



GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY  
INVESTING IN OUR PLANET

# Beyond the Numbers

Actions by the GEF Partnership to Safeguard  
the Global Environment









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# OUR NUMBERS ONLY TELL PART OF THE STORY

Since 1992 the GEF has invested over **\$18.1 billion**  
and leveraged **\$94.2 billion** in additional resources  
for more than **4,500 projects**  
in **170 countries.**





# A NEW DIRECTION IN THE GEF PARTNERSHIP TO PROTECT AND RESTORE THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT

The GEF was established on the eve of the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 to fund actions around the world to protect the global environment. The GEF serves as a financial mechanism for global Conventions on Climate Change, Biodiversity, Desertification, Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and Mercury, and has the mandate as well to support actions in International Waters, including the oceans and seas.

In the years since its establishment, the GEF has funded over 4,500 projects in 170 countries, and many thousands more through the GEF Small Grants Program. As reflected in this publication, these investments have achieved major global environmental benefits under the Conventions and across the focal areas covered by the GEF's work.

But the pressures on the global environment are relentless, outpacing efforts to counteract them. And the stakes could not be higher. The fight for the global environment is a fight for nature and people. People everywhere depend on the health and vibrancy of Earth systems. The sustainable development goals of countries cannot be achieved unless the resource base on which they depend is maintained.

In the face of this harsh reality, the GEF Partnership recently agreed to a new direction in its work to achieve greater results and help to meet this rising challenge. This agreement is set out in the Summary of the Negotiations of the Seventh Replenishment of the GEF. In combination with its traditional investments under the Conventions, the GEF is:

- i. Strategically focusing its investments to catalyze *transformational change in key systems that are driving major environmental loss, in particular energy, cities and food*;
- ii. Prioritizing *integrated projects and programs* that address more than one global environmental problem at a time, building on the GEF's unique position and mandate to act on a wide range of global environmental issues; and
- iii. Implementing new strategies and policies to enhance results, *including stronger engagement with the private sector, indigenous peoples, and civil society, and an increased focus on gender equality*.

This publication tells the story of this new direction in the GEF Partnership. The aim is clear—to go beyond business as usual and turn the tide of global environmental loss.









# IMPACT PROGRAMS FOR SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION

The nexus between climate change, biodiversity, and land degradation presents a key opportunity to achieve results in a synergistic way. Seizing that opportunity means tackling the drivers of environmental degradation, not just its symptoms. The GEF has developed three Impact Programs to

do this: They focus on Food systems, Land Use, and Restoration; Sustainable Cities; and Sustainable Forest Management. These Impact Programs collectively address key drivers of environmental degradation and offer the potential for the GEF to contribute to systemic change.



# FOOD SYSTEMS, LAND USE AND RESTORATION

The global food system's impact on biodiversity and ecosystem services is overwhelming. With 40% of the planet's landmass (excluding deserts, permanent ice, and lakes) being used to grow food, the potential for environmental degradation will only increase as agriculture continues to expand. At the same time, nearly 2 billion hectares of cropland, grazing land, forests, and woodlands are degraded. This has negative impacts on ecosystem services, including the provision of water, food, fuel, clean air, and animal habitats.

GEF funding is being used to support countries to ensure that productive lands are embedded within landscapes that are providing ecosystem services and protecting the natural ecosystems and soil on which they depend. Food production landscapes are anchored around a sound, comprehensive land use plan that is simultaneously meeting a full range of local needs, including water availability, nutritious and profitable crops for families and local markets, and enhancing human health; while also contributing to national economic development and

policy commitments (e.g. NDCs, LDN, Aichi targets for biodiversity conservation, Bonn Challenge); and supporting biodiversity maintenance, climate change mitigation, and the provision of food and commercial commodities to international supply chains.

Three areas for action are being pursued in order to foster transformational impact at scale: 1) promoting sustainable food systems to tackle negative externalities in value chains; 2) promoting deforestation-free agricultural commodity supply chains; and 3) promoting large-scale restoration of degraded landscapes for sustainable production and ecosystem services. These priorities are not mutually exclusive and can be fostered through comprehensive land use planning. Where food and ecological systems are integrated within landscapes, implementation at scale of a suite of related strategies and interventions can address multiple challenges simultaneously and in line with specific site needs.



# SUSTAINABLE CITIES

The world is urbanizing at a rapid pace. Nearly 50% of the global population lives in cities and by 2050 it is expected to increase to nearly 70%, according to the United Nations. Moreover, most of this growth will be concentrated in developing countries, with nearly 90% of the increase from cities in Asia and Africa. Cities are therefore the best place to start addressing three mega-trends that drive global environmental degradation: urbanization, a rising middle class, and population growth.

Cities produce 80% of the world's gross domestic product (GDP). They consume over 75% of global energy supply and generate 70% of greenhouse gas emissions. They are increasingly choked by traffic, air pollution, and waste production. Meeting the production and consumption needs of urban populations strains rural and urban ecosystems both locally and globally. Physical expansion of urban areas can directly compromise the provision of vital ecosystem services provided by forests and biodiversity such as clean air, water catchment integrity, storm water control, and energy conservation.

If managed well, compact, resilient, inclusive, and resource-efficient cities could become drivers of green economy, contributing to both local livability and global environmental benefits.

At the individual city level, the Sustainable Cities Impact Program aims to bring about opportunities for greater integration, efficiency, synergy, and increased returns of investment in urban infrastructure. It supports an integrated approach to promote cross-sectoral and holistic urban planning and implementation, with the following objectives:

- Decarbonization of cities;
- Prevention of habitat loss / degradation in peri-urban areas;
- Integration of food systems to prevent loss/degradation of agricultural land, and reduce negative externalities in the logistics/transport system for food distribution;
- Promotion of a circular economy approach that addresses material and design engineering, consumer use, and recovery and recycling; and
- Promotion of resilient urban design to absorb potential shocks from climate and other global changes.

The GEF's Sustainable Cities Impact Program is built around the Global Platform on Sustainable Cities (GPSC), which aims to create a strong network of cities that act as global ambassadors for urban sustainability. The platform is strengthening opportunities for cutting-edge support, learning, and knowledge sharing. The Global Platform is supporting cities by expanding access to technical expertise and finance and facilitate knowledge sharing among cities through existing major global city networks, financial institutions, and technology providers.

Further, the program is also playing an important role in advancing the cause of urban sustainability in policy, both nationally and globally. It encourages the integration of ideas into local policy and institutional arrangements and facilitate stronger synergies between national and city governments.

As of late 2019 The Sustainable Cities Impact Program is supported in various capacities by: The World Bank Group, C40, WRI, ICLEI, IDB, UNIDO, AfDB, ADB, DBSA, UNEP, UNDP, UN-HABITAT and ESA.







# SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT



Forests cover around 30% of the Earth's land surface, approximately 4 billion hectares.<sup>1</sup> Rapid development and competing land uses, particularly for farming and grazing lands, commercial plantations, and infrastructure expansion, have cut wide swaths through the world's forests. These threats place remaining natural forest areas and their globally important biodiversity under heavy pressure. As human populations continue to increase, competition for land only will further intensify. Over the past 25 years, the extent of the world's forests has declined by about 3%. Yet, over the same period of time, the rate of net forest loss has been cut by over 50%.<sup>2</sup> Advances made in slowing forest decline have been achieved through a range of measures, and important among these are the forest protection, management, and restoration approaches that are at the core of sustainable forest management (SFM).

There are few places in the world where intact forest biomes still exist and allow for a more concerted and comprehensive approach to sustainable forest management. The Amazon, the Congo Basin, and some important dryland landscapes around the world represent the last geographies where a different approach to long-term development can be tested. These biomes are globally important for biodiversity and carbon storage, provide livelihoods and subsistence to communities that rely on forests and agriculture for their survival and as such qualify as "key ecosystems" where a concerted SFM approach can have value. In these globally important ecosystems, there is an opportunity to change the future development trajectory from natural resource depletion and biodiversity erosion, to one based on natural capital management and productive landscapes. The latest science

also indicates that these globally important ecosystems require integrated ecosystem-scale management for maintaining their "ecological integrity and functioning" and delivering global environmental benefits. Because of the scale of these biomes, a comprehensive and large-scale set of investments is needed as fragmented and isolated projects will not be sufficient in these large ecosystems to maintain the integrity of these unique and globally important areas.

The three geographical targets for the SFM Impact Program (Amazon, Congo Basin, Drylands) are the major ecosystems and perhaps the last places where an integrated and concerted sustainable forestry management approach can truly transform the course of development and produce multiple benefits for biodiversity, climate change, and land degradation. The novelty of this Impact Program resides in the fact that the GEF will maintain the ecological integrity of entire biomes through the concentration of efforts and investments in a manner that takes into account strong regional cross-border coordination. The SFM Impact Program is addressing the drivers of forest loss and degradation through strategies aimed at creating a better enabling environment for forest governance; supporting rational land use planning across mixed-use landscapes; strengthening the management and financing of protected areas; clarifying land tenure and other relevant policies; supporting the management of commercial and subsistence agriculture lands to reduce pressure on adjoining forests; and utilizing financial mechanisms and incentives for sustainable forest management.

