

2020 Update: Program Evaluation of the Least Developed Countries Fund

(Prepared by the Independent Evaluation Office of the GEF)

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Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AfDB	African Development Bank
COP	Conference of the Parties
DANIDA	Danish International Development Assistance
DBSA	Development Bank of Southern Africa
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
FSP	full size project
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEF IEO/IEO	Global Environment Facility's Independent Evaluation Office
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
LDC	least developed country
LDCF	Least Developed Countries Fund
MSP	medium size project
MTF	Multi Trust Fund
MTR	midterm review
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NAPA	National Adaptation Programme of Action
OPS5	Fifth Overall Performance Study
OPS6	Sixth Overall Performance Study
PIF	Project Identification Form
PIR	Project Implementation Report
SCCF	Special Climate Change Fund
TE	Terminal evaluation
TER	Terminal evaluation report
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

UNIDO

United Nations Industrial Development Organization

WWF-US

United States World Wildlife Fund

I. Background and Context

a. Introduction

1. At its 26thth meeting in June 2019, the Least Developed Countries Fund/Special Climate Change Fund (LDCF/SCCF) Council approved the Four-Year Work Program of the GEF's Independent Evaluation Office (GEF IEO)¹ which includes an update to the 2016 program evaluation of the LDCF² during fiscal year 2020. The IEO will evaluate the LDCF focusing on performance and progress towards LDCF objectives and results in the four years since the 2016 evaluation. The evaluation will follow-up on conclusions and recommendations of the 2016 LDCF evaluation and will provide the LDCF/SCCF Council with evaluative evidence of the Fund's relevance and emerging results. An overview of the 2016 LDCF evaluation recommendations is provided in annex A.

b. LDCF background and portfolio

2. The LDCF was established as one of the climate change adaptation financing mechanisms of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), in response to guidance from the Seventh Conference of Parties (COP) in Marrakech in 2001.³ The LDCF is mandated by the UNFCCC to, among other responsibilities, provide support to the climate adaptation efforts of least developed countries (LDCs)—including the preparation of national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs), implementation of NAPA priority projects in LDCs, preparation of the national adaptation plan (NAP) process in eligible developing countries, and for other elements of the LDC work program.⁴ The LDCF also serves the Paris Agreement as its financial mechanism. Box 1 defines key terms used and annex B provides a summary of UNFCCC COP guidance and decisions regarding the LDCF. Recent UNFCCC COP guidance includes a request based on findings of the 2016 LDCF Program Evaluation “to continue to enhance capacity development in the least developed countries for the development of project proposals with a focus on identifying potential funding sources, both national and international, and enhancing long-term domestic institutional capacities.”⁵

3. NAPAs provide a process for LDCs to identify priority activities that respond to their **urgent and immediate needs** to adapt to climate change—those for which further delay would increase vulnerability and/or costs at a later stage. The main content of NAPAs is a country-driven list of ranked priority adaptation activities and projects, designed to facilitate the development of proposals for

¹GEF/LDCF.SCCF.26/ME/01/Rev.01, LDCF/SCCF Annual Evaluation Report: June 2019, June 2019. Available [from: https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/LDCF%20SCCF_26_ME_01_IEO_Annual_Evaluation_Report_May_2019%20Rev01.pdf](https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/LDCF%20SCCF_26_ME_01_IEO_Annual_Evaluation_Report_May_2019%20Rev01.pdf).

² GEF IEO, Program Evaluation of the Least Developed Countries Fund, September 2016. Evaluation Report No. 106.

³ UNFCCC/CP/2001/13/Add.1, Decision 7/CP.7. Available from: https://unfccc.int/files/cooperation_and_support/financial_mechanism/application/pdf/7_cp.7.pdf

⁴ See annex B for UNFCCC COP Guidance and Decisions regarding the LDCF.

⁵ FCCC/CP/2016/10/Add.1 Decision 11/CP.22 par. 14 & 15 Available from: <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2016/cop22/eng/10a01.pdf>

implementation of the NAPA. The focus is on short-term outputs and potential long-term outcomes. As of the most recent LDCF/SCCF progress report to Council, April 30, 2019, 51 LDCs had accessed \$12.20 million in support of the preparation of their NAPA.⁶ Annex C contains an overview of completed NAPA country reports. Additionally, 210 projects have been CEO Endorsed/Approved to implement priorities identified in NAPAs, representing \$1,161 million in LDCF funding.

4. NAPs provide a process for LDCs to formulate and implement activities that focus on **medium- and long-term adaptation needs**, building on the experience of the LDCs in addressing urgent and immediate adaptation needs through the NAPAs. As of the April 30, 2019 LDCF/SCCF progress report to council, LDCF support towards the NAP processes totaled \$71.63 million.⁷ This support has come both in the form of projects focused solely on advancing NAP processes, and projects which combine support to the NAP process with adaptation investments for NAPA implementation. As of September 2019, the cutoff for this evaluation, 11 projects have been identified by the GEF Secretariat as providing support to the NAP process.

5. The GEF acts as an operating entity of the UNFCCC financial mechanism and was entrusted with the financial operation of the LDCF. The LDCF is separate from the GEF Trust Fund, and—together with the SCCF—has its own council. The governance structure, operational procedures and policies that apply to the GEF Trust Fund are also applied to the LDCF and SCCF. However, the LDCF/SCCF Council can modify the procedures in response to COP guidance or to facilitate LDCF/SCCF operations to enable them to successfully achieve their objectives.

6. Since it entered into force in November 2016, the LDCF is part of the operating entity of the financial mechanism for the Paris Agreement and the UNFCCC. The LDCF is entrusted to continue to play a key role to strengthen developing countries' resilience to climate change, with a renewed focus on implementation. At the heart of the Paris Agreement and the achievement of long-term goals are the nationally determined contributions (NDCs).⁸ Each country outlines its efforts to reduce national emissions and to adapt to impacts of climate change. LDCF supports the adaptation-related NDCs and seeks to align its programming with priorities identified in NDCs.

7. Unlike the GEF Trust Fund, which is replenished every four years, the LDCF receives voluntary contributions with no regular replenishment schedule. This has led to a high level of financing uncertainty. At the 24th LDCF/SCCF Council meeting in June 2018, the GEF Secretariat modified the LDCF project selection and approval process to improve pipeline management from a “first-come, first-served” basis to batch approvals of projects through work programs to be approved by the LDCF/SCCF

⁶ GEF/LDCF.SCCF.26/03, Progress Report on the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund, Executive Summary, par. 6, June 6, 2019. Available from: http://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF.LDCF_SCCF_26_03_Progress_Report.pdf

⁷ GEF/LDCF/SCCF.26/03, Progress Report on the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund, par. 8, June 2019. Available from: http://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF.LDCF_SCCF_26_03_Progress_Report.pdf

⁸ More information about NDCs is available from: <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/nationally-determined-contributions-ndcs#eq-5>

Council.⁹ Projects constituting the work program are selected based on agreed upon factors for prioritization, similar to the process undertaken for the GEF Trust Fund. The first LDCF work program was submitted to the LDCF/SCCF Council for approval at its 25th meeting in December 2018.¹⁰

8. There are currently 18 GEF Agencies that can access LDCF funding. They comprise the original three GEF Implementing Agencies—the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the World Bank—plus the seven former Executing Agencies—the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the African Development Bank (AfDB), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). These 10 GEF Agencies are joined by the 8 accredited GEF Project Agencies, which have no corporate responsibilities: Conservation International, the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF), the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), the Foreign Economic Cooperation Office, the Ministry of Environmental Protection of China (FECO), Fundo Brasileiro para a Biodiversidade (FUNBIO), the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), the West African Development Bank (BOAD), and the U.S. World Wildlife Fund (WWF-US). This paper uses the term “GEF Agencies” to refer to both GEF Agencies and GEF Project Agencies.

