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## FOURTH OVERALL PERFORMANCE STUDY OF THE GEF (OPS4)

### INTERIM REPORT

(PREPARED BY THE GEF EVALUATION OFFICE)

# Fourth Overall Performance Study (OPS4) of the GEF



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## Interim Report

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## Executive Summary

1. The Fourth Overall Performance Study (OPS4) is expected to be delivered on time to the fifth replenishment process of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in early September 2009. This interim report contains an overview of the evidence emerging so far. While most of the preliminary findings in this report should not be taken as final, they are nevertheless brought to the attention of the replenishment meeting in June 2009 to provide an indication of the content and direction of the final OPS4 report.
2. The GEF operates in a changing world, where the urgency of action on global environmental issues is increasing, and where public funding for international cooperation on environmental and related sectors has steadily declined since 1997. In recent years, several new programs and funds have been initiated; however, many have not yet started their disbursements. Fragmentation and a lack of coordination are apparent in the international governance structure for global environmental issues. Within this context, the GEF needs to continue to focus on its role and mandate to provide new and additional grant and concessional funding to meet the agreed incremental costs of measures to achieve agreed global environmental benefits.
3. Evaluative evidence so far suggests that the GEF performs this role through catalyzing action in three broad categories: (1) “foundational” and enabling activities, focusing on policy, regulatory frameworks, and national priority setting and relevant capacity; (2) medium-size and full-size projects and the Small Grants Programme, which focus on demonstration, capacity development, innovation, and market barrier removal; and (3) full-size projects with high rates of cofunding, catalyzing investments or implementing a new strategic approach at the national level.
4. The impact assessments of the GEF Evaluation Office suggest that GEF support in all three categories is progressing toward impact. In the climate change and ozone-depleting substances (ODS) focal areas, where the causal chains are relatively short from outcomes to impact on reduced or avoided emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) or phaseout of production and use of chemicals, many projects show impact at completion point. In the biodiversity and international waters focal areas, where causal chains often need decades to lead to improvements, a much lower number of projects show impact at completion point—yet a high number of projects show that they can progress toward impact. These assessments show that GEF support delivers results when implemented.
5. Yet the GEF continues to be perceived by many as “failing to deliver.” The evidence gathered so far through various evaluations and OPS4 case studies suggests that the preparation phase of project ideas, appraisal, and approval is still inefficient and slow. Reform processes have not yet led to visible improvements at the country level. The final report of OPS4 will aim to provide insight as to causes and possible solutions. While further improvements in the programming phase are necessary, the final report will also look at whether the current funding levels of the GEF are sufficient for the kind of support the GEF is supposed to make available according to the guidance of the conventions and its catalytic and incremental role. Current evidence suggests that funding levels are not adequate.
6. GEF support continues to be in line with guidance from the conventions, where applicable, as noted in the Third Overall Performance Study (OPS3). There is no

evidence that the increasing emphasis on national programming in the GEF leads to reduced attention for global environmental issues. By becoming signatories to a convention, countries are required to bring their national policies in line with convention obligations. Evidence so far suggests that countries have used GEF support to introduce new policies and to develop the requisite environmental legislation and regulatory frameworks.

7. This interim report identifies two issues that will be further explored in the final report. First, developments in GEF-4 have led to increased emphasis on national programming of GEF support. Many global environmental problems tend to be transboundary in nature. Tackling transboundary problems in the context of national programming will be a challenge for GEF-5. Second, the current structure of the GEF is under increased strain, due to external and internal factors. OPS3 concluded that the GEF as a network organization was reaching its limits with 10 Agencies. Evaluative evidence so far suggests that the GEF needs to solve the tension in its network relationships in order to operate smoothly and efficiently, particularly in the identification of project ideas, the programming of national support, and project appraisal and approval.

8. The final OPS4 report will contain an assessment of GEF governance in terms of its current structure and the role of its various components. However, one governance issue needs immediate attention. Regarding the replenishment process, this report notes that current best practice is to involve recipient countries as members of the process; for example, the 15th replenishment of the International Development Association included nine borrower country representatives. Resolution of this issue cannot wait until the final report. This interim report recommends that:

**Recipient countries of the GEF should be included in the replenishment process.**

9. The final report will contain the full evidence as related to the terms of reference and the key questions of OPS4. This interim report does not aspire to a full overview. All findings presented here are preliminary and can change or be nuanced in the final report. In the conduct of OPS4 to date and in the preparation of this report, the Office has received and incorporated comments and suggestions from GEF stakeholders, the Quality Assurance Peer Group (composed of colleagues from independent evaluation offices of GEF Agencies), and the two Senior Independent Evaluation Advisors. The Evaluation Office remains fully responsible for the contents of this report.

## The GEF in a Changing World

10. The Global Environment Facility was created to provide new and additional grant and concessional funding to meet the agreed incremental costs of measures to achieve agreed global environmental benefits. These principles have not changed with the incorporation of new focal areas and partners over time. To better understand how they could be applied in the upcoming period of GEF-5, the Fourth Overall Performance Study will provide an overview of global environmental and development trends and the international architecture for global environmental issues as well as the current understanding of how global environmental problems might be solved, how much funding would be needed to do so, and how the GEF could be positioned in this changing architecture in line with its mandate and achievements to date.

11. In recent years, climate change has captured the attention of the international community, given the severity of the problem and its truly global consequences. Reports of the Fourth Assessment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) point to the risk of abrupt and irreversible changes. Recent studies point toward more rapid onset than predicted, with ice melting more rapidly than anticipated in both polar regions and a realization of worst-case IPCC scenarios.<sup>1</sup> Negotiations to set new targets for emissions are still under way, but no obvious breakthroughs are yet appearing and the gap between the developed world, emerging nations, and least developed countries is continuing to widen. There is widespread agreement that action to ensure sufficient reduction of greenhouse gas emissions would be very costly and will exceed available public funds by several orders of magnitude. It is also increasingly clear that the costs of *not* taking sufficient action early on will be dramatic; these were calculated by the 2006 Stern Review as up to 20 percent of a country's gross domestic product.<sup>2</sup>

12. Accelerated climate change will compound related global environmental problems. Ecosystems undergoing additional stress through higher or lower temperatures, more or less rainfall, and/or more frequent extreme weather events will lead to higher rates of species extinction. This may threaten plants with limited abilities to move with changing habitats as well as other species who in the past have shown to be vulnerable. Changing patterns in agriculture and massive land conversion, partly as a result of rapidly escalating biofuel production, may exert additional pressures on natural ecosystems. Currently, 60 percent of ecosystems are degraded or are being used unsustainably. Extinction of species is 100 to 10,000 times the rate before human intervention in the environment. More rapid climate change will only reinforce these trends.

