principles, norms, and standards for those parts of the GEF for which it is directly responsible, such as the GEF Secretariat, the IEO, and the STAP. The Council can also require minimum standards and minimum procedures to be applied to the evaluation of the activities that it funds. Specific roles and responsibilities for evaluation are detailed for each partner in the following subsections. Specific roles and responsibilities for monitoring are detailed in the GEF Monitoring Policy.

1. GEF Council

40. **The GEF Council ensures accountability and oversight of GEF performance and results.** The Council develops, adopts, and oversees the operational policies and programs for GEF-financed activities; reviews the operations of the GEF with respect to its purposes, scope, and objectives; and ensures that the GEF policies and work program, including operational strategies, programs, and projects, are monitored and evaluated on a regular basis. The Council also establishes the GEF

Evaluation Policy for the GEF and approves the IEO's work program and budget. The Council receives the independent evaluations conducted by IEO, including the comprehensive evaluation of the GEF, and decides on follow up actions from evaluation recommendations. The Council uses independent evaluation to complement a larger system of financial oversight and accountability within the GEF Trustee and Agencies. On behalf of the Council, the GEF Trustee ensures the maintenance of appropriate records and accounts of the GEF trust fund and provides for their audit, in accordance with the rules of the Trustee.

41. **The GEF Council provides an enabling environment for evaluation activities in line with internationally accepted standards and guarantees the independence of the IEO.** The Council ensures that adequate resources are allocated to enable the independent evaluation function to operate effectively and with independence and that evaluators have the freedom to conduct their work without repercussions for career development. It also appoints a professionally competent director to lead the IEO. The Council promotes transparency, participation, and disclosure of evaluation findings, and ensures that sufficient time is dedicated to discussion of evaluation issues at Council meetings. The GEF Council, together with the GEF CEO and the IEO Director, is responsible for the use of evaluation products including the systematic consideration of findings, conclusions, and recommendations, and lessons, for decision making on GEF programs and policies.

2. Independent Evaluation Office of the GEF

42. **The IEO has the central role of ensuring the independent evaluation function within the GEF**. The IEO operates as an organizational unit independent of GEF Secretariat management or Agency. The IEO prepares the overall evaluation policy for the GEF to be endorsed by the Council; sets the minimum requirements for evaluation in the GEF partnership, sets an evaluation agenda for approval by the Council, validates the terminal evaluations of projects and programs by Agencies, conducts a broad spectrum of independent evaluations and shares evaluative evidence within and outside the GEF.

43. The IEO pursues the goals of improved accountability and learning through two main functions:

(a) **An evaluative function.** The main function of the IEO is to independently evaluate the effectiveness of the GEF at the project, program, portfolio, and institutional levels.

(b) **A normative function.** The IEO is tasked to set minimum evaluation requirements, and evaluation standards within the GEF to ensure improved and consistent measurement of GEF results.

44. **The IEO is independent from both the policy-making process and the delivery and management of assistance**. This guarantees that data gathering and analysis and judgments on criteria, findings, and recommendations will not be influenced by conflicts of interest or undue interference by management at any level. The IEO requests feedback and comments on draft reports from all stakeholders consulted during the evaluation, ensuring due diligence and verification of any eventual evidence gaps. The Secretariat, Agencies, and other affected parties may receive, comment, and respond to draft and final evaluation reports, but cannot approve, hold

back, request changes, or otherwise modify such draft and final evaluation reports. IEO evaluation reports are submitted directly and simultaneously to the GEF Council and the GEF Secretariat.

45. **The independence of the IEO evaluation function is overseen by the GEF Council.** The GEF Instrument, amended at the Fifth GEF Assembly in May 2014, states that "there shall be an independent evaluation office headed by a director, appointed by and reporting to the Council, whose responsibility it is to carry out independent evaluations consistent with decisions of the Council."[8] The term of the IEO Director will be determined by the Council. A Council Selection and Review Committee is formed to oversee the processes for appointing the Director and for conducting his/her performance objective reviews. The Director cannot join the GEF in any other capacity after completion of his/her mandate with the GEF. The Director is directly accountable to the GEF Council for the work of the IEO and may propose to the Council any measure he/ she believes is necessary to ensure evaluation independence.

