

Summary of the 58th Meeting of the Global Environment Facility Council

The 58th meeting of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Council elected a new CEO and Chairperson to lead the GEF for a four-year term. The Council also agreed on a Work Program comprising 63 projects and five programs, with total resources amounting to USD 645.4 million.

The new GEF CEO and Chairperson is Carlos Manuel Rodríguez, the current Minister of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica.

The agreed Work Program includes programs on marine biodiversity, artisanal small-scale gold mining, wildlife, electric mobility, and food systems, land use, and restoration (FOLUR), as well as four Non-Grant Instruments (NGIs). The Work Program will benefit 72 recipient countries, including 20 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and 10 small island developing States.

The GEF Council examined a draft strategy for private sector engagement and requested the Secretariat to work with an *ad hoc* Council working group to revise the Strategy for presentation, along with an implementation plan, at the next Council session in December 2020.

The GEF Council also discussed the approach paper for the 7th Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF that will inform the replenishment negotiations for GEF-8. It agreed on the GEF Business Plan and Corporate Budget for FY2021 and the Work Program and Budget for the GEF Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) for FY2021.

Convening as the Council for the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), Members agreed on the LDCF Work Program comprising eight projects, with total resources amounting to USD 59.59 million. It also agreed on the FY2021 Administrative Budget for the Funds and the FY2021 Work Program and Budget for the IEO under the LDCF and SCCF.

The decision to meet online for the first time rather than in person was taken in direct response to the COVID-19 crisis. To deal with the challenge of a virtual meeting involving participants from different time zones, the Secretariat organized two practice sessions online before the meeting, the meeting was shortened to two days and the agenda was truncated. Getting participants accustomed to the virtual nature of the meeting presented a few challenges, but the technical team managed to keep the meeting running smoothly despite one or two glitches. The Council was able to consider every agenda item, discussion on the Work Program and policy issues such as the proposed private sector engagement strategy was as robust as in normal Council meetings, and the meeting overall appeared to run smoothly. In light of the Secretariat's observation that COVID-19 is likely to continue to have an impact on GEF's work into FY2021, it is possible this online format may be used successfully again in future.

This summary highlights the discussions and decisions reached at the 58th meeting of the GEF Council and the 28th meeting of the LDCF/SCCF Council.

A Brief History of the GEF

The GEF was set up in the 1990s in response to rising concerns about the state of the global environment. Following a pilot phase started in 1991, the GEF's role in providing financing and support for environmental projects was affirmed in 1994, when representatives of 73 countries agreed on the GEF's structure and functions. To date, the GEF has provided over USD 20 billion in grants and helped mobilize and leverage more than USD 100 billion from other sources. This funding has assisted more than 4700 projects in 170 countries.

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Organizational Structure: The GEF has a complex and unique organizational structure. The GEF Assembly is a high-level group composed of 183 member states. It convenes every 3-4 years. The Assembly reviews the GEF's policies and operations and has met six times.

The GEF Council gathers twice each year and is the main decision-making body. It develops, adopts, and evaluates operations, policies and programs and is composed of 32 appointed Council Members representing developing countries, developed countries, and economies in transition.

The GEF Secretariat is based in Washington, D.C., and supports the work of the Council and Assembly. The Secretariat, which currently has around 80 staff, also coordinates and oversees the GEF's work programs, monitors project implementation, and carries out Council and Assembly decisions.

In addition, the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) provides expert advice, while the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO), which was created in 2003, reviews and reports on the GEF's impact and effectiveness.

Funding: The GEF is funded by donor nations, which commit money every four years through a process called the GEF replenishment. Since its creation in 1991, the GEF Trust Fund has been replenished by USD 2.75 billion (GEF-1), USD 3 billion (GEF-2), USD 3.13 billion (GEF-3), USD 3.13 billion (GEF-4), USD 4.34 billion (GEF-5), USD 4.43 billion (GEF-6), and USD 4.1 billion (GEF-7).

Focus of Work: The GEF supports projects in several areas, including biodiversity, chemicals and waste, climate change, international waters, land degradation, and sustainable forest management. It has also supported activities in other areas such as the circular economy and ozone depletion.

The GEF works with numerous partners and channels funds through 18 "GEF Agencies," including several United Nations agencies and programmes, regional development banks and funds. Other GEF agencies include World Wildlife Fund US; Conservation International; the International Union for Conservation of Nature; the Brazilian Biodiversity Fund, and the Foreign Economic Cooperation Office of China.

The GEF also administers the LDCF and the SCCF and provides secretariat services to the Adaptation Fund established by the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Additionally, the GEF serves as a financial mechanism for a number of multilateral environmental agreements. These include the:

- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD);
- UNFCCC;
- UN Convention to Combat Desertification;
- Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants; and
- Minamata Convention on Mercury.

Summaries of IISD Reporting Services coverage of past GEF Council and Assembly meetings can be found at: http://www.iisd.ca/process/trade_invest_in_sd.htm

Report of the GEF Council Meeting

Naoko Ishii, GEF CEO and Chairperson, opened the 58th meeting of the GEF Council on Tuesday morning, 2 June, bringing together participants from many time zones via WebEx videoconference for the first ever meeting of the Council conducted entirely online. Precautions against the ongoing



Naoko Ishii, GEF CEO and Chairperson, opens the 58th GEF Council meeting

COVID-19 pandemic meant that Council Members could not meet in person for what would be CEO Ishii's final Council meeting after eight years at the helm.

CEO Ishii said the COVID-19 crisis highlights the nexus between health and the environment, the need for science to guide policy, the fragility of economic and social systems, and the need to adopt global solutions to address global problems. She added that it underscores the need to restore a balance between human and natural systems. Reflecting on her eight years as GEF CEO and Chairperson, Ishii said that during her tenure the GEF has: adopted a comprehensive GEF 2020 strategy; upgraded its business standards; improved its safeguards policy, gender policy and stakeholder engagement policy; and changed how it measures progress.