13. Possibly the only positive news about global environmental issues is that the world community has managed to stop the production of most ozone-depleting substances. The GEF has played an important role in supporting Eastern Europe and Central Asia countries with economies in transition in this effort. However, it is increasingly clear that ODS alternatives have adverse climate change effects and that current stockpiles are being reintroduced illegally into use. Furthermore, the list of dangerous chemicals being

<sup>1</sup> See the conclusions of the Scientific Congress on Climate Change, Copenhagen, March 2009 (not yet formally published) and the new projections of the MIT Climate Change model: Sokolov and others, "Probabilistic Forecast for 21st Century Climate Based on Uncertainties in Emissions (without Policy) and Climate Parameters," *Journal of Climate* 22(10).

<sup>2</sup> N. Stern, *The Economics of Climate Change: The Stern Review* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

added to the environment is expanding rapidly. The final OPS4 report will include a more detailed discussion of this issue.

14. The “tragedy of the commons” continues with regard to several global environmental issues, notably those concerning international oceans, polar regions, and space. An example is the North Pacific Subtropical Gyre, also known as the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. This is an area twice the size of Texas covered with floating refuse—cups, bottle caps, plastic packaging—brought together by the prevailing currents in the Pacific. Most of this refuse is disintegrating into tiny polymers that may be mistaken for plankton and thereby enter the food chain.

15. The international architecture and governance arrangements needed to deal with these increasingly urgent global environmental problems are complex. Numerous multilateral environmental agreements aim to tackle specific problems; frequently, these have overlapping mandates and compete for limited resources. The Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations recently reported that coordination and cohesion among all these agreements is poor; in some cases, they are even in conflict with one another.<sup>3</sup> Proposals for greater collaboration, synthetic action, and better coordination have so far not yielded tangible results.

16. The pressing need for urgent action is clear, yet the current international situation is not conducive to such reforms. With the emergence of the financial crisis in developed countries, the focus of international efforts is on stabilizing the international financial architecture and on promoting international trade as well as preserving and creating jobs. The recent meeting of the G-20 laid the groundwork for infusing the financial system with trillions of dollars, but barely mentioned the environmental challenges the world is facing. At the same time, the financial crisis is further exacerbating environmental problems, notably by making cheaper but ecologically unsustainable alternatives for energy, chemicals, land, and water more attractive to the detriment of the environment.

17. On the investment side, some major increases in funding were announced at the World Bank through pledges of more than \$6 billion to create climate change trust funds. Many bilateral donors have opened up funding possibilities for climate change–related activities. This increase in funding promises is recent and not yet discernible in official statistics (see figure 1 and table 1). The most up-to-date information from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development shows a decline in official development assistance (ODA) for funding of environmental issues. A similar decline is observed in donor funding of the GEF, which decreased from 0.84 percent of ODA in GEF-2 to an estimated 0.48 percent of ODA in GEF-4. The comparison is noteworthy, even if not all GEF funding is considered to be ODA.

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<sup>3</sup> JIU, *Management Review of Environmental Governance within the United Nations System* (Geneva, UN, 2008 (JIU/REP/2008/3))

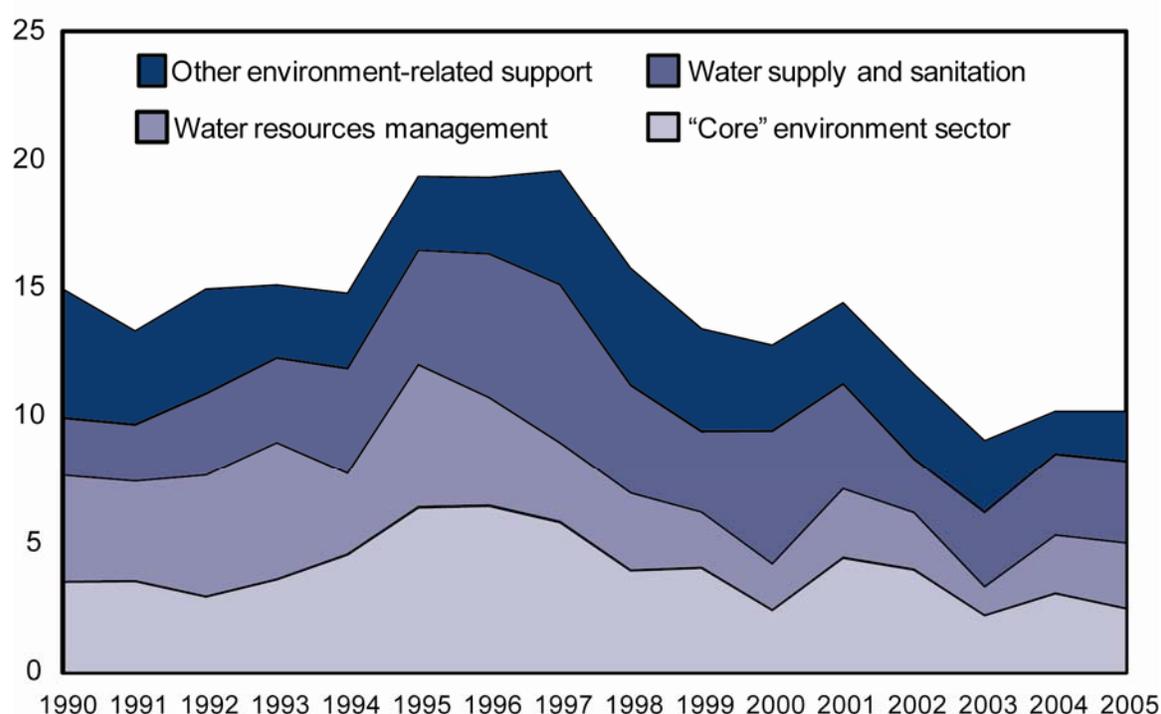
*Table 1. GEF Replenishments and Trends in ODA  
(thousand \$)*

	Pilot phase	GEF-1	GEF-2	GEF-3	GEF-4
Total ODA	252,119	247,101	236,827	358,858	481,226 (est.)
GEF	843	2,014	1,983	2,208	2,288
As % of ODA	0.33	0.82	0.84	0.62	0.48 (est.)

Sources: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; GEF replenishment data.

*Figure 1. Aid for the Environment 1990–2005: Environment-Related ODA as Share of Total ODA*

**% share of total ODA**



Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *OECD Environmental Outlook to 2030* (Paris, 2008), Statlink: [dx.doi.org/10.1787/262577124883](http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/262577124883).