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<sup>1</sup> Global Forest resources Assessment 2015, FAO: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4793e.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid









# FOCAL AREAS FOR TARGETED INVESTMENTS

The urgency of addressing global environmental challenges in an integrated manner is reflected in the GEF-7 focal area strategies as well as the Impact Programs. The focal areas remain the central organizing feature in GEF-7 and enable countries to develop discrete, focused interventions where those are best suited to meeting critical environmental objectives.

The GEF is at the same time examining the possibilities for achieving multiple, cross-focal area benefits from these investments. For example, many interventions focusing on mainstreaming biodiversity would have climate-related benefits, as would many interventions that support land degradation neutrality.



# BIODIVERSITY

The GEF has supported 1,692 projects in more than 155 countries to conserve and sustainably use global biodiversity.

As the largest funding mechanism for protected areas worldwide, the GEF has invested in over 3,300 PAs, covering more than 860 million hectares, an area larger than Brazil. The GEF has also provided biodiversity protection and planning for more than 350 million hectares of productive landscapes and seascapes.

The GEF has also supported the development of National Biosafety Frameworks in 126 countries, and their subsequent implementation under the Cartagena Protocol.

In GEF-7, the goal of GEF's biodiversity strategy is to maintain globally significant biodiversity in landscapes and seascapes. To achieve this goal, GEF investments are contributing to the following objectives:

- Mainstreaming biodiversity across sectors as well as landscapes and seascapes;
- Addressing direct drivers to protect habitats and species; and
- Further developing biodiversity policy and institutional frameworks.

GEF support to biodiversity mainstreaming focuses on sustainably managing biodiversity in productive landscapes and seascapes and ensuring that the impact of productive sectors on biodiversity is avoided, or substantially reduced or minimized. This requires improved land-use planning, sectoral policy-making, and economic decision-making that are informed by the valuation of biodiversity and the ecosystem good and services that biodiversity provides to society, in addition to improved biodiversity management approaches, including harnessing biodiversity for sustainable agriculture. In addition, the GEF continues to build capacity of countries to combat the illegal wildlife trade and the unsustainable use of species, with priority action on threatened species and wildlife.

In order to address direct drivers to protect habitats and species, the GEF is primarily supporting investments to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of protected area systems. In addition, the GEF continues to invest in the prevention and control of invasive alien species particularly in island ecosystems.

GEF supports the complete and effective implementation of the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols to improve biodiversity policy, planning, and review.





## CONSERVATION OF COASTAL WATERSHEDS IN THE CONTEXT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

The “Conservation of Coastal Watersheds in the Context of Climate Change” project is a collaboration of three federal agencies in Mexico: the National Commission for Protected Areas (CONANP), the National Forestry Commission (CONAFOR), the National Institute of Ecology and Climate Change (INECC), and a private institution, the Mexican Fund for the Conservation of Nature (FMCN). The project promotes integrated environmental management of 16 coastal watersheds to conserve biodiversity, contribute to climate change mitigation, and enhance sustainable land use. Six of these watersheds are found along the Gulf of Mexico and 10 along the continental part of the Gulf of California in regions that experience significant impact from climate change and that are habitat to globally significant biodiversity. After four years of implementation, 1.2 million hectares of protected areas in the watersheds are being consolidated to achieve effective management. The project has secured \$28.6 million in endowment funds, which have leveraged an equal amount of capital to support the project in the long term. CONAFOR is providing funding to forest owners that are conserving 12,212 hectares of key biological corridors for the jaguar (*Panthera onca*). INECC has developed six Integrated Watershed Action Plans (IWAPs) to maintain key ecosystem services such as water yield and soil retention. Coalitions of NGOs and producers are using IWAPs to align subsidies, the private sector is using the IWAPs to define actions and areas to compensate for their impact, while CONAFOR assigns higher grades to areas defined as priority by the IWAPs for its payment for ecosystem services that cover 1.1 million hectares in the selected watersheds. In 2016 the avoided emissions and carbon sequestered by the activities supported by the project reached 58% of the 4.105 metric tonnes of carbon dioxide reduction project goal.

Advances in the second half of the implementation will be measured in the second semester of 2019.

## ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE AND THE GLOBAL WILDLIFE PROGRAM

Biodiversity is increasingly threatened by the illegal wildlife trade, which is particularly acute in Africa and Asia where iconic species such as the African elephant, white and black rhinos, and pangolins are being poached to extinction. Wildlife crime also robs communities of their natural capital and livelihoods, deepens poverty and inequality, and threatens national security by causing instability and fueling conflicts. To respond to this crisis, the GEF is supporting the Global Wildlife Program (GWP), an innovative program to help tackle the supply, trade, and demand for wildlife products.

The primary objective of the GWP is to stop the poaching of animals in the forests and savannas of Africa while also reducing the demand for wildlife products in Asia. The \$131 million GWP works across 19 countries in Africa and Asia (Botswana, Cameroon, Congo Republic, Ethiopia, Gabon, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Afghanistan, India, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam). It is expected to leverage \$704 million in additional financing over the seven years of its implementation.

The GWP is improving the management of more than 21.8 million hectares of protected areas in Africa and 4.5 million hectares in Asia that are essential habitats for key species. In addition, it is expected to improve the management of 30 million hectares of landscapes and seascapes and prevent the emission of 25 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions.



# CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION

The GEF provides critical support for countries to help their transformation to a low-emission development pathway.

Since 1991, the GEF has supported over 1,300 projects to mitigate climate change in 167 countries, and support countries to fulfill their reporting and communication requirements to the UNFCCC and enhance national capacities for climate policy and decision-making.

These projects target a vast range of sectors: from technology transfer, energy efficiency, and clean energy, to sustainable transport and urban systems, to climate-smart agriculture and sustainable management of land and forests. Together, GEF investments are expected to contribute 8 billion metric tons of direct and indirect GHG emission reductions over time, the equivalent of taking 1.8 billion cars off the road for a year.

The GEF-7 climate change mitigation strategy aims to support developing countries to make transformational shifts towards low-emission development pathways compatible with the objectives of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement. Within the evolving landscape of climate finance, the strategy is designed to be as complementary as possible to other sources of climate finance, such as the Green Climate Fund.

Building on the GEF's long-standing track record of driving innovation and fostering enabling conditions, the strategy also aims at promoting private sector engagement and increased investment in low-carbon technologies. With these objectives in mind, the GEF-7 mitigation strategy looks to harness and maximize synergies with the other GEF focal areas, including through integrated programming

focusing on sustainable cities, sustainable forest management, and food commodities value chains.

To achieve the ambitious goal of reducing (or avoiding) emissions of greenhouse gases equivalent to at least 1.5 billion tons of CO<sub>2</sub>, the mitigation strategy hinges upon three fundamental pillars:

**Promote innovation and technology transfer for sustainable energy breakthroughs.** Technology is one of the keys to reducing or slowing the growth in greenhouse gas emissions, and to stabilize their concentrations. The GEF focuses its efforts on four areas: (i) de-centralized renewable power with energy storage; (ii) electric drive technologies and electric mobility; (iii) accelerated energy efficiency adoption; (iv) and clean tech innovation.

**Demonstrate mitigation options with systemic impacts.** The GEF will conduct holistic and integrated migration efforts through its Impact Programs on Sustainable Cities, Food Systems, Land, and Restoration, and Sustainable Forest Management. The Sustainable Cities Impact Program, for example, targets urban interventions with significant climate change mitigation potential to help cities shift towards low-emission and resilient urban development in an integrated manner.

**Foster enabling conditions for mainstreaming mitigation concerns into sustainable development strategies.** The GEF continues to address the need for enabling conditions to mainstream climate change concerns into the national planning and development agenda through its support for enabling activities, including Convention obligations and the Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency through sound data, analysis, and policy frameworks.



## **SUPPORTING RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECT PREPARATION IN AFRICA**

The GEF invested \$10 million in equity to capitalize the project preparation window for the Facility for Energy Inclusion (FEI), a \$500 million + debt platform focusing on renewable energy access investments across Africa. The FEI which reached the first close in August 2018 with capital from the GEF, AfDB, Sustainable Energy Fund for Africa (SEFA), Nordic Development Fund, and Calvert Impact Capital, provides senior and mezzanine debt financing to small-scale independent power producers (IPPs) and mini-grid projects. Project preparation costs are reimbursed by successful project developers, allowing the facility to remain financially sustainable over time and to continue to support the preparation of new low-carbon energy generation projects across the region. The project is expected to provide reimbursable grants for 10-15 renewable energy projects, resulting in an estimated 8.7 million tons of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions and leveraging substantial resources from private sector project developers and debt investors.