Most importantly, she said, the GEF has moved to address the root causes of environmental degradation and focus on integrated approaches to creating systemwide transformative change. She highlighted the paradox of "successful projects that fail to move the needle" and emphasized that, by shifting from a "project logic" to a "system logic," the GEF has demonstrated the courage necessary to begin catalyzing broader, systemic change.

CEO Ishii closed by saying much remains to be done. She thanked Council Members for their support during her tenure. Finally, she noted the agenda, scheduled over six hours spread across two days, would necessarily be limited. She lamented that there was no way to convene the GEF's normal consultation with civil society organization (CSOs) prior to the Council's session.

Council Members adopted the agenda (GEF/C.58/01).

GEF Business Plan and Corporate Budget for FY2021

On Tuesday, 2 June 2020, Peter Lallas, GEF Secretariat, introduced the GEF Business Plan and Corporate Budget for FY2021 (GEF/C.58/03). He noted challenges in making budget estimates due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, which has brought questions of new risks and new needs associated with ensuring full delivery of GEF-7 and initiation of the GEF-8 replenishment process. He pointed to savings for FY2020 due to reduced travel and efficiency in budgetary support for such endeavors as the Capacity-Building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT), gender, and results-based management. He also noted successful negotiations for lower rent for office space as well as system-level efficiency improvements. In particular, he pointed to a 50% savings on Council meeting costs for FY2020 and a request



Peter Lallas, GEF Secretariat

for FY2021 that reflects reduced travel based on the assumption that the pandemic's impacts will continue into 2021. He concluded noting that the FY2021 request represents a 0.3% reduction relative to the FY2020 budget.

Members expressed general support for the proposed business plan and budget, while raising some concerns, particularly in relation to impacts of COVID-19.

In response to questions and comments, CEO Ishii noted that the Technical Advisory Group on the GEF-8 replenishment consists of experts rather than country representatives, but noted the desire for inclusivity and said she would discuss how best to include the full Council in discussions with the incoming GEF CEO and Chairperson.

In his response, Lallas highlighted:

- a three-month extension on deadlines for project proposals and cancellations;
- development of a COVID-19 information paper on the needs and risks of all partners;
- sections in the information document on addressing sources of the pandemic and on supporting livelihoods through, for example, the Small Grants Program; and
- prioritization of constituency workshops and dialogues in light of COVID-19.

Lallas also discussed work to upgrade the GEF Portal, which will help ensure continuity in GEF activities, and said the Country Support Program will continue virtually if necessary.

He noted that FY2022 will have a full budget to account for the cost of replenishment, including the next GEF Assembly. He affirmed the need for GEF support to the CSO Network, including a CSO website, and for indicators on gender equality, pointing to a document on this subject before the Council. He agreed that indigenous peoples are vulnerable, particularly in the time of COVID-19, and emphasized learning lessons from traditional and indigenous practices regarding nature and wildlife, saying such lessons are embedded in GEF projects.

Praveen Desabatla, speaking for the World Bank in its role as GEF Trustee, noted that a paper on guiding principles for responsible investment will be presented to the Council later in 2020. He said GEF Trust Fund investments are not heavily impacted by short-term market fluctuations but said the Trustee team is monitoring the situation and will share information at the next Council session. On an increase in the World Bank's management fee, he said it is based on liquidity and that because

FY2020 saw higher liquidity than had been expected, due to smaller disbursements to implementing agencies from the Trust Fund, the fee had increased. He said projections of liquidity are lower for FY2021 and invited further questions.

The proposed Budget and Business Plan were adopted with no changes.

Decision: The Council, having reviewed document GEF/C.58/03, "GEF Business Plan and Corporate Budget for FY21," takes note of the business plan, and agrees on an FY2021 corporate budget from the GEF Trust Fund of USD 29.257 million, comprised of:

- USD 23.478 million for the GEF Secretariat;
- USD 2.725 million for STAP; and
- USD 3.054 million for the Trustee.

The Council also agrees to a total FY2021 administrative budget for the Nagoya Protocol Implementation Fund of USD 18,800, comprised of the following allocations from the Fund to cover the Secretariat's and Trustee's expenses for administration and implementation:

- USD 13,500 for the GEF Secretariat; and
- USD 5,300 for the Trustee.

In addition, the Council agrees to a total FY2021 administrative budget for the Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency from the Initiative's Trust Fund of USD 435,500, comprised of:

- USD 400,000 for the GEF Secretariat; and
- USD 35,500 for the Trustee.

The Council requests the Secretariat, in consultation with STAP and the Trustee, to present a combined FY2022 corporate budget and business plan for discussion at its June 2021 meeting.

Work Program and Budget of the Independent Evaluation Office: May 2020

On Tuesday, Juha Uitto, Director, IEO, presented the document "Work Program and Budget of the Independent Evaluation Office: May 2020" (GEF/ME/C.58/01). He explained it presents the IEO budget for FY2020 and the proposed budget for FY2021, as well as an update on the IEO's completed and ongoing evaluations and knowledge management activities during the reporting period of January–May 2020.

He also reported on two Strategic Country Cluster Evaluations (SCCEs): one on Biomes in Africa and one on LDCs. He said findings indicate support to countries has been relevant to national priorities and climate resilience was seldom addressed outside



Juha Uitto, IEO, presents the Work Program and Budget for the IEO

of climate adaptation projects. The SCCEs also found that when project sustainability is included in the design phase, positive outcomes are more likely. He explained that due to COVID-19 the findings and recommendations from the two SCCEs will be discussed with various stakeholders and included as part of the Seventh Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF (OPS7).

Uitto noted that the peer review of the IEO has been completed, but commented that it would not be appropriate for him to report on the results himself except to say the assessment was valuable and the IEO has prepared an action plan in response to the recommendations of the peer review. He said both the review and the draft action plan had been provided to the Council as an information document (GEF/ME/C.58/Inf.04), and will be discussed at the Council meeting in December 2020. He also said the IEO's Evaluation Policy has been revised in response to the recommendations of the peer review, and the revision will be supplied to the Council at its December 2020 session as a working document.

