

Thematic Evaluation Series

**Evaluation of FAO's support to
climate action (SDG 13) and the
implementation of the
FAO Strategy on Climate Change (2017)**

Global Environment Facility study

**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
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Abbreviations and acronyms

CBIT	Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency
FFS	Farmer field schools
GEF	Global Environment Facility
LDC	Least developed countries
OED	Office of Evaluation (FAO)
PPG	Project Preparation Grant (GEF)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIDS	Small island developing states

1. Background

1. In the framework of the evaluation of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) support to climate action (SDG 13) and the implementation of the FAO Strategy on Climate Change (2017), the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) conducted a desk review of projects funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), where FAO is the implementing agency (referred to henceforth as “FAO-GEF projects”). Due attention to FAO-GEF projects in the overall evaluation of FAO and climate action has been necessary as, in the period under evaluation (2015–2020), the GEF has been a top funder of FAO projects related to climate change and Sustainable Development Goal 13 (SDG 13) (28 percent, as determined in the preparatory stage of the evaluation).
2. The objective of the desk review is to build a better understanding of FAO-GEF collaborative contributions to the SDG 13 agenda. Prior to the desk review, a pilot exercise was conducted with the objective to determine evaluability of the portfolio and emerging topics for attention during the larger study. This document presents the findings and conclusions from the full desk review, along with additional information about the FAO-GEF projects, and suggestions for additional analysis.

1.1 The Global Environment Facility and financing of climate change activities

3. The GEF describes its role as that of occupying “a unique space in the global environmental financing architecture derived from its formal mandate as a financing mechanism under several, multilateral environmental agreements: the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Minamata Convention, the Stockholm Convention, the Montreal Protocol..., in addition to targeted support for transboundary freshwater and marine issues” (GEF IEO, 2018a).
4. Climate change is one of the five main focal areas of the GEF and accounted for its largest single-focal area GEF Trust Fund allocation for the period 2014–2018 (the GEF-6 funding period) (GEF IEO, 2018a). Among other GEF funding sources contributing to climate action, the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), managed by the GEF, finances projects with activities which would not be necessary if climate change was not occurring. All vulnerable developing countries are eligible to apply for funding. Additionally, “apart from specific adaptation projects, vulnerable countries need to develop National Adaptation Plans [NAPs]. Only least developed countries can apply for such funding through the [Least Developed Countries Fund] LDCF. In response to a request from the [Conference of the Parties] COP, [the GEF] begun funding the first steps of the NAP process in non-LDC countries, through the SCCF.” (GEF, 2021a). Some projects funded through the SCCF directly assist countries in the preparation of their national communications and update reports to the UNFCCC (and are also included in this study).
5. Additionally, GEF supports the Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT), which was created at the request of parties to the Paris Agreement with the aim “to help strengthen the institutional and technical capacities of non-Annex I countries to meet the enhanced transparency requirements defined in Article 13 of the Paris Agreement.” (GEF, 2021b). In the latest GEF funding cycle (GEF-7), the CBIT has become a more integral part

of its support for climate action, following the GEF Council's decision on the establishment of a CBIT Trust Fund.

6. The GEF provides guidance on formulation and implementation of funded projects on addressing vulnerable populations (including in the context of climate change). Examples include the GEF Policy on Gender Equality, its Principles and Guidelines for Engagement with Indigenous Peoples and the GEF Policy on Stakeholder Engagement.

1.2 The FAO-GEF portfolio

7. FAO became a full member of the GEF in 2006. It is among 18 partner agencies of the GEF,¹ implementing over 200 projects or Project Preparation Grants (PPGs) across the world during the period 2015–2020. According to FAO's calculations, the FAO-GEF projects to date have mitigated 532 million² tonnes of CO₂-eq from the atmosphere.³ As per the assessment of the evaluation team, almost the entire portfolio of GEF projects and PPGs implemented during the period 2015–2020 have direct or indirect links to SDG 13 (a full portfolio analysis is available as Annex 4 to the evaluation). More information about the characteristics of these projects is presented below:
 - i) Relevance to SDG 13: in the above-mentioned assessment of FAO-GEF portfolio carried out by the evaluation team, 24 projects were classified as having a direct link to SDG 13 "SDG 13 exclusive", 77 as contributing to SDG 13 in addition to other SDGs "SDG 13+", 89 as contributing to SDG 13 although not being directly related to it "SDG 13 possible effect", and 16 as "other SDGs", with no immediate link to SDG 13.
 - ii) Project size: most of the portfolio is a mix between full and medium size projects.⁴ Less than one third, about 50, were PPGs.
 - iii) Project period: even though the GEF-5 funding cycle (2010–2014) concluded in mid-2014, most projects in the mapping are from this period, due to project extensions. The second largest category are the GEF-6 (2014–2018), followed by the GEF-7 (2018–2022). In the GEF-5, the climate change focal area strategy focused on market transformation, but also included areas such as promoting investment for renewable energy modalities. The GEF-6, which allocated 26 percent of funding to the climate change focal area, did not drastically depart from the GEF-5 (for example, it retained focus on renewable energy and energy efficiency), but in a different configuration that pivoted also to the GEF's models of influence.
 - iv) Geographical coverage: the regional distribution of the overall database is presented in the graphic below (data as of January 2020, FAO-GEF projects with entrance on duty date or not to exceed date between 2015 and 2020).

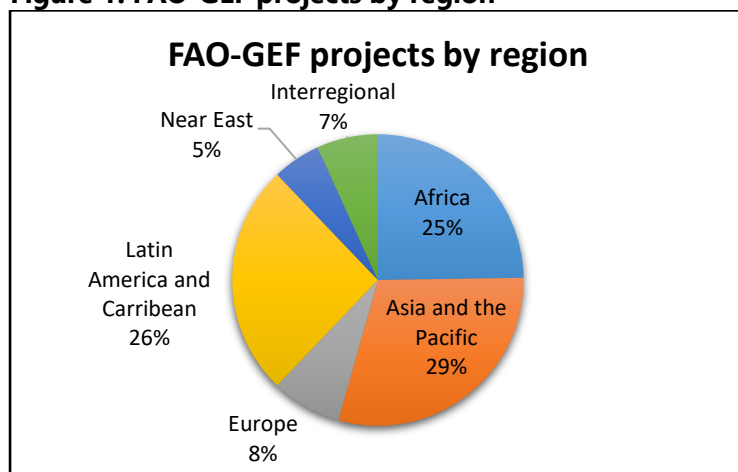
¹ GEF Agency is an institution eligible to request and receive GEF resources directly for the design and implementation of GEF financed projects.

² By the time of publication of this study, this number may have been further adjusted. The most up to date calculation can be obtained from the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit at the FAO.

³ Carbon dioxide equivalent, which converts the amounts of greenhouse gases to the equivalent amount of carbon dioxide.

⁴ The GEF provides financing at different levels, notably full-sized projects (above USD 2 million), medium-sized projects (up to USD 2 million) and enabling activities (i.e. to fulfill essential reports to conventions, financing up to USD 1 million).

Figure 1. FAO-GEF projects by region



Source: Evaluation team

Note: Least developed countries (LDC) and small island developing states (SIDS): approximately 36 percent of the mapped portfolio include LDC countries as recipients, and 7 percent - SIDS countries, including through regional projects. It is worth mentioning that starting with strategy for the GEF-5 period, the GEF started to identify specific support to LDC and SIDS.