## **CATALYZING THE GLOBAL SHIFT TO ELECTRIC MOBILITY**

The transport sector is responsible for about one quarter of all energy-related global emissions. With the global fleet of vehicles expected to double by 2050, the IPCC estimates that for the sector to align with the Paris Agreement, all new vehicles will need to be electric from 2035. The new GEF-7 Global Program on Electric Mobility responds to this challenge by supporting the rapid introduction of electric mobility in low- and middle-income countries through activities at global, regional and national level. It builds on a solid basis of knowledge and outreach capacity developed by the leading electric mobility programs of the IEA and of UN Environment, to de-risk investments in electric vehicles through demonstration projects that raise awareness and strengthen capacities in developing countries. The program establishes global thematic working groups focusing on light and heavy duty vehicles, charging infrastructure, grid integration, and batteries, to support participating countries with policy guidance and knowledge products. Furthermore, Investment Support Platforms are being established in Asia, Africa and Latin America, with participation of, and inputs from, the private sector. The GEF's \$30 million investment, which leverages more than \$430 million in co-financing, supports recipient countries to meet their transportation goals under the Paris Agreement's NDCs, contributing to generate emission reductions of approximately 67 million tCO<sub>2</sub>e in the first group of 17 participating countries (Antigua

and Barbuda, Armenia, Burundi, Chile, Costa Rica, India, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Madagascar, Maldives, Peru, Saint Lucia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Togo, Ukraine, and, Uzbekistan).

## **POWERING THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY TRANSITION IN INDIA**

In India, where the potential for demand-side energy efficiency is vast, the GEF partnered with Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), an innovative public-sector financial institution and energy services company. The project aims to support the expansion of EESL's energy-savings business model in domestic and street lighting, through the promotion and delivery of highly efficient LED lightbulbs, as well as the development of new business lines, such as super-efficient ceiling fans in the domestic tri-generation sector (i.e., power, heat and cooling) and smart-grid technologies. By leveraging \$400+ million in additional resources, the GEF resources aim to provide EESL with the technical assistance and risk capital needed to scale up activities in successful areas and add new business lines. Implemented jointly by ADB and UNEP, this initiative is expected to generate approximately 38 million direct and 22 million indirect tons of GHG emission reductions through 2032.

## **THE GEF 10 ISLAND CHALLENGE: DERISKING THE TRANSITION OF THE CARIBBEAN FROM FOSSIL FUELS TO RENEWABLES**

The GEF-funded Ten Island Challenge is a four-year regional program that seeks to accelerate the transition of Caribbean island economies from heavy dependence on fossil fuels to a diverse platform of renewables and energy efficiency, thus establishing a blueprint for other Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Through the development of national energy transition strategies and investment pipelines, to date the program has already contributed to an increase of 8% renewable energy penetration in participating countries (based on the weighted average percentage share of renewable energy in power generation across the five participating countries). In parallel, over 10 megawatts of solar PV projects have been deployed in participating countries leveraging over \$15 million in private sector capital. Finally, to enable knowledge sharing on the energy transition between SIDS, the program launched the regional knowledge management platform called the CARILEC Renewable Energy Community (CAREC) together with CARILEC—the regional utility association.



# CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTION

The GEF supports adaptation to climate change in developing countries through the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), which supports urgent, medium and long-term adaptation needs in least developed countries, and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), accessible by all developing countries. Established in 2001 at the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP 7, the two funds also support implementation of the Paris Agreement. It supported 343 adaptation projects in more than 130 countries, delivering direct benefits to over 27 million people and bringing nearly 7 million hectares of land under climate resilient management.

The LDCF provides adaptation planning to address resilience needs at various timescales. It provides resilience-building investments in the diverse landscapes and sectors that constitute priorities for today's 47 LDCs. It supports capacity building in-country, to better understand risks, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change, as well as to better access climate finance and respond to UNFCCC obligations.

The Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) is accessible by all developing countries. With 78 projects, it has focused on technology transfer, innovation, and private sector engagement, as well as effective scale-up.

The goal of the GEF-7 Adaptation strategy is to strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability to the adverse impacts of climate change in developing countries, and support their efforts to enhance adaptive capacity. This goal is fully aligned with the Paris Agreement's global goal on adaptation. The strategy emphasizes three objectives for the LDCF and SCCF:

## **Reduce vulnerability and increase resilience through innovation and technology transfer for climate change adaptation.**

Effective responses to climate change require technological, social, and institutional innovation, which could be incremental or transformational in nature. The increasingly evident effects of climate change and variability require climate resilience technologies to be transferred, adapted, and deployed across the developing world.

**Mainstream climate change adaptation and resilience for systemic impact.** Adaptation presents a cross-cutting, systemic challenge for ecosystems and livelihoods. The GEF is increasing its efforts to develop adaptation projects that address other environmental and sustainable development challenges as well. For example, the GEF is helping develop climate-resilient smallholder food systems, cities that deliver efficient, integrated, and sustainable development solutions while also building resilience of populations and infrastructure to climate change and variability, and delivery of clean and resilient energy solutions, particularly for vulnerable populations.

**Foster enabling conditions for effective and integrated climate change adaptation.** The GEF continues to support countries as they develop National Adaptation Plans under the UNFCCC. These plans provide a framework that countries can refer to in integrating climate change adaptation considerations into long-term planning and processes. For example, the GEF may help advance integrated approaches that allow countries to continue to address their urgent and immediate needs, while also strengthening the institutional frameworks and capacities required to pursue adaptation strategies beyond individual projects and programs.

The new strategy also places an emphasis on enhancing complementarity with other key climate finance providers, such as the Green Climate Fund, and help address the growing demand for adaptation support and to enhance financial leverage.

With GEF's unique mandate across several multilateral environmental conventions, the LDCF and SCCF can offer effective support that capitalizes on synergy and multiple benefits. For example, approximately 50 percent of LDCF implementation projects to date contributed to land degradation and biodiversity management. Ninety-five percent of LDCF projects align to some extent with expanding synergies with other GEF focal areas. While there is already a strong track record to support integrated solutions, there exists a significant potential to harness them more systematically and intentionally towards greater impact, which the LDCF and SCCF is addressing in GEF-7.



## **SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT IN ETHIOPIA UNDER THE GREAT GREEN WALL INITIATIVE**

Climate change is putting Ethiopia's agriculture sector at risk of losing access to water. A GEF-funded project piloted climate-smart agriculture in 30 local districts known as Woredas, 70 micro-watersheds, 149 farmer groups, and 2,886 households in six intervention regions. This LDCF project received a World Bank award for innovation and excellence for its achievements in improving land rights among landless youth and women, especially by ensuring use rights over the rehabilitated degraded communal land for undertaking various natural resources-based income generating activities. A total of over 575,000 hectares of degraded land have already been rehabilitated through various physical and biological soil and water conservation measures. The project has also benefitted approximately 80,000 forest-dependent people as of 2017.

## **REDUCING URBAN FLOOD RISK IN NIGER**

The Niger River has reached record highs over recent years, resulting in increasingly unpredictable and devastating flood conditions in the surrounding areas. These conditions illustrate the combined effects of land degradation deterioration of protective infrastructure, reduced infiltration capacity of soil in upstream areas, poor land-use and urban planning; and a lack of early-warning systems. These issues, coupled with rapid population growth and widespread poverty, make Niger extremely vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change. This project supports Niger in building resilience to natural hazards, particularly urban and peri-urban flood risk, by addressing urban disaster risk management through an innovative combination of urban drainage and flood protection infrastructure, restoration of large irrigated schemes in peri-urban areas, enhanced planning capacities for drainage and urban development, sustainable land and water management practices in upstream watersheds, and capacity development for the government at the national and local

level. The project has already delivered a drinking water program with 45 mini networks and 30 equipped boreholes, focused on serving displaced people in the Diffa region. The project has also completed the construction of a protection dike in Niamey, recovered 8,364 hectares of irrigable land, developed dune fixation and biological protection of koris banks. The project is providing critical support to populations in flood affected regions, directly benefitting an estimated 4 million people.

## **ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE PACIFIC**

A regional project supported by the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) enhanced the capacity of 14 Small Island Developing States in the Pacific to adapt to climate change by mainstreaming climate change adaptation measures into relevant development policies and plans, and through demonstration projects involving adaptation technologies across the water, coastal management and food security sectors. After five years of implementation, the project had reached over 80 communities or villages, with over 40,560 people benefitting from reduction in waterborne disease due to the installation of solar water purifiers, access to safe water and storage facilities, coastal protection measures such as seawall extensions, and several other resilience-building measures.

