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Summary of the 70th Meeting of the GEF Council: 15-19 December 2025

As the world’s largest multilateral fund for the environment, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) has a unique mandate to support developing countries in addressing global environmental challenges and delivering local benefits. At their December 2025 meetings, the Councils of the family of funds managed by the GEF, comprising the GEF Trust Fund, Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), and Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF), approved a total of approximately USD 372 million in funding to support climate action, biodiversity conservation, pollution prevention and reduction, and integrated environmental action across Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

As the GEF Trust Fund enters the final phase of its eighth replenishment cycle (GEF-8), its newly approved Work Program will allocate USD 290.6 million to 30 projects and programs across 56 countries, including 21 small island developing states (SIDS) and 21 least developed countries (LDCs). These initiatives aim to tackle illegal fishing, strengthen island economies, reduce pollution, and incentivize the adoption of regenerative farming practices.

In preparation for the next cycle of GEF funding (GEF-9), the Council also considered the Eighth Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF (OPS8), which highlighted that the GEF delivers consistently strong results across global and country level interventions. The Council considered the OPS8 recommendations, which call for, among other things, deepening integration while reducing complexity, expanding and better leveraging private sector engagement, and pursuing higher-risk, high-reward innovation with appropriate safeguards and incentives, aligned with the GEF’s risk appetite framework.

The LDCF/SCCF Council approved a Work Program channeling USD 52.26 million toward climate change adaptation priorities in four LDCs, two of which are also SIDS, and in one non-LDC SIDS. The Work Program is expected to mobilize an additional USD 116.84 million in co-financing, including nearly USD 90 million from international financial institutions (IFIs). Council members also reviewed the Funds’ progress and monitoring reports, which showed strong portfolio performance and results, alongside persistent challenges related to disbursement delays, reporting compliance, and resource constraints. Discussions emphasized the need for predictable funding, strengthened country capacity, and sustained support for

local institutions and Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs).

The GBFF Council approved a Work Program allocating USD 28.28 million to three projects in Colombia, Indonesia, and Madagascar, leveraging approximately USD 57.07 million in co-financing to support implementation of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). Members also welcomed the achievement of the Fund’s portfolio targets, including strong allocations for LDCs, SIDS, and IPLC-led actions, while underscoring the importance of regional balance, co-financing, and meaningful stakeholder engagement. The Council considered a draft resource mobilization strategy for the GBFF and established an *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Predictability in Financing to explore ways to enhance and strengthen predictability of contributions to the Fund.

Throughout the meetings, Council members and observers emphasized that scaling impact under future programming cycles will require not only increased resources but streamlined processes and stronger partnerships as well. During the LDCF/SCCF Council, four donors announced new pledges: Germany pledged EUR 10 million to the LDCF; Belgium pledged EUR 5.9 million to the LDCF; Ireland pledged EUR 3 million to the LDCF and EUR 2 million to the SCCF; and Sweden pledged SEK 130 million to the LDCF.

On the final day of the meetings, the GEF Council announced it would appoint a new CEO and Chairperson to lead the organization into GEF-9 next year. The statement came as the

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Council announced the departure of GEF CEO and Chairperson Carlos Manuel Rodríguez, following his notification that he will step down from GEF leadership effective immediately. The Council appointed Director of Strategy and Operations, Claude Gascon, as interim CEO while a search is undertaken to fill the position on a permanent basis.

The 70th meeting of the GEF Council took place in a virtual format from 15-19 December 2025, alongside the 39th meeting of the LDCF/SCCF Council and 5th meeting of the GBFF Council. The meetings were preceded by a consultation among civil society organizations (CSOs) and the GEF Council on 12 December 2025.

A Brief History of the GEF

Originating with a 1989 proposal by France to formulate financing responses to mounting concerns over global environmental problems, the GEF was established as a pilot program in 1991 through arrangements between three Implementing Agencies: the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Environment Programme, and the World Bank, with the latter also housing and administering the GEF. Its purpose was to provide concessionary and additional funding of incremental costs for achieving global environmental benefits, with an initial endowment of around USD 1 billion. The GEF was restructured through the adoption of a new GEF Instrument in March 1994 in response to developing countries' calls for democratic decision-making. This change replaced the World Bank's weighted voting system based on the share of the Bank's capital stock held by each member country. With this restructuring, the GEF became a separate institution, housed in but not administered by the World Bank. The GEF operates as a key mechanism for global environmental funding, with 18 Implementing Agencies.

GEF Governance Structure: The GEF's organizational structure includes:

- an Assembly that meets every four years;
- a Council that meets semi-annually;
- a Secretariat;
- a Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP), established in 1995, which provides independent advice to the GEF and assistance in the delivery of Council members' responsibilities; and
- an Independent Evaluation Office (IEO), created in 2003, which supports the improvement of accountability and learning in GEF strategies and operations through its evaluations.

The organization's main decision-making body is the GEF Council, which includes both donor and recipient countries and is responsible for developing, adopting, and evaluating the GEF's operational policies and programs. It comprises 32 appointed Council members, each representing a constituency of countries that, in general, aligns with regional groupings of either donor or recipient countries.

The GEF Assembly is the main guiding structure for the GEF. It comprises representatives of all 186 member countries and has convened seven times between 1998 and 2024. The Assembly meets at the Ministerial level to review GEF policies, operations,

and membership, and to consider amendments to the GEF Instrument.

The GEF administers the LDCF, SCCF, and GBFF. It also serves as a financial mechanism for several multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), including the: Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD); Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants; Minamata Convention on Mercury; and Agreement under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement). In addition, the GEF's work focuses on sustainable forest management and international waters, among others. Funding from the Facility is channeled to recipient countries through its 18 Implementing Agencies.

GEF Replenishments: The GEF is funded by donor countries, which commit resources every four years through the replenishment process. Since its establishment in 1991, the GEF Trust Fund has been replenished with 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), USD 4.1 billion (GEF-7), and USD 5.33 billion (GEF-8). The GEF-8 cycle concludes in June 2026, and negotiations for GEF-9, which is expected to commence in July 2026 and run through June 2030, are currently underway.

GEF Consultations with Civil Society: Prior to the 70th Meeting of the GEF Council, Council members and the GEF Secretariat held a [consultation with civil society leaders and representatives](#) to reflect on progress toward GEF-9 and to consider how a whole-of-society approach can be embedded across GEF-9. Discussions focused on strengthening implementation, expanding access to finance, and ensuring meaningful participation of civil society, Indigenous Peoples, youth, and local communities throughout the GEF partnership. Participants noted declining support for CSO-led projects and called for predictable and adequate funding, stronger representation of whole-of-society actors in decision making, and clearer mechanisms to match GEF-9 ambitions with budgetary allocations.

Summaries of ENB coverage of past GEF Council and Assembly meetings can be found at: enb.iisd.org/negotiations/global-environment-facility-gef

Report of the 70th Meeting of the GEF Council

On Monday, 15 December, Carlos Manuel Rodríguez, GEF Chairperson, CEO and Council Co-Chair, welcomed delegates to the 70th meeting of the GEF Council, noting this is the second-to-last Council gathering before GEF-9. He reflected on GEF-8's accomplishments, noting over 40 policy commitments have been fully implemented. He said 80% of funds disbursed during GEF-8 align with climate change objectives, 70% with biodiversity objectives, and 60% with land degradation objectives.