9. These 18 GEF Agencies have direct access to LDCF for the preparation and implementation of activities financed by the Fund. As of March 31, 2019, nine GEF Agencies were involved in LDCF operations (ADB, AfDB, FAO, IFAD, IUCN, UNDP, UNEP, UNIDO, and World Bank). The largest share of the portfolio is held by UNDP with 54 percent of total funds approved.¹¹ The UNDP has assisted a large number of countries in preparing their NAPAs and follow-up NAPA implementation projects.

10. At the 24th LDCF/SCCF Council Meeting in June 2018 the new GEF Programming Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change for the LDCF/SCCF and Operational Improvements was approved. The findings and conclusions of the 2016 LDCF program evaluation and 2017 SCCF program evaluation contributed to the revision of the GEF programming strategy on adaptation to Climate Change. The goal of the 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. The strategy includes updates to the three strategic objectives and a stronger emphasis on private sector engagement for the LDCF and SCCF, presented in box 1, with definitions provided in box 2. The strategy also seeks to enhance gender equality and mainstreaming and strives to enhance coordinated and synergistic programming with other major climate funds as well as with other GEF focal areas.

⁹ GEF Joint Summary of the Chairs, 24th LDCF/SCCF Meeting, June 2018, Decision on Agenda Item 5. Available from: https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF.LDCF_SCCF_24_Joint_Summary_of_the_Chairs.pdf

¹⁰ GEF/ LDCF.SCCF.25/04, Work Program for Least Developed Countries Fund, November 2018. Available from https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF.LDCF_SCCF_25.04_Work_Program.pdf

¹¹ GEF/LDCF.SCCF.26/03, Progress Report on the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund, par. 14, June 2019. Available from: https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF.LDCF_SCCF_26_03_Progress_Report.pdf

Box 1: GEF Strategic Objectives and Pillars

The GEF Programming Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change for the LDCF and SCCF (July 2018 to June 2022)¹² has three strategic objectives:

- Reduce vulnerability and increase resilience through innovation and technology transfer for climate change adaptation.
- Mainstream climate change adaptation and resilience for systemic impact.
- Foster enabling conditions for effective and integrated climate change adaptation.

Private sector engagement will be fostered for the LDCF and SCCF through the three objectives of this strategy and implemented through the following two pillars:¹³

- Expanding catalytic grant and non-grant investments
- Support enabling environments for the private sector to act as an agent for market transformation.

The results framework of the GEF adaptation program is provided in annex D.

Box 2: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Definitions of Key Terms

The UNFCCC COP guidance and decisions regarding the LDCF (annex B) and GEF strategic objectives and pillars (box 1) make use of several key terms that are defined as follows by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC):¹⁴

Adaptation The process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects. In human systems, adaptation seeks to moderate or avoid harm or exploit beneficial opportunities. In some natural systems, human intervention may facilitate adjustment to expected climate and its effects.

Capacity building The practice of enhancing the strengths and attributes of, and resources available to, an individual, community, society, or organization to respond to change.

Resilience The capacity of social, economic, and environmental systems to cope with a hazardous event or trend or disturbance, responding or reorganizing in ways that maintain their essential function, identity, and structure, while also maintaining the capacity for adaptation, learning, and transformation.

Vulnerability The propensity or predisposition to be adversely affected. Vulnerability encompasses a variety of concepts and elements including sensitivity or susceptibility to harm and lack of capacity to cope and adapt.

11. An overview of LDCF support to NAPAs, NAPA implementation projects, and projects supporting the NAP process by project type is presented in table 1.¹⁵ To date, 281 LDCF projects have been

¹² GEF/LDCF.SCCF.24/03, GEF Programming Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change for the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund and Operational Improvements July 2019 to June 2022, June 2018. Available from: https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF.LDCF_SCCF_24.03_Programming_Strategy_and_Operational_Policy_2.pdf

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 29-30.

¹⁴ IPCC, Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability, IPCC Working Group II Contribution to AR5, Glossary, 2018. Available from: https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/02/WGIIAR5-AnnexII_FINAL.pdf

¹⁵ Categorization of projects supporting the NAP process has been provided by the GEF Secretariat.

approved by Council, or have advanced beyond this stage in the project cycle.¹⁶ Fifty-one of these projects, and \$11.3 million in LDCF funding, has gone to enabling activities (EA), all of which support the formulation of NAPAs. Twelve medium-size projects have been approved by Council, representing \$21.1 million in LDCF funding. Eleven of these support implementation of NAPA priorities, while the remaining project is focused on advancing NAP processes in LDCs. The 218 full-size projects which have been Council approved represent \$1.4 billion in LDCF funding, with 208 of these focused on implementation of NAPA priorities, and an additional 10 either combining support towards NAP processes with implementation of NAPA priorities, or focused entirely in advancing NAP processes. As of the March 31, 2019 Progress Report on the LCCF and SCCF, cumulative pledges to the LDCF amounted to \$1,399.88 million, of which \$1,347.86 million had been received, with resources available for new funding decisions amounting to \$112.06 million.¹⁷

12. Fifteen of the 218 FSPs presented in table 1 are multi-trust fund (MTF) projects, which combine LDCF resources with resources from SCCF, GEF, or other trust funds. MTF projects were introduced during the GEF-5 replenishment period.¹⁸ While 14 MTF projects including LDCF financing were submitted for approval during the GEF-5 period (13 of which were approved and are either under implementation or awaiting implementation start), no MTF projects with LDCF funding were submitted during the GEF-6 period. However, the number of MTF project proposals has increased during the GEF-7 period, following the roll-out of the new LDCF/SCCF strategy and GEF programming directions in July 2018, and in line with the GEF-7 ambition to better mainstream adaptation and climate resilience in GEF Trust Fund programming.¹⁹ Six MTF projects with LDCF funding have been submitted during the GEF-7 period, with one having been CEO Endorsed and another approved by Council. As of June 2019, \$104.46 million in LDCF funding had been allocated to MTF projects or programs.²⁰

13. An overview of the LDCF portfolio by project status is presented in table 2. Only projects which have been approved by Council or have advanced beyond this stage in the project cycle are considered as part of the LDCF portfolio. The stage in the project cycle which respective projects have reached will determine the manner in and extent to which they are reviewed in this evaluation. The transition from the GEF Secretariat project management information system (PMIS) to a new data portal has led to data gaps as information on older projects is not yet available in the new portal, but not up to date in the old system. This has been a limitation in presenting accurate information on project status at this stage. The

¹⁶ An overview of the LDCF project cycle and approval process is available here: <https://www.thegef.org/council-meeting-documents/step-step-guide-ldcf-project-cycle>

¹⁷ GEF/LDCF.SCCF.26/03, Progress Report on the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund, Executive Summary, par.1-2, June 2019. Available from: http://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF.LDCF_.SCCF_.26_03_Progress_Report.pdf

¹⁸ GEF IEO, Program Evaluation of the Least Developed Countries Fund, September 2016. Evaluation Report No. 106, p. 11.

¹⁹ GEF/LDCF.SCCF.26/03, Progress Report on the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund, Executive Summary, par. 43, June 2019. Available from: http://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF.LDCF_.SCCF_.26_03_Progress_Report.pdf

²⁰ GEF/LDCF.SCCF.26/03, Progress Report on the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund, Executive Summary, par. 42, June 2019. Available from: http://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF.LDCF_.SCCF_.26_03_Progress_Report.pdf

status of projects in the approval process will be updated as information becomes available as part of the evaluation process.

Table 1: LDCF Portfolio by Project Type

Project type*	No. of projects	Budgetary allocation (million \$)#			Co-financing (as percentage of total)
		LDCF financing	Co-financing	Total	
Enabling activity	51	11.3	1.3	12.5	10
Medium size-project (MSP)	12	21.1	64.3	85.4	75
Full size-project (FSP)	218	1,394.6	6,863.0	8257.6	83
Total	281	1,426.9	6,928.6	8,355.5	83

* The formulation of NAPAs are funded through Enabling Activities, while NAPA implementation Projects and support of NAPs are funded through MSPs and FSPs
 This table presents information on projects which have been approved by the LDCF Council or have advanced beyond this stage in the project cycle.

Financial implications of dropped projects have not been taken into account.
 LDCF financing numbers include PPG Grants as well as Agency Fees.
 Individual cell values have been rounded.