The project also enhanced the capacities of over 160 government institutions in climate change adaptation, and strengthened or developed 20 national policies, plans, or frameworks for enhanced adaptation. In Micronesia and Niue, the project helped establish a climate change division, with associated budget. In the Marshall Islands, climate change was integrated into national water resource policies and master plans, while in the Solomon Islands, climate change was mainstreamed into the Department of Agriculture Strategies and Corporate Plan. Several countries also mainstreamed gender considerations in their revised or new policies. At the regional level the project helped develop a Practical Guide on Mainstreaming Climate Change into Development Plans and Projects.



# LAND DEGRADATION

Since 2006, when land degradation became a dedicated GEF focal area, the GEF has supported 220 projects and programs with a specific focus on supporting sustainable land management to combat desertification and deforestation, creating multiple benefits for the global environment in production landscapes.

The Land Degradation focal area projects and programs have targeted 320 million ha of agro-ecosystems globally. Based on the incoming implementation reports of the partly ongoing projects and programs, 143 million hectares are under sustainable land management (SLM). These have benefited more than 80 million smallholders through various activities such as inputs into their farming systems, improvement of irrigation structures, training and capacity building, and alternative livelihood opportunities.

The GEF's investment has helped hold the line against global land degradation, while simultaneously improving the livelihood base of millions of rural people who rely on agriculture for their livelihood.

The GEF is well-placed to help countries implement convention decisions and facilitate coordinated investments in sustainable land management practices, including LDN. The GEF investment addresses seek to address the drivers of land degradation, robust assessment of experience and existing knowledge, and knowledge and experience. The GEF strategy has two primary objectives:

## **SUPPORT ON THE GROUND IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT**

The three GEF Impact Programs form a major component of the GEF delivery towards combating land degradation and deforestation. The Food Systems, Land Use, and Restoration Impact Program provides the opportunity for an integrated approach to implementing sustainable land management to increase the prospects for food security for smallholders and communities that are dependent on farming for their livelihoods. The Sustainable Forest Management Impact Program seeks to avoid further degradation, desertification, and deforestation of land and ecosystems in drylands through the sustainable management of production landscapes. The Sustainable Cities Impact Program will create opportunity for countries to integrate voluntary LDN targets into urban planning.

## **CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT TO SUPPORT VOLUNTARY LDN TARGET IMPLEMENTATION**

A conducive enabling framework and overarching political support through the Convention is essential for LDN investments. GEF, for example, is working to embed the LDN tool into existing planning frameworks and participatory land-use planning, and is promoting policy work at national levels leading to the resolution of land tenure issues that are obstacles to LDN objectives. GEF is also making targeted investments to sustain and rebuild productive areas, mitigate the effects of drought, increase resilience, and prevent conflict and migration.



## CONSERVING BIODIVERSITY AND IMPROVING LIVELIHOODS IN INDIA

The Himalayas are well-known for their beauty and watershed function for many countries in Asia. But land degradation upstream combined with climate change are threatening the livelihoods of communities living downstream. In 2006, the GEF invested \$7 million in a project to improve livelihoods through sustainable land, water and biodiversity conservation. The initiative, led by the World Bank, attracted \$83 million in contributions from other partners. Following initial success in 11 districts, the Government of Uttarakhand turned to some 126 villages in the middle-Himalayas that were home to 74,000 people. Communities designed a watershed plan through participatory processes and acted to control land degradation, promote alternative energy and create sources of income to reduce pressure on natural resources. The project has completed 20 micro-watersheds; planted trees on 883 ha with oak regenerating naturally on 115 hectares; created 315 village ponds and 125 roof water-harvesting tanks; and secured 423 water sources. Nearly 5,000 pine briquettes have been distributed to the villagers, and more than 3,300 solar lanterns and 66 biogas plants have been installed.

## IMPROVING LAND MANAGEMENT AND RURAL LIVELIHOODS

The GEF-funded Environmental Land Management and Rural Livelihoods project in Turkey, implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), followed an integrated multi-focal area approach aiming to improve sustainability of agriculture and forest land use management through the diffusion and adoption of low-carbon technologies with win-win benefits in land degradation, climate change, and biodiversity conservation and increased farm profitability and forest productivity. The project has been implemented in Central Anatolia, where arid and semi-arid conditions prevail. Most activities are focused on the Konya Closed Basin, encompassing a production landscape of agricultural lands, pastures, forests, sand dunes, as well as wetlands and water bodies. The basin also harbors important natural sites with high ecological value.

Global environmental benefits that were generated: rehabilitation of 20,000 hectares of degraded forest lands with an annual sequestration rate of 60,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>eq; conservation agriculture was applied on 50,000 hectares avoiding emissions of 20,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>eq/year; improved rangeland management on 30,000 hectares with annual sequestration rates of 90,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>eq; and biodiversity conservation was mainstreamed in 80,000 hectares of production landscape including the restoration of natural habitats essential for maintaining agricultural productivity. The total indicative direct and indirect CO<sub>2</sub> benefits over a the project period amount close to 1 million metric tons CO<sub>2</sub>e.

## REVERSING LAND DEGRADATION BY REDUCING THE SALINITY AND ALKALINITY OF SOILS

The Shaanxi Weinan Luyang Integrated Saline and Alkaline Land Management project in China (ADB) successfully rehabilitated degraded land and improved the physical environment by reducing the salinity and alkalinity of 68,000 hectares of soils in the project area (Weinan Municipality), and reduced the impact of floods to the local residents of 51 villages, which improved agricultural production and increased agricultural yield per area by 50%, benefitting more than 40,000 smallholders.

GEF support enhanced the environmental benefits of the project through three major fields of activities:

(i) improved management of saline and alkaline soils through rehabilitation of drainage system and introduction of sustainable land and water management best practices; (ii) improved resilience to climate change of agro-ecosystems and reduce flood risk to local people; (iii) improved wetland management and rural livelihoods.

The project was fully aligned with national UNCCD strategies and plans and in line with the key priorities of the provincial governments. In this way, the scaling-up of best practices for land rehabilitation to improve the productivity of the Shaanxi provincial ecosystems was achieved, which ultimately led to the transformation and recovery of desert forest and grasslands in the Yellow River basin.



# CHEMICALS AND WASTE

Over time, the GEF has moved toward an integrated approach to chemicals and waste that combines persistent organic pollutants (POPs), ozone-depleting substances (ODS), mercury and the Strategic Approach to Integrated Chemicals Management (SAICM) in a single focal area. This approach maximizes cross-cutting global environmental benefits while continuing to support the individual chemical conventions. Investments help dispose of chemicals and wastes through the industrial chemicals and agricultural chemicals programs and there is a program dedicated to least developed countries and small island developing states. The GEF has helped 18 countries with economies in transition to meet the ODS phase-out targets of the Montreal Protocol. National and bilateral partners contributed additionally to these projects, which have transferred new technologies, enhanced recycling operations and provided training to reduce ODS use. With GEF support, consumption and production of chlorofl uorocarbons (CFCs) have been eliminated, but some work remains to address other ozone-depleting substances such as hydrochlorofl uorocarbons (HCFCs).

Since 2010, the GEF has invested in projects concerning the management and use of mercury. These range from Minamata Initial Assessments, development and capacity building to healthcare waste

management, lifecycle management of mercury-containing products and waste, and artisanal small-scale gold mining. Since 2013, the GEF has been a financial mechanism for the Minamata Convention, a global treaty to protect human health and the environment from the adverse effects of mercury.

GEF-7 explores the important synergies between the International Waters and the Chemicals and Waste focal areas to address specifically the challenge of marine litter and micro-plastics. Waste consisting of plastics can contribute to the POPs challenge as POPs contained in plastics can be released in the environment including oceans, if not properly managed. Marine litter in the form of micro-plastics to a significant extent derives from land-based activities and should also be seen in the context of waste management issues dealt with under this focal area. Recognizing the need to transform the entire life cycle of plastics to reduce marine plastic pollution, the GEF invests in a few strategic *circular economy* initiatives to promote the adoption of closed loop production and consumption patterns instead of traditional linear take-make-waste approaches. Investments focus on public/ private investments to transform the plastic life cycle.



We are at a moment when more and more chemicals are being produced and put into everything we consume. We are also at a point where the industry itself is beginning to shift to more sustainable 'green' supply chains and manufacturing. How can the chemicals industry accelerate this switch? What are the challenges ahead, and what innovations and global coalitions do we need?

The GEF is a catalyst for both governments and the private sector to help eliminate or reduce harmful chemicals and waste. The GEF's programming strategy for chemicals and waste builds on its past work in policy and priority setting, piloting technologies and techniques to build best practices, and progressively working with the private sector to help foster sound management of chemicals and waste.

The GEF has developed two key strategic objectives around chemicals and waste:

- Develop the enabling conditions, tools, and environment for the sound management of harmful chemicals and wastes;
- Reduce the prevalence of harmful chemicals and waste and support the implementation of clean alternative technologies/substances.