Rodríguez underscored that a recent independent assessment found the GEF was "best in class." Other noteworthy highlights, he said, include strengthening capacity development, approving



Carlos Manuel Rodríguez, GEF Chairperson, CEO and Council Co-Chair

full-size projects at a faster rate than under GEF-7, and delivering financial support to civil society.

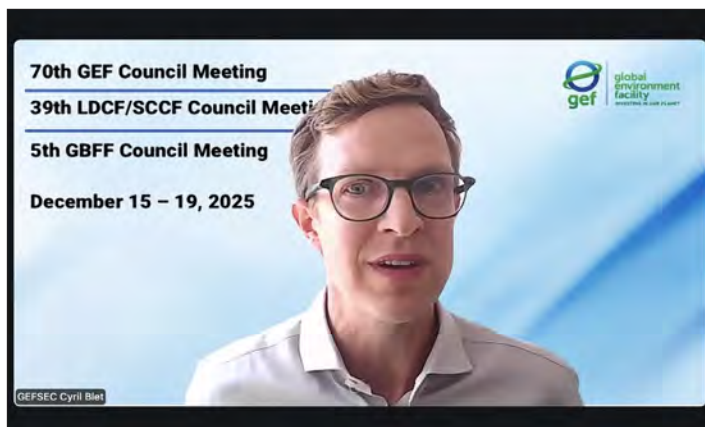
Council Co-Chair Richard Bontjer, Australia, underscored that the GEF has had a positive impact on the lives of hundreds of millions of people while at the same time driving sustainable environmental outcomes. He noted steady progress in integrating inclusion into its policies, programs, and delivery mechanisms. He lauded the decision on the GEF's risk appetite, saying it resulted in a change in the direction of how the GEF operates and delivers results by accepting high levels of risk, thereby driving innovation and delivering greater impact on the ground.

Co-Chair Rodríguez introduced, and the Council adopted, the provisional agenda ([GEF/C.70/01/Rev.1](#)).

GEF Monitoring Report

On Monday, 15 December, Cyril Blet, Senior Results-based Management Specialist, GEF Secretariat, introduced the GEF Monitoring Report 2024 ([GEF/C.70/02](#)). He outlined how the GEF-8 portfolio is delivering environmental results while managing risk in line with the GEF's Results Measurement and Risk Appetite Frameworks. The presentation highlighted a systematic approach that integrates results tracking, risk management, and performance monitoring across the project cycle.

Blet explained that the [GEF-8 Results Measurement Framework](#) tracks outcomes at two levels: Tier 1, which focuses on project and program outputs and outcomes; and Tier 2, which assesses the effectiveness of the GEF partnership in managing



Cyril Blet, Senior Results-based Management Specialist, GEF Secretariat

delivery. He underscored that measurable environmental outcomes are being achieved across all GEF-8 focal areas, including expanded terrestrial and marine protected areas, increased land restoration and sustainable land management, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, improved management of international waters, and reductions in chemicals and waste.

Regarding risk management, Blet explained that higher risk ratings at early project stages reflect more rigorous risk identification and mitigation measures, contributing to more moderate risk profiles during implementation. He reported that overall, risk exposure remains within the GEF's risk appetite across most regions, although higher risks persist in LDCs, SIDS, fragile and conflict-affected situations, and complex or multi-country projects.

Council members broadly welcomed the report, commending the strong focus on gender equality, local-community empowerment and private-sector engagement, the application of the risk-appetite framework, and progress in marine protected areas and habitat conservation. Several raised concerns about delays in securing co-financing, performance variations among Implementing Agencies, and persistent higher risks in LDCs and in fragile and conflict-affected situations.

One Council member noted lack of reporting by Agencies on private sector co-financing and encouraged the Secretariat and Agencies to provide more qualitative data to address this issue. Another highlighted that environmental benefits of global overexploited fisheries are quite low, and that the Agency with the largest project share has the second lowest rating for implementation progress and the largest share of reported grievances.

The GEF CSO Network welcomed the report, highlighting significant progress in involving women, noting, however, that only 20% of livelihood benefits reach them. They lamented the lack of information on the involvement of CSOs, Indigenous Peoples, youth, and people with disabilities on project design and implementation.

The Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group (IPAG) cited good progress across all five environmental focal areas. They welcomed the [Inclusive Conservation Initiative](#) and [Heart of Conservation Initiative](#) as innovative direct funding initiatives supporting Indigenous Peoples' leadership and sustaining their livelihoods. They recommended including Indigenous Peoples' traditional territories within the GEF-9 core indicator framework.

Responding to members' comments, the Secretariat stated their expectation that the country engagement strategy will help address implementation challenges. On fisheries, they stressed that lack of environmental results reported does not convey underachievement as many relevant projects aim to report on this indicator during the next reporting period.

Regarding delays in securing co-financing, the Secretariat explained that the highest level of co-financing materialization has been observed this year, which is a positive trend, but that progress is slow in mobilizing co-financing early in the project implementation cycle. They highlighted that these delays were attributed primarily to contextual constraints rather than a lack of commitment from co-financiers. They added that co-financing

may be underreported where countries lack the capacity to engage fully with co-financing partners.

Decision: In its Decision, the Council welcomes the report and the continued implementation of the GEF-8 Results Measurement Framework and GEF Risk Appetite.

Work Program for the GEF Trust Fund

On Monday, 15 December, Fred Boltz, Manager, Programming Division, GEF Secretariat, presented the Work Program for the GEF Trust Fund ([GEF/C.70/03](#)). He stated that the Work Program comprises 30 projects and programs, totaling USD 296 million, and is expected to mobilize USD 1.8 billion in co-financing. If approved, it will bring total programming for the GEF-8 cycle to 83%, he added.

Boltz highlighted that Work Program resources are to be allocated as follows: USD 97.1 million for the Climate Change focal area, USD 67.8 million for Biodiversity, and an additional USD 116.1 million for the Land Degradation, International Waters, and Chemicals and Waste focal areas. He added that a USD 15 million grant allocation is proposed for a Non-Grant Instrument (NGI). He stressed that the Work Program will support work in 56 GEF recipient countries, of which over half are SIDS and almost half are LDCs.

Boltz outlined several projects and programs that would be implemented, mentioning the [Unlocking Blue Pacific Prosperity](#) (UBPP) through the Ocean Flagship Programme, a Pacific-led initiative to sustainably manage and protect the vast ocean territories of the Pacific Islands, with the target of, *inter alia*, protecting at least 30% of waters by 2030. He also highlighted a global project to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated tuna fishing, which aims to increase tuna populations so they return to sustainable levels.

In the ensuing discussion, Council members expressed their broad support for the Work Program. Several lauded the level of private sector co-financing. One lamented that only one multilateral development bank (MDB) was involved in this project cycle, expressing the wish that more be involved in GEF-9. One member noted that the high level of support for LDCs and SIDS should help the Secretariat advocate for greater funding and efficiency. The GEF CSO Network urged all GEF donors to expedite their payments and to scale up their funding under the UNFCCC, CBD, and other relevant MEAs.



Claude Gascon, GEF Secretariat



Luciana Melchert Saguas Presas, Council member, Brazil

Some members also called for a second review of specific projects, expressing concerns about security and fiduciary risks in some host countries and, highlighting the need for the effective use of resources, questioned whether certain projects could be implemented without GEF support.