46. The Director manages the IEO and its budget by implementing strategic decisions by the GEF Council, providing overall direction and resource management, and strengthening institutional relationships. The Director is solely responsible for personnel decisions in the IEO in accordance with staff rules. In the exercise of these functions, the IEO Director participates in the GEF Council, the Assembly, and in the replenishment meetings on evaluation issues, and responds to Council requests on any related matters. The Council has direct access to the Director and his/her staff, and the Director may communicate directly with Council members during and between Council meetings or arrange special meetings as deemed appropriate and without prior clearance from anyone outside the IEO. Furthermore, the Director may propose decisions to the GEF Council on a no-objection basis between Council sessions.

47. **To avoid conflict of interest, the Director establishes clear conflict-of-interest rules for the IEO staff.** In this connection, an evaluation will not be entrusted to an IEO staff member who has been responsible in the past for the design, implementation, or supervision of the project, program, portfolio, strategy, or policy to be evaluated. The IEO does not engage consultants who have worked previously either as individuals or through private consulting firms and/or nonprofit organizations on the design or implementation of a project, program, portfolio, strategy, or policy to conduct evaluation analysis or prepare evaluation reports of the same.

48. **Under the Director's leadership, the IEO has the responsibility for undertaking independent evaluations that involve a set of projects from more than one Agency.** These evaluations are typically on a strategic level, on focal areas or programs, or on cross-cutting themes. Institutional evaluations are also undertaken. In addition, the IEO validates project terminal evaluations for those Agencies in which the evaluation function is not fully independent. It does so according specific evaluation guidelines.[9] Where possible and to prevent duplication and to

[8] GEF, *Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility* (http://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/GEF_Instrument-Interior-March23.2015.pdf), para. 21.i.
[9] IEO, "Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluation for Full-sized Projects," (http://www.gefieo.org/sites/default/files/ieo/evaluations/files/gef-guidelines-te-fsp-2017.pdf).

promote synergies, the IEO collaborates with evaluation units of the GEF Agencies. Within the GEF, the IEO facilitates cooperation with and among the GEF partners on matters of evaluation. This includes the establishment of procedures and guidelines on evaluation based on the internationally recognized good practice standards.

49. **In support of the Council's oversight role and to promote accountability, the Director of the IEO reports directly and regularly to the Council on evaluation findings.** The evaluative evidence is presented in Semi-Annual Evaluation Reports (SAER) which summarize the data and analyses, findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the individual evaluations completed in the semester being reported on. The SAER is presented as a working document and includes proposed Council decisions based on the recommendations from the evaluations. The evaluations themselves are submitted to the Council as information documents.

50. The evidence presented in the IEO's evaluations is either developed by the IEO itself or extracted and independently verified from evaluations by GEF Agency evaluation units. Data and information sources include monitoring data (once independently verified), the academic literature, primary data collected through interviews, field visits, remote- sensing, and other relevant credible sources. The IEO undertakes post completion evaluation for a sample of projects. The IEO also reviews project terminal evaluation reports submitted by the Agencies. Terminal evaluation reports focus on the ex post results of GEF projects and programs.

51. **The IEO Director prepares a four-year rolling work program and budget request and submits these directly to the Council for approval.** The monitoring and evaluation budgetary needs of the Agencies and the GEF Secretariat are addressed separately in the GEF corporate budget and through project fees. The IEO four-year work program and budget is developed in consultation with the GEF partnership and is approved by the Council. It reflects a phased approach over a GEF replenishment period to ensure adequate evaluation coverage to promote accountability and learning. For every major evaluation, the IEO prepares an approach paper which is shared for comment with all the partners involved before finalization to allow for stakeholder feedback on the evaluation design.