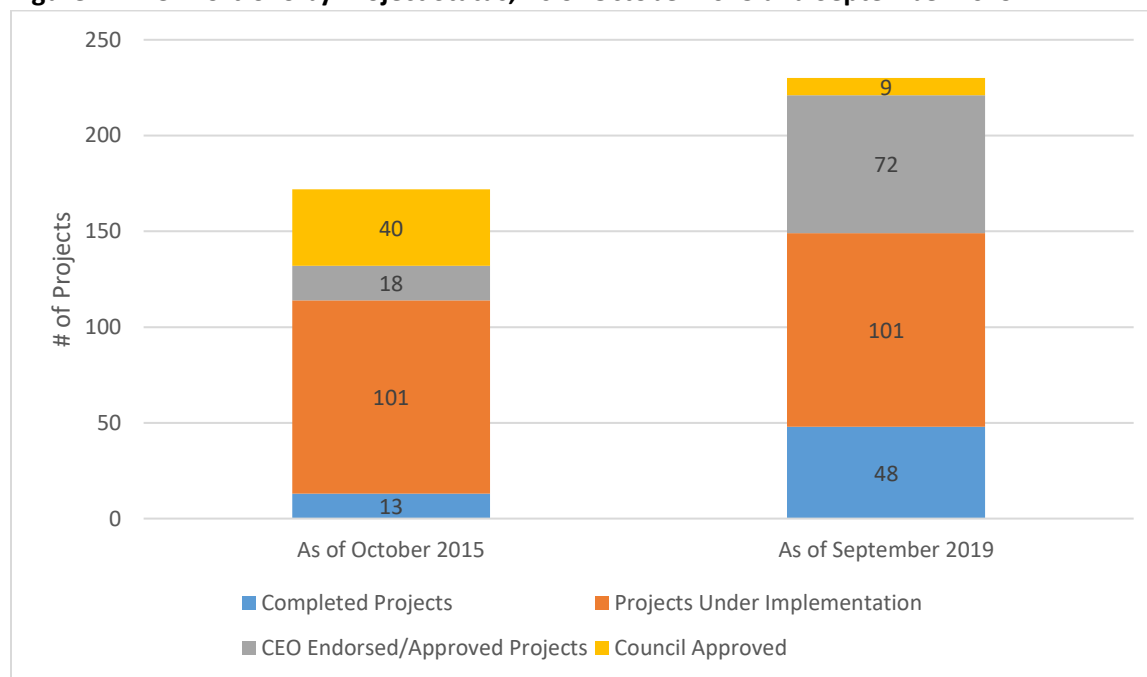
Table 2: 2019 LDCF Support to NAPAs, NAPA Implementation Projects, and Projects Supporting the NAP Process, by Project Status

Number of projects by Status	NAPAs (EAs)	NAPA implementation projects (FSP & MSP)	Projects supporting the NAP Process (FSP & MSP)	Total
Completed	51	47	1	99
Under implementation		100	1	101
CEO endorsed/approved		63	9	72
Council approved		9		9
Total	51	219	11	281

14. A significant change since the 2016 LDCF program evaluation, which this evaluation updates, is the maturation of the LDCF portfolio of projects, particularly in regard to the number of completed projects which can provide information on results, sustainability, and lessons learned. Figure 1 compares the LDCF portfolio of NAPA implementation projects and projects supporting the NAP process by project status as of October 2015, the cutoff for consideration in the 2016 LDCF program evaluation, and as of September 2019, the cutoff for this evaluation. Thirty-four NAPA implementation projects, and one project supporting the NAP Process, have reached completion since October 2015, for a total of 47

completed NAPA implementation projects, and one completed project supporting the NAP process.²¹ While the portfolio of NAPA implementation projects and projects supporting the NAP process has matured since the previous evaluation, the portfolio of LDCF enabling activity projects supporting the development of NAPAs has not changed much, with only one new NAPA completed, for the South Sudan²², and submitted to UNFCCC in 2017.²³

Figure 1: LDCF Portfolio by Project Status, As of October 2015 and September 2019



c. Previous evaluations of the LDCF

15. The most recent evaluation of the LDCF was carried out by GEF IEO and presented to the 20th LDCF/SCCF Council meeting in June 2016. The Evaluation found LDCF supported activities to be highly relevant to COP guidance and countries’ development priorities, and to show clear potential in reaching the GEF’s three adaptation strategic objectives, as well as having co-benefits beyond the climate change focal area. Furthermore, it found improvement in gender performance of the LDCF portfolio following the introduction of enhanced requirements for GEF, though the share of projects which were gender mainstreamed was still low at 14 percent. Finally, it found that the unpredictability of resources based on the lack of a formal resource mobilization process had a negative impact on efficiency. The evaluation reached three recommendations: the GEF Secretariat should explore and develop mechanisms that ensure the predictable, adequate, and sustainable financing of the Fund; the GEF Secretariat should make efforts to improve consistency regarding its understanding and application of

²¹ Two completed projects, GEF IDs 2190 and 2040 were completed at the time of the 2016 evaluation but not included in the review of completed projects, as no terminal evaluation was conducted for either project.

²² GEF ID 5564.

²³ UNFCCC Submitted NAPAs. Accessed November 12, 2019.

available here: <https://unfccc.int/topics/resilience/workstreams/national-adaptation-programmes-of-action/napas-received>

the GEF gender mainstreaming policy and the Gender Equality Action Plan to the LDCF; and, the GEF Secretariat should ensure that PMIS data is up to date and accurate.

16. As part of the Sixth Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF (OPS6) a Climate Change Focal Area Study was completed and published in 2017, which included discussion of the LDCF portfolio, drawing evidence mainly from the 2016 evaluation. Evaluative evidence on adaptation to climate change and LDCF was also synthesized in OPS6 from evaluations and special studies of the GEF Trust Fund that included LDCF and SCCF projects.

17. The Fifth Overall Performance Study (OPS5) published in 2014, covered adaptation to climate change in its review of the GEF work on focal area strategies, results-based management and tracking tools, multi-focal area and multi-trust fund (MTF) projects as well as gender mainstreaming. The study included preliminary findings of a quality-at-entry review of a sample of projects approved to implement NAPAs to assess the extent to which they respond to key issues identified by NAPAs and project design quality.²⁴ The IEO conducted further quality-at-entry reviews of approved NAPA implementation projects published in 2014.²⁵ This review concluded that (1) a large majority of NAPA implementation projects were aligned with their respective NAPA, (2) agriculture was the key adaptation priority area in NAPAs, (3) all projects were consistent with LDCF strategies, eligibility criteria, and priorities, (4) a high percentage of NAPA projects were mainstreaming gender into adaptation initiatives, and (5) a large majority of projects included wide stakeholder involvement and had risk assessment and mitigation strategies in place.

18. The 2012 GEF Evaluation of Focal Area Strategies²⁶ aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the elements and mechanisms that make a focal area strategy successful. The evaluation concluded that, in most cases, the GEF-5 focal areas did not draw on a systematic identification of the envisaged causal relationships between various elements of the relevant strategy, which is an impediment to achieving catalytic results. Technical Paper 7 of this evaluation²⁷ focused on climate change adaptation under the LDCF and SCCF. The paper affirmed that the LDCF/SCCF strategy on adaptation largely reflects the current state of scientific knowledge and is sound from a scientific perspective on the basis of UNFCCC COP guidance. Technical Paper 8²⁸ provides an overview of COP guidance to the GEF. It found that the GEF was generally responsive to UNFCCC guidance.

