Drylands SCCE:

Draft Report - Reference Group Meeting Notes

Meeting Date: November 13, 2023

Main topic: Discuss reference group member feedback on the draft evaluation report circulated on November 1, 2023.

Participant List	
Ydidiya Abera	FAO
Christopher Brett	World Bank
Phemo Karen Kgomotso	UNDP
Jessica Kyle	ICF
Geeta Batra	GEF IEO
Carlo Carugi	GEF IEO
Juha Ilari Uitto	GEF IEO
Federico Fraga	GEF IEO

Juha Uitto (GEF IEO) - Opened the meeting.

Carlo Carugi (GEF IEO) – Introduced the evaluation and provided an overview of its scope, approach, and methodology.

Ydidiya Abera (FAO) – Still waiting for comments from technical experts. Expressed concern about recommendation 4. Enquired to what extent projects will be required to report on biophysical monitoring data, whether there is knowledge about how much of this type of data is available, and/or how feasible it is to collect it. Also asked whether there would be a timeline to implement this recommendation. In addition, enquired whether sufficient attention has been given to the Dryland Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program, while acknowledging it may be too early for this evaluation to consider results from this Program.

Christopher Brett (World Bank) – Commented on the fact that there is no recommendation related to how the global knowledge platforms for impact programs should be working to support countries implementing child projects at the national level. Requested more operational recommendations related to the interactions between global platforms and country projects.

Geeta Batra (GEF IEO) – Referred to findings of earlier GEF IEO evaluations on integrated approach pilots and impact programs. Invited Christopher to express his opinion and draft a recommendation about how he thinks the knowledge platform could best benefit countries in implementing projects. Clarified that while this evaluation will not be able to cover most of the recently designed interventions, these will be covered within the eighth comprehensive evaluation of the GEF (i.e., OPS 8).

Christopher Brett (World Bank) – Responded that in the current GEF programs, global platforms are being developed first, followed by country projects, and that country projects will be approved all at once to improve timing and coordination. Expressed that global knowledge platform offers services at the country level and must be aligned with what the countries are requiring.

Carlo Carugi (GEF IEO) - Clarified that this evaluation's scope is not about programs, but about drylands. Such clarification will be added in the introduction of the report.

Christopher Brett (World Bank) –Raised concerns around how to manage the docking between related GEF-7 and GEF-8 impact programs, given that programs will overlap in their 7 to 8 year implementation period and in the countries that participate. Suggested that a cross governance structure is needed – I.e., a governance structure that creates linkages across programs to make sure their resources are being used responsibly and that there is no duplication of efforts.

Carlo Carugi (GEF IEO) - Responded to Ydidiya Abera that Recommendation 4 is not prescriptive.

Jessica Kyle (ICF) – Complemented Carlo Carugi's response about recommendation 4. This comes from the evaluation team's observations about how environmental results are being reported. Environmental outcomes in GEF dryland projects are mostly reported in hectare terms, with few cases of robustly measured improvements in biophysical indicators that would verify relevant changes in environmental status. Recommendation 4 aims to raise awareness that, when feasible and appropriate, such reporting should be encouraged.

Phemo K. Kgomotso (UNDP) – Expressed concern whether programs are being given enough time to mature before we can properly learn from them.

Geeta Batra (GEF IEO) – Explained how GEF IEO evaluations are often timed in a way to inform ongoing discussions. Mentioned the GEF Geospatial Platform as an example of such work.

Juha Uitto (GEF IEO) - Closed the meeting.

Action Items

1. IEO will draft meeting notes and circulate to reference group members for any additions or amendments before posting on the IEO website**.**
2. IEO will prepare an audit trail table documenting all comments received and corresponding actions taken to respond to or address them.