8. Many of these projects have already concluded, while others are currently in implementation or at the conceptual and project approval stages. As of January 2020, in the overall FAO-GEF portfolio, 123 projects were operationally active, and another 68 were at various stages of approval. These projects cover all of FAO's regions, with an overall value of nearly USD 861 million.
9. According to FAO "The GEF-7 program, with its signature integrated Impact Programs, is more aligned with FAO's comparative advantages in the larger sustainable agriculture space than ever before." (2021a). The FAO is also the lead agency for the integrated GEF-7 Dryland Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program (USD 104 million in 11 countries), which recognizes climate change as an important driver of land degradation. Moreover, the FAO is co-leading the implementation of the GEF-7 Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration Impact Program (USD 360 million in 26 countries) aiming to directly address climate change as part of transitioning towards more resilient and sustainable food systems.
10. A dedicated unit at the FAO, the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit, manages the FAO-GEF portfolio, and has provided inputs to this evaluation.

2. Evaluation questions

11. The SDG 13 evaluation as a whole aims to answer the following three questions:

EQ 1. Is FAO making a relevant and effective contribution to globally agreed climate action targets?

EQ 2. Is FAO fit for purpose to significantly contribute to globally agreed climate action targets?

EQ 3. Does FAO optimally engage partnerships that leverage the effect of its work on climate action towards impact generation?

12. This study of FAO-GEF projects contributes to each of the main questions, and specifically to the following sub-questions:

EQ 1:

EQ 1.1 What have been FAO's main contributions (direct and indirect through other SDGs) to SDG 13, and to the Paris Agreement, and how relevant are such contributions?

EQ 1.2 Is the climate agenda mainstreamed across FAO's portfolio of programmes and projects to ensure enhanced relevance and coherence with FAO's mission on climate action, SDG 13, the Paris Agreement and the evolving international climate agenda?

EQ 1.3 What type of initiatives have been, or are likely to be, most effective to achieve significant and sustainable results, and why?

EQ 2:

EQ 2.1 How relevant and adequate are FAO's delivery mechanisms, human and financial resources and monitoring systems to address country/regional level needs and to plan, budget, monitor and communicate FAO's support in achieving the targets posed by SDG 13 and by the Paris Agreement?

EQ 3:

EQ 3.1 Is FAO's collaboration with its main (public and private) development partners (United Nations [UN] and others) effectively building on FAO's comparative strengths and weaknesses on climate change related areas?

EQ 3.2 To what degree has FAO's collaboration with State partners or development/multi-lateral partners been effective in leveraging climate action at country and at global level?

EQ 3.3 Are new, innovative partnerships in support of SDG 13, (e.g. in financing, know-how and technologies, research, advocacy, etc.) being forged or adhered by FAO and are these showing concrete results?

EQ 3.4 Is FAO using its internal implementation modalities to effectively achieve globally agreed climate action targets (in SDG 13 and Paris Agreement) through sharing knowledge, best practices, and experiences as well as by adapting/replicating/scaling up climate change adaptation and mitigation technologies?

3. Methodology and limitations

13. Prior to the full exercise, a pilot study, which sampled ten diverse FAO-GEF projects, was conducted with the objective to determine evaluability of the portfolio and emerging topics for attention during the full desk study. The ten projects (see Appendix 2) were selected to be representative of the overall database, on the following criteria: i) relevance to SDG 13; ii) project size; iii) GEF funding period; iv) geographical coverage; and v) inclusion of projects for the LDC and SIDS. The pilot study showed that the available data can be time-consuming to analyse, therefore a methodology utilizing computer software has been designed.
14. First, the overall portfolio of the FAO-GEF projects was scanned for duplicates and to get a sense of project themes and statistics. The PPGs were mapped against the larger project they supported. In cases where the larger project was included in the list of projects to be reviewed, the PPGs were omitted from the analysis in order to avoid duplication. As a result:
 - i) Documents from 165 projects have been reviewed, out of which 39 were evaluations.
 - ii) The main data analysed at the project level were project evaluations, project documents and progress reports.
 - iii) Additionally, few relevant larger thematic evaluations of the GEF Independent Evaluation Office were reviewed.
15. Mid-term evaluations (or "reviews") and final (terminal) evaluation are mandatory and required by the donor for mid- and full-size GEF projects. These are conducted either by the OED or managed by the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit, under the responsibility of the project's Budget Holder. Majority of the projects in the analysis however, did not have evaluations conducted yet (see Limitations section). In these cases, project documentation was analysed instead, which provided an insight into the potential and likelihood to contribute to Climate Action.
 - i) The analysis aimed to respond to the relevant eight sub-questions through capturing and analysing information from the data, on project design, implementation and partnerships.
 - ii) A framework was created for coding the data and using it to answer the evaluation sub-questions, which is presented in Appendix 3.
 - iii) Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software was used to consolidate, organize and analyse the raw data, and provided a user-friendly overview of word frequencies and patterns.
 - iv) The information gathered through the above analysis was used to point to individual projects' evaluations and documents which were examined more carefully in the context of the respective evaluation sub-questions. In addition, during the pilot phase, a representative sample of ten projects was selected for an in-depth review and study, see Appendix 2.
16. Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software facilitates data analysis and is frequently used by researchers in different fields. For this study, Atlas.ti (in the pilot stage) and MaxQDA (for the full desk study) were utilized. Below are further details on the nature of this analysis:

- i) For scanned PDF files, optical character recognition was carried out with a suitable program before the import into MaxQDA, in order to convert the file into readable format.
- ii) A portion of the documentation was not available in English. Therefore, the codes used were also translated into Spanish, while the number of documents in French (2) and Portuguese (1) was deemed too low for the level of effort of translation. These documents were reviewed manually instead.
- iii) Different spelling options and word endings were accounted for in the MaxQDA analysis.
- iv) In some of the cases, annexes which were irrelevant were omitted in order to avoid word-count not directly pertinent to the projects.
- v) A total of close to 100 000 hits (keywords in context) were found in the English and Spanish language documents (N=162). These were analysed using the "keyword in context" feature of MaxQDA.

3.1 Limitations

17. In cases where project extensions were granted, many GEF-6 projects have not been evaluated at the final stage yet. For the GEF-7 period (2019-2022), out of 32 FAO-GEF projects currently in the pipeline in 2020, only 4 are at the more advanced, project approved stage and have a project document available. These projects do not have progress documentation or evaluations yet, which constrained the evaluative evidence for their analysis. Therefore, for majority of the GEF-7 projects, the evaluation is only able to provide insight into these as far as what they intend to do and the *potential* to contribute to SDG 13 (rather than what has been achieved). Since in the GEF-7 period, major funding is secured by the FAO (close to USD 1 billion), another evaluation synthesis in the future can be valuable.
18. The MaxQDA software had a few limitations as well. Most importantly, despite care being taken to prepare the PDF and Word files for assessment with the MaxQDA software, a limited number of files were still not readable by the software. This was duly noted, but the evaluator was not able to analyse all of them manually instead.