The GEF projects seek closer integration with global supply chains. These efforts help ensure that products crossing national borders are free of global priority substances that otherwise enter into markets and recycling chains. The GEF can help to convene the relevant stakeholders and function as an honest broker in facilitating the work needed to help transform the chemicals industry and related products and materials streams.

## MANAGING PCBS IN MEXICO

Across the globe, many polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) are widely used in electrical transformers because they are a useful fire retardant. Mexico no longer uses PCBs in new equipment, but older equipment still contains the hazardous chemical. The GEF supported a \$4.6 million project in Mexico for the environmentally sound management and destruction of PCBs, generating \$10.8 million in complementary funding from partners. The project exceeded targets, disposing of nearly 2.5 million tons of PCB oil and 5.4 million tons of equipment containing PCBs.

## PHASING OUT ODS IN BELARUS

The GEF supported a comprehensive project in Belarus to phase out ODS in the refrigeration industry and the solvent sector with a GEF investment of \$7.47 million and \$2.23 million in additional leveraged funds. The project supported the conversion of the refrigerator manufacturing industry to non-ODS materials, as well as provided training and equipment to establish 3R (recover, reclaim, and recycle) capacity in the industrial, commercial and transportation refrigeration servicing sector. Solvents used in manufacturing processes were targeted by this project through the conversion of electronics and consumer product manufacturers to use non-ODS solvent technologies in their production processes. This project also led to the development of mandatory ODS licensing, training and certification of personnel and equipment, and establishment of a permitting process for imports and exports. The project phased out about 523 ozone depleting potential (ODP)-tonnes of CFCs and 24 ODP-tonnes of halons.

## REDUCING GLOBAL EXPOSURE TO MERCURY

Artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) is the largest anthropogenic source of mercury globally. Under the Minamata Convention on Mercury, parties agreed to take steps to reduce, and where feasible eliminate, the use of mercury and mercury compounds from ASGM. To address this sector, the GEF recently approved a \$45 million global program, with \$136 million in co-financing, Global Opportunities for Long Term Development of the ASGM Sector (GEF GOLD). The GEF GOLD Program covers eight countries (Peru, Colombia, Guyana, Philippines, Indonesia, Mongolia, Kenya, and Burkina Faso) in three of the largest ASGM regions, including Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

The GEF GOLD program aims to reduce the use of mercury in the ASGM sector in the participating countries through facilitating access to finance to miners and mining communities for the introduction of low and non-mercury technologies and techniques. It also connects mines to refiners and guaranteed off-takers in order to develop sustainable ASGM supply chains.

The global environmental benefits (GEBs) include at least 145 tons of mercury reduction (approximately 10% of global emissions), but more GEBs are expected because of the replication potential of the investment funds that will be set up. The project also results in co-benefits for biodiversity and climate.



# INTERNATIONAL WATERS

Intrinsically linked to prosperity and economic growth, healthy marine and freshwater ecosystems have gained high-level global and national attention as critical to sustaining life on earth. It is globally recognized that transboundary marine and freshwater systems underpin and connect ecosystems, human health, and key economic sectors. It is therefore imperative that countries work in a coordinated fashion towards actions that will secure a healthy environment for present and future generations. At the same time, national and localized planning strategies are increasingly mainstreaming the sustainable use of these ecosystems to ensure they continue to provide valuable services, including food security, potable water, recreation opportunities and carbon sequestration, all of which contribute to GDP, livelihoods, improved quality of life and business development.

Since the creation of the GEF, the unique mandate of the GEFs International Waters Focal Area to support transboundary cooperation at all levels in shared marine and freshwater ecosystems has proven successful in achieving long term benefits. The GEF has invested in over 360 projects in more than 170 countries, supporting 47 transboundary river basins in 73 countries, 15 transboundary lakes, 13 transboundary groundwater basins and 24 of Earth's 64 large marine ecosystems.

In GEF-7 the International Waters Focal Area continues to serve its unique mandate and support transboundary cooperation at all levels in shared marine and freshwater ecosystems. Three key objectives are the targets of GEF-7 international waters investments, namely 1) strengthening Blue Economy opportunities; 2) improving management in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, and 3) enhancing water security in freshwater ecosystems.



## **SAFEGUARDING THE PACIFIC TUNA FISHERIES**

The waters surrounding the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) of the Pacific support the largest tuna fishery of any ocean. GEF support has helped establish the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, which manages tuna resources across an area that covers approximately 20% of the planet's surface. The Commission has adopted measures to limit overfishing of bigeye and yellowfin tuna stocks and is not permitting any more vessels to fish for Albacore in the North and South Pacific Ocean. It has also introduced a fee-based system to support these measures.

## **SUSTAINABLE GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT IN SADC MEMBER STATES**

Groundwater plays a significant role in the South African Development Community (SADC) region, supporting about 70% of the 250 million people that live in the region. Some member states actively integrate groundwater into their water resource management policies and laws; but generally, groundwater does not feature prominently in institutional frameworks necessary to manage water at both national and transboundary levels. GEF, along with its partners, have supported the establishment of the SADC-Groundwater Management Institute, a centre of excellence for the region that helps countries work together and overcome challenges—particularly in the water sector—, which are best addressed through cooperation and integration at the regional level.

## **INNOVATIVE FINANCING FOR WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT IN THE CARIBBEAN**

It is estimated that 85% of wastewater entering the Caribbean Sea remains untreated. The degradation caused by this is of serious concern and has clear health impact on both populations and the coastal ecosystems, as well as seriously impact the region economically. The Caribbean Regional Fund for Wastewater

Management (CRoW), established in 2011, provides sustainable innovative financing for the wastewater sector, support policy and legislative reform, and foster regional dialogue and knowledge exchange among key stakeholders in the Wider Caribbean Region.

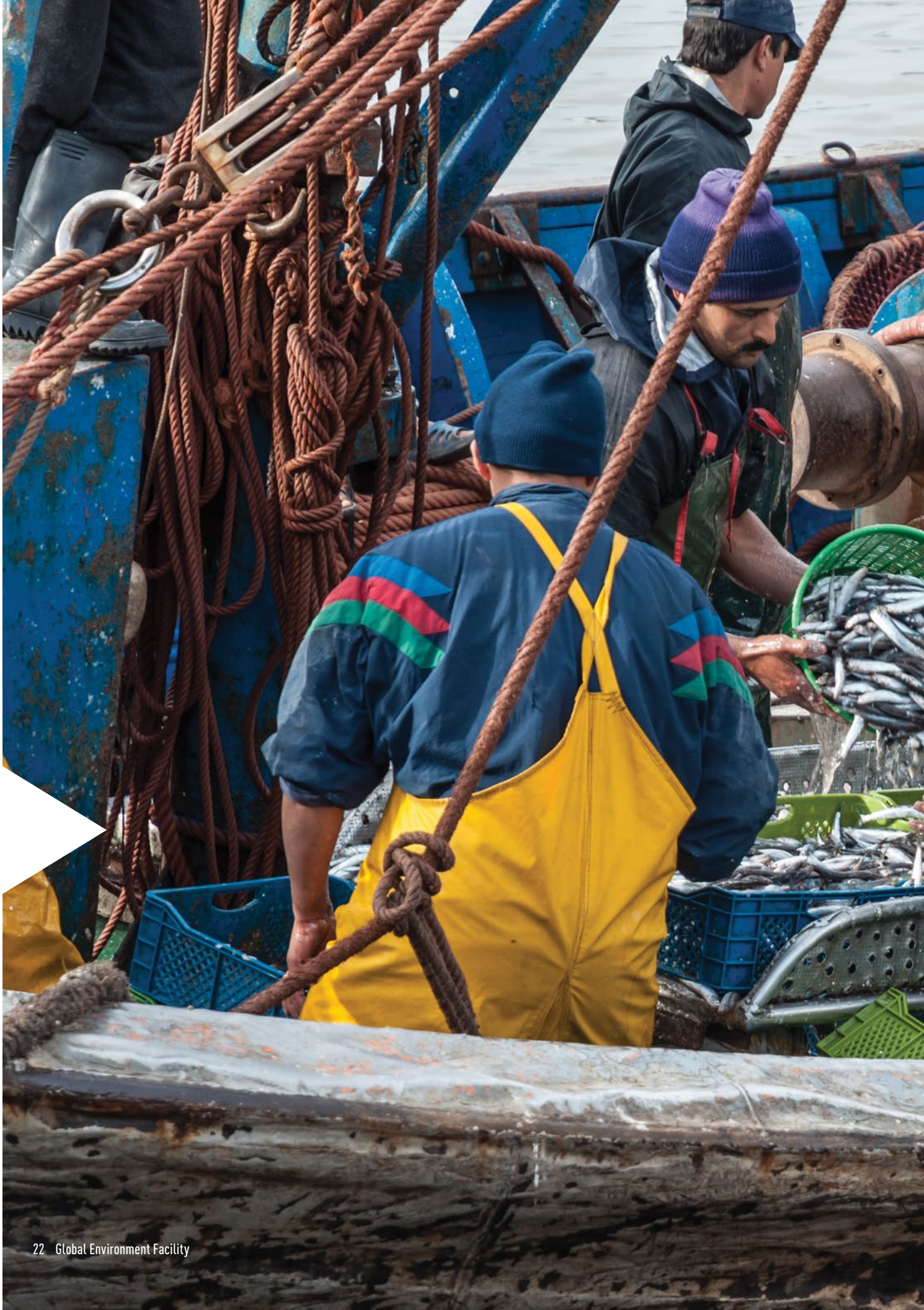
## **ENHANCING ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA REGION**

With strong buy-in from countries, International Finance Institutions and European Union partners, GEF International Waters has launched a new series of GEF investments as part of the "Mediterranean Sea: Enhancing Environmental Security" programme. The objective of the programme is to jump-start the implementation of agreed upon priority actions at the regional/national levels to reduce the major transboundary environmental stresses affecting the Mediterranean Sea and its coastal areas, while strengthening climate resilience and water security, and improving the health and livelihoods of coastal populations.