Uitto stated that the IEO is currently focused on the OPS7. With fieldwork suspended due to COVID-19, Uitto drew attention to savings in the IEO budget. He reported that the request for FY2021 was USD 630 million, which he said is well within the Council-approved four-year budget. Despite being unable to travel to conduct evaluations, he said, the IEO is using other data sources to support its evaluation work.

Responding to comments from Council members, Uitto thanked them for their support, especially with regard to questions of good governance, human rights, socioeconomic benefits, gender issues, and disability. He confirmed the IEO would pay attention to these.

Decision: The Council, having reviewed the "Work Program and Budget Report of the GEF Independent Evaluation Office: May 2020," acknowledges the progress made by the IEO in the reporting period, and agrees to the IEO budget for FY2021.

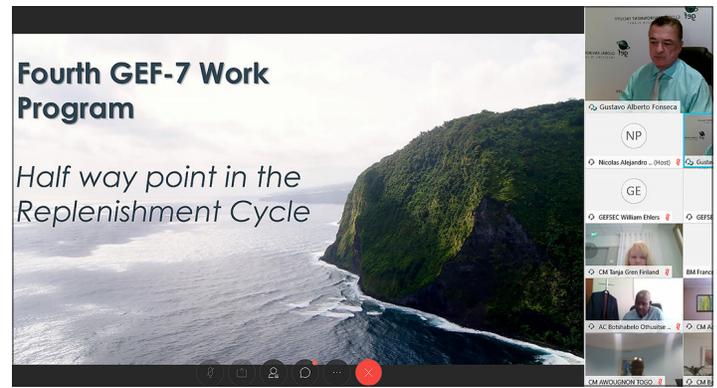
Work Program for GEF Trust Fund

On Tuesday, Gustavo Fonseca, GEF Secretariat, introduced the proposed Work Program for GEF Trust Fund (GEF/C.58/04/Rev.01), noting it marks the halfway point in the GEF-7 replenishment cycle. He said the Work Program contains 68 projects and programs, for a total request of USD 593.9 million from the GEF Trust Fund and USD 51.5 million in associated Agency fees. He pointed out that the total of USD 645.4 million represents 16.6 % of the entire GEF-7 replenishment. He said it includes two new Impact Programs, "GOLD+" and "Common Oceans," and four non-grant instruments (NGIs), and is expected to bring USD 4.3 billion in co-financing.

Fonseca observed that the proposed Work Program features the International Waters and the Chemicals and Waste focal areas prominently, with many programs and projects. He said their share of GEF-7 programming against their nominal allocations is now at or slightly above 50% at the mid-point of GEF-7.

Fonseca noted several elements of the Work Program relevant to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- the Global Wildlife Program will address specific issues related to the zoonotic aspect of wildlife trade and help develop alternative approaches to local livelihoods at a time when the wildlife tourism economy is in crisis;



Gustavo Fonseca, GEF, presented the Work Program for the GEF Trust Fund

- the GOLD+ program relates to mercury pollution from artisanal small-scale gold mining, which is more relevant due to the increasing price of gold since the start of the pandemic; and
- the FOLUR Impact Program will, after adding the new countries in this Work Program, be better placed to build sustainable and resilient food systems.

Council Members expressed general support for the Work Program.

Many members expressed concern about the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on GEF projects and programs, particularly on project implementation, stakeholder consultations, levels of co-financing, knowledge management, and possible project cancellation deadlines. Several called for a comprehensive report on COVID-19 impacts at the next Council session. One Member suggested a broader discussion at the next Council on the impact of COVID-19 on the GEF strategy. The representative of the Indigenous Peoples Advisory Council offered to develop with the Secretariat an "early warning system" regarding COVID-19 impacts on indigenous peoples. The Secretariat welcomed the idea.

CEO Ishii described the Secretariat's approach to COVID-19 as two-pronged: assessing, managing and mitigating risks, while identifying possible opportunities to adjust existing projects and programs to address COVID-19 impacts; and examining the longer-term implications for the human-nature interface, the need for transformational change, and the post-COVID-19 Green Recovery.

Several Council Members noted difficulties presented by projects that include middle-income countries which are ineligible for official development assistance (ODA). Other Members noted that, as a financing mechanism for several multilateral environmental agreements, the GEF cannot limit itself to only ODA-eligible nations.

Other concerns were raised by Members, including on:

- possible impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on expected co-financing in the Work Program;
- the lower representation of African countries in this Work Program compared to past Work Programs;
- the need to work with operational focal points when working on co-financing;
- underperforming outcome indicators, including those on marine habitats, fisheries, and chemicals, and what the Secretariat intends to do to address them;
- the need to ensure sustainability in projects;

- the need to ensure that the Common Oceans program complements and does not overlap with existing initiatives on oceans, and does not touch issues still under negotiation in talks about biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction;
- the Work Program not reflecting linkages with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- the need for information on the share of financing in the Work Program going to LDCs, and the need to focus more on LDCs in future Work Programs;
- the desire to see gender-specific information in project summaries;
- the question of why certain countries such as Sudan are not included in the GOLD+ program;
- the percentage of funding going to the United Nations Development Programme, an agency with more than half of all grievance cases before the Council; and
- the need to engage more GEF Partner Agencies in projects in the Caribbean small island developing States.

Fonseca said all comments would be reflected in the meeting record and the Work Program, and the Secretariat invited further written comments.

In response to one Member's concern about the proposed project to help India prepare its Fourth National Communication to the UNFCCC at a time when countries are transitioning to Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs), the Secretariat pointed out that BTR is not due until 2024, its format has not yet been agreed, and the project is being designed in such a way that the database used for the Fourth Communication can also aid in preparation of India's BTR.