One Council member noted that agency concentration remains a concern, while welcoming recent improvements. They highlighted positive developments in the Pacific, including projects in the Marshall Islands and Kiribati, and welcomed initiatives such as [Unlocking Blue Pacific Prosperity](#).

Another member commended the inclusion of projects that advance integrated approaches and encouraged continued innovation in gender-responsive governance and finance mechanisms. They welcomed the increase in private sector co-financing, noting it now surpasses GEF financing. Another member cautioned against co-financing becoming a rigid evaluation criterion, noting this can penalize middle income mega-diverse countries that face asymmetrical investment flows.

Responding, the Secretariat reported that GEF-8 programming currently stands at 83%, with projects in the pipeline that could raise programming to 94%, and potentially to 100% if outstanding donor contributions are paid. They noted that demand for NGIs remains strong, with requests oversubscribing available resources by a factor of four. On co-financing, they said while GEF-8 targets are being met, overall ratios are lower than in the June 2025 program due to a one-off boost from the [Global Microfinance Initiative](#). The Secretariat also confirmed that specific statements and footnotes requested by members will be reflected in the Work Program documentation.

The Secretariat acknowledged requests for second reviews and confirmed that these will be undertaken for the specified projects.

Decision: In its Decision, the Council, among other things, approves the Work Program comprising 30 projects and programs, subject to comments made during the Council meeting and additional comments that may be submitted in writing to the Secretariat by 16 January 2026.

Conventions Executive Secretaries Panel

On Tuesday, 16 December, Co-Chair Rodríguez invited the heads and high-level representatives of several convention secretariats to reflect on how the GEF and the conventions it serves can strengthen synergies, improve national-level coordination, and translate global commitments into implementation.

Monika Stankiewicz, Executive Secretary, Minamata Convention on Mercury, stressed that integrated programs will remain central under GEF-9 and underscored the need to further mainstream mercury and chemicals across all integrated programming. She pointed to the need to reframe action on mercury, persistent organic pollutants, and other chemicals, not as standalone issues but as drivers of multiple co-benefits. On national coordination, she highlighted GEF constituency workshops as a useful mechanism for bringing national counterparts together.

Yasmine Fouad, Executive Secretary, UNCCD, identified food systems and food security as powerful entry points for national-level synergies, noting their potential to translate high-level political decisions into tangible benefits for communities. She called for stronger private sector engagement through vehicles that combine incentives, de-risking, and blended finance. On national outreach, she recommended establishing national coordination committees that include both operational and Convention focal points, and that engage ministries of planning and finance alongside environment and foreign affairs ministries.

Noura Hamladji, Deputy Executive Secretary, UNFCCC, highlighted the Rio Conventions Joint Capacity-Building Programme as a tool to increase coordination among national focal points. She emphasized the importance of aligning Nationally Determined Contributions, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, and land degradation neutrality targets within national planning processes. Reflecting on the recent UN Climate Change Conference in November 2025 (COP 30), Hamladji highlighted a shift from norm-setting to implementation, which requires the GEF and other operating entities to accelerate delivery, strengthen coordination, and address persistent access challenges.

Asad Naqvi, Director, Implementation Support Division, CBD Secretariat, highlighted ongoing work under the Liaison



Asad Naqvi, Director, Implementation Support Division, CBD Secretariat

Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions to increase synergies between conventions at the operational and substantive levels. He underscored the importance of synergies between COP presidencies, highlighting the Belem Joint Statement of the Rio Conventions. On measuring success, he said the main two indicators are the Human Development Index and ecological footprint.

Frank Moser, Head, Programme Resources and Oversight Unit, Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions, called for breaking silos and strengthening cross-focal area cooperation at all levels. He noted that synergies can only be achieved through integrated programming and highlighted the importance of aligning targets and ensuring measurable pollution targets across all integrated programs.

Vladimir Jares, Director, UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, speaking on behalf of the BBNJ Agreement, noted that as the Agreement enters into force in January 2026, negotiations are ongoing on, for example, the memorandum of understanding between the BBNJ Conference of the Parties and the GEF. He highlighted that the financing responsibilities assigned to the GEF and to the Agreement's special fund are "essentially identical." He underscored the need to avoid overlaps and ensure all elements of the BBNJ Agreement are adequately covered.

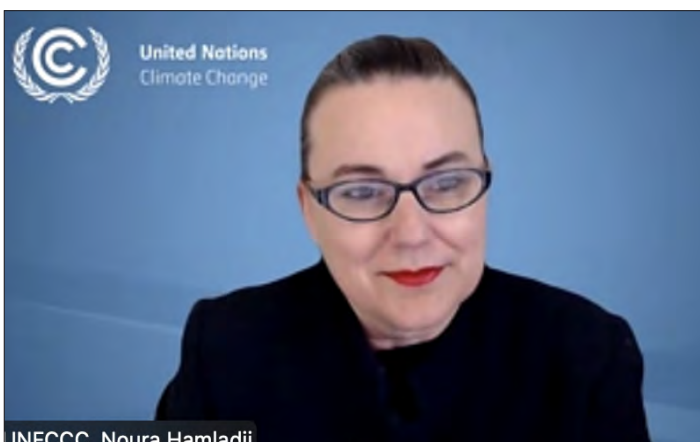
In the ensuing discussion, members welcomed the emphasis on integration among conventions, with some highlighting the need to preserve the key objectives of each convention and to avoid overlaps.

IPAG noted that strengthened collaboration enabled the largest-ever delegation of Indigenous Peoples at Minamata Convention COP 6, contributing to historic outcomes, including the establishment of the Indigenous Peoples Platform of the Minamata Convention.

Relations with Conventions and Other International Institutions

On Tuesday, 16 December, Co-Chair Rodríguez opened the floor for discussion on this agenda item ([GEF/C.70/04/Rev.01](#)).

Council members broadly welcomed the active participation of the various conventions. They emphasized the GEF's important role in supporting reporting for the various MEAs, with one



JNFCCC Noura Hamladji

Noura Hamladji, Deputy Executive Secretary, UNFCCC



Council members during Tuesday's proceedings

member urging that this be a priority going forward. Another member considered it essential to avoid generating negative externalities, noting some new initiatives may do so in the short term.

Members also welcomed efforts to increase complementarity. One welcomed the harmonization of accreditation status across the Adaptation Fund, the Green Climate Fund (GCF), and the GEF, aiming for potential fast-track options to accredit new agencies for GEF-9. Another noted an expectation that the GEF will become the financial mechanism for the agreement resulting from the resumed plastics Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee process.

The GEF CSO Network called for a framework to support a whole-of-society approach in GEF-9 and GEF-10. He said more can be done to enhance the mechanism to link with civil society groups associated with the GEF-related conventions. One Council member called for clarifying the relationship between the BBNJ Special Fund and the GEF to avoid, among other things, further fragmentation.

Members also:

- welcomed collaboration with the Fund for responding to Loss and Damage under the Paris Agreement on climate change;
- underscored the importance of support for BBNJ Agreement implementation under GEF-9;
- welcomed collaborative efforts to strengthen cooperation and complementarity among the MEAs; and
- called for ensuring that GEF priorities are aligned with the conventions.