4. Findings

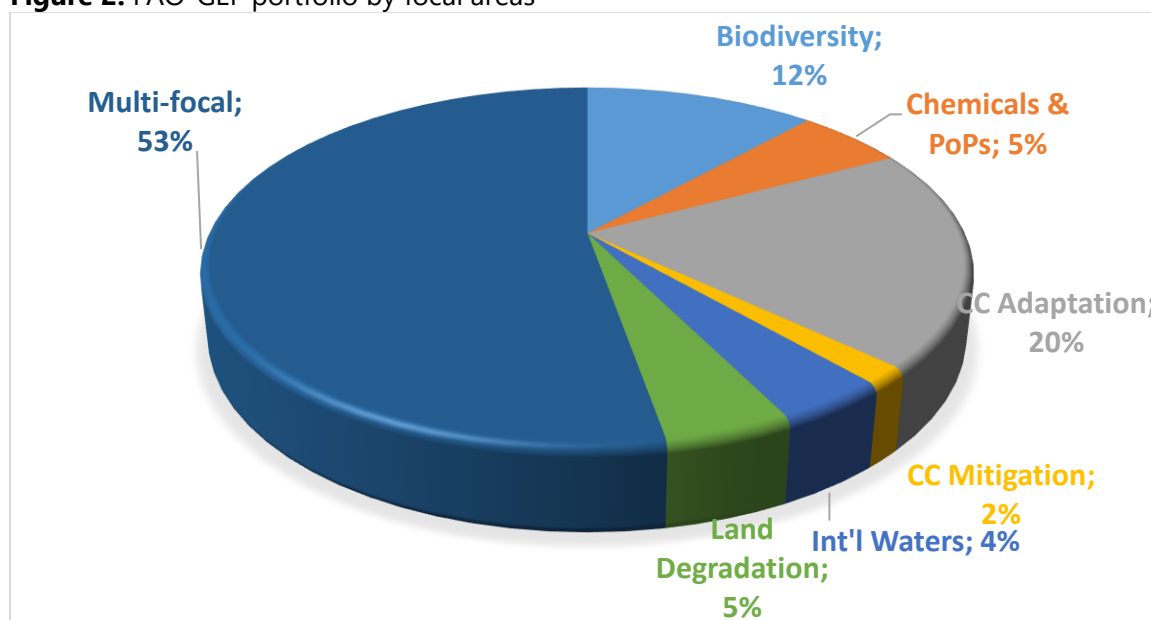
EQ 1. Is FAO making a relevant and effective contribution to globally agreed climate action targets?

EQ 1.1 What have been FAO's main contributions (direct and indirect through other SDGs) to SDG 13, and to the Paris Agreement, and how relevant are such contributions?

Finding 1. According to the database of FAO-GEF projects, about 22 percent of the entire FAO-GEF portfolio of projects has a specific climate change focus, most often addressing adaptation. Several adaptation projects have also a mitigation component, even when it may not be overtly stated. Evaluations also confirm the projects' general relevance to climate change adaptation policies and commitments at the country level (such as the National Adaptation Plans), as well as internationally.

19. Figure 2 below represents the focal area distribution (as of January 2020, closed and active projects, 2015-2020).⁵

Figure 2. FAO-GEF portfolio by focal areas



Source: Evaluation team

20. Project evaluations usually confirm very satisfactory results in relation to the projects' relevance and alignment to existing national policies, strategies, efforts and obligations to the relevant multilateral conventions. As previously noted, projects such as those funded through the SCCF directly assist and capacitate governments in the preparation of their National Communication and Update Reports to the UNFCCC.

21. Many of the regarded projects also have a component related to influencing measures at the national level. For example, the following outcome for GCP/LAO/022/LDF: Efficient and cost-effective climate change adaptation and disaster management measures in wetlands integrated in local and national planning processes.

⁵ Data made available by the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit, dated January 2020.

22. However not all projects manage to achieve such outcomes at the national level. The mid-term evaluation of the GCP/SFS/480/LDF (GFF) concluded that “the project has not yet contributed to inclusion of climate change and variability considerations in national and regional policies and plans.” For the project GCP/AFG/081/GFF, the final evaluation concluded that the project was too small to be able to have the intended influence with regard to national policies, with too many of the relevant outputs actually outside of the project’s control. In this regard, the evaluation of GCP/SFS/480/LDF (GFF) treated the lack of a theory of change as a missed opportunity and strongly recommended one be elaborated, with due attention paid to how the project will support transformation processes that are not in its sphere of control or influence.
23. Note on projects addressing obsolete pesticides – neither the project documentation nor evaluations of the sample project in this category (GCP/SLC/204/GFF) referred to climate change in any way. However, the effects of climate change on obsolete pesticides such as persistent organic pollutants (POPs) have been recognized (UNEP/AMAP, 2011). Removing POPs in a safe manner (which is the key achievement of this project) reduces negative impacts on it due to climate change in the future. In the case of this project, the evaluation verified that 319 tonnes of obsolete pesticide stocks from the 11 project countries have undergone environmentally-sound disposal.

Finding 2. According to the FAO’s own calculations, the FAO-GEF projects to date have mitigated 528 million tonnes of CO₂-eq from the atmosphere, but this evaluation has not attempted to verify the figure.⁶

24. The aggregated global environmental benefits data was collected from 151 projects, out of which only 32 had reported on direct and indirect metric tons of CO₂-eq mitigated (150 745 402 and 377 478 282 tonnes, respectively). This data is dated March 2019.

Finding 3. Many of the projects reviewed included an element of building the national capacity to address climate change, and FAO is also emphasizing its commitment to robust and system-wide capacity development. In cases where projects face delays in implementation, results on capacity development, awareness and education fronts are not evident. Finally, evidence is mixed whether projects resulted in increased awareness on climate change (in some cases yes, in some cases, not yet).

25. Both the Paris Agreement and SDG 13 emphasize that in particular the capacities should be built in the least developed countries (LCDs) and small island developing states (SIDS), with GEF addressing the former through its LDF funding.
26. The GEF has identified five capacity development goals for all its projects (GEF, 2021):
- i) integrate global environmental needs into management information systems;
 - ii) strengthen consultative and management structures and mechanism;
 - iii) integrate multilateral environmental agreements into national policy, legislative and regulatory frameworks;
 - iv) pilot innovative and financial tools; and
 - v) update National Capacity Self-Assessments.

⁶ As it would require technical expertise beyond its scope.

27. In a recent publication on its partnership with the GEF, FAO emphasized its commitment to robust and system-wide capacity development for country-driven transformations (FAO, 2018a). In particular, FAO stated that "15 country projects have benefited from incorporating a step-by-step capacity development approach with innovative methodologies during project formulation and implementation."⁷
28. Some projects carry out a participatory capacity needs assessment and analysis to help design and target their interventions appropriately and increase the likelihoods of sustainability, scale and impact through fostering country-ownership. For instance, such assessment took place during the project preparation phase (carried out through a dedicated grant from the GEF) of the project GCP/DOM/019/GFF (Promoting climate-smart livestock management in the Dominican Republic).
29. In addition, system-wide capacity development approaches were incorporated into the baseline assessments of the GEF-7 Dryland Sustainable Landscapes Impact Programme (lead by FAO) as well as the GEF-7 Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration (co-lead by FAO) with each child project having a dedicated capacity enhancement strategy informed by the participatory capacity assessments during the PPG phase with dedicated indicators to track progress.⁸
30. For the evaluation stage, the Capacity Development Evaluation Framework, developed by the Office of Evaluation, provides detailed guidelines, including minimum standards (FAO, 2019). This framework has already been applied in a number of FAO-GEF project reviews and evaluations.
31. A frequent challenge for FAO-GEF projects is a slow start and inability to reach cruising-speed in implementation sometimes even by the mid-term of the project. One of the consequences of this is that results on capacity development, awareness and education fronts are not evident. As an illustration, the mid-term evaluation of GCP/KYR/010/GFF found that the "project education and awareness strategy is not yet implemented, particularly at the local level," and "the project has established good engagement with local resource users, and the project's site-based activities are contributing to some capacity development. The level of progress as of the mid-term review is not considered sufficient to be self-sustaining. There are opportunities for up-scaling." The mid-term evaluation of the project GCP/SFS/480/LDF (GFF) has similarly pointed out a lack of progress in these areas.
32. Besides the aim to strengthen organizational, institutional and policy capacities, a related component in the projects is to increase awareness, education on climate change impacts and risks, as well as on the approaches implemented by the projects to address climate change. This has been evaluated in several projects. In the case of GCP/SFS/480/LDF (GFF), the evaluation found that, despite certain efforts, the project has not yet increased awareness of government institutions and fishers' organisations. The final evaluation of