In response to some of the other concerns raised, Fonseca:

- confirmed that the wildlife project in Bhutan would not involve area disputed with China;
- promised that lagging outcome indicators, particularly those involving international waters and chemicals and waste, would be the focus of the second half of GEF-7;
- explained that, according to guidance from the Minamata Convention Conference of Parties, only those countries that have ratified the Convention can get GEF funding related to the Convention, which Sudan has not yet done;
- explained that two Black Sea projects address different issues, but the Secretariat will ensure that the two GEF Agencies involved will coordinate and mutually reinforce the projects; and
- pointed out that the Secretariat has provided Members with an information note on the ratio of funding to non-ODA eligible countries.

Decision: The Council, having reviewed document GEF/C.58/04/Rev.01, "Work Program for GEF Trust Fund," agrees on the Work Program comprising 63 projects and five programs, subject to comments made during the Council meeting and additional comments that may be submitted in writing to the Secretariat by 3 July 2020.

Total resources in this Work Program amount to USD 645.4 million, which include GEF project financing and Agency fees. The Work Program comprises Project Identification Forms (PIFs), Program Framework Documents, and a Non-expedited Enabling Activity contained in Annex A to the decision.

The programs include the Common Oceans program, representing the second phase of the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction program, and GOLD+, aimed at expanding the investments started in GEF-6 to eliminate the use of mercury in the artisanal small-scale gold mining sector. The Work Program also contains addenda to the FOLUR Impact Program, the Global Wildlife Program, and the Electric Mobility Program.

Projects using the NGIs are: the Greener Shipping Investment Platform; the Forest Conservation and Sustainable Agriculture Fund for Developing Countries; the Wildlife Conservation Bond; and the Livelihood Carbon Fund 3.

Stand-alone, full-sized projects include 15 projects on biodiversity, seven projects on international waters, seven projects on land degradation, six projects on chemicals and waste, and one project on climate change mitigation.

The Work Program also includes 20 multi-focal area projects, one multi-trust fund project, three Small Grants Programme (SGP) projects, and a Non-expedited Enabling Activity in India on the fourth national communication and fourth biennial update report to the UNFCCC.

With respect to the PIFs and the Non-expedited Enabling Activity, the Council finds that each of these PIFs and the Non-expedited Enabling Activity:

- is, or would be, consistent with the Instrument and GEF policies and procedures; and
- may be endorsed by the CEO for final approval by the GEF Agency, provided the final project documents fully address the Council's and the STAP reviewer's comments on the Work Program, and the CEO confirms that the project continues to be consistent with the Instrument and GEF policies and procedures.

With respect to any PIF and Non-expedited Enabling Activity in this Work Program, the final project document will be posted on the GEF website for information after CEO endorsement. If there are major changes to the project objectives or scope since PIF approval, the final project document shall be posted on the web for Council review for four weeks prior to CEO endorsement.

With respect to the Program Framework Documents in the Work Program, the final child project documents fully incorporating and addressing the Council's and STAP reviews shall be circulated for Council review for four weeks prior to CEO endorsement/approval.



Report on the Private Sector Engagement Strategy

GEF's Private Sector Engagement Strategy

The Council began its work Wednesday by discussing the draft Private Sector Engagement Strategy (PSES) (GEF/C.58/05), with CEO Ishii noting that although significant progress had been made, there remained issues to resolve. She expressed hope the PSES could be adopted at the next session and proposed creating a working group to deal with outstanding issues before December.

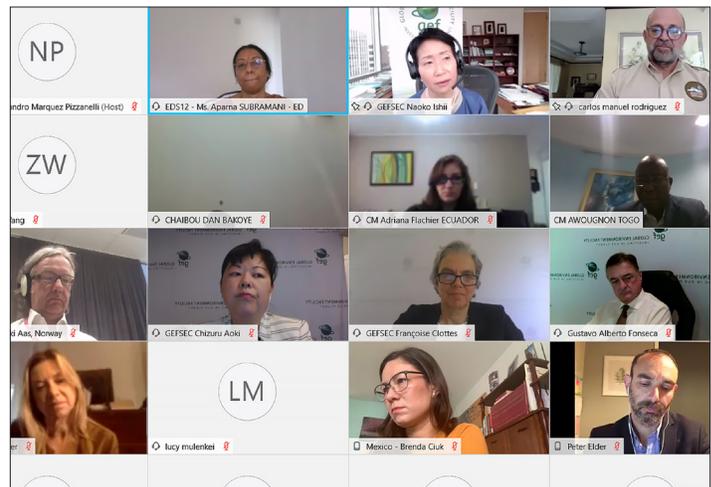
Matthew Brian Reddy, GEF Secretariat, presented the PSES, describing it as a vision in which the private sector at all scales works with the GEF to transform economic systems and markets to address the drivers of environmental degradation and reverse unsustainable global trends while delivering global environmental benefits. He said feedback had been gathered in developing the revised PSES and described three core elements:

- working strategically with multi-stakeholder platforms to achieve scale and impact, recognizing the need to achieve a systems orientation;
- supporting multiple entry points for the private sector with widened engagement, recognizing contributions at all levels; and
- recognizing what can be done internally within GEF to integrate the private sector throughout GEF Partnership to create a more collaborative working space in which the private sector is engaged beyond a transactional level and can benefit from the suite of benefits that the GEF Partnership provides.

He said the PSES “does not have all the answers” but does provide a good basis upon which to structure actions in the implementation plan.