52. **The IEO ensures follow-up of evaluation recommendations through the management action record system, as part of its accountability function.** A Management Action Record table containing all IEO evaluation recommendations, management responses and related Council decisions is compiled annually and circulated to the GEF Secretariat to rate and report progress on actions implemented on Council decisions. The IEO provides an independent assessment of the rate of adoption of Council decisions.

53. **The IEO supports knowledge sharing and establishes systems to disseminate lessons learned and documents best practices from evaluations and provides independent evaluative evidence to the GEF knowledge base.** The IEO supports knowledge sharing by ensuring the highest standards in accessibility and presentation for its published reports. The IEO develops learning products based on evaluations, disseminates findings through the IEO website, publications, a spectrum of conferences, communities of practice, web platforms such as Earth-Eval, social media, to share evaluation findings within and outside the GEF partnership.

54. **The IEO establishes appropriate quality assurance mechanisms for its major evaluations** and adopts the highest standards recognized in the international evaluation community. These quality assurance mechanisms address evaluation approaches and methods, data gathering and analysis, and include reporting on evaluation findings and conclusions.

55. **The IEO works in close partnership with the global evaluation community**. The IEO remains on the cutting edge of emerging and innovative methodologies in environmental evaluation. It consults and collaborates with all relevant partners to foster a network of evaluation professionals who may add value to GEF operations and results.

3. GEF Secretariat

56. **The GEF Secretariat is responsible for monitoring and reporting on the results of the overall GEF Portfolio, in accordance with the results frameworks set by the Council in each replenishment period**. The Secretariat reviews all projects and programs prior to their approval to ensure they meet GEF monitoring and evaluation requirements, including the use of indicators and targets to ensure alignment with focal area objectives.

57. **The GEF Secretariat ensures that findings and recommendations from evaluations are followed up on with respect to GEF policies, programs, and procedures, and that related Council decisions are implemented.** The Secretariat ensures that results and lessons are adequately reflected in public information about the GEF. This includes activities to gather and disseminate best practices to improve portfolio quality. In support of evaluation, the Secretariat responds promptly and fully to all IEO requests for information relating to GEF projects, programs, and policies; and coordinates the GEF management response to IEO evaluations.

4. GEF Agencies

Operational Units

58. **In line with the Minimum Fiduciary Standards for GEF Partner Agencies,[10] the Agencies are responsible for ensuring that projects and programs are properly designed with monitoring and evaluation plans, and that projects are adequately monitored during implementation.** The GEF Agencies are responsible for developing monitoring plans with appropriate performance and results indicators for projects and programs; for adequately monitoring project and program activities, production of outputs, and progress toward outcomes. When designated as a program's Lead Agency, an Agency is responsible for monitoring the program as well as the child projects it directly implements. The Agencies implementing the other child projects in the program are responsible for their monitoring. To ensure that results can be analyzed across Agencies in a consistent manner, project logical frameworks and/or theories of change should be aligned with the GEF focal area results frameworks, as applicable.

[10] "Minimum Fiduciary Standards for GEF Partner Agencies," GA/PL/02 (http://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/GA.PL_.02_Minimum_Fiduciary_Standards_0.pdf)

59. **Agencies must undertake midterm reviews for programs and full-sized projects under implementation for adaptive management purposes.** Midterm reviews are also encouraged for medium-sized projects and enabling activities where appropriate and feasible. These reports are submitted to the GEF Secretariat as part of annual reporting.

60. **The Agencies support the IEO by responding promptly and fully to requests for information or support relating to evaluation of GEF activities, and by making project and program documentation available to the IEO.** As per the updated GEF Policy on Cofinancing, Agencies provide information on the actual amounts, sources, and types of cofinancing and investment mobilized in their midterm reviews and terminal evaluations. The Agencies encourage OFPs to be fully informed of and consulted on the conduct of terminal evaluations, and that they receive and comment on terminal evaluations.