Faizal Parish, Chair, GEF-CSO Network

Decision: In its Decision, the Council welcomes the report and requests the GEF partnership to continue to work with recipient countries to reflect the guidance and national priorities in their GEF programming and activities.

Evaluation of GEF Food Systems Programs and Management Response

On Tuesday, 16 December, Fabrizio Felloni, Deputy Director, GEF IEO, presented the Evaluation of GEF Food Systems Programs ([GEF/E/C.70/02](#)), which spanned GEF-6 to GEF-8 and covered five integrated programs and 105 projects across 32 countries that provided USD 822 million in GEF financing and USD 6.3 billion in co-financing. He highlighted that the programs were strongly aligned with MEAs, including the UNFCCC, UNCCD, CBD, as well as with the Sustainable Development Goals and national strategies. He further reported that the programs delivered substantial environmental, productivity, and socioeconomic benefits, particularly through improved land management, biodiversity conservation, climate-smart agriculture, and strengthened governance platforms.

Felloni outlined constraints to transformational change, including: fragmentation of value chain integration; siloed private sector engagement; and weak policy coherence, with limited attention to political and social drivers. He highlighted the evaluation's recommendations to:

- sharpen program focus and phasing across replenishment periods;
- enhance value-chain integration beyond production;
- elevate political economy and behavior change considerations in design and implementation; and
- improve country docking and knowledge uptake to better support long-term food systems transformation as the GEF moves into GEF-9.

Mohamed Bakarr, Manager, Integration and Knowledge Division, GEF Secretariat, introduced the management response ([GEF/C.70/05](#)) to the evaluation. He said the Secretariat fully agrees with all four recommendations, noting the evaluation affirms the strategic relevance of the GEF's work, while offering actionable recommendations to enhance its effectiveness.

In the subsequent discussion, members welcomed the evaluation and responses. Many supported the recommendation to expand the focus of programs from food production to vertical value chain integration. One supported expansion to cover post-production segments like storage processing and distribution. Council members highlighted the role of reducing food loss and waste. They urged increasing the emphasis on access to adequate and healthy diets. One Council member lamented that the evaluation shows there is room for improvement, and the integrated approach did not fully fulfil its promise. Another suggested addressing gender gaps within food systems and queried how the GEF Secretariat would ensure coherence among Implementing Agencies. A member underscored that food systems transformation must remain country-driven, context-specific, and aligned with national development strategies. He stressed that recommendations involving, among other

things, policy reforms, value chain standards, and institutional restructuring must not become implicit expectations or conditions for support.

The GEF CSO Network underscored that food systems sit at the center of deforestation, biodiversity loss, land degradation, water stress, and climate impact. He urged that the future food systems program bring CSOs and IPLCs into governance, national coordination and monitoring structures, with resources to support their ongoing role. IPAG suggested IPLCs be closely involved in all relevant recommendations from the GEF.

Decision: In its Decision, the Council takes note of the related evaluation recommendations and endorses the management response to address them.

Eighth Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF and Management Response

On Tuesday, 16 December, Geeta Batra, Director, GEF IEO, presented the OPS8 ([GEF/E.C.70/01](#)). OPS8 assessed the GEF's progress in implementing and achieving the objectives outlined in the GEF-8 Programming Directions, in order to inform GEF-9 negotiations. She highlighted that the GEF delivers consistently strong results across global and country level interventions, and has increased its focus on the most vulnerable, including African countries, LDCs, and SIDS.

Batra highlighted a central finding that integration is a key driver of transformational impact, noting integrated programs have expanded significantly and now account for nearly a third of GEF allocations. She reported that these programs have delivered environmental and socioeconomic co-benefits, supported policy coherence, and enabled scaling, including by the GCF. She outlined challenges related to complexity, transaction costs, uneven country capacity, and underdeveloped exit and sustainability strategies, further highlighting that deeper local empowerment remains an area for focus going into GEF-9.

On private sector engagement, Batra highlighted this has expanded and produced catalytic results, including through blended finance and NGIs, but remains below its full potential due to, among other things, regulatory barriers and capacity constraints. On institutional performance, she noted the GEF remains highly efficient, with low administrative costs and improvements in project cycle timelines, but cautioned that



Geeta Batra, Director, GEF IEO



Claude Gascon, Director of Strategy and Operations, GEF Secretariat

the growing number of funding windows and instruments risks increasing fragmentation and transaction costs.

Claude Gascon, Director of Strategy and Operations, GEF Secretariat, introduced the management response ([GEF/C.70/06/Rev.01](#)) to OPS8. He underscored the Secretariat's agreement with all nine recommendations, noting the recommendation to update the STAP's terms of reference is directly addressed to the Council.

Council members welcomed the evaluation and expressed appreciation to the GEF IEO for its efforts in undertaking the evaluation. Several members emphasized the OPS8 recommendation to unlock private sector potential and expand the use of NGIs to deliver scalable change, with one member stressing the need to expand blended finance. Many also welcomed the recommendation to pursue higher-risk, high-reward innovation. Some members supported a time-bound working group to consider an update to the STAP's terms of reference, with some suggesting language to add to the relevant decision text. One member noted agreement with the call to reduce complexity, but cautioned that consolidation must not reduce access for small countries that struggle to fit into complex programmatic frameworks.

Responding, the Secretariat said GEF-9 policy directions are trying to address issues around access points for the private sector with respect to public funding facilities. He underscored that a whole-of-society approach will bring in the private sector in GEF-9.

On the review of the STAP mandate, he said the decision text had been amended to reflect the Council's decision to commission a review, which will cover and take forward issues raised by the GEF IEO.

Responding to members' comments, Batra emphasized that all IEO work is evidence-based with importance given to country context and ownership. On a proposal for risk-sharing facilities, she recalled that the GEF played a pivotal role in starting the blended finance work through the Earth Fund in collaboration with the International Finance Corporation.

Decision: In its Decision, the Council takes note of the related evaluation recommendations and endorses the management response to address them. Furthermore, the Council decides to commission a review of the STAP (supported administratively

by the GEF Secretariat) to cover and take forward the issues raised by the GEF IEO, under the authority of a time-bound Council working group, including a review of the STAP Terms of Reference, by the 72nd meeting of the GEF Council.

Other Business

On Friday, 19 December, the Council considered the appointment of the Council Co-Chair for 2026. The Council decided to extend the tenure of Richard Bontjer (Australia) as Co-Chair until its 71st meeting, at which point a new co-chair will be appointed and regular rotation of co-chairs will resume.

A Council member requested considering rescheduling the second GEF Council meeting of the year to earlier dates, ideally in late November or early December. They proposed that the 72nd meeting of the Council, therefore, be held from 30 November to 4 December 2026. Following a comment by another Council member, the Secretariat indicated it will review potential scheduling conflicts with other international events. The Council will take a decision on the proposed dates by email.

Report of the 39th Meeting of the LDCF/SCCF Council

On Wednesday, 17 December, Co-Chair Bontjer opened the meeting, highlighting that the two Pacific projects – in Kiribati and the Marshall Islands – included in the proposed Work Program demonstrate that the GEF’s multi-trust fund modality is functioning effectively.

On the broader international context, he noted that Türkiye, as incoming President of UNFCCC COP 31, will host a Leaders’ Summit and will nominate Australia to serve as President of the negotiations. He added that, with Australia’s support, Pacific countries will host a pre-COP meeting with a leaders’ segment, and that Türkiye will lead the COP 31 Action Agenda, which is expected to include a focus on the climate finance needs of SIDS.