⁷ FAO singled out three examples on this matter: "Enhancing Capacities for a Country-Owned Transition towards Climate Smart Agriculture" (FAO, 2021b), "Institutional Capacity Development Assessment Approach for National Adaptation Planning in the Agriculture Sectors" (FAO, 2018b) and "Strengthening individual and institutional capacities to adapt to climate change in Lao PDR" (FAO, 2021c) although this project is GCP/LAO/022/LDF, but it has not been evaluated yet.

⁸ While the implementation phase of these projects (post-2020) is outside of the scope of this study and has not begun yet, an assessment was performed on a sample of PPGs of these GEF-7 projects.

GCP/AFG/081/GFF found that “the project has increased awareness of [Sustainable Biomass Energy Systems] SBES and [community-based natural resource management] CBNRM in the pilot implementation areas, in Kabul-based stakeholders but, according to all the national-level partners interviewed, not with the wider public.” The final evaluation of GCP/BKF/054/LDF verified the results on the outcome “awareness and knowledge on climate-resilient agro-pastoral practices established at national and regional levels,” with positive results.

Finding 4. While the GEF-5 and GEF-6 funding periods (which accounted for a lion’s share of the projects and PPGs reviewed) both had a special focus on renewable energy, roughly 18 percent of the projects and PPGs reviewed refer to renewable energy, usually addressing biomass energy.

33. This is not particularly surprising, considering that renewable energy is not in the primary scope of FAO’s main mandate. Additionally, given FAO’s role as an agricultural agency, its contributions to biomass energy (via promotion of generating energy through a sustainable use of wood or wastes from agricultural production) are appropriate.
34. The table below is an extraction of projects (in bold) which were particularly relevant (rather than mentioning renewable energy in passing). Some of these projects also dedicated specific indicators, such as “Increase in installed renewable energy capacity per technology.” Projects which are not in bold have been included to showcase that, unsurprisingly, renewable energy has been addressed also in projects related to delivering the countries’ commitments under the UNFCCC.

Table 1. GEF projects related to renewable energy

Project code	Project title
GCP/NIC/042/CBT	Increasing Nicaragua’s capacity to respond to the Paris Agreement
GCP/NIC/046/GFF	Enabling Preparation of Nicaragua’s Fourth National Communication and First Biennial Update Report to UNFCCC
GCP/AFG/081/GFF	Reducing GHG emissions by promoting community forestry, removing barriers to sustainable biomass energy, and laying the groundwork for climate change mitigation in Afghanistan <i>The evaluation of this project verified the figures for CO₂ mitigation as a result of sustainable biomass energy and use of solar cooking stoves.</i>
GCP/AFG/100/GFF	Strengthening capacity in the agriculture, land-use and other sectors for monitoring and reporting on Afghanistan’s mitigation and adaptation targets
GCP/GLO/981/GFF	Global coordination project for the Sustainable Forest Management Drylands Impact Program (PPG)
GCP/MOL/006/GFF	Enabling a policy environment for integrated natural resources management and implementation of an integrated approach to achieve land degradation neutrality in Moldova
GCP/MOZ/117/GFF	Payment for Ecosystem Services to Support Forest Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods
GCP/RAS/304/GFF	Sustainable Management of the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem- II SAP Implementation (PPG)

Source: Evaluation team

EQ 1.2 Is the climate agenda mainstreamed across FAO’s portfolio of programmes and projects to ensure enhanced relevance and coherence with FAO’s mission on climate action, SDG 13, the Paris Agreement and the evolving international climate agenda?

Finding 1. The reviewed portfolio of GEF projects was already selected due to an initial assessment of relevance to SDG 13. Therefore, it is no surprise that the 165 projects were largely relevant to SDG 13 and climate action, even though only 33 percent mention any of the SDGs, and less than 5 percent refer to the SDG 13 specifically.

35. Out of a total of 39 evaluations reviewed, only 23 percent included a reference to any SDG, or the SDGs as a whole. There is currently no specific directive to evaluate relevance or contribution of the FAO-GEF projects to the SDGs. However, certain other requirements may indirectly contribute to such an analysis (for example, the requirement to evaluate on relevance to environmental and development priorities at different levels, as well as the GEF and FAO's strategic priorities) (FAO, 2020a). Further, it was reported through conversations with FAO personnel in the Latin America and the Caribbean region, that there has been a recent management request to link projects to the relevant SDGs.

Finding 2. The Paris Agreement is mentioned twice as often in the documents compared to the SDGs. Most of such projects have been specifically designed to support partner country's contributions to the UNFCCC and under the Paris Agreement. Particularly, these include projects under the GEF's Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) and the FAO-GEF CBIT in the Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) sector umbrellas.

36. The Paris Agreement is mentioned twice more frequently than the SDGs. Not surprisingly, the projects which pay attention to it more often than others are those specifically designed to support the country's contribution to the UNFCCC. Particularly, these are projects under the GEF's Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) and the FAO-GEF CBIT in the Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) sector umbrella. As explained by the GEF, the CBIT "was created at the request of Parties to help strengthen the institutional and technical capacities of non-Annex I countries to meet the enhanced transparency requirements defined in Article 13 of the Paris Agreement." (GEF, 2021b). The aim of the CBIT-AFOLU is "to strengthen developing countries' technical and institutional capacity, through a coordinated dissemination of knowledge in order to meet enhanced transparency framework requirements when implementing priority actions for achieving their respective, nationally determined contributions in the AFOLU sector." (FAO, 2021d). However, the evaluations assessed do not normally mention the Paris Agreement.
37. The LDCs and SIDS both bear a special mention in the climate change action global agenda (see SDG 13 target 13.b). From the FAO-GEF portfolio projects mapped by the OED, approximately 36 percent include LDC countries as recipients, and 7 percent SIDS countries, including through regional projects.

Finding 3. No evidence was found that the majority of projects have recognized, labeled and addressed trade-offs. Less than one fourth of project documents and evaluations make an explicit mention of trade-offs in a manner that is indeed relevant to climate change.

EQ 1.3 What type of initiatives have been, or are likely to be, most effective to achieve significant and sustainable, results, and why?

Finding 1. In the course of this study, several successful projects have been identified.