18. A series of new bilateral funds and multilateral initiatives, especially on climate change issues, have been established in recent years that could lead to increased overall funding levels. To date, the GEF's country portfolio evaluations, OPS4 stakeholder consultations and country case studies, and portfolio analysis for the annual performance report have not found increased funding in GEF recipient countries. In fact, in many countries, the trend pictured in figure 1 appears to continue, while GEF support has grown relative to that of other donors on environmental issues. A lower level of cofinancing reported by the GEF Agencies and observed in the portfolio analysis for the annual performance report also points toward lower funding levels for environmental issues. While the new funds and programs may change these trends in the coming

years, several are relatively narrow in scope and would not reach all countries currently eligible for GEF support.

19. In the final OPS4 report, the most recent environmental and development trends, the existing international architecture, and current governance challenges will be taken into account. Furthermore, the achievements, results, and impacts of the GEF will be brought into the analysis to position the GEF among the growing number of initiatives in this area. This interim report cannot provide a full picture of achievements and results, but recent developments show that the GEF has decreased in relative importance among the competing priorities of donors. Presently, donors seem to focus their interests and efforts on more direct targeting of their funding flows, and the GEF may be perceived by donors as an additional and possibly unnecessary layer on top of existing agencies and entities. Some donors, while accepting the catalytic role of the GEF in capacity development, question whether the GEF can play a catalytic role in investment issues. These dimensions will be further discussed in the final OPS4 report.

### **The Catalytic Nature of the GEF**

20. The GEF's special role as a financial instrument of various multilateral environmental agreements and its mandate to provide new and additional incremental funding for global environmental benefits is intimately tied to the *catalytic nature* of its strategies, interventions, and modalities. Given the nature and scope of the challenges, it is clear that the GEF on its own cannot achieve the impact it strives for. Rather, it must be a partner with governments and donors that encourage others to contribute to, take over, and sustain the actions that ultimately lead to the impacts sought. For this reason, the GEF's ninth operational principle states that "In seeking to maximize global environmental benefits, the GEF will emphasize its catalytic role and leverage additional financing from other sources."<sup>4</sup>

21. Analysis of the focal area strategies, as well as the country portfolio evaluations, points toward three broad categories of GEF activities: (1) "foundational" and enabling activities, focusing on policy, regulatory frameworks, and national priority setting and relevant capacity; (2) medium-size and full-size projects and the Small Grants Programme, which focus on demonstration, capacity development, innovation, and market barrier removal; and (3) full-size projects with high rates of cofunding, catalyzing investments or implementing a new strategic approach at the national level. The international waters focal area uses these three categories of activities in a phased approach: a first, foundational phase in which countries are brought together to diagnose problems and agree on joint actions; a second demonstration phase in which solutions to joint problems are tested, piloted, and demonstrated; and a third investment phase in which countries and other donors join to provide the necessary funds to scale up activities. This approach will be illustrated in the overall breakdown of GEF activities across focal areas and country portfolios in the final OPS4 report.

22. The three categories approach combines all the elements that have been shown to catalyze results in international cooperation. Evaluations in the bilateral and multilateral aid community have shown time and again that activities at the microlevel of skills transfer—piloting new technologies and demonstrating new approaches—will fail if these

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<sup>4</sup> GEF, *Operational Strategy of the Global Environment Facility* (1995); available at [www.gefweb.org/Operational\\_Policies/Operational\\_Strategy/op\\_stat/op\\_stat.html](http://www.gefweb.org/Operational_Policies/Operational_Strategy/op_stat/op_stat.html).

activities are not supported at the institutional or market level as well. Evaluations have also consistently shown that institutional capacity development or market interventions on a larger scale will fail if governmental laws, regulatory frameworks, and policies are not in place to support and sustain these improvements. For this reason, many bilateral and multilateral donors have moved into supporting the government more directly through basket funding, public policy lending, and similar efforts to create enabling environments and sustainable systemic improvements. The GEF has included these elements from the beginning and is therefore equipped to perform its catalytic role.

23. Guidance from the multilateral environment agreements has been important to ensure that the GEF addresses all three support categories. When member countries sign on to a given convention, they are essentially obligated to incorporate the aims of that convention into national regulatory frameworks, laws, policies, and priority setting, and are often supported in so doing by the GEF through foundational activities. Countries need to report on progress to the conventions, and the GEF has been funding these processes in part through enabling activities. Evidence from the country portfolio evaluations and the OPS4 country case studies, as well as reviews of terminal evaluations of enabling activities, demonstrates that countries have used GEF support to introduce new policies and to develop the requisite environmental legislation and regulatory frameworks.

24. The results of enabling activities are often reported to the conventions rather than through the GEF monitoring processes. This may have led the GEF to not address enabling activities directly in the development of focal area strategies or in programming at the country level. The international waters focal area—which is not accountable to a multilateral environmental agreement and therefore does not have a requirement for formal enabling activities—has more organically integrated the role of these foundational activities in its strategies and programming.

25. The final OPS4 report will deepen the analysis of the focal area strategies and portfolios and show how the three categories of support have developed in the GEF. Current evidence from terminal evaluations, country portfolio evaluations, country case studies, and OPS4 evidence on relevance and performance give credence to the soundness of the general approach: first taking care of the regulatory framework and policies; then moving on to develop institutions and their capacities; followed by scaling up through larger, long-term investments. Often these activities are intermingled and run in parallel, but this three categories approach embodies the catalytic and incremental nature of the GEF.

26. The evidence emerging from country portfolio evaluations, OPS4 country case studies, the midterm review of the Resource Allocation Framework (RAF), and portfolio analysis points in the direction of underfunding of the catalytic role of the GEF since GEF-2, a downturn in funding since GEF-3, and increasing needs in the upcoming period of GEF-5. Even though this is only a preliminary finding, it is important to note in this interim report where current evidence (at approximately the halfway point in analysis of relevant data) is leading, especially since this will be relevant to the core of the replenishment process. The final report of OPS4 will contain an analysis by focal area and group of recipient countries (least developed countries, small island developing states, landlocked countries, and so on) and will also contain further evidence as to whether alternative sources of funding and alternative mechanisms have assumed the incremental and catalytic role of the GEF.

## Progress toward Impact: From Hypothesis to Evidence

### *Background, Methodology, and Scope*

27. The Third Overall Performance Study of the GEF reported on significant results achieved by the GEF up to GEF-3 at the level of outcomes or changes in the enabling environment. It noted the difficulties in reporting on changes in the status of the environment, because impact indicators were not adequately measured in projects and thus not reported on at the end. Furthermore, impact-level targets had not been defined in focal area strategies. OPS3 therefore recommended to better define and track impacts in the focal areas.<sup>5</sup> In GEF-4, this recommendation has been implemented to a certain degree through refinement of the focal area tracking tools and further development of project indicators. In parallel to these activities, the GEF Council invited the GEF Evaluation Office to evaluate impacts. This line of inquiry was initiated in 2006 through methodology development and has led to a series of impact papers, studies, and evaluations that are now reported on in the GEF annual report on impact.