Evans Njewa, Chair, LDC Group, reflected on COP 30, expressing disappointment that the LDCs’ primary request for COP guidance to the GEF to scale up public financing through the replenishing of the LDCF to at least USD 3 billion by 2030 was not approved, and noted that the final decision fell short of expectations.

Njewa further lamented that, for the second consecutive year, a much-needed pledging session for the LDCF and SCCF



Evans Njewa, LDC Group Chair

could not be convened during the COP due to insufficient donor support. He warned that the persistent shortage of resources is constraining the ability of LDCs to develop and implement new projects, noting that only a limited number of projects can currently be considered in the Work Program and that several approved projects remain pending for future cycles.

Adao Soares Barbosa, Timor Leste, incoming Chair of the LDC Group, expressed appreciation for the work of his predecessors and looked forward to building on this strong foundation to carry forward shared achievements and priorities in the period ahead.

Co-Chair Bontjer introduced the draft provisional agenda ([GEF/LDCF.SCCF.39/01](#)). The agenda was adopted.

LDCF/SCCF Work Program

On Wednesday, 17 December, Chizuru Aoki, Manager, Conventions and Funds Division, GEF Secretariat, and Olusola Ikuforiji, Climate Change Specialist, GEF Secretariat, presented the LDCF/SCCF Work Program ([GEF/LDCF.SCCF.39/02](#)). They noted it comprises four LDCF projects and one SCCF project, and has a strong emphasis on SIDS, which receive USD 33 million – more than 60% of total requested resources. The Work Program requests USD 52.26 million in GEF project financing and agency fees and is expected to mobilize USD 116.84 million in co-financing, including USD 89.77 million from IFIs, reflecting an IFI participation ratio of 80%.

The Secretariat outlined that gender integration is embedded across the Work Program, noting all projects include gender equality considerations at the design stage, gender analyses to inform gender action plans, gender-responsive monitoring frameworks, and measures to increase women’s participation in decision-making bodies and access to finance, including for women-led micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises.

On expected results, the Secretariat reported that the five projects are expected to deliver adaptation benefits to nearly 190,000 beneficiaries, approximately 49% of whom are women. The projects are expected to: support 13,900 hectares of land under climate-resilient management and 526,700 hectares of coastal and marine areas under climate-resilient management;



GEF Council Co-Chair **Richard Bontjer**, Australia



Chizuru Aoki, Manager, Conventions and Funds Division, GEF Secretariat

strengthen the adaptive capacity of 17,499 people; support 24 policies and plans for adaptation; and engage 74 enterprises in climate adaptation and resilience actions.

The Secretariat also highlighted the financial status of the LDCF, noting that while 11 projects had been technically cleared, only four could be included in the current Work Program due to resource constraints, leaving seven projects deferred. The Secretariat reported the need to address the LDCF funding gaps of: USD 272.7 million to enable all LDCs to access the USD 20 million cap; and USD 316.9 million to meet Financial Scenario A, underscoring the need for additional donor contributions.

Members welcomed increased co-financing with IFIs and expressed support for private sector co-financing in the future. Many highlighted the progress in private sector, women, and youth participation. Noting the funding gap, several members urged countries in a position to do so to contribute to the Funds. One member supported maintaining flexibility and simplifying access to meet diversified needs. Another stressed that all projects must align with national policies and contribute to national adaptation plans.

Drawing on lessons learned during GEF-8, IPAG recommended establishing a dedicated funding window for IPLCs during GEF-9. Responding to a question about contextual high-risk in a project in Eritrea, Aoki emphasized these are related to high climate vulnerability in the country, underscoring the need for interventions to build resilience.

Decision: In its Decision, the Council approves the Work Program comprising four projects for the LDCF and one project for the SCCF, subject to comments made during the Council meeting and additional comments that may be submitted in writing to the Secretariat by 16 January 2026.

Progress Report on the LDCF and the SCCF

On Wednesday, 17 December, Jason Spensley, Senior Climate Change Specialist, and Ladu Lemi, Climate Change Specialist, GEF Secretariat, introduced the document ([GEF/LDCF.SCCF.39/03](#)). They noted that USD 6.19 million in new contributions has been received. They further reported that the projects since the LDCF's inception will collectively reduce the vulnerabilities of 88.9 million people, with 5.89 million trained to identify, prioritize, implement, monitor, and/or evaluate adaptation strategies and measures.

The Secretariat stated that SCCF projects received USD 2.34 million in new contributions. They cited 12.53 million direct beneficiaries, with 271,888 people trained and 5.3 million hectares of land better managed to withstand the effects of climate change. They noted the key sectoral recipients were agriculture and sustainable livelihoods. The Secretariat further mentioned work on communications and visibility enhancements, including engagement at key global moments such as the 7th meeting of the UN Environment Assembly in December 2025 and UNFCCC COP 30 in November 2025.

In the subsequent discussion, members welcomed the report. The GEF CSO Network, while appreciating the focus on whole-of-society approaches and gender responsiveness, recommended extending the latter to include IPLCs and youth. He emphasized that more meaningful engagement is necessary, with greater attention to the quality and scope of civil society involvement. He also called for expanding indicators to include social outcomes to provide a more comprehensive view of impacts and noted that additional funding for training and outreach is essential.

Responding to comments, the Secretariat stated that sub-indicators are being strengthened for GEF-9 and underscored SCCF Window B for innovation and private-sector collaboration.

Decision: In its decision, the Council welcomes the report and takes note of the progress made under the LDCF and SCCF.

Update on the Development of the GEF Programming Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change for the LDCF and SCCF and Operational Improvements July 2026 to June 2030

On Wednesday, 17 December, Juan Pablo Hoffmaister, Senior Climate Change Specialist, GEF Secretariat, presented the document on this agenda item ([GEF/LDCF.SCCF.39/Inf.04](#)), highlighting progress in the development process and outlining the results of bilateral meetings, of the second meeting of the Programming Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change, held in October 2025, and other informal consultations.

Key points from the second meeting, Hoffmaister said, included: support for streamlined themes and approaches; support for LDCs and for strengthening the SCCF for SIDS; inclusion of a specific section on sustainability; recognition of country



Juan Pablo Hoffmaister, Senior Climate Change Specialist, GEF Secretariat

ownership of projects; and clarification of complementarity among climate funds.

On next steps, he said bilateral meetings will continue to ensure the strategy reflects everyone's priorities ahead of the third meeting in Bonn, Germany, in January 2026.

The Council took note of the report.

FY25 Annual Monitoring Review of the LDCF and SCCF

On Wednesday, 17 December, Tshewang Dorji, Senior Climate Change Specialist, GEF Secretariat, and Ravi Janjwadia, Data Analyst, GEF Secretariat, presented the document on this agenda item ([GEF/LDCF.SCCF.39/04](#)), highlighting portfolio scale, performance, results, risks, disbursements, and lessons learned. They underscored that both Funds continue to deliver strong adaptation outcomes in highly vulnerable contexts, while facing persistent resource constraints and implementation challenges.

The Secretariat reported that the LDCF portfolio under implementation comprises 96 projects, supported by USD 627.9 million in GEF financing and USD 2.96 billion in co-financing, with 34% of funds disbursed. They underscored that the portfolio remains concentrated in Africa, with 68%, followed by Asia and the Pacific, with 25%, and that agriculture, nature-based management, and water resources management remain the leading sectors.