²⁴ GEF IEO, OPS5 Technical Document 19: Adaptation to Climate Change, November 2013. Available from: <http://www.gefio.org/sites/default/files/ieo/documents/files/ops5-td19-adaptation-cc.pdf>

²⁵ GEF IEO, The Least Developed Countries Fund: Review of the Implementation of NAPAs, April 2014. Available from: <http://www.gefio.org/sites/default/files/ieo/evaluations/lDCF-napa.pdf>

²⁶ GEF IEO, Evaluation of the GEF Focal Area Strategies – Evaluation Report No. 78, January 2013. Available from: <http://www.gefio.org/sites/default/files/ieo/evaluations/fas.pdf>

²⁷ GEF IEO, Evaluation of the GEF Focal Area Strategies – Technical Paper 7: Climate Change Adaptation under LDCF and SCCF, November 2012. Available from: <http://gefio.org/sites/default/files/ieo/ieo-documents/fas-td02-climate-change-adaptation.pdf>

²⁸ GEF IEO, Evaluation of the GEF Focal Area Strategies – Technical Paper 8: Collection of COP Guidance to the GEF for the Four Conventions the GEF Serves as a Financial Mechanism, November 2012. Available from: <http://www.gefio.org/sites/default/files/ieo/ieo-documents/fas-td08-convention-guidance.pdf>

19. The 2011 evaluation of the GEF Strategic Priority for Adaptation (SPA)²⁹ pilot program aimed to provide lessons and experiences from implementation of the first climate change adaptation strategy supported by the GEF. One of the evaluation's recommendations stated that the GEF should continue to provide explicit incentives to mainstream resilience and adaptation to climate change into the GEF focal areas, as a means of reducing risks to the GEF portfolio.

20. Two evaluations covering work with LDCF resources were published in 2009, one by the UNDP Evaluation Office, and the other jointly by the independent evaluation entities of Danida and the GEF.³⁰,³¹ These earlier evaluations were conducted in the first phase of the LDCF and were thus more focused on NAPA development. A 2010 Danida follow up review of actions taken in response to the 2009 Danida and GEF joint evaluation found that efforts had been made or were underway to respond to most of the recommendations addressed to the LDCF/SCCF Council and the GEF Secretariat. Nevertheless, the report found that some issues need further attention including delineating cooperation between the LDCF and other adaptation funds, and uncertainty about the future financial regime for adaptation.³²

II. Purpose, Objectives, and Audience

a. Purpose and objective

21. The overall purpose of the evaluation is to provide the LDCF/SCCF Council with evaluative evidence of the Fund's relevance, emerging results and their sustainability.

22. The main objective of this evaluation of the LDCF is to evaluate the progress made by the LDCF since the 2016 LDCF program evaluation and the extent to which the LDCF is achieving the objectives set out in the GEF Programming Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change for LDCF/SCCF (2018-2022). The evaluation aims to provide recommendations on the way forward for the LDCF.

b. Stakeholders and audience

23. The primary stakeholders are GEF Secretariat staff, staff of GEF Agencies and LDCF/SCCF Council members. Secondary stakeholders are staff of the STAP, staff from Governments, country-level project implementers and other GEF stakeholders and beneficiaries.

²⁹ GEF IEO, Evaluation of the GEF Strategic Priority for Adaptation (SPA) – Evaluation Report No. 61, July 2011. Available from: <http://www.gefio.org/sites/default/files/ieo/evaluations/gef-strategic-priority-adaptation-2010.pdf>

³⁰ UNDP EO, Evaluation of UNDP Work with Least Developed Countries Fund and Special Climate Change Fund Resources, 2009. Available from: http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/thematic/ldcf/LDCF-SCCF_Evaluation.pdf

³¹ GEF/LDCF.SCCF.7/Inf.4, Joint External Evaluation: Operation of the Least Developed Countries Fund for Adaptation to Climate Change, October 13, 2009. Available from: https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/GEF.LDCF_SCCF_7.Inf4_4.pdf

³² GEF, Follow-up to the LDCF Evaluation (Prepared by DANIDA), October 2010. Available from: https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/Follow-up_to_LDCF_Evaluation_DANIDA_mem_b_4.pdf

24. The evaluation's target audience is LDCF/SCCF Council members, other LDCF/SCCF and GEF stakeholders, as well as the general public and professionals interested in climate change adaptation, national adaptation processes and development.

III. Evaluation Questions and Coverage

a. Coverage and scope

25. This evaluation will cover the timeframe from the start of the LDCF, November 2001, through September 2019. The focus will be on the developments since October 2015, which was the cutoff date for the 2016 Evaluation of the LDCF. The evaluation will focus on relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability of outcomes and additionality of the LDCF.

26. Special attention will be given to sustainability. The sustainability of GEF projects, or "the continuation/likely continuation of positive effects from the intervention after it has come to an end"³³ is measured at completion through a rating which assesses risks to continuation of benefits from factors including environmental, financial, sociopolitical or institutional factors in the country. The GEF IEO has introduced a methodological approach for Post-Completion Verification.³⁴ This evaluation will review the sustainability ratings of LDCF projects at completion and include post completion assessments of two projects using this approach. Post completion travel will be combined with travel for other evaluation activities.

27. The evaluation will also give special attention to gender considerations, resilience and engagement of the private sector. The 2016 program evaluation of the LDCF concluded that the gender performance of the LDCF portfolio has improved considerably in response to enhanced requirements from the GEF, though from a low baseline, and with some confusion as to what it means to be "gender mainstreamed." In November 2017 the GEF adopted a new Policy on Gender Equity³⁵ and a gender implementation strategy³⁶ in June 2018. The GEF Programming Strategy on Adaptation states that "the proposed results framework includes relevant disaggregated indicators for men and women so that impacts and outcomes, and their gender relevance, can be tracked and analyzed."³⁷ The focus of the

³³ [GEF/ME/C.56/02/Rev.01, The GEF Evaluation Policy, June 2019, p.13. Available From: https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF.ME_C56_02_Rev01_GEF_Evaluation_Policy_June_2019_0.pdf](https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF.ME_C56_02_Rev01_GEF_Evaluation_Policy_June_2019_0.pdf)

³⁴ GEF/ME/C.57/03, A Methodological Approach for Post-Completion Verification, November 2019. Available from: http://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF.ME_C57_03_Post_completion_tool_and_yellow_sea_Nov_22_2019.pdf

³⁵ GEF/C.53/04, Policy on Gender Equality, October 2017. https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF.C.53.04_Gender_Policy.pdf

³⁶ GEF/C.54/06, GEF Gender Implementation Strategy, June 2018. https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF.C.54.06_Gender_Strategy_1.pdf

³⁷ GEF/LDCF.SCCF.24/03, GEF Programming Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change for the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund and Operational Improvements July 2019 to June 2022, June 2018. Available from: https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF.LDCF_SCCF_24.03_Programming_Strategy_and_Operational_Policy_2.pdf

evaluation will be on evidence of the operationalization of the new Gender Policy in the LDCF. The results framework on gender equality and women's empowerment is provided in annex E.

28. Regarding resilience, the GEF Programming Strategy on Adaptation states that "In line with the IPCC-defined scope of climate finance for resilience, the LDCF and SCCF seek to enhance resilience to the impacts of climate variability and the projected climate change."³⁸ The latest results framework of the GEF adaptation program states the overarching goal as "To increase resilience and reduce vulnerability to the adverse impact of climate change in developing countries, and support their efforts to enhance adaptive capacity."³⁹ The three objectives of the results framework feed into this goal. The 2010 STAP Advisory Document "Enhancing Resilience to Reduce Climate Risks"⁴⁰ explicitly mentions the various temporal perspectives (current variability, observed medium- and long-term trends in climate, and planning in response to model-based scenarios of anticipated long-term climate change) and broad-based categories of interventions (knowledge-based, capacity-based and ecosystem-based) that—if combined well—can bolster the synergies and perspectives needed for adaptation responses in support of longer-term resilient development. Given the NAPAs' emphasis on 'urgent and immediate needs to adapt to climate change', the programmatic focus is expected to be on adaptation interventions that capture this immediacy.