28. The nature of the impact of GEF-supported projects and interventions needs to be understood in line with the GEF's catalytic nature. The GEF does not intervene on its own, but together with international, national, and local partners. These partners are "catalyzed" through GEF support and continue working toward global environmental benefits after this support has ended. Thus, the GEF *contributes* to the success of a project, but the impact of the project needs to be *attributed* to the partners that continue to work on the issues addressed by the project. This premise was clearly demonstrated in the first impact evaluations undertaken by the Evaluation Office in Eastern Africa, where GEF support and GEF Agency involvement had ended three to five years earlier, but local communities, the management and staff of protected areas, the governments of Kenya and Uganda, and new donors continued to work on improving protected area management. When a measurable increase of key species in the two protected areas studied was discerned, this could be *attributed* to the ongoing efforts of the partners that remained involved. The GEF was no longer active in the initiative, but could be shown to have made essential *contributions* to starting up the process toward impacts. Furthermore, the evaluation showed that the sustainability of the impacts achieved would crucially depend on the national and local partners involved and not on the GEF or its Agencies. The evaluation demonstrated that the causal linkages from the project to the impact achieved can be followed and documented and the contribution of the GEF identified.

29. A narrow interpretation of impact is often used in debates in the international cooperation community. Some experts advocate using the term "impact evaluation" only if the evaluation establishes a rigorous "counterfactual"—in other words, if the evaluation demonstrates quantitatively what would have happened without the intervention. Such a narrow definition is not necessary if the causal mechanism has already been scientifically proven, which is often the case for the GEF. For example, the role of excess nutrient flows in rivers creating eutrophication in downstream water bodies has been empirically established, and the causal mechanism that leads to eutrophication has been researched and demonstrated in laboratories. Similarly, renewable energy technologies and technologies with lower GHG emissions are developed in laboratories under strictly controlled conditions; there is no need to test these technologies through

<sup>5</sup> GEF, *OPS3: Progressing towards Environmental Results: Executive Version* (Washington, DC, 2005), p.16

counterfactual evaluations. Only where human behavior is concerned would counterfactual evaluations be of interest. Such tests would, however, focus on limited elements of GEF strategies and national policies. Moreover, they would be focused on causal attribution, not contribution, and on the role of the partners of the GEF rather than on the GEF itself. Evaluating the impact of the GEF thus requires a recognition that the final impact of follow-up activities of its support will be attributable to its partners: national governments, local authorities, local communities, industries, farmers, and civil society organizations.

30. The GEF approach to impact evaluation begins by identifying assumptions in strategies, programs, and projects as to “who is supposed to do what” after GEF support has ended, and how these actions would lead to reduced environmental threats or enhanced environmental status. It follows the outcomes of GEF interventions into intermediary states that are supposed to ensure drivers that would lead to impacts through the reduction of stress factors, risks, or reduced threats that would lead to an enhanced status or an improved trend in the environment—and sometimes a direct change in status or trend. This tracking from outcomes through intermediary states to impact has been termed by the GEF Evaluation Office the *review of outcomes to impact* (ROtl) methodology. Through this methodology, the Evaluation Office reviews whether there is evidence that follow-up activities in fact take place and whether partners assume their responsibilities and if this is leading to changes in behavior, in markets, and in management of natural resources, and ultimately leading to global environmental benefits.

31. The main sources of independently verified knowledge of GEF results are project terminal evaluations and their reviews, thematic evaluations of the Evaluation Office or other independent evaluators, country portfolio evaluations, and OPS4 studies. Three additional tools have been developed to assess progress toward impact: (1) a desk review ROtl, (2) a field review ROtl, and (3) a full impact evaluation. OPS4 will include up to 210 desk reviews, 9 field reviews, and 2 full impact evaluations, one on three protected areas in East Africa and one on the GEF portfolio of projects intended to reduce ODS.

32. All desk reviews first establish the *theory of change* of the intervention. They then assess the causal pathways from outcomes through intermediary states to impact. Finally, the projects are rated. The final OPS4 report will contain the full overview and analysis. The cohort of projects reviewed and rated is the 210 projects for which terminal evaluations have been submitted since fiscal year 2005. Most of these projects were formulated under GEF-2 and -3. In OPS4, the impact analysis will be complemented with an assessment of whether changes in approach and implementation can be seen in the GEF-4 portfolio, based on project documents and project identification forms and evidence from the country portfolio evaluations and the annual performance report. The final OPS4 report will also analyze current tracking tools and indicators of outcomes and impact and formulate recommendations.

33. The ROtl methodology was presented to an interagency meeting on January 27, 2009. Comments received were taken into account. The desk and field reviews are in full swing and will be finalized in May and June 2009. The ODS impact evaluation is expected to have a final workshop with stakeholders in June. This report presents the current state of analysis in four focal areas (climate change, biodiversity, international waters, and ODS). The two remaining focal areas will be reported on in the final report.

## Climate Change

34. An analysis of the strategies for climate change in GEF-3 and -4 shows a high level of consistency, in terms of a continued focus on market transformation and reduction and avoidance of GHG emissions through energy efficiency and renewable energy. The emphasis is on enabling policies, adequate financial instruments, stimulation of private sector development, and affordability of new technologies. The consistent nature of the strategies employed allows for a comparison over time of the GEF-2 and -3 portfolios of finished projects. More than half of the projects in the cohort of 51 terminal evaluations of climate change projects had been reviewed at the time of the preparation of this interim report.

35. Approximately 60 percent of the projects reviewed already show impacts at project termination through reduced and avoided GHG emissions. The energy efficiency and renewable energy portfolios are both well represented. The remaining projects reviewed do not show progress from outcomes to intermediate stages. Newer projects seem to progress better toward impact than older projects, but this needs to be confirmed in the final OPS4 report.

36. Based on the projects reviewed so far, **emerging issues** include the following:

- GEF support has effectively enabled countries to reduce and avoid GHG emissions and transform markets, but the level of these impacts is marginal in the context of global needs.
- GEF support has been crucial in putting climate change on the national agenda of developing countries, through massive public campaigns and developing national action plans.
- The conclusion of OPS3 still seems valid, that support is in line with the guidance of the conventions, but convention guidance goes beyond the present GEF portfolio and strategy—for example, into adaptation issues, where GEF support has reached a level of \$350 million, but mainly through special funds and programs.