On the SCCF, the Secretariat outlined that the portfolio includes 17 projects, supported by USD 46.7 million in SCCF financing and USD 383 million in co-financing, with 48% disbursed. They reported that SCCF funding is primarily allocated to Africa, with 38%, and Asia and the Pacific, with 35%, with infrastructure, agriculture, and water management as the top sectors.

The Secretariat reported strong portfolio performance across both Funds. For the LDCF, they reported development outcomes were rated moderately satisfactory or above for 83–86% of projects, while implementation progress ratings ranged from 73–81%, broadly aligned with GEF Trust Fund averages. For the SCCF, they noted performance was even stronger, with 100% of projects rated satisfactory on development outcomes and 94–95% rated satisfactory for implementation progress in recent years.

In terms of results, the Secretariat reported the LDCF has reached over 33 million direct beneficiaries cumulatively,



Tshewang Dorji, Senior Climate Change Specialist, GEF Secretariat



Ravi Janjwadia, Data Analyst, GEF Secretariat

almost 50% of which are women, and supported almost 5 million hectares of land to be better managed to withstand climate change. They highlighted that the SCCF has reached over 10.7 million beneficiaries cumulatively, with nearly 50% women, supported 7.5 million hectares of climate-resilient land management, and contributed to over 600 climate-resilient policies and plans.

Drawing on terminal evaluations and portfolio experience, the Secretariat highlighted key lessons, including the importance of:

- effective leadership and active stakeholder participation;
- adaptive management and open communication;
- institutional capacity and continuity, given the impact of staff turnover; and
- policy stability, as changes in government policies can significantly affect project implementation.

In the subsequent discussion, Council members broadly welcomed the report, commending the high share of projects rated satisfactory and progress on gender integration. Several members, however, raised recurring concerns related to disbursement delays, reporting compliance, and portfolio management. One member noted that disbursement rates remain low and that co-financing, particularly from the private sector, could be strengthened.

Several members observed significant overlap between the Annual Monitoring Review and the Progress Report, suggesting these could be streamlined or combined in future reporting.

The GEF CSO Network expressed concern over the backlog of projects dating back to GEF-5, GEF-6, and GEF-7, urging the Secretariat and Agencies to prioritize completion of older projects, especially as the GEF transitions to a different programming approach under GEF-9.

One Council member noted that several projects failed to submit Project Implementation Reports during 2025 and encouraged Agencies to address this non-compliance promptly. Another member echoed concerns about the large number of older projects still active and, drawing attention to projects rated highly unsatisfactory, stressed the need for closer follow-up and corrective action.

IPAG underscored the central role of IPLCs in climate action and requested clearer reporting on how support to IPLCs



Wampie Libon, Council member, the Netherlands



Astrid Schomaker, CBD Executive Secretary

is being tracked and reflected in the monitoring framework, encouraging more detailed reporting in future reviews.

Responding to comments, the Secretariat said they are engaging with Agencies to understand the reasons for the non-submission of Project Implementation Reports and to address disbursement gaps. Regarding merging the Annual Monitoring Review and the Progress Report, the Secretariat expressed willingness to do so if requested by the Council. They explained that while the two reports currently serve different purposes, they can be consolidated in a way that ensures all required information is retained.

Decision: In its Decision, the Council welcomes the review and appreciates the progress made in reporting portfolio-level performance, results, and lessons learned under the LDCF and the SCCF. The Council welcomes the overall finding that the LDCF and SCCF portfolio under implementation in FY25 performed satisfactorily.

Other Business

On Thursday, 18 December, four donors announced pledges:

- EUR 10 million from Germany to the LDCF;
- EUR 5.9 million from Belgium to the LDCF;
- EUR 3 million to the LDCF and EUR 2 million to the SCCF from Ireland; and
- SEK 130 million from Sweden to the LDCF.

Anna Vigh, GEF IEO, drew attention to two upcoming evaluations by the IEO:

- the annual evaluation report in June 2026, that will present a synthesis of evaluative evidence of the funds, addressing nature-based solutions, socioeconomic co-benefits, and GEF programs in Pacific SIDS; and
- a comprehensive evaluation of the funds, for presentation in December 2026, that will focus on the fund's performance and impact, response to COP guidance, policy coherence, transformational change, efficiency, sustainability of results, and the fund's comparative advantage compared to other funds.

LDC Group Chair Evans Njewa expressed appreciation for the contributions, noting that technically cleared projects are waiting for resources to be approved for implementation.

Report of the Fifth Meeting of the GBFF Council

On Thursday, 18 December, Co-Chair Bontjer opened the meeting and presented the provisional agenda ([GEF/GBFF.05/01](#)). He noted the GBFF has concluded its fourth round with 21 LDCs and SIDS accessing the Fund for the first time.

In opening remarks, Claude Gascon reported that the GBFF has achieved all three of its portfolio targets to date: 43% of projects support LDCs and SIDS, exceeding the 39% target; 28% of financing is programmed through IFIs, above the 25% target; and 29% of GBFF financing supports IPLC actions, surpassing the aspirational 20% target.

Astrid Schomaker, CBD Executive Secretary, welcomed the impressive speed on setting up the GBFF, alignment of its indicators with the GBF, and increased complementarity with the GCF. She noted concerns from countries on lack of feedback for submitted proposals and called for addressing the biodiversity finance gap in conjunction with GBF Target 18 (elimination of harmful subsidies). Finally, Schomaker stressed the importance of the GEF Trust Fund for the CBD and cautioned that the GBFF should not divert core GEF biodiversity resources.

The Council adopted the agenda.

Work Program for the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund

On Thursday, 18 December, Chizuru Aoki and Benjamin Singer, Senior Biodiversity Specialist, GEF Secretariat, presented the Work Program ([GEF/GBFF.05/02](#)), which comprises three projects in Colombia, Indonesia, and Madagascar. The Work Program requests USD 28.38 million and leverages approximately USD 57.07 million in co-financing. The Secretariat noted the three projects allocated an average of 23.5% of the requested resources to support IPLCs, which surpasses the aspirational target.

The Secretariat highlighted that the Work Program is expected to contribute to 13 of the 23 GBF targets. It will bring 827,000 hectares of terrestrial and 2.45 million hectares of marine protected areas under improved management; 483,000 hectares of landscapes will also be under improved practices; 200 tons of fisheries will move to more sustainable levels; and



Nicolas Gundlach, Council member, Germany

there will be 15,310 direct beneficiaries, of which 47% will be women.

Council members largely supported the Work Program and welcomed the progress being made by the GBFF. They lauded the expansion of the locally-managed marine areas beyond the Pacific region. Members also expressed satisfaction with the strong IFI involvement and high resource share for IPLCs. Council members called for greater effort to increase co-financing in the future and expressed concern about the program risk and the need to increase SIDS and LDC involvement in the current Work Program.

The GEF CSO Network welcomed the strong focus on IPLCs, saying this is an important signal in the context of the GBF. The GBFF Women's Observer said recognition of women's roles in these projects needs to be supported by full and active representation and capacity building, and called for more action on women-owned micro and small enterprises.