There were many comments from Council Members, with broad support expressed for revising the Strategy in consultation with a Council working group and submitting it to the next Council meeting, as outlined by CEO Ishii. Members acknowledged the progress made and the importance of getting the approach correct. A number of Members said they were ready to adopt the PSES now, but also recognized that additional discussion on colleagues' remaining concerns would be beneficial. Comments by Council Members included that:

- the definition of “private sector” depends on the country context within which it operates and is not a homogeneous group, as it includes diverse entities such as microenterprises;
- the private sector contribution needs to be measurable and quantifiable so it can be monitored;
- the PSES should focus on risk management, women, indigenous communities, and other marginalized groups;
- the capacity of the private sector can also vary and should be taken into account;
- private sector engagement with indigenous groups can be positive or negative and there is a need to learn from past experience;
- there is a need to clarify the roles of the GEF Secretariat, country governments, and local communities;
- regulatory capacities differ among countries and there may be a need for providing support and advice to create effective regulatory frameworks that can catalyze change;
- the existing system for transparent allocation of resources (STAR) must not be eroded;



GEF 58th Council Meeting participants

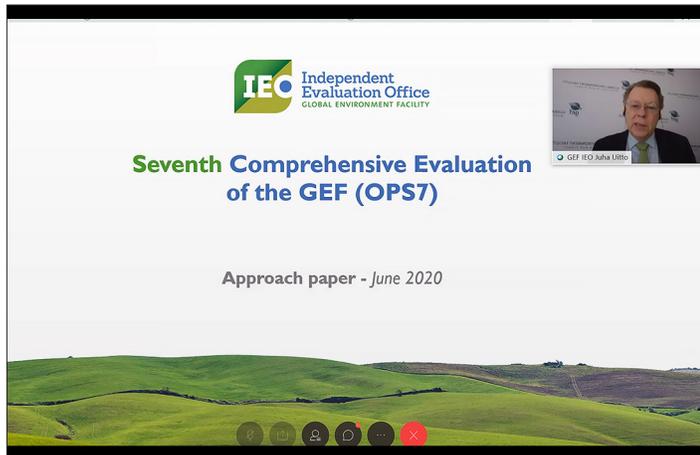
- COVID-19 has affected business all over the world, and therefore should be considered in the PSES;
- the strategy lacks necessary incentives for the private sector and needs to be better linked to the SDGs;
- there is a need to see how the private sector can engage in project design;
- a working group would be valuable but there is a need for the entire Council to engage prior to December;
- the treatment of additionality needs further work;
- any working group should be small and diverse; and
- it would be useful to develop national private sector engagement strategies supported by the GEF and an implementing agency.

Decision: The Council, having considered Document GEF/C.58/05, “GEF’s Private Sector Engagement Strategy,” takes note of the significant progress made in the formulation of the PSES. The Council requests the GEF Secretariat to prepare an implementation plan to be presented for consideration and approval by the Council at its 59th Meeting, alongside a revised PSES. To support this work, the Council further requests a Working Group of interested Council Members and the GEF Secretariat be created to support the development of both elements of the Strategy.

Approach Paper of the 7th Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF

On Wednesday, 3 June, Juha Uitto, Director, IEO, presented the approach paper for the seventh comprehensive evaluation of the GEF (OPS7) (GEF/E/C.58/02). He explained that negotiations for GEF-8 will be informed by OPS7, which he expected to be presented at a replenishment meeting in October 2021 and as a working document to the GEF Council in December 2021. He said the approach paper presents a roadmap to guide the preparation of inputs into OPS7 and facilitate dialogue in the GEF and among its partner Agencies. He indicated that OPS7 will examine:

- results and lessons learned from the implementation of the GEF 2020 Strategy;
- progress on recommendations made in OPS6;



Presentation of the IEO's Approach Paper to the 7th Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF

- the GEF's performance in reducing environmental stresses and enhancing global environmental benefits, promoting transformational change through innovation, and scaling up impacts through integration and efficient systemic approaches;
- institutional policies adopted to support the GEF 2020 Strategy, including those on gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment, engaging the private sector, safeguards, stakeholder engagement, strengthening results-based management, and knowledge sharing;
- the GEF country support program, which has never been evaluated before;
- the performance of the integrated approach pilots (IAPs) and impact programs; and
- the modalities of small grants, medium-sized projects and enabling activities.

Uitto noted that in written comments submitted recently, Members have asked that the OPS7 strengthen review of governance, human rights and other policy issues, and urged the IEO to take these into account. He reviewed the consultative process for OPS7 and its components, noting that while COVID-19 has affected some of its planned consultations, the IEO will consult remotely as much as possible.

Members supported the approach paper overall and the draft decision, while offering suggestions and requests for more in-depth examination of some areas, including:

- sustainability of projects;
- transparency;
- the gaps identified in OPS6;
- how the recommendations of the 2019 Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network of GEF have been addressed;
- the linkages between climate change and biodiversity, and whether current funding levels for biodiversity are adequately reflecting the linkages;
- the short- and long-term risks posed by COVID-19 and the climate crisis on the GEF portfolio, and how best to address them in the next replenishment;
- how the impact programs have contributed to scalability;

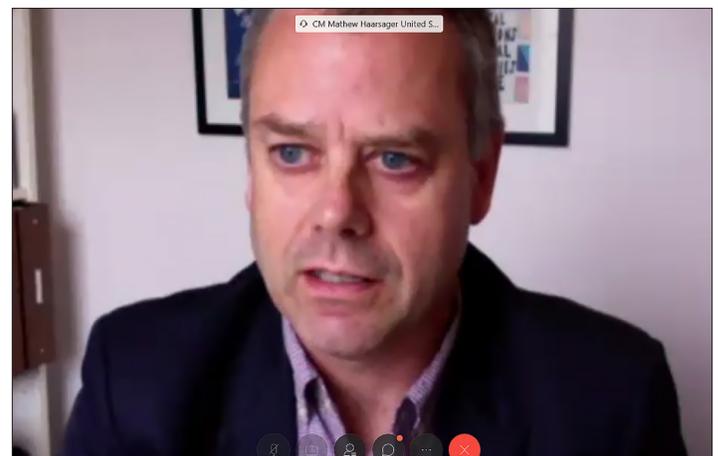
- whether increased communication with operational focal points has resulted in benefits in programming;
- whether the list of GEF Agencies should be modified, including the question of whether to include national agencies;
- whether the GEF-7 framework has increased country ownership;
- a possible framework for supporting a Green Recovery;
- how well GEF serves as financial mechanism for the Conventions it serves;
- linkages between achievement of global environmental benefits and achievement of local social and economic co-benefits;
- examples of successful projects.