37. **Key factors** for progress toward impacts identified in the reviewed projects are as follows:

- *Sustained government support.* This support is embodied in policy frameworks, adequate subsidies (or the removal of perverse incentives), laws and regulations, technical training programs, and benchmarks and guidelines. This is demonstrated in projects that are progressing toward impact, where government support has ensured the transition of markets. It is also shown in its absence, where projects have needed to be supported through changes in regulation that did not take place; as a result, no progress toward impact occurred.
- *Ability to weather market fluctuations.* This refers to addressing the multiple risks involved in investing in emerging markets, in some cases through temporary financial mechanisms to cover up-front investment costs. In cases that did not proceed toward impact, the market was incorrectly identified, and incentives to lead to market changes proved irrelevant or absent.

- *Financial and technological capacity.* The financial and technological capacity to support market changes is present in all cases where progress toward impact is demonstrated.

38. The final OPS4 report will contain an assessment of the relevance of GEF support to convention guidance and the main conclusions and recommendations from an ongoing evaluation of the Least Developed Countries Fund jointly conducted by the GEF Evaluation Office and the Danish International Development Agency's Evaluation Office.

### ***Biodiversity***

39. An analysis of the strategies for biodiversity in GEF-3 and -4 show a continued focus on improved management of natural resources and conservation. Some changes in the formulation and tracking tools of the strategic objectives make it difficult to match the cohort of finished projects (which derive from GEF-2 and -3) to the newer strategies and tracking tools. More than half of the projects in the cohort of 117 terminal evaluations of biodiversity projects had been reviewed at the time of the assembly of this interim report. Almost none of the projects expect impact at project completion—while environmental degradation and species loss can be rapid events, reversing trends and restoring ecological health is a process that may take decades.

40. In light of the long-term nature of these efforts, it is encouraging that, of the reviewed projects, 10 to 15 percent are well on track to achieve global environmental benefits. There are positive impacts on the reduction of threats to and the abundance of some endangered species resulting from GEF activities (for example, reduction in illegal fishing of Red List species in Turkey, increased protection for key Red List species in Romania, increased elephant and antelope in Benin). Many projects (about 50 to 60 percent) have not achieved impact yet, but should be able to do so over time, if other actors contribute. On productive landscapes, no significant evidence could yet be assembled at the impact level, although some outcomes have been achieved, such as increased hectares under improved management. Approximately 25 to 30 percent of projects have a low level of achievement at the outcome and intermediate stage levels and are not likely to progress toward impact.

41. Based on the projects reviewed so far, **emerging issues** include the following:

- GEF support has enabled countries to reduce threats to and increase the abundance of some species; these impacts are important in themselves and crucial to global environmental benefits as the GEF is active in key global biodiversity areas such as biodiversity hotspots.
- Because of the longer term horizon, other actors need to continue providing support to ensure impact, especially on improved management of protected areas and natural resources.
- GEF support is in line with the guidance of the biodiversity convention, but the guidance goes beyond the present portfolio and strategy—for example, into access and benefit sharing, where GEF support is still relatively low.

42. **Key factors** for progress toward impacts identified in the reviewed projects are as follows:

- *Sufficient scale of an intervention.* An appropriately scaled intervention ensures that replication and scaling up can be successful. In some instances, the scope of a single GEF biodiversity project may be sufficient to deliver global benefits, but often replication or scaling up is required to secure ecologically sustainable results in a target area. Projects that progress toward impact have a scope that is sufficiently large to make an impression on areas and regions that need to follow. Some projects that do not yet show this kind of progress represent only a small part of the area to be influenced.
- *Sufficient capacity and financial resources for stakeholders.* Such capacity is essential to sustain results throughout the extended timeframes needed to deliver impacts. Many projects face the difficulty that while negative change has been quite rapid, reversing those changes is a long-term process. Where progress toward impact continues after the GEF support ends, stakeholders have sufficient individual, institutional, and systemic capacity, and the financial resources to apply this capacity.
- *Lack of emergence of uncontrollable new threats in the target area.* Even highly successful projects can ultimately be thwarted from achieving long-term sustained impacts when new threats appear. Such threats include infrastructure development, and changes in global commodity prices that put pressure on resources such as timber or precious metals, or drive agricultural expansion. Among the potentially most significant emerging threats to biodiversity at the global scale is climate change, which could, for example, disrupt the ecological rationale for the current delineations of protected area systems supported by the GEF.

### **International Waters**

43. The international waters focal area has been consistent over time in its philosophy and approach. The phased approach of the international waters focal area—from foundational activities to demonstration and on to implementation/investment—presents a comprehensive mechanism for addressing basin-wide water quality threats. However, this approach, coupled with the increasing involvement of other actors over time, and recognizing the long time horizon for improvements to be noticeable, often means that GEF support is “twice removed” from impact, making it harder to assess. The cohort of 23 terminal evaluations of international waters projects is smaller than that of the two other main focal areas, which may affect the validity of the findings. For this reason, no percentages are presented at this stage.

44. Several of the reviewed projects show strong progress toward impact; and, in general, high levels of outcome achievements are noted. The GEF has been instrumental in promoting new international governance agreements on transboundary water bodies and has catalyzed implementation of several existing agreements. The review of progress toward impact so far confirms that the strategy is sound in principle: if the first foundational phase has deficiencies, outcomes are generally found to be lower. In many cases, GEF support is part of a broad range of activities to achieve basin-wide impacts. Further efforts are therefore needed to develop basin-level impact assessments.

45. Based on the projects reviewed so far, **emerging issues** include the following:

- GEF support has been critical in getting countries to share information and to agree on strategies to deal with agreed common problems.
  - Impacts are slow to evolve and must be evaluated through additional evaluative work on the water basin/body.
  - GEF support is insufficient to cover all problem areas and does not deal with the “tragedy of the commons”—for example, overfishing, pollution, and waste in international oceans.
  - The phased approach is very valuable, but the level of funding has not kept pace.
  - There is a convergence of international waters and biodiversity priorities in the response to threats to global fisheries.
46. **Key factors** for progress toward impacts identified in the reviewed projects are as follows:
- *Binding international and regional agreements.* Support in areas with nonbinding agreements suffers from slow implementation of the strategic action program. Implementation associated with a framework of binding commitments, on the other hand, shows better progress toward impact.
  - *Financial and technical support.* Such support provided within a strategic basin (watershed) framework is an important factor to promote progress toward impact, especially where levels of investment and technical know-how are required that are not within the reach of the participating countries.
  - *Engagement with industry and agriculture to reduce pollution and resource depletion.* This type of engagement has emerged in several projects as an important element in progressing swiftly toward legislation and the adoption of measures leading to stress reduction.
  - *Robust understanding of system stresses and boundaries in planning and implementation.* The complexity and size of the aquatic ecological system require that problems and interventions be cast at the appropriate scale. Failure to properly gauge scale and links between local and wider system drivers has sometimes led to interventions that are unlikely to contribute to the improvement of the ecological system.
  - *Adaptive management to cope with external impact drivers.* The complex social and ecological drivers at play in large ecological systems frequently necessitate action based on imperfect information. Under adaptive management, stakeholders set long-term goals on the basis of available knowledge and likely system responses to different scenarios. This includes redefinition of long-term goals on the basis of the knowledge obtained in the process.
  - *Match of transboundary concerns with national priorities.* Ownership, commitment, and action at the country level are seen to depend on the extent to which transboundary concerns are linked to local needs and national priorities.