Members also urged greater regional balance and increasing the share of coastal countries to address their exposure to coastal erosion. IPAG and the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB) echoed appreciation for IPLC support under the Work Program and called for strengthening meaningful engagement of IPLCs throughout the project design, implementation, and monitoring phases.

Responding to comments, the Secretariat noted progress made regarding private sector contributions, and that the GBFF will focus on mobilizing more resources from this sector. The Secretariat also stated that it plans to hold an informal session between Council members and observers before the next Council meeting to enhance dialogue and interaction among them.

Regarding ensuring regional balance, the Secretariat noted limited proposals from some regions and said they will continue to build technical capacity in these regions.

Decision: In its Decision, the Council approves the Work Program comprising three projects, subject to comments made prior to, and during, the Council meeting and additional comments that may be submitted in writing to the Secretariat by 9 January 2026.

Resource Mobilization Strategy of the GBFF

On Thursday, 18 December, Chizuru Aoki and Sumeet Kaur, Senior Biodiversity Specialist, GEF Secretariat, presented the document "Towards a Resource Mobilization Strategy for the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund 2025-2030" ([GEF/GBFF.05/04/Rev.01](#)), noting it responds to not only a request by the Council at its fourth meeting, but also to specific asks by the 16th meeting of the CBD COP. They stated the draft document had been subject to wide review and comments, which have since been incorporated.

Regarding capitalization of the Fund, the Secretariat noted the GBFF has received USD 388.6 million in voluntary contributions since its launch in August 2023, and presented two indicative capitalization scenarios:

- Scenario A would seek USD 900 million in cumulative resources over five years, from both sovereign and non-sovereign sources, with an increasing share of non-sovereign contributions set at USD 150 million over five years; and
- Scenario B would seek USD 1.625 billion in cumulative resources over five years, from both sovereign and non-sovereign sources, with an increasing share of non-sovereign resources set at USD 375 million over five years.

On the strategy, the Secretariat said it aims to facilitate the continuous, rapid, and robust capitalization of the GBFF from all sources, based on the objectives to increase the adequacy and predictability of funds and substantially increase the level of financial resources. They noted the proposal and terms of reference for establishing an *Ad-Hoc* Working Group on Predictability in Financing, which requested that the group explore ways to enhance and strengthen the predictability of contributions to the GBFF and present its recommendations at the sixth meeting of the GBFF Council.

Responding to the presentation, the Advisory Group of Non-Sovereign Participants noted that a resource mobilization strategy is key to the success of both the GBF and the GBFF. They stressed its success will depend on maintaining engagement with current partners, while concomitantly increasing engagement with new and potential partners.

In the subsequent discussion, Council members expressed appreciation to the Secretariat for the document and supported the four pillars to mobilize resources from diverse sources, including



Sumeet Kaur, Senior Biodiversity Specialist, GEF Secretariat



Fiona Kilcullen, Alternate Council member, Ireland

sovereign partners, subnational and regional public institutions, philanthropy, and the private sector. Some Council members, however, expressed concern about the reliance on sovereign donor funds to support programming tranches. Members broadly supported expanding the terms of reference for a proposed *Ad Hoc* Working Group to explore ways to enhance and strengthen the predictability of contributions to the GBFF.

The GEF CSO network underscored the need for adequate and predictable funds. They stressed that predictability matters as much as the scale of contributions and noted multi-year commitments are necessary for long-term planning and results. The Global Youth Biodiversity Network stated that the resource mobilization strategy is critical given increasing financial constraints. They said developed countries can and must contribute resources to the GBFF, and any private sector engagement must be fully aligned with the goals of the GBF and the GBFF. He urged respect for human rights and environmental safeguards when engaging with private-sector funding.

The CBD Women's Caucus welcomed the effort to articulate a clear vision for predictable and diversified financing, and highlighted the strategy's inclusive drafting process. They stressed that private financing needs to be in line with the GBF and protect the rights of people working on the ground. IPAG recommended establishing a dedicated window for direct IPLC access to support their efforts.

Responding to members' comments, the Secretariat noted that during drafting, various capitalization models had been considered. On bonds, she noted similarities with the Vaccine Alliance's model due to the non-revenue generative nature of biodiversity, which is backed by long-term pledges by donor governments. She said with the 2030 targets, "there is a case to be made for front-loading resources."

Decision: In its Decision, the Council:

- establishes an *Ad-Hoc* Working Group on Predictability in Financing, requesting it to explore ways to enhance and strengthen predictability of contributions to the GBFF along with additional approaches for resource mobilization, and to present recommendations to the Secretariat on how to revise the document which shall be presented to Council for consideration at its sixth meeting; and

- calls for new and additional contributions from all sources to support the continuous, rapid, and robust capitalization of the GBFF and asks the Secretariat to enhance efforts to mobilize resources.

Progress Report on the GBFF

On Friday, 19 December, Jurgis Sapijanskas, Senior Biodiversity Specialist, GEF Secretariat, presented the document ([GEF/GBFF.05/03](#)), highlighting rapid operationalization, very strong demand, and early achievement of all portfolio-level targets.

He outlined that: the first programming tranche included three selection rounds and ran from February 2024 to August 2025, programming USD 201.6 million across 40 projects in 41 countries; and the second tranche opened on 11 August 2025 with USD 161.8 million available. He clarified that the second tranche's first selection round was restricted to submissions from SIDS and LDCs, and to projects implemented through IFIs for non-SIDS and non-LDCs, while the second selection round was open to all countries and agencies without restrictions, and is currently ongoing.

Sapijanskas noted that the regional distribution of projects reflects trade-offs between regional balance and meeting the portfolio targets for IFIs and IPLCs, as well as the pattern of submissions received. He further highlighted that demand exceeds available resources, with USD 325 million requested in the current selection round, compared with roughly USD 75 million remaining.

Sapijanskas also introduced newly developed [Guidelines on Actions by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities](#), prepared through a consultative process involving Council members, observers, IPAG, IPLCs, and the CBD Secretariat. He underlined that the guidelines clarify which activities can be counted toward the portfolio target of allocating 20% of GBFF financing to support actions by IPLCs and provide practical guidance from project design through implementation and reporting.

Andrea Cruz Angón, Co-Chair, GBFF Auxiliary Body, reported on a follow-up to the Council's June 2025 request for technical advice on IFI engagement. She explained that the Co-Chairs requested that the Secretariat prepare a background note on current IFI engagement, alongside a draft survey to gather perspectives from GEF Operational Focal Points on the perceived benefits and



GBFF Aux Co-Chair_Andrea Cruz Angón

Andrea Cruz Angón, Co-Chair, GBFF Auxiliary Body

challenges of working with IFIs. These inputs are expected to inform proposals in early 2026.

In the subsequent discussion, Council members broadly welcomed the Progress Report, commending the Secretariat for rapid operationalization, strong co-financing ratios, and exceeding all portfolio-level targets at an early stage. Several welcomed the creation of a window for LDCs/SIDS and IFIs that helped encourage submissions, with some suggesting such a window could be considered for GEF-9. Several members expressed appreciation for the work of the Auxiliary Body and supported expanding its membership and extending the terms of non-contributing members to strengthen technical input.

At the same time, members raised issues for improvement. Some called for greater transparency in the nomination and selection process, particularly clearer communication on why some submissions were prioritized over others. Others welcomed the IPLC guidelines but asked for clarification on how IPLC organizations are identified and how meaningful engagement is ensured in practice.