Uitto responded that the suggestions and requests may prove to be beyond the budget just agreed for the IEO, but said the Office will do its best, and pointed out that many of these issues are already being addressed in IEO evaluations that will feed into OPS7. He explained how topics for OPS7 were chosen. He also explained the consultative process for OPS7, noting that travel restrictions due to COVID-19 might affect some of these but adding that the Office would work around it as much as possible.

Decision: The Council, having reviewed Document GEF/ME/C.58/02, "Seventh Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF (OPS7): Approach Paper," agrees to the approach outlined in the IEO paper. The Council requests the Independent Evaluation Office to conduct the OPS7 and to provide the evaluation reports to the replenishment process and to the Council according to the schedule presented.

Report of the Selection and Review Committee

On Tuesday, Mathew Haarsager, Chair of the Selection and Review Committee, reported on the process initiated in June 2019 to recruit Naoko Ishii's successor as GEF CEO and Chairperson. He said a ten-month process of advertising, outreach, interviews and reference checks, supported by the World Bank's Human Resources team, concluded in May 2020 with a shortlist of three candidates. The Committee met at the end of May 2020 and selected Carlos Manuel Rodríguez as the new CEO and Chair. Haarsager proposed that the Council formally adopt the Committee's selection.



Mathew Haarsager, US

CEO Ishii congratulated the Committee on conducting a transparent virtual process during the COVID-19 crisis and invited the Council to adopt the proposal. There being no comments, the Committee's proposal was adopted. CEO Ishii announced that Rodríguez would address the Council at the end of this GEF session.

Other Business

On Wednesday, Françoise Clottes, GEF Secretariat, responded to two Members' requests for information under Other Business. First, she reported on upgrades to GEF policies on transparency, financial safeguards, and fiduciary responsibility, pointing to Secretariat compliance with real-time reporting requirements on grievance cases reported to Council. She said the first annual summary of cases will be presented in December 2020. She also promised reports on all outstanding cases that arose before the entry into force of the two new policies and a full updated summary of cases reported by agencies on the GEF website, subject to confidentiality requirements.

Regarding rules and requirements for GEF agencies, she said Agencies should report the volume of non-GEF funding to GEF annually for Council review during the December 2020 meeting, and noted that a report is being prepared for December 2020 which will provide data updated to 30 June 2020.

Report of the LDCF/SCCF Council Meeting

On Wednesday, Naoko Ishii, GEF CEO and Chairperson, acting as Chairperson of the LDCF/SCCF Council, opened this Council's 28th meeting with reflections on her eight years convening the LDCF/SCCF. She noted significant growth in political attention to and understanding of adaptation. She reported that the work of these Funds would grow to close to 400 projects, affecting 20 million vulnerable people, with the approval of eight new LDCF projects under consideration at this session.

She called for clearer understanding of adaptation needs, saying it requires smart investment. She said COVID-19 is focusing attention on security, livelihoods, health, resilience, and many other aspects of life for people who are currently suffering. She emphasized adaptation as a subject for the LDCF, the SCCF, and the GEF Trust Fund, because it can deliver multiple benefits and flexible solutions, as well as responding to the current pandemic.

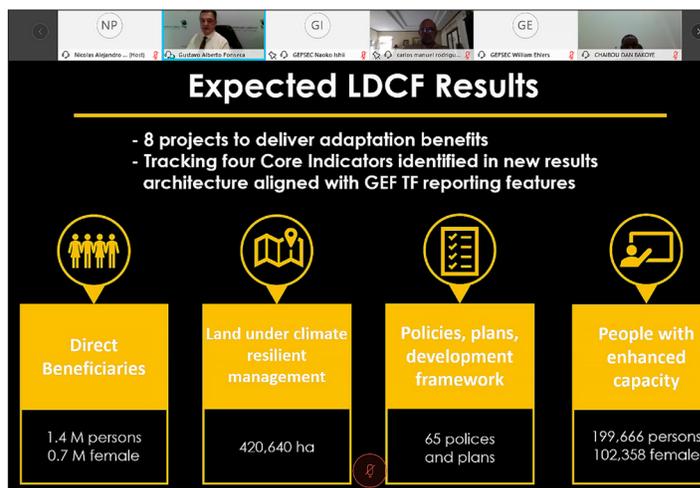
She expressed appreciation for all the commitments made and work completed over the last eight years and called on all GEF Council Members to increase their commitments in order to meet the needs of vulnerable societies that are still lagging behind. She said the return on these investments will be incalculable.

The agenda (GEF/LDCF.SCCF.28/01) was adopted without changes.

Work Program of the Least Developed Countries Fund

Gustavo Fonseca, GEF Secretariat, presented the joint Work Program of the LDCF and SCCF (GEF/LDCF.SCCF.28/03), noting its request for a total of USD 59.59 million for eight projects to address urgent and immediate climate change adaptation priorities. He said the Work Program focuses on:

- supporting livelihoods in vulnerable communities and income generation in key sectors such as agriculture, livestock, and fisheries;
- ecosystem-based adaptation;



Report on the Work Program of the Least Developed Countries Fund

- building resilience through better management of water resources and drinking water;
- innovative practices, integrated management, and appropriate technologies; and
- supportive policy and capacity measures.

He confirmed that all proposed projects meet requirements on gender, with 51.3% of persons receiving capacity building being female. He cited the FAO as receiving by far the largest amount of funding for these projects, with 49% of committed LDCF funds.