### ***Ozone-Depleting Substances***

47. A draft report on the impact evaluation of GEF support to countries with economies in transition on phasing out ODS will be presented at a workshop with representatives

from the governments and the private sector of the four countries in which fieldwork was undertaken (Kazakhstan, Russia, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan). The conclusions of the evaluation will be included in the final OPS4 report.

48. The impact evaluation is based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. Data have been gathered and analyzed through descriptive and regression-based analyses, taking into account differences in time, population, and gross domestic product, among other factors. On the qualitative side, the evaluation is based on four country case studies, eight “light” country case studies, semi-structured interviews, and focus group meetings, as well as a structured questionnaire to validate questions arising from the qualitative data collection. These various sources have been triangulated between and within countries.

49. **Preliminary findings** (which will be discussed at the workshop) indicate that

- the phaseout of ODS consumption and production has been generally successful,
- government commitment to ODS ongoing management and reporting is not consistent,
- some countries have abolished national ozone units,
- illegal trade in ODS is a serious issue,
- destruction of stocks is weak—only 15 percent of countries conduct destruction,
- the impact of project financing on the private sector was positive and has contributed to ODS phaseout.

### ***Work in Progress***

50. The final OPS4 report will contain chapters on all focal areas, including land degradation and persistent organic pollutants, which will bring together findings at the strategic level on results and impacts, and on relevance, performance, and modalities. The final report will also identify factors that block progress toward impact and identify why part of the portfolio is not moving forward.

### **Programming Resources: The Challenge of Addressing Global and Transboundary Issues at the National Level**

51. With the RAF’s introduction, the GEF has moved in the direction of country-level programming. The midterm review of the RAF concluded that the current system is unnecessarily complex, contains various biases, and is impractical. The GEF Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has introduced options for a revised system for GEF-5, the System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR). The final OPS4 report will contain an update of the RAF midterm review, which will be performed in two stages: (1) an update through March 30 (which is presented in this interim report) and (2) an update through June 30 (to be presented in the final OPS4 report).

52. One finding of the RAF midterm review as presented to the Council in November can be updated at this point. The share of global and regional projects in the GEF has increased to its historical level. In the final OPS4 report, the reasons for this resurgence will be analyzed and qualified, in the context of an exploration of the strengths and

weaknesses of global and regional projects. Since many of the GEF programmatic approaches and some umbrella projects are of a regional nature, these will be included as well.

53. The GEF has a history of designing and implementing programmatic approaches, and several of the older programmatic approaches have been successful. The new programmatic approaches have been successful in providing access to GEF-4 funding to countries that otherwise could have lost this opportunity. The speed with which these approaches have been pulled together has led to programs that did not follow the slower, more organic approach shown to be successful in the past. This analysis is not yet complete.

54. The OPS4 stakeholder consultations undertaken so far indicate changes in the roles of several GEF partners in the programming of climate change and biodiversity funding:

- The Secretariat is now more proactively engaging with recipient countries to establish the eligibility of project ideas.
- Many governments have established national consultation processes to identify possible projects for GEF-4. This effort has been led by the GEF focal points.
- In several cases, the involvement of the Secretariat and focal points has led to project ideas shifting from one GEF Agency to another.
- The process of project identification, which was not easy in the past, is perceived by many as having become more complicated and less transparent.

55. The country portfolio evaluations of the GEF show an increasing effort on the part of recipient countries to coordinate and better integrate GEF support into national structures, priorities, and existing frameworks. Although a focus on national priorities would suggest a bias toward ensuring local benefits, this has not necessarily meant that GEF support has been less directed toward global environmental benefits. Given that GEF strategies also follow convention guidance and that being a signatory to a multilateral environmental agreement means that countries will endeavor to incorporate global environmental concerns into their national priorities and frameworks, this is perhaps not surprising, but it is reassuring.

56. Foundational and enabling activities in recipient countries have been important in developing national priorities and frameworks for action. However, in both the biodiversity and climate change focal areas, the linkage of these national priority frameworks to GEF programming support could be improved. This improvement could be promoted from both sides. Countries could interact with the GEF Secretariat and Agencies when national priority setting takes place to ensure that the GEF is fully aware of the reasons for establishing certain priorities. The Secretariat and the Agencies could make better use of existing priority frameworks when preparing project ideas or discussing funding possibilities. The final OPS4 report will explore this issue further.

57. The country portfolio evaluations provide evidence that many environmental problems are transboundary in nature and that there would be increased global benefits if these problems were tackled jointly by countries. Except with regard to the international waters strategy and portfolio, there are now no strong incentives for

countries to tackle transboundary issues. The evidence for this comes mainly from the country portfolio evaluations, the RAF midterm review, and the portfolio analysis of global and regional projects; it will be further explored in the final OPS4 report.

### **Toward Efficiency and Cost-Effectiveness**

58. The GEF's relative youth means that it has been able to keep track of what has happened in most of its funding commitments through terminal evaluations, which are available for a large proportion of GEF projects finished since 2000, including projects from the pilot phase. Coverage since 2002 is excellent. Since 2004, the GEF Evaluation Office, together with the independent evaluation offices of the World Bank, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), has analyzed, reviewed, and rated these terminal evaluations and reported on outcomes, risks to sustainability, and terminal evaluation quality in the GEF annual performance reports.

59. The *Annual Performance Report 2008*, which will be presented to Council in June 2009, includes an assessment of all terminal evaluations received since fiscal year 2005. This comprises 210 terminal evaluations, which represent a total GEF funding of approximately \$1 billion. The same 210 terminal evaluations form the cohort of projects reviewed for OPS4 on progress toward impact. Seven of these terminal evaluations have been verified in the field.

60. The policy recommendations for GEF-4 contain a target of outcomes of finished projects of 75 percent moderately satisfactory or higher. This target has been achieved and exceeded: 80 percent of projects are rated as moderately satisfactory or higher. It should be noted that the evaluation offices of the GEF, the World Bank, and UNEP agree with each other's ratings, with minor differences.<sup>6</sup> Particularly in recent years, the ratings of the offices have been remarkably similar, building confidence that these ratings are sufficiently triangulated to ensure their reliability. Furthermore, the World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group has noted that GEF projects in the Bank score higher than environmental projects the Bank has undertaken without GEF cofunding.