38. Foundational to achieving significant and sustainable results is an accurate identification of the root causes and barriers of the problems that are being addressed in the projects, and continues to set realistic project goals (*vis-à-vis* the funding and timeline available). Sustainable outcomes are also closely linked with a comprehensive capacity development effort that fosters country ownership (see Finding 3 to EQ 1.1 above).

39. One example is spotlighted in the “Success story” below. This project’s goal was to support Nepal’s agriculture sector become climate resilient by promoting urgent and immediate adaptation measures and integration of adaptation priorities outlined in the National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) into agriculture sectorial policies, plans, programmes and local actions. Among its other activities, the project utilized farmer field schools (FFS).

Success story

Project “Reducing vulnerability and increasing adaptive capacity to respond to impacts of climate change and variability for sustainable livelihoods in agriculture sector in Nepal”

- Climate adaptive approaches and practices are nicely interwoven in diversified livelihoods strategies and community assets protection, and the FFS approach proved effective to enabling farmers accept, adopt and adapt to affordable location specific climate adaptive crop varieties and associated technologies.
- Informed replication of climate adaptive agriculture practices attributable to project is taking place.
- Mobile bulletins: FFS group members found these bulletins useful to a larger extent in safeguarding their crops and livestock against likely risks and vulnerabilities.
- Nobody left behind principle: the project worked with 3484 most vulnerable farming households organized into 120 FFS groups and located in the most remote parts of the project districts.

Finding 2. More than half of the FAO-GEF portfolio are multi-focal area projects, which is quite high compared to other GEF agencies’ distribution.⁹ This, along with other evaluative findings, points that FAO could be better placed (compared to other agencies) to implement projects touching upon different areas of relevance to climate change at once – i.e. biodiversity, land degradation – by virtue of being continuously selected to lead such projects.

Finding 3. While in the overall FAO project portfolio, FFS feature quite prominently, the GEF projects reviewed had about ten examples of these (out of 165 projects). All these FFS projects have had direct relevance and an objective to integrate climate resilience into

⁹ See Figure 2 for the FAO-GEF projects’ distribution by focal area. Other agencies’ distributions have been assessed based on the GEF project database (GEF, 2021d).

agricultural and agro-pastoral production systems. Moreover, as evidenced by the evaluations of these projects, the approach has been well appreciated by the beneficiaries and largely successful in disseminating climate change adaptation practices and tools.

40. The FFS are usually quite low-cost and not difficult to maintain. If well-implemented and institutionalized into a pluralistic extension system, at the end of the project, farmers gain new skills and a capacity to face climate-change related challenges in the future. The evaluations for these projects have been quite positive. For example, the final evaluation of GCP/NEP/070/LDF found that the project “proved effective to enabling farmers accept, adopt and adapt to affordable location-specific climate-adaptive crop varieties and associated technologies.” (see the “Success story” above for more details).

EQ 2. Is FAO fit for purpose to significantly contribute to globally agreed climate action targets?

Inclusion

Finding 1. 93 percent of the projects and PPGs reviewed mention women, compared to about 50 percent mentioning youth. No evidence was found of inclusion or mention of the “leave nobody behind” principle.

The GEF and FAO policies on gender equality sets out the guiding principles and mandatory requirements for mainstreaming gender across operations. While the FAO-GEF projects provide gender-disaggregated data, not all succeed at gender-mainstreaming or addressing, in part, the structural barriers to existing disparities. However, others have been highlighted as success stories by the GEF itself. In addition, since the GEF-7 period, it is mandatory to undertake a gender analysis in the formulation stage. This can have a notable impact, to be assessed following the GEF-7.

41. The GEF requests its agencies to comply with a robust Policy on Stakeholder Engagement, which stipulates stakeholder identification, involvement, and gender-responsiveness, and requires public records, monitoring and reporting elements throughout the projects' lifecycles (GEF, 2017a). Notably, the GEF Secretariat assesses projects for stakeholder engagement at the CEO approval stage.
42. FAO's Policy on Gender Equality (2013) sets out the organization's gender equality goals and objectives, and importantly, the minimum standards for gender mainstreaming and women-specific targeted interventions (FAO, 2013). Internally, FAO has also been making an effort to make gender expertise and advice more accessible to FAO-GEF project formulators (see draft Guidelines for FAO-GEF Gender-responsive Project Design).
43. The GEF Policy on Gender Equality, which came into effect mid-2018, applies to all GEF Agencies and GEF-financed activities (GEF, 2017b). It sets out the guiding principles and mandatory requirements for mainstreaming gender across the GEF's governance and operations with a view to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The policy has a set of requirements, including in relation to the project and program cycle, and monitoring, learning and capacity development. Notably, these requirements include:
- i) Gender analysis or equivalent socio-economic assessment that identifies and describes any gender differences, gender differentiated impacts and risks, and opportunities to address gender gaps and promote the empowerment of women that may be relevant to the proposed activity.

- ii) Any corresponding gender-responsive measures to address differences, identified impacts and risks, and opportunities through a gender action plan or equivalent.
 - iii) If gender-responsive measures have been identified, the results framework or logical framework include actions, gender-sensitive indicators and sex disaggregated targets.
 - iv) GEF agencies should provide information in their annual project implementation reports, mid-term reviews and terminal evaluations on progress, gender-sensitive indicators and results.
44. The Evaluation of FAO's Work on Gender (2020) provided an insight that through these requirements and guidance, donors such as the GEF "have positively influenced gender mainstreaming in their funded interventions" (FAO, 2019c).
45. Separately, the Evaluation of Gender Mainstreaming in the GEF (2018) concluded that "despite a dramatic reduction in gender-blind projects since the introduction of the policy on gender mainstreaming... there has only been a slight increase in the percentage of projects rated gender sensitive or gender mainstreamed." (GEF IEO, 2018b). This evaluation did find, however, that FAO's weighted gender rating score was one of the highest among GEF agencies. The evaluation praised the design of FAO's climate change project in Malawi's Lake Malombe area (GCP/MLW/053/LDF) for its "extensive description of gender issues, gender-differentiated vulnerabilities, identification of priority issues, and corresponding actions," and its gender mainstreaming strategy.¹⁰ Similarly, the GEF's 2020 report on the implementation progress of its Gender Equality Strategy highlighted as good practice the new GEF-7 project in Georgia on land degradation (GCP/GEO/006/GFF). The GEF has found that the project design closely followed the relevant policies, and was gender-responsive, with a robust gender action plan and plans to hire a gender expert to support the government in project interventions (GEF, 2020).
46. Another positive example is the GCP/NEP/070/LDF climate adaptation project, which its final evaluation finds has "contributed in economic and social empowerment of the most vulnerable farmer field school group members and specifically the women." As stated in the evaluation:
- The community adaptation plans prepared for each of these groups and the social and gender analysis undertaken ensured that all project activities are undertaken in a gender responsive manner. Project took all possible measures to empower and capacitate the most vulnerable farmer field school members throughout its implementation (FAO, 2020b).
47. The mid-term review of a climate-smart livestock project in Ecuador (GCP/ECU/085/GFF and GCP/ECU/092/SFC) states that "the project has explicitly included the gender approach, expressed in the diagnosis of gaps in the relations between men and women in the productive systems of livestock and in the elaboration of a strategy to approach it." The review confirmed that the project team was actively using this strategy, however, "quality assurance and monitoring compliance with the goals included in the strategy has not been systematic..."

¹⁰ It should be noted that the project has not been evaluated yet.

