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Agenda Item 07

**FY25 WORK PROGRAM AND BUDGET FOR THE INDEPENDENT EVALUATION
OFFICE OF THE GEF UNDER THE LDCF AND SCCF**

(Prepared by the Independent Evaluation Office of the GEF)

Recommended Council Decision

The Council, having reviewed document GEF/LDCF.SCCF.36/E/01, “FY25 Program and Budget for the Independent Evaluation Office of the GEF under LDCF and SCCF,” approves the annual budget of \$347,788 to carry out the work program for fiscal year 2025. The budget is in line with the term of the evaluation work, which spans multiple years. The approved budget is being distributed as follows:

1. \$203,073 from the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and
2. \$144,715 from the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF)

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. During fiscal year (FY) 2024, the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) completed the activities of the annual work program approved by the Least Developed Countries Fund/Special Climate Change Fund (LDCF/SCCF) Council at the 34th Council meeting in June 2023. The IEO completed the Evaluation of GEF Support to Climate Information and Early Warning Systems (CIEWS) and prepared the LDCF/SCCF Annual Evaluation Report (AER) 2024.
2. Consistent with the evaluation budgeting approach for the GEF Trust Fund (TF), the IEO's work program and budget under the LDCF and SCCF adhere to a multiannual model. This model allows for the inclusion of multiyear evaluations and facilitates knowledge-sharing activities following evaluation completion. Maintaining a four-year work program aligns with the objective of fostering a longer-term vision for evaluation within the Funds.
3. The IEO conducts evaluations to assess the performance and results of the LDCF and SCCF. These evaluations serve accountability purposes, promote learning, and aim to enhance the performance of the Funds. The LDCF/SCCF indicative work program for FY2024–2027 (annex I) aligns with the goals outlined in the GEF programming strategy for climate change adaptation (FY23–26). This strategy aims to assist developing countries in advancing toward the adaptation goals set in the Paris Agreement. The work program focuses on four thematic areas: 1) agriculture, food security, and health; 2) water; 3) nature-based solutions; and 4) climate information and early warning systems (GEF 2022). The IEO's work program for the LDCF/SCCF (annex I) incorporates Annual Evaluation Reports (AERs) to monitor performance, program and thematic evaluations, and the inclusion of adaptation to climate change in the Eighth Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF (OPS8). These evaluations and activities are intended to provide insights that will inform the next GEF adaptation programming strategy.
4. In June 2023, the LDCF/SCCF Council approved a budget for the IEO of \$339,500 for FY24. The IEO estimates that the budget will be nearly fully used by the end of the fiscal year. This document presents a progress report on the activities completed by the IEO in FY24, and a work program and a budget for activities proposed for FY25.

II. PROGRESS REPORT AND FOUR-YEAR WORK PROGRAM

5. In FY24 the IEO completed the AER 2024 and the thematic evaluation of GEF support to climate information and early warning systems. The proposed IEO work program for FY25 includes the preparation of the AER 2025, the conduct of the LDCF/SCCF program evaluation, and the inclusion of adaptation to climate change in OPS8.

Annual Evaluation Report

6. The IEO has prepared the LDCF/SCCF Annual Evaluation Report (AER) 2024 to provide an overview of the performance of the Funds. The AERs are following the GEF Annual Performance Report's (APR) biennial schedule and will report on the performance of the LDCF and SCCF

through assessment of completed projects using information from terminal evaluations in FY25 and FY27. Aside from the assessment of terminal evaluations, the LDCF and SCCF are covered to some degree through thematic evaluations conducted by the IEO. Consequently, the FY24 and FY26 AERs will report on the Funds through a synthesis of evaluative evidence, conclusions, and recommendations from GEF TF evaluations conducted during GEF-8 that also cover LDCF/SCCF projects. All AERs will continue to include a summary of the GEF Management Action Record (MAR), tracking the progress in implementation of the GEF management's action plan that has been endorsed by the LDCF/SCCF Council.

7. The AER 2024 presents a synthesis of evidence from five GEF TF evaluations that have integrated adaptation to climate change and covered LDCF/SCCF projects. These evaluations include:

- (a) Evaluation of the GEF's Approach and Interventions in Water Security (GEF/E/C.64/01/Rev.02)
- (b) GEF Support to Drylands Countries (GEF/E/C.66/01)
- (c) Evaluation of Community-Based Approaches at the GEF (GEF/E/C.66/02)
- (d) Learning from Challenges in GEF Projects (GEF/E/C.66/03/Rev.01)
- (e) Evaluation of GEF Support to Climate Information and Early Warning Systems (GEF/E/C.66/04)

8. The synthesis of evidence aligns with the themes and levers of transformation as formulated in the *GEF Programming Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change for the LDCF and the SCCF for the GEF-8 Period of July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2026, and Operational Improvements* (GEF 2022). Additionally, the AER includes a summary of the GEF MAR, tracking the progress in implementation of the GEF management's action plan that was endorsed by the LDCF/SCCF Council. The AER 2024 is being submitted to the Council as an information document (see GEF/LDCF.SCCF.36/E/Inf.01).