Several members emphasized the growing importance of resource mobilization, noting the balance of available funds is limited and that increased contributions from non-sovereign sources, including the private sector and philanthropy, are increasingly urgent. Concerns were also raised about regional balance, with some noting the Latin America and the Caribbean region currently accounts for a relatively high share of funding compared to Asia, and expressing hope this would be addressed in future rounds.

The GEF CSO Network called for: clearer reporting on how IPLC participation and decision making are occurring in practice; stronger capacity building for IPLCs, women, and youth; and fuller regional representation in the Auxiliary Body.

Responding to comments, the Secretariat acknowledged the concerns raised; noted improvements in transparency and stakeholder participation; and highlighted ongoing efforts to strengthen resource mobilization capacity, address regional imbalances through outreach and engagement, and refine reporting and governance arrangements as the GBFF continues to scale up.

Decision: In its Decision, the Council welcomes the report by the Secretariat, takes note of progress made in the operations of the



Catalina Góngora Torres, The Nature Conservancy

GBFF, and decides to extend the first term of the non-contributing members of the Advisory Group of Non-Sovereign Participants until 31 December 2026.

Results Framework of the GBFF

On Friday, 19 December, Jurgis Sapijanskas presented the document on this agenda item ([GEF/GBFF.05/05](#)). He noted the objective of the revision to the framework is to enhance measurement and reporting of the Fund's contribution to the implementation of the GBF, by aligning the portfolio-level indicators with the GBF monitoring framework. The proposed framework includes 11 indicators and 26 sub-indicators, covering all GBF targets included for focus support in the program directions.

Sapijanskas drew attention to two new indicators tracking: the Fund's contribution to GBF Target 18 (elimination of harmful subsidies) and 19 (public and private financing); and policies and processes that are enacted due to GBFF projects. He also mentioned five dedicated indicators for IPLCs, tracking, among others, the number of IPLC beneficiaries and the surface area of Indigenous and traditional territories supported by the GBFF. Another novelty of the framework, he added, is the requirement for spatial polygon data, which more efficiently map intervention areas.

The Council welcomed the modifications to the framework, praising alignment with the GBF monitoring framework, increased emphasis on finance mobilization and reducing harmful subsidies, and support for IPLCs, women, and youth participation data disaggregation. One member expressed concerns over an indicator requiring companies to disclose their biodiversity-related risks, dependencies and impacts, citing duplication with national reports.

The CBD Women's Caucus welcomed the framework and requested strengthening qualitative benchmarks on gender, cautioning against the risk of equating participation with decision-making power.

One member supported alignment with the GBF but cautioned against selective reporting, calling for verification methodologies and portfolio-level balancing mechanisms to maintain strategic focus.

In response, Sapijanskas said the indicator requiring companies to disclose biodiversity-related risk is contributing to national



Jurgis Sapijanskas, Senior Biodiversity Specialist, GEF Secretariat

reporting and is complementary to indicator 9.4 that ensures large and transnational companies implement GBF Target 15 (disclose and reduce businesses' biodiversity-related risks).

Decision: In its Decision, the Council approves modifications to the Results Framework and requests the Secretariat to take the next steps outlined in the document to implement the new GBFF Results Framework, effective 1 July 2026.

Other Business

The GEF IEO announced that a second GBFF evaluation will be presented in June 2026, focusing on the Fund's strategy, relevance to the GBF, complementarity with the GEF Trust Fund, and portfolio performance.

Joint Summary and Closing of the GEF, LDCF/SCCF and GBFF Council Meetings

On Friday afternoon, 19 December 2025, the GEF Council, the LDCF/SCCF Council, and the GBFF Council conducted a paragraph-by-paragraph reading of the Co-Chairs' Joint Summaries of the three Council meetings. They were accepted without amendment.

Co-Chair Bontjer expressed his gratitude to all those involved in the Council meetings and lauded them for their success.

The Council also announced that it would appoint a new CEO and Chairperson to lead the organization into its ninth replenishment period in 2026. The statement comes as the Council announced the departure of Carlos Manuel Rodríguez, following his notification that he will step down from GEF leadership effective immediately. The Council appointed Claude Gascon as interim CEO while a search is undertaken to fill the position on a permanent basis.

Co-Chair Bontjer closed the meetings at 9:54 am EST.

Upcoming Meetings

CBD SBI 6: The sixth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI) will review implementation of the CBD in advance of the next meeting of the COP. **dates:** 16-19 February 2026 **location:** Rome, Italy **www:** cbd.int/meetings

CIF Trust Fund Committee Meetings 2026: The Climate Investment Funds (CIF) Trust Fund Committee Meetings are held regularly to oversee and decide on strategic direction, operations and other activities, and the policies that drive those activities, for the two trust funds that comprise the CIF. **dates:** 9-16 March 2026 **location:** Washington, DC, US **www:** www.cif.org/governance/upcoming-trust-fund-committee-meeting

CMS COP 15: The 15th meeting of the COP to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals will convene to review implementation of the Convention. **dates:** 23-29 March 2026 **location:** Campo Grande, Brazil **www:** cms.int/cop15docs

BBNJ PrepCom III: The third substantive meeting of the Preparatory Commission (PrepCom III) for the Entry into Force of the BBNJ Agreement and the Convening of COP 1 to the Agreement will continue work on the cluster of issues agreed by the organizational session and discussed at PrepCom I and

PrepCom II. **dates:** 23 March - 2 April 2026 **location:** New York, US **www:** un.org/bbnjagreement/en

2026 WBG/IMF Spring Meetings: The 2026 Spring Meetings of the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund will include the Development Committee Meeting, the International Monetary and Financial Committee, and events and fora focused on international development, the global economy, and financial markets. **dates:** 21-26 April 2026 **location:** Washington, DC, US **www:** worldbank.org/en/meetings/splash/spring

71st Meeting of the GEF Council and 8th GEF

Assembly: The eighth GEF Assembly and the 71st meeting of the GEF Council will bring together ministers, prominent environmentalists, government officials, business leaders, and leaders of GEF Agencies and the MEAs, as well as civil society representatives and Indigenous Peoples, to discuss governance and financing solutions for global environmental challenges. **dates:** 30 May - 6 June 2026 **location:** Samarkand, Uzbekistan **www:** thegef.org/events/eighth-gef-assembly

For additional upcoming events, see sdg.iisd.org/

Glossary

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| BBNJ Agreement | UN Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction |
| CBD | UN Convention on Biological Diversity |
| CSOs | civil society organizations |
| COP | Conference of the Parties |
| GCF | Green Climate Fund |
| GBF | Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework |
| GBFF | Global Biodiversity Framework Fund |
| GEF | Global Environment Facility |
| IEO | Independent Evaluation Office |
| IIFB | International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity |
| IFIS | international financial institutions |
| IPAG | Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group |
| IPLC | Indigenous Peoples and local communities |
| LDCs | least developed countries |
| LDCF | Least Developed Countries Fund |
| MEA | multilateral environmental agreement |
| NGI | Non-Grant Instrument |
| OPS8 | Eighth Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF |
| SCCF | Special Climate Change Fund |
| SIDS | small island developing states |
| STAP | Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel |
| UNFCCC | UN Framework Convention on Climate Change |
| UNCCD | UN Convention to Combat Desertification |