48. As established by the project mid-term review, in Senegal (GCP/SEN/065/LDF), the Dimitra Clubs promoted by FAO helped “to strengthen the gender aspects of the project (women's leadership, including youth) and the dissemination and ownership of CCA good practices discussed in the farmer field schools.”
49. While rates of women participating in the FFS tends to be one of the performance indicators and strong participation has been recorded, evaluations find that the ratio of male to female FFS facilitators is much lower. In the project above, this was explained as related to the low proportion of women among the decentralized state service agents. In another FFS project (GCP/BKF/054/LDF) this was rationalized due to a lack of qualified women with an appropriate background for facilitation. Similarly, in a non-FFS project, the final evaluation of GCP/AFG/081/GFF concluded that, due to socio-cultural norms, no women could be elected to the forest-management committees.
50. The cases above can promote a debate on circumstances outside of the projects' control. It is worth noting that as per the GEF Policy on Gender Equality, GEF projects should promote gender equality and female empowerment “where these can help achieve global environmental benefits.” However, such a responsibility would need to be in view with the operational, time and resource limitations in the projects' lifecycles.
51. Finally, in other earlier FAO-GEF projects, some evidence points to the operational focus remaining on the number of women and vulnerable community members benefiting from the intervention without addressing the structural barriers to existing disparities. For instance, the evaluation of GCP/SNE/002/GFF concluded that women's participation in the project could have been strengthened if a gender-based analysis of the oases ecosystems management had been conducted at the start of the project. Meanwhile, the final evaluation of GCP/ECU/082/GFF provided another lens for insight on this, noting that although transformational gender change was one of the ambitions of this project, due to shortcomings in planning, transformational gender strategies were not part of project implementation.

Finding 2 (indigenous and minority communities). Most of the reviewed projects' core documentation and evaluations do not comment on engagement with the local indigenous communities or minority ethnic groups. One justification that projects provide is that these groups were either not present in the project zones, or not identified as specifically more vulnerable compared with the dominant ethnic group/s. Nevertheless, there are a few projects which have done (according to their evaluations) a highly satisfactory job of engaging with these communities, including creating income-generating opportunities.

52. Both FAO and the GEF have requirements and safeguards in place to promote inclusiveness, including of indigenous communities. For instance, in cases where the project area coincides (even if only in part) with indigenous peoples' territories or whenever project activities affect indigenous peoples outside the project area, it is necessary to undertake an analysis and obtain their consent following good faith consultations and a thorough process of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) before any activity can be implemented in that area (FAO, 2015). One third of the reviewed project designs took the FPIC into account. As far as project design goes, an evaluation of the GEF's Engagement with Indigenous Peoples (2017) found that FAO is one of the agencies which exceeded the requirements to “undertake free, prior, and informed consultations with affected indigenous peoples to ascertain their broad community support for projects affecting them

and to solicit their full and effective participation in designing, implementing, and monitoring measures.” (GEF IEO, 2017).

53. It should also be noted that as of 2018, the FAO-GEF Project Implementation Review, which each project is required to submit annually, contains a dedicated section on the involvement of indigenous people, as well as monitoring for social safeguards. However, the mid-term evaluation of GCP/CHI/039/GFF (2019) still found it necessary to recommend for the project to develop indicators to address gender and indigenous community issues.
54. Ten evaluations directly addressed indigenous people and other marginalized groups’ inclusion in the projects. More than half of these evaluations concluded that inclusion has been at least mildly satisfactory. A success story is the project GCP/VEN/011/GFF (Sustainable Forest Lands Management and Conservation under an Eco-social Approach in Venezuela): the mid-term evaluation concluded that these communities actively participated in the design and implementation of the project activities which were relevant to them, including management.
55. The new GEF-7 project GCP/NIC/046/GFF (Enabling Preparation of Nicaragua’s Fourth National Communication and First Biennial Update Report to UNFCCC) attempts to address the needs to indigenous communities. One of its outcomes is to improve the living conditions and climate adaptation in the project zones, which include seven indigenous territories. The project’s funding proposal also expressed commitment to the FPIC principle, as well as an intention to implement training workshops on gender equality and indigenous, traditional and local knowledge.

Transformational change

Finding 1. Transformational change is often noted in project documents, such as under the umbrella of building “effective partnership that can ensure the achievement of project results and transformational change.” However, the evaluations studied offer a less optimistic picture of how much has actually been achieved to contribute to transformational change lasting beyond the project.

56. Together with sustainability (see EQ 1.3 above), transformational change is closely linked with efforts to achieve more long-lasting outcomes. This goes beyond partnerships and incorporates system-wide and sustained capacity enhancement efforts across people, organizations, institutions and policies (see references to EQ 1.1 above). Project documentation and evaluations warn of some limitations to be aware of across the board, namely, government budgets, personnel numbers and turnover, and capacities. This risk is amplified for regional projects, where intrinsic political risks, delays and time constraints are prominent (mid-term evaluation, GPC/SLC/204/GFF).
57. In relation to increasing the likelihood of a long-lasting change, the evaluation of GCP/KYR/010/GFF recommended to focus on a smaller number of high-impact, highly replicable, and cost-effective demonstration practices.
58. The same evaluation warned that “efforts should be made to ensure that recommendations made to the national government and local resource management authorities are actually adopted and incorporated in policies, strategies and plans.” In the case of GCP/NEP/070/LDF, such proof exists. As verified by the final evaluation, Nepal’s newly revised “Climate Change Policy 2019” mainstreamed one policy and six strategy level

recommendations previously made in a report submitted by the project. In addition, the project developed various crop modelling and yield forecasting systems and procedures, which have been institutionalized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development. Finally, the evaluation found that “a climate change adaptation perspective of agriculture development although was not totally new, yet an eye opener in many ways for the recipients of the projects training events” (staff from various ministries and departments).

EQ 2.1 How relevant and adequate are FAO's delivery mechanisms, human and financial resources and monitoring systems to address country/regional level needs and to plan, budget, monitor and communicate FAO's support in achieving the targets posed by SDG 13 and by the Paris Agreement?¹¹

Finding 1. Financial resources have generally been found to be sufficient, and financial management to be in order (though budget re-adjustments and low expenditure rates resulting in no-cost extensions are very common). At the same time, project evaluations warn that it is very difficult to track and understand precise figures and activities when it comes to co-financing of GEF projects (i.e. how much of the planned co-financing actually materialized).

59. Due to the nature of in-kind co-financing, it is difficult to not only accurately quantify amounts, but also to isolate the contributions to the projects vs. other activities (even in relation to secondment of personnel who may be dedicating only a percentage of their time to the projects). Not all projects sign co-financing agreements and co-financing can be more robustly monitored.

Finding 2. Project extensions are a signal that implementation ends up much slower than originally planned. Slow procurement, staff hiring and changes in personnel were some of the reasons given in the project evaluations and progress reports.

60. However, one must not underestimate the complexity of some projects (for instance, in fragile environments; difficult to implement; or requiring stakeholder collaboration and alignment across different countries) that FAO undertakes with GEF funding. Additionally, the current COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in many projects unable to continue usual operations, and requesting extensions as a result. Finally, political crises (for example, the mass protests in Chile in 2019–2020), can hamper projects' progress and are outside of the FAO or the GEF's control.