## **WEST BALKANS DRINA RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT**

The Drina River Basin is central to economic, environmental and social development of the Balkan Peninsula. About one million people reside in its 20,000 km<sup>2</sup> which span the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro. With hydrological extremes predicted to become more frequent in the region, cooperation will be increasingly important and while stakeholders will need to consider the trade-offs across sectors, including when considering the development of new hydropower infrastructure. Together with partners, the GEF is helping countries towards benefiting from rehabilitated infrastructure and strengthened capacity in water resources management, including flood management, forecasting and warning, across both the Drina and Sava River basins.









# ENGAGING THE PRIVATE SECTOR

The private sector will need to play an essential role in transforming economic systems and reversing unsustainable global trends. A number of private sector leaders have responded to the call and have started to take action. They have done so not only from a risk perspective but also to pursue business opportunities. According to the 2017 landmark report *Better Business, Better World* from the Business & Sustainable Development Commission, pursuing sustainable and inclusive business models could unlock economic opportunities worth at least \$12 trillion a year by 2030 and generate up to 380 million jobs, primarily in developing countries. However, leadership will continue to be needed to create partnerships between the private sector, government, and civil society to bring

about the profound changes necessary to meet global challenges. The GEF has a long history of engaging businesses and catalyzing private sector investment. GEF-7 offers opportunities for the public and private sectors to identify and structure new ways of working together. The GEF is moving towards a more holistic approach that mainstreams private sector engagement across GEF programs and focal areas. In GEF-7, the GEF's work with the private sector is based on two pillars:

1. Expanding the use of blended finance;
2. Mobilizing the private sector as an agent for market transformation.





# EXPANDING THE USE OF BLENDED FINANCE

Since 2008, the GEF and its partner agencies have successfully used a wide array of blended finance such as debt, equity and guarantees to attract private sector investment and deliver global environmental benefits beyond business as usual. In GEF-6, the Non-Grant Instrument Pilot attracted more proposals than could be funded and resulted in 11 innovative projects that included \$99.5 million in GEF funding while attracting \$1.8 billion in co-financing through a balanced regional distribution addressing fundamental drivers of global environmental degradation. The pilot demonstrated that non-grant instruments can be used in blended finance structures that provide high leverage of GEF investment and that private

sector resources can be successfully mobilized in “frontier” areas such as land degradation, biodiversity, chemicals and waste, and international waters.

Under GEF-7, the GEF is accelerating the use of blended finance in support of delivering global environmental benefits, and continues to catalyze investments from capital markets at global and national levels aligned with focal area objectives. The GEF Partnership is continuously innovating, keeping track of global trends in blended finance and seeking more opportunities to invest in natural resources management projects.





# MOBILIZING THE PRIVATE SECTOR AS AN AGENT FOR MARKET TRANSFORMATION

The GEF-7 strategy offers enhanced opportunities to work collaboratively with the private sector as an agent for market transformation. GEF-7 has shifted the focus of investment to create enduring public-private partnerships that address the underlying drivers of environmental degradation. Transformation, or systems change, is the centerpiece of the GEF's efforts to maximize impacts and scale-up integrated approaches with the private sector.

The new Impact Programs in particular are designed to foster the private sector's early contribution to the design of projects with a value chain approach to address both sustainable patterns of production and consumption.

The Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration, Sustainable Cities and Sustainable Forest Management Impact Programs bring together governments and the private sector to work collaboratively on common environmental challenges to have direct and durable effects at regional and global scales on ecology, economics and societies.

And there are leading examples of success: the GEF has enlisted the support of major palm oil producers who have committed to "zero-deforestation" palm oil production, facilitating training and capacity building for smallholders that form the foundation of the supply chain. In Paraguay, McDonald's has joined this initiative to support zero-deforestation beef production. Major appliance and equipment manufacturers such as Philips, Osram, ABB, MABE are supporting the Sustainable Energy for All effort to accelerate energy efficiency and leapfrog developing markets to more efficient equipment. The International Maritime Organization and major shippers committed voluntarily to an international regulatory framework which reduces the spread of invasive species through the Globallast Program, leading to formal adoption of the approach in the Ballast Water Management Convention (BWM) in 2017. The GEF GOLD partnership which aims at taking mercury out of the supply chain, builds a bridge between suppliers and corporate consumers of gold, such as computer, high end jewelry, as well as financial sector, enabling new approaches to reduce harmful mercury emissions across the full supply chain.









# ENGAGING FOR ENHANCED RESULTS

The GEF's work is guided by engagement policies to strengthen projects, build country capacity and ownership, and work with stakeholders for better results. They reflect core GEF institutional priorities in the areas of safeguards, gender

equality, the rights of indigenous peoples and stakeholder engagement to protect against unintended social and environmental harms. They also express the values of the GEF Partnership.



# ENHANCING & MONITORING RESULTS

The GEF has set targets for achieving global environmental benefits using 11 core indicators that capture major results during GEF-7. These are shown in the box across.

The GEF's results framework allows countries, agencies, and the Secretariat to report on and monitor progress toward results generated by GEF projects and programs, including multiple benefits across focal areas. These results are reflected on the GEF website and reported to GEF Council and the Conventions which GEF serves. GEF core indicators are based on clear technical definitions and methodological guidelines to facilitate consistent application across all projects and programs. More streamlined reporting on project- and program-level results allows the

aggregation of project data at the portfolio level and supports evidence-based decisions to inform and strengthen future investments.

These targets reflect the GEF's commitment to contribute to turning the tide of environmental degradation, and meet the critical challenges facing us today. Looking forward, the GEF-7 results architecture will support the efforts to catalyze a transformation of the key systems that otherwise drive the deterioration of the global environment. GEF-7 also emphasizes increased operational efficiency, accountability, transparency, and sharing of knowledge and lessons—to better inform future work and create the strongest opportunities available to protect and restore the global environment.

## BOX 1: 11 GEF CORE INDICATORS

1. Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use (hectares)
2. Marine protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use (hectares)
3. Area of land restored (hectares)
4. Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas)
5. Area of marine habitat under improved practices to benefit biodiversity (hectares; excluding protected areas)
6. Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated (metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e)
7. Number of shared water ecosystems (fresh or marine) under new or improved cooperative management
8. Globally over-exploited fisheries moved to more sustainable levels (metric tons)
9. Reduction, disposal/destruction, phase out, elimination, and avoidance of chemicals of global concern and their waste in the environment and in processes, materials, and products (metric tons of toxic chemicals reduced)
10. Reduction, avoidance of emissions of POPs to air from point and non-point sources (grams of toxic equivalent gTOE)
11. Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment



# ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS AND FIDUCIARY STANDARDS

Environmental and Social Safeguards (or Standards) are essential tools to prevent and mitigate undue harm to people and the environment in the design and implementation of projects. In carrying out its mandate to generate global environmental benefits, the GEF is improving its ability to effectively and equitably manage environmental and social risks and impacts and improve outcomes of all GEF-financed projects and programs.

To facilitate this process, the GEF updated its Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards in December 2018. This new Policy reflects the GEF's commitment to sustainable development and sets out the GEF's approach to avoiding, preventing, minimizing, mitigating and managing any adverse impacts that GEF financed projects and programs may have on people or the environment. The policy also provides opportunities for GEF to better incorporate environmental and social considerations throughout the project cycle in ways that not only include "do no harm" safeguard but also helps identify opportunities to improve environmental and social outcomes of GEF projects and programs.

The updated policy builds on a robust consultative process engaging GEF Agencies and a multi-stakeholder Working Group on Environmental and Social Safeguards. As a result, the GEF's new Safeguard Standards are in line with international best standard,

including expanded and strengthened minimum standards in areas such as:

- labor and working conditions;
- community health, safety, and security;
- climate and disaster risks;
- disability inclusion;
- disadvantaged or vulnerable individuals or groups;
- adverse gender-related impacts, including gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse; and
- Indigenous Peoples.