Some Members called for GEF to increase efforts to promote its visibility and that of the LDCF, in order to mobilize more resources. Some questioned the baseline and mechanism for judging results on income generation, given COVID-19's impacts on health and other elements of sustainability. Some Members called for gender-specific information on all aspects of projects, and a few requested more information on the implications of COVID-19 on implementation in the most vulnerable countries and on private sector engagement, including financial support for projects.

In response, Fonseca confirmed GEF's commitment to continue its efforts to increase donor contributions. He asked for Members' assistance, noting their convening power such as in the Ministerial Dialogue and Planning Session in Germany in September 2019. In response to a query, he said two projects were proposed by Haiti and the project addressing the most immediate concern—for clean drinking water and enhancement of climate resilience in water management—was selected for priority funding in the absence of resources for both. He also expressed an intention to fund the other project when resources become available.

He said countries are expected to identify issues, assess risks, design projects, and use available tools for project implementation to address the impacts of COVID-19, and also identify whether alternative tools are needed. He said the COVID-19 task force is currently examining issues relating to the baseline and will share information on this very soon, with the aim of making projects more relevant to recovery efforts. He also confirmed that all efforts will be made to access full data on gender considerations and reiterated the need for the Council to complete development of a private sector strategy in order to bring in the richness of private sector approaches, scale up activities, and make GEF funding go further. He said GEF is developing incentive packages to help further this aim.

Decision: The Council, having reviewed document GEF/LDCF.SCCF.28/03, “Work Program for the Least Developed Countries Fund,” agrees on the Work Program comprising of eight projects. This is subject to comments made during the Council meeting and additional comments that may be submitted in writing to the Secretariat by 3 July 2020. Total resources in this Work Program amount to USD 59.59 million for the LDCF, inclusive of GEF project financing and Agency fees.

The Work Program is comprised of eight PIFs, including one multi-trust fund project, listed in Annex A, on:

- improving the climate resilience of agro-silvo-pastoral production systems in Burkina Faso;
- planning and implementing ecosystem-based adaptation in Djibouti’s Gobaad Plain and Tadjourah Ville;
- strengthening the climatic resilience of the drinking water sector in the south of Haiti;
- integrated water resource management and ecosystem-based adaptation in Lao PDR’s Xe Bang Hieng River Basin and Luang Prabang City;
- enhancing the resilience of vulnerable coastal communities in Liberia’s Sinoe County;
- enhancing pastoral farming producers’ resilience in southeast watersheds of Mauritania;
- enhancing resilience of communities and ecosystems in the dry Miombo Woodlands of Tanzania Mainland and Dryland of Zanzibar; and
- resilient and sustainable livelihoods for rural Yemen.

With respect to the PIFs in the Work Program, the Council finds that each of these PIFs:

- is, or would be, consistent with the Instrument and GEF policies and procedures; and
- may be endorsed by the CEO for final approval by the GEF Agency, provided that the final project documents fully incorporate and address the Council’s and the STAP reviewer’s comments on the Work Program, and that the CEO confirms that the project continues to be consistent with the Instrument and GEF policies and procedures.

With respect to any PIF in this Work Program, the final project document will be posted on the GEF website for information after CEO endorsement. If there are major changes to the project objectives or scope after PIF approval, the final project document shall be posted on the web for Council review for four weeks prior to CEO endorsement.

FY21 Work Program and Budget for the Independent Evaluation Office of the GEF under the LDCF and SCCF

Chizuru Aoki, GEF Secretariat, introduced the FY2021 Administrative Budget for the LDCF/SCCF (GEF/LDCF.SCCF.28/04 FY21). She indicated that the document summarized activities undertaken in FY2020, including key accomplishments such as the launch of the Challenge Program and the Work Program. She also said the proposed business plan for FY2021 has two major elements, namely actions to address COVID-19 and development of a new climate change adaptation programming strategy for 2022-2026.



Chizuru Aoki, GEF Secretariat

She introduced the proposed FY2021 budget for the LDCF/SCCF, noting that the FY2021 LDCF budget is 1.8% below FY2020, and the FY2021 SCCF budget is 7.2% above the FY2020 budget. The budget proposes, for FY2021:

- USD 1.5 million for the LDCF; and
- USD 797,924 for the SCCF;

During the subsequent discussion with Council Members, Aoki said that although the details of replenishment are yet to be worked out, it would be good to have a technical advisory group to enable cross-fertilization among the different funds.

Decision: The LDCF/SCCF Council, having reviewed document GEF/LDCF.SCCF.28/04 FY21, “FY21 Administrative Budget for the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund,” agrees on the proposed budget for the GEF Secretariat, STAP, the Trustee and the GEF IEO as follows: USD 1,046,674 (GEF Secretariat), USD 128,000 (STAP), USD 384,000 (Trustee), and USD 41,000 (GEF IEO) from the LDCF; and USD 478,924 (GEF Secretariat), USD 128,000 (STAP), USD 115,000 (Trustee), and USD 76,000 (GEF IEO) from the SCCF.

Other Business

No issues were raised under this agenda item.

Closing of the LDCF/SCCF Council

GEF CEO and Chairperson Ishii closed the Council meeting at 10:54 am Eastern Daylight Time (EDT).

Summary of the Chair

At the conclusion of the Council meetings on Wednesday, 3 June, CEO Ishii reviewed the Summaries of the Chair for the 58th meeting of the GEF Council and for the 28th meeting of the LDCF/SCCF Council.

Closing

CEO Ishii then introduced incoming GEF CEO and Chairperson Carlos Manuel Rodríguez, noting that during his tenure as Costa Rica’s Minister of Environment and Energy, his country’s forests doubled in size and Costa Rica became a top destination for ecotourism.

Rodríguez thanked the Council for the opportunity to build upon Ishii’s legacy. He cautioned that only ten years remain to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius and to put production

and consumption on a sustainable path. He expressed hope for agreement on a post-2020 framework on the myriad environmental problems the world faces. He emphasized, however, that this cannot happen without recognition that the GEF partnership must be at the center of these efforts as a huge agent of change, as no other agency does what GEF does in the way GEF does it. He expressed concern that although GEF has achieved much, its actions have had not had sufficient impact at the global level, and that most people do not know enough about it. Rodríguez then expressed optimism that GEF will become “super-visible,” not just in the G20 countries but to every citizen in every country. He expressed gratitude to outgoing CEO and Chairperson Ishii and to the Council for the honor and trust given to him with this appointment.