Finding 3. While the evaluations found human resources and delivery mechanisms to be generally adequate, and the project teams are often praised by the stakeholders consulted, improvements remain to be made. Projects with larger teams have understandably had more capacity for adequate support, supervision and field visits. Where gaps were noted, evaluations recommended specific additional experts to be hired (or to be granted more working hours); importantly this includes monitoring and evaluations and gender experts.

61. For example, the evaluation of GCP/ECU/085/GFF found that, with the exception of some distant communities, all the participating producers and communities stated that they received good quality support or supervision visits at least twice per month. The evaluation attributed this success largely to the project team's relatively large size. Similarly, the

¹¹ For the purpose of answering this question, only the evaluations were analysed, in order to gain a more critical and impartial view.

evaluation of GCP/GAM/033/LDF recommended to hire a full-time technical assistant to support the project manager in increasing delivery pace and effectiveness.

EQ 3. Does FAO optionally engage partnerships that leverage the effect of its work on climate action towards impact generation?

EQ 3.1 Is FAO's collaboration with its main (public and private) development partners (UN and others) effectively building on FAO's comparative strengths and weaknesses on climate change related areas?

Finding 1. In the context of GEF projects, FAO is prominent in a number of larger programmes which are partnerships between different development agencies. A limited number of evaluations comment on FAO's comparative advantages and its ability to capitalize on these.

62. Examples of these partnerships include, under the GEF's "international waters" focal area: Common Oceans – Global sustainable fisheries management and biodiversity conservation in the areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ) (with the United Nations Environmental Programme [UNEP], the World Bank, the Global Ocean Forum, the World Wide Fund for Nature [WWF], Conservation International, the International Union for Conservation of Nature [IUCN]); and the Coastal Fisheries Initiative (with the United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], UNEP, the World Bank, WWF and Conservation International). Where FAO is the lead agency, it is tasked with the demanding role of coordinating the different partners and their respective projects, promoting learning across agencies' sub-projects, as well as global-level evaluations.
63. In the ABNJ project partnership, the final evaluation commends the project, "the choice of partners has been one of the strengths of the project, with the comparative advantage and contributions of most partners clear and valuable," while noting elsewhere that FAO traditionally works with governments, and engagement with private sector has been limited (and neither through the other development partners of this project).
64. The global project GCP/GLO/530/GFF (Participatory assessment of land degradation and sustainable land management in grassland and pastoral systems) has been a partnership with IUCN. Similarly to other FAO projects, FAO's convening power was considered as a comparative advantage by the project's partners (as verified by the mid-term evaluation). FAO also has considerable experience in global grassland and rangeland management and assessment, which it did not utilize as expected, "With the exception of Uruguay... FAO has not proactively mobilized its experience in grassland and rangeland management to complement that of IUCN. Despite these issues, the partnership between FAO and IUCN has allowed embedding the project in its Global Dryland Initiative, and working with local pastoralist communities, research institutions and government partners at country level to implement Land Degradation Assessment activities."

EQ 3.2 To what degree has FAO's collaboration with state partners or development/multilateral partners been effective in leveraging climate action at country and at global level?

Finding 1. Projects which adapted well to national changes and were quick to recognize and utilize potential efficiency gains from various partnerships, did well.

65. In contexts where significant government institutional reform and/or change in policies occurs (of relevance to climate action), evaluations credit the projects' ability to adapt to these as one of the key factors for success and continued relevance. Similarly, some projects

employed a strategy of successfully increasing efficiency and addressing their own capacity gaps by leveraging external support for their activities from partner national agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

66. A positive example of successful partnerships in a situation where a project had to adapt to a situation of restructuring in the government, was showcased in the project GCP/NEP/070/LDF (Reducing vulnerability and increasing adaptive capacity to respond to impacts of climate change and variability for sustainable livelihoods in agriculture sector). According to the final evaluation, the project “engaged with these new government entities in the best possible manner and ensured the achievement of project outcomes and objectives.” This can be considered a success factor.

Finding 2. Most of the partnerships are taking place with state institutions in the project countries. While often fruitful, in select cases their performance has been sub-par. Partnerships are not always formalized via an agreement, and co-financing from partners does not always materialize to the extent expected (see above).

67. In regional and global projects, it is important to establish or utilize functional links between the project countries, in order to implement the project in a collaborative manner. The evaluation of GCP/SNE/002/GFF found that this worked due to the project's participatory approach, which allowed for strong technical cooperation between the three project countries in the Maghreb region.

Finding 3. Partnering with government as an executing agency has key benefits, in addition to country ownership and increasing the likelihood of sustainability. In relation to addressing climate change specifically, the fact that the government often possesses useful facilities and equipment, as well as local expertise, has increased the projects' efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

EQ 3.3 Are new, innovative partnerships in support of SDG 13, (e.g. in financing, know-how and technologies, research, advocacy, etc.) being forged or adhered by FAO and are these showing concrete results?

Finding 1. Most of the FAO's partnerships on the ground through GEF projects have been with government, less so with civil society organizations, academia and private sector at country level.

68. According to project evaluations, limited partnership-building (including with civil society organizations) constrains project implementation and can be a missed opportunity. For instance, in GCP/AFG/081/GFF, “the strong performance and capacity of the technical service-provider [a German NGO] was a contributing factor to the results achieved,” as per its final evaluation.
69. Some partnership agreements with non-state partners are not formalized (i.e. signed) even when partnerships existed in practice (for instance in GCP/SNE/002/GFF, GCP/SFS/480/GFF).
70. Several innovative partnerships have been identified within individual projects, which, even though these are not generally at large-scale, may be useful to consider.
- i) Example 1: During the GCP/SFS/480/LDF (GFF) project, FAO partnered with a regional institution with membership from the three project countries, as the executing agency for the project. The agency was already established to promote sustainable use of the

fisheries' resources in the project's area and had stellar scientific expertise. While in theory and design this innovative partnership could be quite appropriate to address the climate-related strains on the fish stock and local livelihoods, the evaluation showed that in practice this partnership faced many difficulties.

- ii) Example 2: The evaluation of GCP/PHI/062/GFF (Dynamic Conservation and Sustainable Use of Agricultural Biodiversity to ensure Food Security and Ecosystems Services and Resilience) describes the following successful private sector partnership with potential for sustainability:

Several initiatives have been undertaken in partnership with the private sector, including linkage of women weavers' products to the owner of a major national business. The volume ordered through this private connection helped generate a (relatively) high income for the women weavers, well above previous levels. The buyer is a well-known retail supplier... so there is an expectation of further orders and wider promotion of the t'nalak products and linkage with other private sector clients through the owner's personal connections.

- iii) Example 3: the project GCP/SNE/002/GFF (Adaptive Management and Monitoring of the Maghreb's Oases Systems), managed to utilize the networks of its civil society organization partners in an effective manner:

The project evaluation found that these partnerships were effective in delivering the expected outputs. A partnership was forged with a regional civil society organization that brought together a number of civil society organizations in the project's three countries. In turn the national civil society organizations' networks with communities and farmers enabled a greater and more effective outreach.

EQ 3.4 Is FAO using its internal implementation modalities to effectively achieve globally agreed climate action targets (in SDG 13 and the Paris Agreement) through sharing knowledge, best practices, and experiences as well as by adapting/replicating/scaling up climate change adaptation and mitigation technologies?