61. Terminal evaluation outcome ratings of moderately satisfactory or above received since fiscal year 2005 are presented by GEF Agency and focal area in table 2. Note that the Executing Agencies cannot yet be included in a meaningful way, given that very few terminal evaluations for their projects are available. Furthermore, only the three largest focal areas—climate change, biodiversity, and international waters—yield meaningful data in this regard.

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<sup>6</sup> UNDP's Evaluation Office does not review the outcome ratings of project terminal evaluations. Its reviews focus on the quality of terminal evaluations.

*Table 2. Outcome Ratings by GEF Agency and Primary Focal Area*

Agency	% rated moderately satisfactory or above	Focal area	% rated moderately satisfactory or above
World Bank	85	Climate change	84
UNDP	78	Biodiversity	81
UNEP	72	International waters	78

Source: GEF Evaluation Office, *Annual Performance Report 2008* (Washington, DC, forthcoming).

62. Risks to sustainability are assessed on the basis of reviews of the terminal evaluations. Over the GEF-4 period, the average rating has remained relatively stable, with 58 percent of projects rated at least moderately likely to remain sustainable. The progress from outcomes to impact analysis “unpacks” this general rating and provides more detailed information on why and how projects and follow-up actions are achieving impact in the longer run.

63. A preliminary overview of materialized cofunding reported by Agencies for finished projects reveals that, since fiscal year 2005, cofunding appears to have stabilized at a level of 1:2—that is, for each dollar of GEF funding, 2 dollars of cofunding are realized. Outliers in fiscal year 2004, when the ratio was 1:7, have led to higher reported cofunding in earlier annual performance reports. This issue will be further analyzed and reported on in the final OPS4 report.

64. The GEF project cycle continues to be a source of great concern. One of the big problems that the GEF is facing is that it is generally perceived as “not being able to deliver.” The analysis of results, achievements, and progress toward impact show beyond a doubt that the GEF *is* fully able to deliver—once projects are finally approved and implemented. As the Joint Evaluation of the GEF Activity Cycle and Modalities demonstrated, the process of identifying, appraising, and approving projects was characterized by inefficiencies and long time delays. Changes to the cycle have not yet reached many recipient countries of the GEF. The final OPS4 report will include an update of the GEF activity cycle evaluation. A special effort will be made to analyze what happens during the project identification phase, where concerns about efficiency, maintenance of agreed-upon time limits, uncertainties about roles, accusations of micromanagement and lack of technical support, and the added value of the process proliferate in the absence of a solid understanding of what is happening and why. This analysis will yield recommendations on how to further simplify and streamline the procedure. Furthermore, it will be placed in the context of the management of resources in the GEF.

65. The Joint Evaluation of the GEF Activity Cycle and Modalities concluded that project proposals waited years for approval decisions. It was not possible in that evaluation to fully explore whether the overall level of GEF funding was a restricting factor in this regard because there was no objective way to identify a level of funding that would be justified, given the catalytic and incremental role of the GEF. The portfolio review of all GEF-funded activities aims to provide more insight into the levels of funding required to undertake GEF support in countries in line with (1) the guidance of the conventions, (2) the catalytic and incremental role of the GEF, and (3) developments in the countries themselves. This analysis will aim to determine whether the GEF has been underfunded, especially in GEF-3 and -4. This could potentially mean that, to a large

extent, the GEF's efficiency problems—its perceived inability to deliver—is the result of underfunding. This analysis will be included in the final OPS4 report.

66. A comparison of costs in the GEF to those of other international organizations and funds has been undertaken to establish whether the GEF is performing at the level of international standards in this regard. The final OPS4 report will contain this analysis and will also look at issues such as the involvement of the private sector and civil society organizations.

### **The GEF as a Learning Organization**

67. In principle, the GEF is very well poised to be a learning organization par excellence. It has a Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP), supported by efforts in the UN system to better track and understand global environmental trends and challenges. It has a fully functional monitoring and evaluation system, extending from the GEF Evaluation Office and Secretariat into the coordinating and evaluation units of the GEF Agencies and into sufficiently funded monitoring and evaluation at the project level. To fulfill the GEF's catalytic role, many GEF projects aim to be innovative. The GEF Council discusses monitoring and evaluation reports and promotes feeding evidence back into programming. However, the GEF does not have a knowledge management strategy and encounters serious challenges in this regard:

- Although GEF Agencies often have strong learning capacity within their own portfolios, there are relatively few efforts to ensure learning from Agency to Agency (IWLearn, within the international waters focal area, is perhaps an exception; past initiatives, such as the GEF focal area task forces, have functioned intermittently in the last few years).
- No explicit strategy, toolbox, or framework for innovation, demonstration, replication, or scaling up exists in the GEF for all GEF strategies.
- The GEF is “thin on the ground” and strong at the top; in other words: learning at the Council level does not ensure that information will be adequately shared at the level of project identification, preparation, and management.
- The GEF Secretariat has initiated improvements using the GEF Web site by creating more active information sharing through articles and blogs.

68. Experiences from projects are, in principle, gathered and analyzed in terminal evaluations. The *Annual Performance Report 2008* provides an overview of the quality of terminal evaluations since the Evaluation Office started assessing this in fiscal year 2004. The quality of terminal evaluations, further promoted through the adoption of minimum standards in the 2006 GEF monitoring and evaluation policy, has increased from an initial 69 percent to an average of 89 percent moderately satisfactory or higher in the GEF-4 period. This means that, with some exceptions, terminal evaluations can provide valuable lessons on past performance and achievements. However, these lessons are not systematically compiled and disseminated adequately throughout the system, either by the Evaluation Office, the Secretariat, or the Agencies.

69. Project experiences will only lead to more systematic learning if they have been adequately tracked, monitored, and evaluated. Quality at entry of monitoring and evaluation in projects is generally high, at 76 percent moderately satisfactory or above.

During implementation, generally high levels of satisfactory performance are maintained. However, many projects still need to assemble baseline data in the first year of implementation. Only 18 percent of projects have a full baseline established at the time of final approval. While quality at entry has improved in general, the percentage of projects that start with an established baseline has remained at the same level over the GEF-4 period.

70. The evaluation function in the GEF, particularly the role of the Evaluation Office, has been the subject of a peer review. The peer review report will be presented to the Council in June 2009, and the conclusions of this review and its recommendations incorporated in the final OPS4 report. Further evidence on the role of monitoring and evaluation derived from stakeholder consultations will be added.

71. The role of the STAP is the subject of a self-assessment by the STAP, which will provide material to be triangulated with other evidence in the GEF collected by the Evaluation Office. This information will be complemented with a review of how learning and the infusion of up-to-date science and technology take shape in a random sample of 48 projects. A review is being conducted of the systems through which GEF Agencies and institutions incorporate lessons into operations. A preliminary finding is that where project proposals received feedback from the STAP, they generally responded thoughtfully and vigorously.