9. In FY25 the IEO will prepare the AER 2025 to presents an assessment of project outcomes and sustainability, quality of project monitoring and evaluation (M&E), gender considerations, and vulnerabilities addressed by the cohort of LDCF/SCCF projects submitted since 2023 and included in the GEF Annual Performance Report (APR).

Program Evaluation

10. The IEO has conducted a series of program evaluations of LDCF and SCCF, most recently in 2020 and 2021, respectively (GEF IEO 2022a and 2022b). The main objectives of these evaluations were to assess the progress the Funds made since the most recent program evaluations (GEF IEO 2016 and 2018) and the extent to which they were achieving the objectives set out in the GEF-7 adaptation strategy. The findings and conclusions of the

program evaluations informed the LDCF/SCCF Programming Strategy (GEF 2022). Program evaluations have also been important for validating good performance and results to encourage donor support.

11. In FY25 the IEO will update the LDCF/SCCF program evaluations to assess the progress the Funds have made since the 2020 and 2021 program evaluations and to inform the next LDCF/SCCF Programming Strategy. The evaluation will focus on the extent the Funds have achieved LDCF/SCCF objectives, their response to Conference of the Parties (COP) guidance, and enhancement of policy coherence. Additionally, the evaluation will assess the Challenge Program for Adaptation under the LDCF/SCCF. The GEF launched the Challenge Program in 2019 in support of the increased emphasis on private sector engagement in its programming directions. The Challenge Program uses a preselection modality for LDCF/SCCF funding, soliciting project concepts through calls for proposals. To date, it has announced three calls for proposals. The first two were each valued at \$10 million and after a review process, 19 proposals were selected for financing as medium-size projects. The LDCF/SCCF program evaluation will be submitted to the LDCF/SCCF Council in a consolidated report in June 2025.

Thematic Evaluation

12. As part of the four-year work program of the IEO approved by the LDCF/SCCF Council at its 34th meeting in June 2023, the IEO completed the thematic Evaluation of GEF Support to Climate Information and Early Warning Systems (CIEWS) in FY24 (GEF IEO 2024a). CIEWS play a crucial role in diminishing vulnerability to climate change impacts and fostering climate change resilience. Globally, there is a growing recognition of the significance of CIEWS, which have become integral to climate change adaptation. The expansion of CIEWS, when integrated with disaster risk reduction and management, has demonstrated effectiveness in lowering mortality rates in regions affected by major disasters. CIEWS have been noted in some GEF programming directions and strategies since 2010 and in all adaptation to climate change strategies for the LDCF and SCCF. In the 2022–2026 adaptation strategy, CIEWS have been elevated to one of the four priority themes.

13. The evaluation of support to CIEWS aims to understand how projects funded by the LDCF, the SCCF, and the GEF TF have incorporated CIEWS into their programming strategies. Additionally, it provides evidence on the performance of these interventions through an assessment of their relevance, results, and sustainability. The overarching objective is to inform future GEF programming on CIEWS by offering valuable insights into successful areas and identifying aspects that require additional focus for achieving sustainable outcomes. The evaluation (GEF/E/C.66/04) was presented to the GEF Council in February 2024 and is included in the synthesis of evaluations in the AER 2024 (see GEF/LDCF.SCCF.36/E/Inf.01).

Adaptation in Comprehensive Evaluations of the GEF

14. The IEO has synthesized conclusions and evaluative evidence on adaptation to climate change in the past three OPSs including the *Seventh Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF* (OPS7; GEF IEO 2022c). OPS7 brought in evaluative evidence from the AERs prepared during

FY19–21, from the 2020 and 2021 program evaluations of the LDCF and the SCCF, and from GEF TF evaluations and special studies conducted by the IEO during GEF-7 that included LDCF/SCCF activities. The IEO also conducted a study on the mainstreaming of climate change resilience in the GEF portfolio that informed OPS7.

15. Adaptation to climate change will be included in the Eighth Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF (OPS8) through various channels. OPS8 will bring in evaluative evidence from the AERs prepared during FY23–26, the updates of the program evaluation of the LDCF and SCCF, the thematic evaluation of LDCF/SCCF, and from GEF TF evaluations conducted by the IEO during GEF-8 that include LDCF/SCCF activities. The evaluation work on including adaptation in OPS8 will be done in FY25 and continued in FY26.

III. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

16. The purpose of IEO knowledge management activities is to support the use of evaluations across the GEF partnership and to promote the application of lessons from evaluations to improve overall performance and impact. Evaluative evidence and findings from the IEO work program under LDCF/SCCF have been disseminated through several knowledge products and activities in FY24. The AER 2023 has been published and is available on the IEO website (GEF IEO 2024b). The IEO has participated in the Technology Executive Committee (TEC) activity group on early warning systems (EWS) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which is drafting a policy brief entitled “Realizing Early Warnings for All: Innovation and Technology in Support of Risk-Informed Climate Resilience Policy and Action.” Contributions to the policy brief included illustrative examples from the recently completed IEO evaluation of GEF support to CIEWS. The draft policy brief was discussed at the TEC 28 meeting in April 2024. Findings and lessons from the LDCF/SCCF work program were also shared through blogs, and at conferences, including the Fourth Conference on Evaluating Environment and Development: Integrating Environmental and Socioeconomic Domains for Sustainability, held in Washington DC in March 2024, and at the gLOCAL Evaluation Week 2024, in an event organized by IEO on Evaluation and Transformational Change: Balancing Ambition and Realism.

17. During FY25, evaluative evidence and findings from the IEO work program under LDCF/SCCF will be disseminated through several knowledge products and activities. Reports of the thematic evaluation of GEF support to CIEWS and the AER 2024 will be published and shared on the IEO website. The IEO will report on these evaluations in reports of the GEF to sessions of the conference of the parties to the UNFCCC. Findings will also be shared through blog posts on Earth-Eval, an online community of practice hosted by the IEO, and at various relevant conferences.

IV. MULTIANNUAL EVALUATION BUDGET

18. The multiannual budget of the IEO under the LDCF/SCCF for FY24–27 was approved for a total of \$1,269,257 in June 2023 (GEF IEO 2023). The LDCF/SCCF Council approved a total budget for the IEO of \$339,500 for FY24 at its 34th meeting in June 2023. This amount was

within the approved envelope for FY24–27. The projected amount to be disbursed by the end of FY24 is approximately 90 percent of the approved budget. Travel cancelled and postponed for unforeseen circumstances have resulted in lower than planned expenditures. Based on the multiannual nature of the budget, these undisbursed funds from the FY24 budget will be rolled over into the FY25 budget.

19. Table 1 presents the FY24–25 budget for the IEO under the LDCF/SCCF. The IEO work program has been tailored so that the approved budgets will allow for an effective and efficient delivery of the proposed evaluation work. The amounts shown for the activities cover the staff cost of an IEO senior evaluation officer to manage and contribute to conducting the evaluation activities, and the cost of an evaluation analyst to support the evaluations. The multiannual budgets include the costs of consultants, travel, knowledge management and dissemination, and miscellaneous expenses. As the evaluations will be led by an IEO staff using in-house human resources, staff cost will be charged directly to the individual evaluation budgets via the World Bank time recording system.

20. The IEO requests the LDCF\SCCF Council's approval for the proposed annual budget of \$347,788 for FY25 to cover the cost of the activities in the work program presented above. The breakdown of the proposed annual budget is \$203,073 from the LDCF and \$144,715 from the SCCF.

Table 1: Multiannual Budget of the Independent Evaluation Office of the GEF (thousands \$)

<i>Expense Category/LDCF</i>	<i>FY24 Approved Budget</i>	<i>FY24 Estimated Expenditures</i>	<i>FY25 Budget Request</i>
<i>Fixed Cost</i>			
IEO Salaries and Benefits Cost	126,900	127,000	130,073
<i>Total (A)</i>	126,900	127,000	130,073
<i>Variable Cost</i>			
Consultants	50,000	41,000	57,500
Travel	22,000	10,000	10,000
Knowledge Management/Dissemination	3,000	3,000	3,000
Miscellaneous	2,500	2,500	2,500
<i>Total (B)</i>	77,500	56,500	73,000
<i>Total Annual Budget (A+B)</i>	204,400	183,500	203,073

<i>Expense Category/SCCF</i>	<i>FY24 Budget Request</i>	<i>FY24 Estimated Expenditures</i>	<i>FY25 Budget Request</i>
<i>Fixed Cost</i>			
IEO Salaries and Benefits Cost	84,600	85,000	86,715
<i>Total (A)</i>	84,600	85,000	86,715
<i>Variable Cost</i>			
Consultants	25,000	22,000	42,500
Travel	20,000	8,000	10,000
Knowledge Management/Dissemination	3,000	3,000	3,000
Miscellaneous	2,500	2,500	2,500
<i>Total (B)</i>	50,500	35,500	58,000
<i>Total Annual Budget (A+B)</i>	135,100	120,500	144,715
LDCF/SCCF Total			
<i>Total Annual Budget</i>	339,500	304,000	347,788

V. REFERENCES

All URLs were checked before publication or as of the access date noted.

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VI. ANNEX I: INDICATIVE IEO WORK PROGRAM UNDER THE LDCF/SCCF FOR FY24–27

FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27
LDCF/SCCF Annual Evaluation Report 2024	LDCF/SCCF Annual Evaluation Report 2025	LDCF/SCCF Annual Evaluation Report 2026	LDCF/SCCF Annual Evaluation Report 2027
Evaluation of GEF Support to Climate Information and Early Warning Systems	LDCF/SCCF: Program Evaluation 2025		
	Include adaptation to climate change in OPS8	Include adaptation to climate change in OPS8	