Finding 1. While the FAO-GEF projects often make their knowledge public (i.e. through project websites or social media), and make efforts to share it beyond the project's locale (through participation in regional meetings, for example), more can be done to effectively attract relevant partners to this knowledge and disseminate it.

- 71. As per the GEF requirement, most of the evaluations have assessed the projects' communications strategies, successes and challenges. Firstly, these evaluations have confirmed also the need for increased awareness, see below:
 - i) Planning at local and national levels is also hindered by the same kinds of limitations of knowledge and understanding that affect the development of specific climate change adaptation strategies (GCP/LAO/022/LDF).
 - ii) Inadequate understanding and knowledge among key stakeholders at diverse levels regarding the nature, magnitude and implications of climate change, the specific forms and levels of vulnerability affecting the target wetlands and their constituent communities, and the relations between wetlands and climate change resilience (GCP/DOM/019/GFF).
- 72. There is evidence that FAO is engaging, through its GEF projects, to share and increase knowledge on climate change, also beyond the projects' main audiences.

73. Improvements could certainly be made though. The evaluation of GCP/SLC/204/GFF¹² determined that the project's stakeholders had weak engagement levels due to lack of knowledge of the project and its activities (this risk was already identified, but not addressed, in a previous pesticides project in the region). The mid-term evaluation found that:

Knowledge has been generated on sound pesticides management since a diagnostic of the gaps on the current pesticides legal framework in each project country was developed... Stakeholders have also benefitted from knowledge sharing through a package of trainings focused on safeguarding obsolete pesticides, remediation of pesticides contaminated sites, pesticides import/export and control, and generally increasing awareness on the adverse effects of these chemicals. A new data repository on the Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency's website was developed, which will contain data on pesticides use in the region.

74. Other knowledge is shared across the project stakeholders and communities on a smaller-scale, but very effectively. See below an example from the evaluation of GCP/MLI/038/LDF (Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change through Integrated Agricultural and Pastoral Management in the Sahelian zone in the framework of Mali's Sustainable Land Management Approach):

[The] very dynamic WhatsApp group brings together more than 50 people – mainly farmers, pastoralists and facilitators/trainers (technical services) – who regularly exchange on good agro-pastoral practices. Interventions and/or concerns in a given situation (experience or difficulties encountered) are presented in the group where the facilitators, agents of the technical services, intervene to better guide farmers and pastoralists. More than thirty good practices [have been shared in the group]. When a breeder and/or farmer encounters a particular difficulty, it is mentioned to the group; facilitators and/or agro-pastoralists with experience in the field intervene and propose solutions.

¹² Note that this project took place in eleven SIDS countries in the Caribbean.

5. Topics for future analysis

- i) It appears that the evidence on projects' implementation performance on gender is mixed. In the future (and particularly considering the direction on gender in the GEF-7), it can be worthwhile to complete a more detailed analysis, aiming to look into how some projects succeed more than others in this realm, and identifying elements crucial for success.
- ii) It could be useful to separately assess conflict and fragile situations, due to the link between conflict and climate change. According to the Environmental Law Institute, environmental peacebuilding affects every one of the SDG 13 targets, and vice versa. The GEF Independent Evaluation Office recently released an evaluation on GEF support in fragile and conflict-affected areas, which provides useful background for such an analysis (GEF IEO, 2020).
- iii) A synthesis analysis of the results frameworks from various FAO-GEF projects can provide useful insights beyond this evaluation, for instance, to inform the work of the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit.

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Appendix 1. Database of the FAO-GEF projects analysed in the scope of this evaluation

[Database available here.](#)

Appendix 2. Projects selected and analysed in the pilot study

Ten projects, largely representative of the mapped portfolio in terms of project size, relevance to the SDG 13, GEF period and regional distribution, were selected for the pilot exercise:

Project code GEF period	FAO Region	Project Title	Project size	SDG 13 relevance	Evaluation availability
1. GCP/SFS/480/LDF GEF-5	Africa	Enhancing Climate Change Resilience in the Benguela Current Fisheries System (Angola, Namibia, South Africa)	Full size	SDG 13+	Mid-term and final
2. GCP/BKF/054/LDF GEF-5	Africa	Integrating Climate Resilience into Agricultural and Pastoral Production for Food Security in Vulnerable Rural Areas through the Farmers Field School Approach	Full size	SDG 13+	Mid-term Final in progress
3. GCP/AFG/081/GFF GEF-5	Asia	Reducing GHG emissions by promoting community forestry, removing barriers to sustainable biomass energy, and laying the groundwork for climate change mitigation in Afghanistan	Medium size	SDG 13 exclusive	Mid-term and final
4. GCP/LAO/022/LDF GEF-5	Asia	Climate Adaptation in Wetlands Areas in Lao PDR	Full size	SDG 13 exclusive	No, a mid-term review is planned 2020
5. GCP/NEP/070/LDF GEF-5	Asia	Reducing vulnerability and increasing adaptive capacity to respond to impacts of climate change and variability for sustainable livelihoods in agriculture sector	Full size	SDG 13+	Mid-term and final
6. GCP/KYR/010/GFF GEF-5	Europe and Central Asia	Sustainable management of mountainous forest and land resources under climate change conditions	Full size	SDG 13+	Mid-term only
7. GCP/SNE/002/GFF GEF-5	Near East	Adaptive Management and Monitoring of the Maghreb's Oases Systems	Medium size	SDG 13 possible effect	Mid-term and final
8. GCP/SLC/204/GFF GEF-5	LAC	Disposal of Obsolete Pesticides including POPs, Promotion of Alternatives and Strengthening Pesticides Management in the Caribbean	Full size	SDG 13 possible effect	Mid-term only
9. GCP/DOM/019/GFF GEF-6	LAC	Promoting climate-smart livestock management in the Dominican Republic	Medium size	SDG 13+	No, supervision mission planned 2020
10. GCP/NIC/046/GFF GEF-7	LAC	Preparation of Nicaragua's fourth national communication and first biennial update report to UNFCC	Enabling activity	SDG 13 exclusive	No, new project

Appendix 3. Table of categorization for purposes of analysis

A computer software was used to code the projects according to this framework. For each of the code groups below, various terms were selected for searching using the computer software (synonyms and different variants of spelling were accounted for). This resulted in a large list of terms (or codes) which drove the use of the software.

Grouping	Code grouping name	Corresponding evaluation question
Climate Change specific activities and results	Climate Change Adaptation	EQ 1.1, 1.2
	Climate Change Mitigation	EQ 1.1, 1.2
	National Climate Change measures	EQ 1.1, 1.2
Contributing factors	Success factors	Cross-cutting
	Barriers	Cross-cutting
	Effective initiatives	EQ 1.3
Gender, marginalized populations	Gender and vulnerable populations	EQ 2
	Leave nobody behind principle	EQ 2
FAO mechanisms and systems	Financial resources	EQ 2.4
	Human resources	EQ 2.4
	Procurement	EQ 2.4
	Monitoring and Evaluation	EQ 2.4
	Communication, knowledge management	EQ 3.4
Partnerships	Partnerships - dev partners, UN agencies	EQ 3.1
	Partnerships - innovation	EQ 3.3
	Partnerships - state, multi-lateral	EQ 3.1, 3.2
Capacities and sustainability	Capacity building, awareness and education – general.	EQ 1.1, 1.3
	Sustainability	EQ 2
Transformational change	Transformation, scale-up, paradigm shift	Cross-cutting