### **The Nature of the GEF: At a Crossroads?**

72. The GEF exists through its three Implementing Agencies—at the request of the member countries, the governing bodies of the World Bank, UNDP, and UNEP have adopted the GEF Instrument. Together with the GEF Secretariat, they have shaped the GEF into what could potentially become a world-class international organization. The question is whether the bird should fly out of the nest and become its own master or if a new basis for continuing the current instrument should be found. As OPS3 pointed out, with the addition of seven new Agencies, the GEF is reaching the limits of what can be done in a network organization. The final OPS4 report will examine whether the strain on the network relationships has increased and if the GEF's operation is indeed at a crossroads. The evidence for this premise comes from various evaluations, including the midterm review of the RAF and the Joint Evaluation of the GEF Activity Cycle and Modalities, as well as from stakeholder consultations. Various international developments add stress to the situation, including the following:

- Increasing emphasis on competition for resources among Implementing and Executing Agencies; in contrast, the origins of collaboration in the GEF were based on an agreed-upon division of labor founded on comparative advantages
- Shift toward greater country ownership subsequent to the Paris Declaration's promotion of harmonization and alignment
- Growing demand for direct access to funding, starting in the climate change negotiations but now apparent in other negotiations as well

73. In her proposals to the replenishment process, the CEO has represented the GEF as a unique bridge between the international financial institutions and the UN. Furthermore, the GEF is unique in its role as the financial instrument of various multilateral environmental agreements. OPS4 will take a step toward assembling the

evidence as to where partnership issues in the system need solution and what the potential solutions could be. Critical in this regard is the OPS4 governance substudy, which is under way but will not be completed until after the Council and replenishment meetings have taken place in June.

74. The GEF cannot continue with business as usual, and the CEO has taken up this challenge and is proposing various options to the replenishment process. The Agencies have been invited to present their perspectives as well. The final OPS4 report will bring stakeholder perspectives to this debate along with evidence on how the GEF is working today as well as on international standards from similar organizations. One immediate observation from preliminary OPS4 findings relates to the need to ensure that the conventions and member countries of the GEF are sufficiently involved in the process of making any changes to the GEF, in particular when it comes to governance.

75. The recent meeting of the G-20 in London called for reform of the governance of the international financial institutions and demanded a greater voice for developing countries in the governance of these institutions. This follows other calls for more inclusiveness in governance and in replenishment processes in recent years. The 15th replenishment of the International Development Association included nine representatives of the association's borrower countries. Similar inclusion of recipient and borrower countries has taken place in other recent replenishments—for example, that of the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

76. This interim report therefore contains one recommendation on this point: Recipient countries of the GEF should be included in the replenishment process.

### **The Evidence Basis and Ongoing Work**

77. The OPS4 will be based on a rich array of evaluative evidence, much of which is already reviewed, but some of which needs further work. Specifically, the evaluation is based on the following:

- Portfolio analysis of all GEF projects in all phases: 2,343 projects totaling \$8.274 in funding
- 210 terminal evaluations received since fiscal year 2005
- Fieldwork in more than 55 countries, ranging from full evaluations to case study work to field verification of project results; including nine field verifications of progress toward impact and fifteen field verifications of terminal evaluations
- Evidence from 26 evaluations of the GEF Evaluation Office
- Evidence from evaluations conducted by GEF Agency evaluation offices and from other relevant evaluations
- Review of 450 project identification forms and their review sheets
- Reviews of various samples of projects for specific purposes, such as gender analysis, learning, global and regional projects, and programmatic approaches
- Desk reviews of available literature and documentation

- Stakeholder consultations with all categories of GEF partners, triangulated with semi-structured interviews, surveys, and evaluative evidence from other sources

*Table 3. Total Number of GEF Projects and Investment by GEF Replenishment Period*

GEF replenishment period	Number of projects	Total funding (million \$)
Pilot phase	113	728
GEF-1	381	1,234
GEF-2	627	1,850
GEF-3	787	2,485
GEF-4 (as of March 31, 2009)	434	1,977
Total	2,342	8,274

Source: GEF Project Management Information System, March 31, 2009.

*Table 4. Investment in Projects by GEF Replenishment Period and Focal Area (million \$)*

Period	BD	CC	IW	ODS	POPs	LD	MF	Total
Pilot phase	312	277	118	4	0	0	17	728
GEF-1	445	501	114	120	0	0	54	1,234
GEF-2	709	643	288	43	27	0	141	1,850
GEF-3	753	731	310	12	125	174	381	2,485
GEF-4	414	572	208	2	164	152	465	1,977
Total	2,632	2,725	1,038	181	316	325	1,057	8,274

Source: GEF Project Management Information System, March 31, 2009.

Note: BD = biodiversity; CC = climate change; IW = international waters; LD = land degradation; MF = multifocal; POPs = persistent organic pollutants.

*Table 5. Investment in Projects by GEF Replenishment Period and Geographical Scope (million \$)*

Period	National	Global	Regional	All projects
Pilot phase	542	54	131	728
GEF-1	863	144	227	1,234
GEF-2	1,302	234	314	1,850
GEF-3	1,564	399	523	2,485
GEF-4	1,184	285	509	1,977
Total	5,455	1,116	1,704	8,274

Source: GEF Project Management Information System, March 31, 2009.

*Table 6. GEF Investment in Projects by GEF Replenishment Period and Geographical Region (as percentage of total)*

Period	Africa	Asia	LAC	ECA	Global	Regional	All
Pilot phase	23	33	21	8	7	8	100
GEF-1	15	29	17	21	12	6	100
GEF-2	19	24	26	14	13	4	100
GEF-3	26	21	19	13	16	4	100
GEF-4	23	29	20	10	14	4	100
Total	22	26	21	13	13	5	100

Source: GEF Project Management Information System, March 31, 2009.

Note: ECA = Europe and Central Asia; LAC = Latin America and the Caribbean.

78. OPS4 products will be peer reviewed by a Quality Assurance Peer Group consisting of nine colleagues of independent evaluation offices of GEF Agencies. Two Senior Independent Evaluation Advisors will provide advice as to whether OPS4 has met its terms of reference and is of the required quality and will provide an independent perspective on the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of OPS4.

79. Much of the analytic and evaluative work has been done as of this writing, but has yet to go through processes of quality assurance, triangulation, and calibration. Several component studies are still ongoing. The final OPS4 report will therefore be of a considerably wider scope than this interim report and will contain, in addition to that noted above,

- an analysis of the role of the GEF Trustee and management of resources in the GEF;
- the main findings, conclusions, and recommendations from the independent component study on governance;
- an assessment of sample projects and set of recommendations for GEF-5 regarding the GEF's recent initiatives to better integrate gender concerns into projects with development components.