29. Guidance from COP 23 encouraged the GEF to further enhance engagement with the private sector.⁴¹ As a vital part of the adaptation programming strategy, private sector engagement will be implemented through two pillars: 1) expanding catalytic grant and non-grant investments, and 2) support enabling environments for the private sector to act as an agent for market transformation. The pillars are aligned with the approach to private sector engagement articulated in the GEF-7 Programming Directions.⁴² The LDCF aims to support local private actors and micro, small, and medium enterprises in their efforts to contribute to adaptation ambitions. To help address priorities identified by LDCs in NAPAs and NAPs, private sector-relevant themes, such as value chains, market development, risk transfer and sharing mechanisms, insurance/re-insurance and eco-tourism, are relevant. The LDCF may also support incentives and policy measures to encourage private sector engagement, including fiscal and financial tools and instruments for climate risk transfer and management. Additionally, the

³⁸ IPCC, 2014, *Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report* and GEF/LDCF.SCCF.24/03, GEF Programming Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change for the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund and Operational Improvements July 2019 to June 2022, June 1, 2018. Available from:

https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF.LDCF_SCCF_24.03_Programming_Strategy_and_Operational_Policy_2.pdf

³⁹ GEF/LDCF.SCCF.24/03, GEF Programming Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change for the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund and Operational Improvements July 2019 to June 2022, June 1, 2018. Available from: https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF.LDCF_SCCF_24.03_Programming_Strategy_and_Operational_Policy_2.pdf

⁴⁰ GEF/C.39/Inf.18, *Enhancing Resilience to Reduce Climate Risks: Scientific Rationale for the Sustained Delivery of Global Environmental Benefits in GEF Focal Areas*, November 2010. Available from:

https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/C.39.Inf_18_-_STAP_Climate_Resilience_Report_4.pdf

⁴¹ See annex B, FCCC/CP/2017/11/Add.1/Decision 10/CP.23, par.11.

⁴² GEF/R.7/19, GEF-7 Replenishment Programming Directions, April 2018. Available from: https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/publications/GEF-7%20Programming%20Directions%20-%20GEF_R.7_19.pdf

GEF and GCF may collaborate to identify pathways and opportunities to facilitate pilot private sector-oriented initiatives supported by the LDCF (and SCCF) to be scaled up with the GCF.

b. Key evaluation questions

30. The overarching goal and strategic objectives, an integral part of the GEF programming strategy on adaptation, translate into the evaluation questions below grouped by the core evaluation criteria:

<p>1. Relevance</p>	<p><i>Does LDCF support continue to be relevant to UNFCCC COP guidance and decisions, the GEF adaptation programming strategy, and countries' broader development policies, plans and programs?</i></p> <p>The 2016 LDCF program evaluation found LDCF-supported activities for the most part highly relevant to COP guidance and countries development priorities and that they show clear potential in reaching the GEF's three adaptation strategic objectives. The evaluation will assess the relevance of newly approved LDCF projects in responding to the GEF adaptation programming strategy, and country priorities. (See annex B for UNFCCC COP guidance and decisions, and box 1 for GEF strategic objectives and pillars.). It will also assess LDCF responsiveness to the LDC Work Program and to guidance from UNFCCC COP, including the request to continue to enhance capacity development and continue to enhance long-term domestic institutional capacities, which drew from the 2016 LDCF program evaluation.</p>
<p>2. Effectiveness</p>	<p><i>How effective is the LDCF at delivering on expected outcomes?</i></p> <p>The evaluation will take advantage of the growing body of evidence from completed projects to assess the extent to which they have delivered on expected outcomes, and challenges within each type of outcome.</p> <p><i>What are the gender equality objectives achieved and gender mainstreaming principles adhered to by the LDCF?</i></p> <p>The 2016 LDCF program evaluation found that there was confusion as to what it means to be "gender mainstreamed" and recommended the GEF Secretariat to improve consistency of the application the gender policy. The evaluation will assess the application of GEF's gender policies during the past four years.</p> <p><i>To what extent has the LDCF engaged the private sector?</i></p> <p>The evaluation will assess newly approved and completed projects in line with the 2018-2022 GEF adaptation strategy regarding private sector engagement.</p> <p><i>What are lessons learned from implementation experience?</i></p> <p>The evaluation will synthesize lessons learned from the portfolio of completed projects.</p>

<p>3. Efficiency</p>	<p><i>How have resource flows and resource predictability, or lack thereof, affected the Funds programming?</i></p> <p>The 2016 LDCF program evaluation found that unpredictability in the LDCF replenishment process slowed the project preparation process. The evaluation will assess how the lack of a regular replenishment process and unpredictability of funding effects LDCF programming. In addition to stakeholder interviews and portfolio analysis, materialized pledges of voluntary contributions and the alignment with funding decisions will be compared since the 2016 evaluation.</p> <p><i>How efficient is the Fund’s project cycle as a delivery mechanism?</i></p> <p>The evaluation will perform project cycle analysis to compare the project preparation process for LDCF projects to projects funded by other trust funds.</p>
<p>4. Sustainability</p>	<p><i>To what extent have the outcomes achieved in LDCF projects been sustainable post completion?</i></p> <p>The evaluation will review the sustainability ratings of LDCF projects at completion and include assessments of the factors that affect sustainability of outcomes of two projects post completion.</p>
<p>5. Additionality</p>	<p><i>What has been the additionality, both environmental and otherwise, of the LDCF?</i></p> <p>GEF additionality is defined as the additional outcome (both environmental and otherwise) that can be directly associated with the GEF supported project or program.^{43, 44} The evaluation will assess LDCF’s additionality in six areas: environmental, legal/regulatory, institutional, financial, socio-economic and innovation outcomes of the LDCF.</p>

c. Assessing performance

31. The Fund’s performance will be assessed at the Fund’s macro level as well as the project level. The former will be in terms of the degree to which the LDCF has operated according to the strategic

⁴³ [GEF/ME/C.56/02/Rev.01, The GEF Evaluation Policy, June 2019, p.16. Available From: https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF.ME_C56_02_Rev01_GEF_Evaluation_Policy_June_2019_0.pdf](https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF.ME_C56_02_Rev01_GEF_Evaluation_Policy_June_2019_0.pdf)

⁴⁴ “An Evaluative Approach to Assessing GEF’s Additionality”, prepared by the GEF IEO, includes a more detailed discussion of definitions of additionality across agencies, as well as the explanation of the definition adopted by the GEF IEO, which follows:

- (a) Changes in the attainment of direct project outcomes at project completion that can be attributed to GEF’s interventions; these can be reflected in an acceleration of the adoption of reforms, the enhancement of outcomes, or the reduction of risks and greater viability of project interventions.
- (b) Spill-over effects beyond project outcomes that may result from systemic reforms, capacity development, and socio-economic changes.
- (c) Clearly articulated pathways to achieve broadening of the impact beyond project completion that can be associated with GEF interventions.

GEF/ME/C.55.inf. 01. An Evaluative Approach to Assessing GEF’s Additionality. November 2018. p.13-14. Available from: <https://www.gefio.org/sites/default/files/ieo/council-documents/files/c-55-me-inf-01.pdf>

objectives set, informed by the UNFCCC COP guidance and decisions received, to analyze the broader progress to impact. This also translates, among others, into evaluating the Fund's performance regarding the mainstreaming of adaptation into broader developmental policies, plans and programs, and assessing how NAPAs relate to other GEF focal areas beyond climate change adaptation. The latter will focus on performance related to the achievement of emerging project results against stated goals. The core evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and additionality) will be applied as outlined in the previous paragraph.

IV. Evaluation Design

a. Methodology

32. The evaluation's methodological approach is expected to include the following main elements:
- **Document review:** Review of documentation will include GEF specific documents on the LDCF and related interventions, as well as additional literature beyond GEF and LDCF/SCCF Council and project documents, and GEF Secretariat policies, processes and related documents. Document review will also include non-GEF IEO evaluation materials, academic and grey literature on the Fund, and NAPA and NAP developments.
 - **Portfolio review:**
 - Review of prepared NAPAs. In 2017, South Sudan submitted its NAPA to UNFCCC.⁴⁵ This is the only NAPA completed in the time since the 2016 evaluation. This NAPA will be reviewed as part of the evaluation.
 - Quality-at-Entry Review. Projects which have been approved by Council and/or CEO Endorsed/Approved since October 2015, (58) will be reviewed for quality-at-entry. A protocol will be developed, building on the protocol used in the 2016 evaluation, to assess relevance to UNFCCC guidance and decisions, the GEF adaptation programming strategy, and countries broader development policies, plans and programs.
 - Review of Completed Projects. Projects which have reached completion since October 2015, (35) will be subject to a desk review for results and newly available project documents, (project implementation reports (PIRs), midterm reviews (MTRs), terminal evaluations (TEs), and terminal evaluation reviews (TERs), etc.) will be analyzed. The data gathered from the project reviews will be aggregated at the portfolio level and used to evaluate the LDCF implementation projects as a whole. A protocol will be developed, building on the protocol used in the 2016 evaluation, to assess the projects in a systematic manner and ensure that project level key questions are addressed coherently.