After his remarks, Council Members welcomed Rodríguez to his new position as GEF CEO and Chairperson. Ben Green, Council Member, UK, speaking on behalf of developed country Members, praised Rodríguez’s experience and vision, especially his awareness of the importance of integrated approaches and of working toward GEF-8.

Brenda Ciuk, Council Member, Mexico, speaking on behalf of developing recipient countries, welcomed Rodríguez and highlighted the challenges ahead, specifically GEF-8 and the need to ensure a strong replenishment process. She highlighted Rodríguez’s relevant experience and praised his dedication to advancing nature conservation and climate change adaptation in his role as Minister of Environment and Energy for Costa Rica.

Lucy Mulenkei, on behalf of the CSOs, thanked CEO Ishii for her strong support for indigenous peoples during her tenure. She expressed a warm welcome to Rodríguez, whom she called a “longtime friend of indigenous peoples,” and said she looked forward to his leadership.

Yoshitomo Kondo, Council Member, Japan, congratulated Rodríguez on his appointment. Kondo expressed his deepest appreciation for Ishii’s leadership and noted major changes during her tenure as CEO and Chairperson, including the Paris Agreement and the operationalization of the Minamata Convention. He also highlighted Ishii’s leadership during the GEF-6 and GEF-7 replenishment processes, the GEF2020 Strategy, and the impact programs. He underscored that GEF’s achievements could not have been accomplished without her leadership, and said her



Yoshitomo Kondo, Japan

contributions to environmental progress were “invaluable.” Following Kondo’s comments, Council Members applauded via the videoconference.

Stefan Schwager, Council Member, Switzerland, noted the circumstances for the passing of the torch were unusual given that Members could not meet in person, and thanked CEO Ishii for her leadership and remarkable work.

Following Schwager’s comments, Council Members watched a video that looked back on her tenure, highlighting key milestones in her career of working to safeguard the global environmental commons. CEO Ishii thanked everyone profusely. Stressing that much remains to be done, she struck a note of hope for the future as she passed the torch to Rodríguez as the new CEO. She thanked everyone for “our journey together,” calling her time as head of the GEF an “honor and a privilege.” CEO Ishii then announced her plans to join the University of Tokyo leading a newly-established Center for Global Commons.

Council Secretary William Ehlers closed the meeting at 11:52 am EDT.

Upcoming Meetings

High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2020: The UN Economic and Social Council is convening this annual event, which will address the theme “Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development.” Participants will also discuss how to launch a decade of action on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) while combating COVID-19. **dates:** 7-16 July 2020 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York, US (TBC) **www:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2020>

42nd Meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol (OEWG 42): Due to COVID-19, OEWG 42 will meet virtually with an agenda pared down to one issue: preparations for the 2021-2023 replenishment of the Multilateral Fund (MLF). The OEWG will convene three identical technical sessions of three hours each over three days, each aimed at Parties in different time zones. During this meeting the Technology and Economic Assessment Panel (TEAP) replenishment task force will present its report intended to inform the 32nd Meeting of Parties (MOP) in its decision on an appropriate level of funding for the MLF replenishment. **dates:** 14-16 July 2020 **location:** virtual **www:** <http://conf.montreal-protocol.org/meeting/oewg/oewg-42/SitePages/Home.aspx>

Sixteenth Meeting of the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee: The POPRC will review the possible listing of hazardous chemicals under the various annexes of the Stockholm Convention. **dates:** 14-18 September 2020 (TBC) **location:** Rome, Italy (TBC) **www:** <http://www.pops.int>

52nd Sessions of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies: The 52nd sessions of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies will meet in October 2020. **dates:** 4-13 October 2020 **location:** Bonn, Germany (TBC) **www:** <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/conferences/bonn-climate-change-conference-october-2020>

24th meeting of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical, and Technological Advice (SBSTTA): The 24th meeting of the SBSTTA is tentatively scheduled for the second half of October, having been postponed from May because of COVID-19. It will focus on scientific and technical matters in preparation for CBD’s 15th Conference of the Parties, which is

expected to agree on a post-2020 biodiversity framework. **dates:** second half October (TBD) **location:** TBC **www:** <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/>

Third Meeting of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI): The SBI is tentatively scheduled to convene after the 24th meeting of the SBSTTA. It will address issues related to the CBD's implementation. **dates:** second half October (TBD) **location:** Montreal, Canada (TBC) **www:** <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/>

Joint 12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Vienna Convention and 32nd Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol: The meeting will address, *inter alia*, implementation of the Kigali Amendment, linkages between hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) and hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) in transitioning to low global warming potential alternatives, issues related to energy efficiency while phasing down HFCs, and critical and essential use exemptions. **dates:** 23-27 November 2020 **location:** Tashkent, Uzbekistan **www:** <http://ozone.unep.org/meetings>

59th Meeting of the GEF Council: The Council meets twice annually to develop, adopt and evaluate the operational policies and programs for GEF-financed activities. **dates:** 8-10 December 2020 (TBC) **location:** TBC **www:** <https://www.thegef.org/council-meetings>

Glossary

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CSO	civil society organization
FOLUR	food systems, land use, and restoration
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEF-7	seventh replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund
IEO	GEF Independent Evaluation Office
LDCs	least developed countries
LDCF	Least Developed Countries Fund
NGI	non-grant instrument
PIF	Project Identification Form
PSES	Private Sector Engagement Strategy
SCCF	Special Climate Change Fund
STAP	Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change



Naoko Ishii, GEF CEO and Chairperson, thanked and waved goodbye to the GEF Council family