The new safeguards set the minimum requirements for the GEF Agencies to identify and manage environmental and social risks and impacts in GEF-financed projects and programs. The Policy further requires all GEF Agencies to have adequate policies, procedures, systems, and capabilities in place to ensure the following nine minimum standards are met at all levels of project and program implementation, including by executing partners.

The GEF also has a policy on Fiduciary Standards and other measures in place to ensure robust systems to maintain financial integrity, quality and efficiency in operations. These can be found on the GEF website at [www.thegef.org](http://www.thegef.org), under Documents, Policies and Guidelines.

## BOX 2: GEF'S MINIMUM STANDARDS

1. Environmental and Social Assessment, Management, and Monitoring
2. Accountability, Grievance, and Conflict Resolution
3. Biodiversity Conservation and the Sustainable Managing of Living Natural Resources
4. Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement
5. Indigenous Peoples
6. Cultural Heritage
7. Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention
8. Labor and Working Conditions
9. Community Health, Safety, and Security







# SUPPORTING GENDER EQUALITY

Women constitute half of the world's population and are essential to every approach required for safeguarding the global environment. Persistent inequalities between men and women, however, hold back today's prospects for sustainable development. The potential transformation of gender approaches stems not only from the opportunity to engage more people in environmental efforts in terms of absolute numbers, but also through the inclusion of the unique skills, knowledge, and experiences of women in their roles as the primary users and stewards of many natural resources. The GEF's Policy on Gender Equality, adopted in 2017, marks an increased institutional ambition to catalyze projects and actions that generate greater environmental impact through gender-responsive approaches and results. We have made good progress. Recent analysis indicates that 66% of GEF-6 projects invested in gender analyses during project preparation, and 78% used sex-disaggregated indicators to measure results. There has also been a steady increase in the share of projects reporting on gender activities and results; from 54% of GEF-4 projects to 73% of GEF-5 projects. In a project in Mauritania, women and young people now make up more than 50% of project participants and are benefitting from the project's multi-dimensional approach to reducing poverty and promoting sustainable natural resource management. With support to develop their skills, women are improving the quality and quantity of their produce and increasing their competitiveness on the market. In addition to generating greater income, women are increasing their voice and influence outside their households by taking on more and more decision-making roles in producer organizations. Improvements in access to drinking water are also making a big difference to the daily lives of women and girls, saving them an average of five hours per day and freeing their time for education, money-making activities and participation in the community.

To be effective, efforts to stem environmental degradation must tackle its drivers and contribute to systems change in key areas, such as the production and consumption of food, energy, and goods and services, and the growth and management of cities. It must include efforts to address interconnected drivers for unsustainability,

exclusion, and inequality, and involve actions on many fronts, such as promoting an equal voice in planning and decision-making among key actors, and creating opportunities for both women and men to develop, support, and benefit from sustainable solutions to environmental and social challenges. Concerted collaborative efforts will be needed to narrow gender gaps in areas such as control over natural resources, participation and decision-making, and access to benefits and services. This will not only contribute to greater gender equality, but also help unleash women's potential as key agents of change to achieve global environmental benefits.

The GEF's Policy on Gender Equality places the GEF gender approach to gender squarely on par with this new thinking and practices. It marks an increased ambition to collaborate with governments, the private sector, and civil society to catalyze projects and actions that have the potential to materialize greater environmental impact through gender-responsive approaches and results.

Collaborative commitments on sustainability and integrated approaches holds renewed promise to harness opportunities to connect global environmental benefits and gender equality, including:

- Supporting women's improved access, use, and control of resources, including land, water, forest, and fisheries;
- Enhancing women's participation and role in natural resources decision-making processes, with women as agents of change at all levels;
- Targeting women as specific beneficiaries and creating opportunities from sustainable livelihoods and income-generation opportunities such as conservation, rehabilitation, and restoration actions for women;
- Investing in women's skills and capacity by supporting capacity development of different groups, including communities and women's organizations.





# ENGAGING CIVIL SOCIETY

Since its inception the GEF has recognized that effective civil society engagement is key to achieving its mission. Civil society organizations (CSOs) working in GEF programs and projects, enhance country ownership and leverage valuable partnerships and resources.

The GEF values the role CSOs play ensuring that the needs of affected communities are adequately met, providing specialized experience and knowledge, improving project design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation, among others. In addition to their role at the country, program, and project levels, CSOs contribute to the formulation of policies and strategies and provide a valuable voice to the Council deliberations and Replenishment processes.

The Updated Vision for engaging civil society with the GEF approved by Council in 2017 includes an updated set of objectives and principles

to provide an overall guide to this engagement. The updated Vision is designed to complement and reinforce other key dimensions of civil society engagement with the GEF, including in the design and implementation of GEF projects and programs.

Furthermore, the GEF policies on stakeholder engagement, gender equality, and environmental and social safeguards reinforce the need for meaningful participation of civil society, including local communities, indigenous peoples, youth, women, and girls, in GEF's financed-activities.

Looking ahead, the GEF remains committed to enhancing its engagement with CSOs in a constructive, inclusive, and transparent manner to improve the effectiveness of its operations and the impact of its programs and projects.

## BOX 3: OTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR CIVIL SOCIETY TO ENGAGE WITH THE GEF

- **Access to grants of the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP):** The SGP is a corporate program of the GEF and the only grant window exclusively dedicated to financing projects conceived and executed by civil society organizations. For more information see page 33.
- **GEF Consultations with CSOs:** to be held on the day prior to Council and are open to a limited number of self-funded and sponsored CSOs. During the Consultations, CSOs will be invited to present on topics as chosen by the Council, with input from CSOs and the GEF Secretariat.
- **GEF's Expanded Constituency Workshops (ECW):** will continue providing opportunities for regional, national and local CSOs to participate and interact with government officials, agencies, GEF Secretariat staff and other CSOs in each GEF region, share experiences, lessons learned and strengthen their ability to engage with the GEF.
- **CSO participation at Council Meetings:** focus on sharing the voices of communities and other stakeholders in the field, while still maintaining robust engagement on policy issues. For this reason, Council will invite two groups of CSOs to its biannual meetings: 1) regional CSO representatives and 2) local CSOs with expertise in a technical or geographic area, as per Council recommendations during the previous meeting.





# SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME

The GEF's Small Grants Programme (SGP) is a key component of GEF's strategy to address global environmental degradation, through the financing of local initiatives from civil society and community-based organizations. The Programme has provided over \$612 million to 22,592 projects, leveraging more than \$919 million in co-financing, in cash and in kind, since its inception in 1992. GEF SGP projects are managed by community-based organizations and indigenous peoples currently in 125 countries. These innovative small grants, on average about \$25,000 each, contribute to addressing multiple global environmental benefits, while improving livelihoods of local communities. Of the completed projects between 2017 and 2018, 92% were gender responsive and 29% were led by women. For example, in Brazil, SGP supported a project implemented by the indigenous Waurá people aimed at recovering traditional pepper varieties and aguapé salt production, in Sierra Leone, SGP worked with rural women in the conservation of the Gola Rainforest, and in Colombia SGP worked with women to protect the mangrove ecosystem in the Naya river.

Based on lessons learned during the last 25 years, and inputs from recent stakeholder consultations, including with governments, Convention focal points, and the private sector, the Small Grants Programme places greater focus in GEF-7 on promoting strategic and results-based investments at the local level in alignment with

the GEF's Impact Programs and focal area investments. SGP-financed projects could require greater focus on promoting and supporting innovative and scalable initiatives at the local level to protect the global environment in priority landscapes and seascapes. SGP could also support projects that would serve as "incubators" of innovation, with the potential for broader replication of successful approaches through larger projects supported by the GEF and/or other partners.

The SGP gives priority in GEF-7 to the following strategic initiatives, which complement the Impact Programs at the community level: 1) Sustainable Agriculture and Fisheries; 2) Low-Carbon Energy Access Benefits; 3) Community-based Threatened Ecosystems and Species Conservation: Land and Water; 4) Local to Global Coalitions in Chemicals and Waste Management; and 5) Catalyzing Sustainable Urban Development.

The SGP's Country Programming Strategy prioritizes critical landscapes/seascapes to focus its programming on globally recognized important ecosystems (including Key Biodiversity Areas). It continues to seek synergies, implement multi-sectoral approaches by involving communities at the landscapes/seascapes level, and facilitate communities' innovative actions to effectively manage the complex mosaic landscapes/seascapes.



The background of the page is a photograph showing the silhouettes of people on a boat, likely a traditional dugout canoe, against a bright orange sunset sky. The boat is on the water, and the people are holding long poles or oars. The overall mood is serene and traditional.