⁴⁵ GEF/LDCF.SCCF.26/03, Progress Report on the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund, par. 5, June 6, 2019. Available from: https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF.LDCF_.SCCF_.26_03_Progress_Report.pdf

- **Meta-assessment Review:** Since the 2016 LDCF program evaluation the GEF IEO and other agencies have conducted evaluations that have reviewed the LDCF, the NAPA and NAP process as well as NAPA implementation and projects supporting the NAP process. The evaluation team will conduct a meta-assessment review to synthesize lessons, findings and experiences from such assessments of the LDCF and related activities.
- **Interviews:** Interviews regarding the results, operations and management of the LDCF will be conducted with select stakeholders from: the GEF as the LDCF administrator, GEF Agencies, relevant government and non-governmental actors in selected LDCs, the LDC Expert Group, and the UNFCCC secretariat
- **Field Visits:** Field visits will focus on gathering evidence of sustainability of project results post completion. The number of LDCF projects visits will as such depend on the mutually beneficial synergies explored between evaluation endeavors. In the absence of such synergies a minimum of two field visits will be conducted.
- **Triangulation:** The evaluation team will conduct an analysis of, and triangulate data collected to determine trends, formulate main findings, lessons and conclusions. Different stakeholders will be consulted during the process to test preliminary findings. Also see “V. Quality Assurance.”

b. Design limitations

33. The evaluation will be subject to limitations due to the maturity of the LDCF portfolio. In the past four years, 35 projects have reached completion for a total of 48 completed projects, which still represent a small share of the LDCF portfolio. The analysis will focus on highlighting illustrative examples from projects for which sufficient information and lessons have been articulated.

34. Another limitation is that due to time and budget constraints only a small number of projects will be visited, which limits the amount of information that can be collected from stakeholders directly involved in projects in the field. This limitation will be mitigated by combining project visits with other ongoing evaluations or evaluation work.

35. The evaluation is also expecting to face problems obtaining accurate information on LDCF projects due to the unreliability of the GEF PMIS data, especially on project status and in light of the transition to the new GEF Portal. PMIS/Portal data will be compared with LDCF/SCCF Council progress reports for the LDCF and GEF Agencies will be requested to verify project data before projects are reviewed.

V. Quality Assurance

36. In line with IEO’s quality assurance practice, quality assurance measures have been set up for this evaluation. The draft approach paper and draft evaluation report will be circulated and validated before finalization through a comprehensive stakeholder feedback process with the key stakeholders. In the case of the draft evaluation report this will take place prior to the June Council in 2020. Key stakeholders include the GEF Secretariat, GEF Agencies, STAP, and select GEF focal points. Comments,

feedback and suggestions will be considered, and the approach paper and final report will be adjusted accordingly. Additionally, the draft approach paper has been internally reviewed in the GEF IEO, and an internal and external peer reviewer with experience in adaptation to climate change evaluation has been selected to provide advice throughout the evaluation process. The internal and external peer reviewer will advise on the evaluation methods described in the approach paper, findings and recommendations of the evaluation, and the draft and final evaluation report.

VI. Deliverables and Dissemination

37. The main findings, conclusions, and recommendations will be included in the IEO LDCF/SCCF Annual Evaluation Report that will be presented to the LDCF/SCCF Council at the June 2020 meeting. The full report will be submitted as a Council information document. It will be distributed to LDCF/SCCF Council members, GEF Secretariat, GEF Agencies, STAP and relevant GEF country focal points. A graphically edited version will be published on the IEO's website and will also be made available to interested parties through email. A four-page summary of the report will be produced and posted on the website. The above-mentioned outputs will be distributed through existing IEO mailing lists as well as to stakeholders involved in the conduct of the evaluation. The main findings, conclusions, and recommendations will be included in the Report of the GEF to the Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC. To reach a wider audience the evaluation will also be presented through webinars and at relevant evaluation conferences and workshops such as Adaptation Futures.

VII. Resources

a. Timeline

38. The update of the LDCF program evaluation will take place between October 2019 and June 2020. The initial work plan is shown in table 4 and will be further revised and detailed as part of the further preparation.

Table 4: Work Plan

Task	Month: Responsible	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
		2019	2019	2019	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020
I Evaluation Design										
Draft Approach Paper		█	█							
Feedback Process			█							
Approach Paper			█							
TORs			█							
Protocol Development			█	█						
II Evaluation Context										
Literature Review			█	█	█	█				
Meta-Evaluation Review				█	█					
Evaluation Matrix				█	█					
III Data Collection										
Interviews					█	█				
Project Desk Review			█	█	█					
Field Visits					█	█				
IV Analysis										
Data Analysis				█	█	█				
Draft Report						█	█			
Feedback Process							█	█		
V Outreach										
Final Document to Council									█	
Presentation to Council										█
Final Graphically Edited Version of Report										→
Webinar										→
Report Summary										→
Blog-post										→

b. Budget (internal)

39. The LDCF evaluation update is budgeted at \$55,000. A further breakdown of cost elements has been provided for the IEO.

c. Team and skills mix

40. The evaluation will be led by a task manager from the GEF IEO with oversight from the Chief Evaluation Officer and Director of the IEO. The manager will lead a team comprised of GEF IEO Evaluation Analyst and consultants. A short-term consultant will be selected to help with desk reviews and portfolio analysis. A mid-level short-term consultant with technical and policy expertise in

adaptation to climate change and evaluation as well as knowledge of the key priority areas as indicated in the NAPAs will be hired to provide guidance and specific inputs at major milestones of the evaluation.

Annex A: Conclusions and Recommendations of the Program Evaluation of the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) 2016

Conclusions

In its evaluation of the LDCF, the GEF Independent Evaluation Office reached the following eight conclusions:

Conclusion 1: LDCF-supported activities, for the most part, have been highly relevant to COP guidance and countries' development priorities. There is a generally high degree of coherence between the scope of LDCF-funded activities and both the guidance and priorities of the UNFCCC and the GEF, and the development priorities of countries receiving LDCF support.

Conclusion 2: LDCF-supported interventions show clear potential in reaching the GEF's three adaptation strategic objectives. Eighty-eight percent of NAPA country reports, and 90 percent of implementation projects were, from a large to an extremely large extent, aligned with the GEF adaptation strategic objectives. The quality at entry review showed that 98 percent of NAPA implementation projects had a high to very high probability of delivering tangible adaptation benefits. Also, the majority of stakeholders interviewed indicated it was very likely that the NAPA implementation projects they were familiar with, or involved in, would reach the GEF's strategic adaptation objectives.

Conclusion 3: Contributions of LDCF-supported interventions to focal areas other than climate change are potentially significant. It is not within the Fund's mandate to explicitly target focal areas beyond climate change, but given the primary priority areas for LDCF support—agriculture, water resource management, and fragile ecosystems—there is clear potential for beneficial synergies with the biodiversity and land degradation focal areas in particular. The Fund's support also has the potential to contribute, to some extent, to GEF's global environmental benefits, most notably in maintaining globally significant biodiversity and sustainable land management in production systems.

Conclusion 4: The efficiency of the LDCF has been negatively affected by the unpredictability of available resources. Despite employing measures to expedite the project cycle, the LDCF's efficiency has experienced negative effects from the unpredictable nature of available resources. There is no formal resource mobilization process, and the Fund has to rely on voluntary contributions. Unpredictable funding creates uncertainty for GEF Agencies and LDCs reliant on LDCF support for the implementation of their primary climate change adaptation priorities. It also negatively influences stakeholders' perceptions of the Fund's transparency and, overall, affects LDCF efficiency.