Evaluation Units

61. **Agencies ensure the conduct of required terminal evaluations of GEF-supported projects and programs in their portfolio.** Depending on the Agency's institutional structure as well as internal rules and procedures, two scenarios exist: (1) the evaluation unit conducts project terminal evaluations, and (2) the evaluation unit validates the evaluations managed by operational units. Agencies are responsible for the terminal evaluation of the child projects they directly implement in a program. In addition, the Lead Agency will be responsible for submitting the terminal evaluation for the program. Consistent with the GEF Project and Program Cycle Policy, any project and program evaluations must be shared with the IEO.

62. GEF Agency Evaluation Units may be called upon to explore with the IEO possible areas of common interest and cooperation and opportunities for joint evaluations. For evaluations covering issues of GEF concern and the GEF portfolio, the evaluation units engage with the IEO on the terms of reference, approach, and scope.

63. The Agency evaluation units coordinate with the IEO on norms, standards, and quality of evaluations when it comes to GEF-financed activities. Agencies are expected to provide adequate financial support for their evaluation units to undertake their work in a way that does not compromise the independent conduct of evaluations.

5. Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel

64. **Upon receipt of specific requests from the IEO, the STAP may contribute scientific and technical advice, data or other information that may be useful to evaluation.** Such requests may pertain to opinions on the evaluability of scientific aspects and related methodologies for measuring global environmental impacts in response to evaluation approach papers, terms of reference, or reports. STAP members may also be requested for direct support to an evaluation while respecting the independence of the IEO.

6. GEF Operational Focal Points

65. Several entities in GEF member countries are involved in evaluation in different ways. Many

countries have undertaken efforts to establish or improve national evaluation and assessment systems on local and global environmental benefits. These initiatives may include improving basic census data, establishing national and project baselines, establishing participatory environment and natural resource monitoring schemes, using national communications and inventories of global environmental benefits, among others.

66. **In line with GEF operational principles on country ownership, evaluation activities will be consultative.** The GEF OFPs will be fully consulted with and informed by the GEF Agencies and the IEO on the planning, conduct, and results of any evaluation activity performed in their country, and they in turn will respect the independence of the evaluation.

67. **The GEF OFPs play a key role in facilitating access to staff members of government institutions involved in GEF projects during evaluations.** They may promote the use of, follow-up to, and action on evaluation recommendations related to GEF matters and directed at the regional, national, and project levels. They also play an important role in keeping national stakeholders (including the civil society organizations involved in GEF activities) fully consulted with, informed on, and involved in the plans, conduct, and results of country-related GEF evaluation activities.

7. Other Stakeholders

68. A considerable number of locally and internationally based stakeholders are involved in GEF evaluation activities. These stakeholders are the individuals, groups, or institutions that have an interest or stake in the outcome of a GEF-financed project or program, including those potentially affected by a project or program. Stakeholders may include national project or program executing agencies; groups contracted to conduct activities at various stages of the project or program; and other civil society groups including local community members who may have an interest in the project or program, or who are living in the project or program area, or who are dependent for part of their livelihoods or in times of stress on the natural resources of the project or program area. Their involvement in evaluation depends on the project or program and their role. For example, academic institutions or private sector companies may support evaluation activities directly and provide outside perspectives and expertise. CSOs may play an important role in providing feedback as beneficiaries or as representatives of community groups.

69. **Consistent with provisions in the GEF Instrument and with the GEF Stakeholder Engagement Policy, there shall be transparency in the preparation, conduct, reporting, and evaluation of public involvement activities in all projects and programs.** This includes full disclosure of all nonconfidential information, and consultation with major groups and representatives of local communities. GEF evaluations should involve project stakeholders, both as participants and contributors and as users and beneficiaries as appropriate. Local stakeholder participation and participatory approaches in evaluation are particularly necessary in projects and programs that affect the incomes and livelihoods of local groups, especially disadvantaged populations in and around project sites (for example, indigenous and other local communities, women, and poor households).