# WORKING WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Many of the world's ecosystems and biodiversity areas of high importance overlap with indigenous peoples' lands, territories, and resources. The GEF is dedicated to ensuring that its operations fully respect the dignity, human rights, economies, cultures, and traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and their members. More than 426 GEF projects involve indigenous peoples. In addition, 15% of GEF SGP projects, about 2,500 projects, have been directly awarded to indigenous peoples.

The Integrated Ecosystem Management in Indigenous Communities Project in Central America is a GEF investment of \$9.7 million that leveraged \$39.9 million to strengthen the role of indigenous peoples in biodiversity conservation and management. The total area inhabited by indigenous people in Central America is estimated to be as high as 170,000 km<sup>2</sup>, almost one-third of the area of the seven countries that make up the region. The projects emphasize achieving effective conservation of biodiversity and natural resources in the seven Central American countries (Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama) by strengthening the capacity of indigenous peoples to protect and manage their natural and cultural resources, as well as rescuing and reinforcing traditional land-use practices they have developed over centuries.

Building on this foundation, in GEF-7 the GEF continues to work with indigenous peoples and local communities, national governments,

NGOs, and others to strengthen the capacity of IPLCs to protect the global environment. The GEF works with IPLCs across the portfolio through activities such as reducing mercury pollution from artisanal and small-scale gold mining, conserving agrobiodiversity and creating market opportunities for traditional varieties, preventing land degradation through traditional agricultural practices, developing and reinforcing community-based natural resource management, and supporting the establishment of Access and Benefits Sharing systems under the Nagoya Protocol.

In addition to supporting IPLC's environmental stewardship throughout the GEF's work, the GEF has created a global set aside that will focus in geographies where IPLC territories that are home to globally significant biodiversity along with potentially important carbon stocks and that are under threat.

Project investments focus on:

- Site-based conservation and sustainable use;
- Sustainable financing of IPLCs-driven conservation; and
- Capacity development for IPLC organizations and integration of diverse knowledge systems to achieve conservation and sustainable natural resource management outcomes.









# KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING AT THE GEF

Knowledge is a primary asset of the GEF Partnership, and knowledge generation and sharing are critical for the GEF to achieve a lasting impact in safeguarding the global environment.

The GEF investments underpin the generation and exchange of knowledge around global environmental issues, facilitating the capture, synthesis, transfer and uptake of this knowledge within and beyond the GEF Partnership. Accordingly, the GEF has been

financing targeted knowledge and learning components in its projects, including knowledge hubs, platforms, communities of practice, distance learning, and information sharing tools. In addition, every GEF project is required to develop and implement a “knowledge management approach” to enhance learning, knowledge exchange and capture/dissemination of lessons learned and best practice.



To facilitate and enhance knowledge sharing and learning across the Partnership, the GEF has also introduced several innovative knowledge and learning tools and initiatives:

### **GEF ACADEMY**

The GEF Academy is a GEF learning initiative that provides an online and face-to-face curriculum of courses/learning events designed to enhance the capacity of GEF partners and stakeholders to engage with the GEF and to deliver global environmental benefits. Courses are developed and offered in partnership with GEF Agencies, GEF IEO and STAP, as well as other like-minded institutions that work on the global environment.

### **GEF KALEO “ASK THE EXPERT” ONLINE SEARCH TOOL**

GEF Kaleo is a free online knowledgebase that is powered by machine learning. It is an easy to access “question and answer” platform that provides GEF partners and stakeholders up to date information regarding GEF policies and operations. GEF Kaleo delivers answers to common questions about the GEF that are vetted by experts and updated regularly. Topics such as GEF policies and procedures are comprehensively covered in fast, bite-sized, and accurate manner.

### **GEF KNOWLEDGE DAYS**

The GEF Knowledge Day is an experiential peer-to-peer knowledge sharing and learning event that takes place in recipient countries and is designed around project site visits or knowledge fairs. It primarily aims to enable key GEF partners in a country or region (i.e. GEF focal points, focal points from key environmental conventions, civil society representatives, etc.) to learn from GEF projects and discuss lessons and good practice approaches.

### **THE ART OF KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE: A RESULTS-FOCUSED PLANNING GUIDE AND WORKSHOPS**

This guide highlights a variety of GEF case studies and examples of successful knowledge exchange in GEF projects, as well as lessons learned from implementing these initiatives for enhanced global environmental impact. It is the product of collaboration across the GEF Partnership, offering a practical step-by-step blueprint with illustrative examples on how to design, implement, and monitor knowledge exchange embedded in projects.

The guide features the free augmented reality mobile app Blippar which enables online access to the guide from around the world. And the Art of Knowledge Exchange Workshops, organized by the GEF, help introduce the guide to GEF country counterparts, demonstrating how to use it in project design and implementation.

### **KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT (KM) ADVISORY GROUP**

The GEF KM Advisory Group consists of interested members of the GEF Partnership, including GEF Agencies, STAP, IEO, CSO Network, countries and the Conventions. The Group serves as an informal vehicle for collaboration and consultation on the development, planning and execution of the GEF’s KM approach across the GEF Partnership. It supports the GEF’s KM Agenda and functions as a sounding board for proposed KM initiatives.

The KM Advisory Group also functions as a GEF-wide knowledge exchange platform where GEF partners can learn from and leverage each other’s KM efforts, eventually building links with each other’s systems and undertaking collaborative KM initiatives. The Group stays in touch virtually and holds face-to-face meetings twice a year, following Council meetings.





# COUNTRY SUPPORT PROGRAMME

All GEF recipient countries can benefit more effectively from the GEF when they develop the capacity to participate fully and to engage in and contribute to the protection of the global environment. The Country Support Programme (CSP) strengthens the capacity of GEF Focal Points, Convention Focal Points, civil society, and GEF Agency staff to support projects and programs that benefit the global environment in their countries and constituencies through a better understanding of the GEF. The Country Support Program is the major outreach vehicle for the GEF and comprises a variety of opportunities for meetings and workshops to promote learning and dialogue among different GEF stakeholder groups.

Under GEF-6, CSP conducted a total of 39 Expanded Constituency Workshops (ECWs) reaching more than 2,000 participants from over 120 countries. These events keep Participants up to date on GEF strategies, policies, and procedures, and encourage coordination and team work at the national level. The ECWs provide opportunities for specialized training in cooperation with GEF Agencies, and allow other relevant meetings to take place back-to-back, such as civil society consultations, meetings with

Convention Secretariats, discussions on specific projects, and reviewing of national programming of GEF resources. ECWs include a GEF Knowledge Day as a critical component for learning by visiting and analyzing specific GEF projects.

The CSP also supports an annual GEF Introduction Seminar for new Agency and country staff; Constituency Meetings where Council Members and Alternates meet with the focal points of their Constituency to consider issues before the Council; National Dialogues that discuss GEF programming, national coordination with relevant line ministries, and serve to validate and disseminate national objectives, strategies, and policies.

The strategic objectives of the Country Support Program remain fully relevant under GEF-7. Countries have reported that the needs addressed by the program remains high and the intensity of program engagement is expected to increase. The type of activities currently financed by the on-going program will continue to shape future offerings, with greater emphasis on the unique features of the GEF-7 package offerings, with the goal of helping countries to engage and participate in new opportunities.







## GEF AGENCIES

The GEF Agencies support governments in the development, implementation and management of GEF projects. They are:

- African Development Bank (AfDB)
- Asian Development Bank (ADB)
- Brazilian Biodiversity Fund (FUNBIO)
- Conservation International (CI)
- Development Bank of Latin America (CAF)
- Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA)
- European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- Foreign Economic Cooperation Office, Ministry of Environmental Protection of China (FECO)
- Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)
- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
- West African Development Bank (BOAD)
- World Bank Group
- World Wildlife Fund US (WWF-US)

## UN CONVENTIONS SUPPORTED BY THE GEF

The GEF serves as financial mechanism to five international environmental conventions. These are:

- Minamata Convention on Mercury
- Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)
- United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD)
- United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)













The Global Environment Facility was established on the eve of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit to help tackle our planet's most pressing environmental problems. Since then, the GEF has provided **over \$18.1 billion in grants and mobilized an additional \$94.2 billion in co-financing** for more than **4,500 projects in 170 countries**. Today, the GEF is an international partnership of 183 countries, international institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector that addresses global environmental issues.

### THE GEF IS:

- A unique partnership of 18 agencies—including United Nations agencies, multilateral development banks, national entities and international NGOs—working with 183 countries to address the world's most challenging environmental issues. The GEF has a large network of civil society organizations, works closely with the private sector around the world, and receives continuous inputs from an independent evaluation office and a world-class scientific panel.
- A financial mechanism for five major international environmental conventions: the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
- An innovator and catalyst that supports multi-stakeholder alliances to preserve threatened ecosystems on land and in the oceans, build greener cities, boost food security and promote clean energy for a more prosperous, climate-resilient world.



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