Conclusion 5: LDCF support to NAPA implementation projects has resulted in catalytic effects in completed projects, though extensive replication and upscaling generally 42 demands further financing beyond the projects' time frame. Completed NAPA implementation projects developed or introduced new technologies and/or approaches which were successfully demonstrated and disseminated, and resulted in activities, demonstrations, and/or techniques being repeated within and outside of these projects. Additional catalytic effects, as identified by project stakeholders, were (1) in the generation of significant social, economic, cultural, and human well-being co-benefits as a result of NAPA project implementation; (2) the projects having impacts on multiple sectors and at different levels of society;

and (3) the projects resulting in the development of foundations for larger-scale projects through analytic work, assessments, and capacity building. Only 15 percent of completed projects performed well on upscaling. For the majority of projects that received low performance ratings for scaling up, additional financing will be required to ensure scaling up. The technical and institutional capacity-building and information-sharing activities had good buy-in from national and local-level officials, but projects highlight further financing beyond the project's time frame as the primary requirement for scaling up.

Conclusion 6: There is a clear intent to mainstream adaptation into countries' environmental and sustainable development policies, plans, and associated processes. The portfolio analysis found that almost three-quarters of NAPA country reports clearly detailed the ways in which NAPA priorities would be linked with existing national policies, plans, and strategies.

Conclusion 7: The gender performance of the LDCF portfolio has improved considerably in response to enhanced requirements from the GEF, though there seems to be confusion as to what it means to be "gender mainstreamed." Almost 50 percent of projects under GEF-4 lacked a gender mainstreaming strategy or plan, which went down to 8.7 percent under GEF-6. Over 90 percent of NAPA implementation projects financed under GEF-6 address gender concerns to some degree. However, this evaluation rated only 17.4 percent of these projects as gender mainstreamed; more projects need to move from the "gender aware" and "gender sensitive" categories to the "gender mainstreamed" rating. The Gender Equality Action Plan clearly explains what it means for a project to be gender mainstreamed. Some other Council documents, specifically the Annual Monitoring Review, show a different interpretation regarding gender mainstreaming.

Conclusion 8: There are significant discrepancies in project data from the GEF Secretariat's PMIS. A quality assessment of PMIS information was not a specific objective of this evaluation, but project data harvesting from the PMIS revealed 58 broken links to project documentation for 46 projects. Moreover, cross-checking the available project data with GEF Agencies revealed further discrepancies in PMIS data.

Recommendations

In its evaluation of the LDCF, the GEF Independent Evaluation Office reached the following three recommendations:

Recommendation 1. The GEF Secretariat should explore and develop mechanisms that ensure the predictable, adequate, and sustainable financing of the Fund.

Recommendation 2. The GEF Secretariat should make efforts to improve consistency regarding its understanding and application of the GEF gender mainstreaming policy and the Gender Equality Action Plan to the LDCF.

Recommendation 3. The GEF Secretariat should ensure that PMIS data is up to date and accurate.

Annex B: UNFCCC COP Guidance and Decisions regarding the LDCF⁴⁶ ⁴⁷

The LDCF was established in 2001 as adaptation funding mechanism. Its mandate, objectives and priorities in supporting LDCs has developed over time. A concise overview of UNFCCC COP Guidance and Decisions towards the LDCF is provided below:

- FCCC/CP/2001/13/Add.1, Decision 2/CP.7, Annex B, par. 9, and Annex D, par.22: Capacity building in developing countries as part of the LDC (non-Annex 1) work program, in support of country-driven capacity-building activities with a focus on especially those countries particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.
- FCCC/CP/2001/13/Add.1, Decision 5/CP.7 and Decision 7/CP.7, par.6: Support the work program for the LDCs, including the preparation of the NAPAs.
- FCCC/CP/2003/6/Add.1, Decision 4/CP.9, par.1a: Support preparation of National Communications to the Convention.⁴⁸
- FCCC/CP/2003/6/Add.1, Decision 6/CP.9, pars. 2 and 3: Support the implementation of NAPAs (the support of NAPA implementation projects) as soon as possible after the NAPA completion.
- FCCC/CP/2003/6/Add.1, Decision 6/CP.9, par. 3 and FCCC/CP/2005/5/Add.1, Decision 3/CP.11, par.1a: NAPAs should be country-driven, in line with national priorities, which ensures cost-effectiveness and complementarity with other funding sources. There should be a focus on urgency and immediacy of adapting to the adverse effects of climate change with a prioritization of activities.
- FCCC/CP/2005/5/Add.1, Decision 3/CP.11, par. 1 b-c: (b) Supporting the implementation of activities identified in NAPAs, in order to promote the integration of adaptation measures in national development and poverty reduction strategies, plans or policies, with a view to increasing resilience to the adverse effects of climate change, and (c) Supporting a learning-by-doing approach.
- FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1, Decision 1/CP.16, par. 15: Establish a process to formulate and implement national adaptation plans (NAPs) as a means of identifying medium- and long-term adaptation needs and developing and implementing strategies and programs to address those needs.
- FCCC/CP/2012/8/Add.2, Decision 12/CP.18, par. 1: To provide funding from the Least Developed Countries Fund for activities that enable the preparation of the NAP process.
- FCCC/CP/2014/10/Add.2 Decision 10/CP.20 par. 8 & par.10: To share lessons learned and progress made in pilot accreditation of Global Environment Facility national project agencies, and to enhance communication with implementing agencies and to encourage its implementing

⁴⁶ GEF, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Guidance from the Conference of the Parties and Responses by the Global Environment Facility, COP1-COP23, Nov 2018. Available here:

https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/publications/GEF_UNFCCC%20COP%20Guidance2018_CRA.pdf

⁴⁷ All UNFCCC Decisions available here: <https://unfccc.int/decisions>

⁴⁸ UNFCCC overview “Non-Annex I national communications.” Available from:

http://unfccc.int/national_reports/non-annex_i_natcom/items/2979.php

agencies to enhance their communication with countries to facilitate a timely implementation NAPAs.

- FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1 Decision 1/CP.21 In Decision 1/CP.21, par. 58, The COP decided that the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Global Environment Facility, the entities entrusted with the operation of the Financial Mechanism of the Convention, as well as the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), administered by the Global Environment Facility, shall serve the Paris Agreement.
- FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.2 Decision 8/CP.21 par.6 & 8: Notes that the GEF IEO is carrying out a review of the LDCF, and requests the GEF to carry out a technical review of the programme priorities of the LDCF, taking into account the GEF IEO review and to focus on undertaking pilot concrete climate change activities that are particularly relevant for the least developed countries, and enhancing longer-term institutional capacity to design and execute these capacities
- FCCC/CP/2016/10/Add.1 Decision 11/CP.22 par. 14 & 15: Welcomes the conclusions of the “Program evaluation of the Least Developed Countries Fund” and requests the GEF to continue to enhance capacity development in the least developed countries for the development of project proposals with a focus on identifying potential funding sources, both national and international, and enhancing long-term domestic institutional capacities.
- FCCC/CP/2017/11/Add.1/Decision 10/CP.23 par.11 Encourages the Global Environment Facility to further enhance engagement with the private sector including its technology projects. 19.
- FCCC/CP/2018/10/Add.2 Decision 16/CP.24 par. 3 & 4: That support to the Least Developed Countries Work Programme should come from the Least Developed Countries Fund, as well as other bilateral and multilateral sources, and that the Least Developed Countries Work Program be updated to reflect the needs of the least developed countries, including through
 - Establishing and/or strengthening national climate change secretariats and/or focal points to enable effective implementation of the Convention, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement in the least developed Country Parties
 - Providing training to strengthen capacity of negotiators for Least Developed Countries to participate in the climate change process
 - Supporting process to formulate and implement national adaptation plans and related adaptation strategies, including national adaptation programmes of action
 - Support preparation and implementation of successive national determined contributions
 - Continue promoting public awareness programmes, strengthening cooperative action on adaptation technology development and transfer, strengthening capacity of meteorological and hydrological services for weather and climate information to support implementation of adaptation actions, and continue supporting capacity building initiatives to enable effective engagement in reporting and review activities under the Convention and the Paris Agreement, as needed

- FCCC/PA/CMA/2018/3/Add.1: Section II. par. 7 & 9: That the Least Developed Countries Fund shall serve the Paris Agreement

Annex C: Overview of Completed NAPAs

	Country	GEF Agency	GEF ID	Approval date of NAPA Preparation Grant	NAPA Report Completion Date	Duration	
						in years	and months
1	Afghanistan	UNEP	2530	May-04	Sep-09	5	4
2	Angola	UNEP	3409	Oct-07	Dec-11	4	2
3	Bangladesh	UNDP	2026	May-03	Nov-05	2	6
				Updated version	Jun-09		
4	Benin	UNDP	2461	Mar-04	Jan-08	3	10
5	Bhutan	UNDP	2352	Oct-03	May-06	2	7
6	Burkina Faso	UNDP	2156	Jul-03	Dec-07	4	5
7	Burundi	UNDP	2466	May-04	Feb-07	2	9
8	Cabo Verde	UNDP	2351	Oct-03	Dec-07	4	2
9	Cambodia	UNDP	1869	Dec-02	Mar-07	4	3
10	Central African Republic	UNEP	2425	Jan-04	Jun-08	4	5
11	Chad	UNDP	2480	Mar-04	Jan-10	5	10
12	Comoros	UNEP	2049	Jun-03	Nov-06	3	5
13	Democratic Republic of the Congo	UNDP	2409	Dec-03	Sep-06	2	9
14	Djibouti	UNEP	2191	Aug-03	Oct-06	3	2
15	Equatorial Guinea	UNDP	5191	Nov-12	Nov-13	1	0
16	Eritrea	UNDP	1959	Dec-02	May-07	4	5
17	Ethiopia	UNDP	1960	Apr-03	Jun-08	5	2
18	Gambia	UNEP	2050	Jul-03	Jan-08	4	6
19	Guinea	UNDP	2362	Nov-03	Jul-07	3	8
20	Guinea Bissau	UNDP	2524	May-04	Feb-08	3	9
21	Haiti	UNEP	1948	Jan-03	Dec-06	3	11
22	Kiribati	UNDP	2388	Oct-03	Jan-07	3	3
23	Lao People's Democratic Republic	UNDP	2148	Jul-03	May-09	5	10
24	Lesotho	UNEP	2013	Feb-03	Jun-07	4	4
25	Liberia	UNEP	2414	Dec-03	Jul-08	4	7
26	Madagascar	World Bank	2521	May-04	Dec-06	2	7

Table continued

	Country	Implementing Agency	GEF ID	Approval date of NAPA Preparation Grant	NAPA Report Completion Date	Duration	
						in years	and months
27	Malawi	UNDP	2027	Jun-03	Mar-06	2	9
28	Maldives	UNDP	2353	Oct-03	Mar-08	4	5
30	Mauritania	UNEP	1956	Jan-03	Nov-04	1	10
31	Mozambique	UNDP	2029	Apr-03	Jul-08	5	3
32	Myanmar	UNEP	3702	Jul-08	May-13	4	10
33	Nepal	UNDP	3412	Jan-08	Nov-10	2	10
34	Niger	UNDP	2481	Mar-04	Jul-06	2	4
35	Rwanda	UNEP	2484	Jun-04	May-07	2	11
36	Samoa	UNDP	1868	Dec-02	Dec-05	3	0
37	São Tomé and Príncipe	World Bank	2464	Apr-04	Nov-07	3	7
38	Senegal	UNEP	2085	Oct-03	Nov-06	3	1
39	Sierra Leone	UNDP	2482	Apr-04	Jun-08	4	2
40	Solomon Islands	UNDP	2814	Jun-05	Dec-08	3	6
41	Somalia	UNDP	5007	Jul-12	Apr-13	0	9
42	South Sudan	UNDP	5564	Aug-13	Feb-17	3	5
43	Sudan	UNDP	2031	May-03	Jul-07	4	2
44	Timor-Leste	UNDP	3464	Oct-07	Sep-11	3	11
45	Togo	UNDP	2465	Mar-04	Sep-09	5	6
46	Tuvalu	UNDP	1969	Feb-03	May-07	4	3
47	Uganda	UNEP	2168	Aug-03	Dec-07	4	4
48	United Republic of Tanzania	UNEP	1996	May-03	Sep-07	4	4
49	Vanuatu	UNDP	1970	May-03	Dec-07	4	7
50	Yemen	UNDP	1990	Jan-03	Apr-09	6	3
51	Zambia	UNDP	2413	Dec-03	Oct-07	3	10
Average duration of all NAPAs						3	10

Annex D: Results Framework of the GEF Adaptation Program

The revised results framework of the GEF Adaptation Program is structured around three strategic objectives with associated outcomes and indicators. As of July 1, 2018, project and program proponents that seek funds from the LDCF and/or the SCCF for climate change adaptation will be requested to align their proposals with one or more of these strategic objectives.

Goal	To strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability to the adverse impacts of climate change in developing countries, and support their efforts to enhance adaptive capacity
Objective 1	Reduce vulnerability and increase resilience through innovation and technology transfer for climate change adaptation
<i>Outcome 1.1</i>	Technologies and innovative solutions piloted or deployed to reduce climate related risks and/or enhance resilience
<i>Outcome 1.2</i>	Innovative financial instruments and investment models enabled or introduced to enhance climate resilience
Objective 2	Mainstream climate change adaptation and resilience for systemic impact
<i>Outcome 2.1</i>	Strengthened cross-sectoral mechanisms to mainstream climate adaptation and resilience
<i>Outcome 2.2</i>	Increased ability of country to access climate finance or other relevant, largescale, programmatic investment
Objective 3	Foster enabling conditions for effective and integrated climate change adaptation
<i>Outcome 3.1</i>	Climate-resilient planning enabled by stronger climate information decision support services, and other relevant analysis
<i>Outcome 3.2</i>	Institutional and human capacities strengthened to identify and implement adaptation measures

Annex E: GEF-7 Results Framework on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE)⁴⁹

Outcome area: Gender-responsive GEF program and project design and development		
Indicators	Baselines	Verification
1. Percentage of projects that have conducted a gender analysis or equivalent socio-economic assessment	Baseline: 66%	Project documents at PIF and CEO Endorsement/ Approval
2. Percentage of projects that plan to carry out gender-responsive activities - Number of projects with specific gender action plans	Baseline: Not available	
3. Percentage of projects that include sex-disaggregated and gender sensitive indicators	Baseline: 78%	Gender tags in the GEF portal
4. Percentage (and number) of anticipated GEF beneficiaries that are female	Baseline: Not available	GEF Core indicator
5. Percentage of projects that are tagged for expected contribution to closing gender gaps and promoting GEWE in one or more of the following categories: - contributing to equal access to and control of natural resources of women and men - improving the participation and decision-making of women in natural resource governance - targeting socio-economic benefits and services for women	Baseline: Not available	Gender tags in the GEF portal
Outcome area: Gender-responsive program and project reporting and results		
Indicators	Baselines	
6. Percentage (and number) of GEF beneficiaries that are female	Baseline: Not available	PIRs/MTRs/TEs (Qualitative analyses)
7. Percentage of projects that report on progress on gender-responsive measures, sex-disaggregated and gender-sensitive indicators, and lessons learned	Baseline: 73%	
8. Percentage of projects that report on results in one or more of the following categories: - contributing to equal access to and control of natural resources of women and men - improving the participation and decision-making of women in natural resource governance - targeting socio-economic benefits and services for women	Baseline: Not available	

⁴⁹ GEF, GEF Gender Implementation Strategy, June 1, 2018. GEF/C.54/06 P.11. Available from: https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF.C.54.06_Gender_Strategy_0.pdf