



GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY
INVESTING IN OUR PLANET



Integrated Programming in the Global Environment Facility

Learning from the GEF-6
Integrated Approach Pilot (IAP) Programs





Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Introduction	5
The Learning Process	9
The IAP Programs in Action	13
Resilient Food Systems Program (RFS)	13
Good Growth Partnership (GGP)	14
Sustainable Cities (SC)	15
Experiences and Emerging Lessons	17
Advancing the Integrated Approach	17
RFS Program - Fostering Sustainability and Resilience for Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa	17
GGP Program - Taking deforestation out of Commodity Supply Chains	20
SC Program – Promoting Integrated Urban Planning and Implementation	25
Approach to Governance – Organizational and Operational Modalities	28
Cross-cutting Priorities	30
Gender Mainstreaming	30
Systems Resilience	31
Stakeholder Engagement	32
Private Sector Engagement	33
Knowledge Management	34
Conclusions	37

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Introduction



During the [GEF-6 replenishment cycle](#), the integrated approach was introduced as a new modality for programming GEF resources to generate global environmental benefits. The GEF-6 Programming Directions set out a rationale for piloting the modality to address discrete, time-bound global environmental challenges, in line with the targets and goals of the multi-lateral environmental agreements (MEA) that the GEF serves.

The focus on “integration” ensures that GEF financing is not “siloed” by focal area, but rather invested in a coherent manner to promote synergy in generating multiple global environmental benefits. The integrated approach therefore enables recipient countries to tackle environmental challenges in a holistic and coherent manner, while ensuring that progress in any dimension of the global environment does not negatively affect other related objectives.

Three [Integrated Approach Pilot \(IAP\)](#) programs launched during GEF-6 were the first to apply this new mode of GEF programming. Two were global programs, one focused on taking deforestation out of commodity supply chains (now branded as [Good Growth Partnership](#)), and the other on tackling urbanization ([Sustainable Cities](#)); the third program focused on promoting sustainability and resilience for food security in the drylands of Sub-Saharan Africa (now branded as [Resilient Food Systems](#)). Together, the programs invested about \$283 million in GEF grants and an additional \$3,466 million in co-financing for projects in 25 countries across Africa, Asia, and Latin America ([see Table 1](#)). Three of the countries (Brazil, Paraguay, and Senegal) are involved in at least two programs.

TABLE 1: SUMMARY PROFILE OF THE GEF-6 IAP PROGRAMS

PROGRAM	COUNTRIES	GEF AGENCIES	EXECUTING PARTNERS	GEF GRANT (MILLIONS USD)	CO-FINANCING (MILLIONS USD)
RFS	Burkina Faso, Burundi, Ghana, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda	IFAD (Lead), CI, FAO, UNDP, UNEP, UNIDO, World Bank	ICRAF, AGRA, Bioversity	106.35	786.24
GGP	Brazil, Indonesia, Liberia, Paraguay	UNDP (Lead), CI, UNEP, IFC / World Bank, WWF-US	ISEAL Alliance, ProForest, Global Canopy, Rainforest Alliance, SEI	40.31	263.46
SC	Brazil, China, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, South Africa, Viet Nam	World Bank (Lead), ADB, AfDB, DBSA, IADB, UNEP, UNDP, UNIDO	C40, ICLEI, WRI	137.24	2,416.64

Each of the IAP programs embodied several key underlying principles for advancing the integrated approach. These include, *demonstrating value-added of the GEF, demonstrating additionality of the program, creating institutional frameworks for stakeholder engagement, dealing with complexity, achieving results by promoting systemic shifts, and leveraging the private sector* (Table 2). In addition, the programs also took into consideration the following two important GEF priorities:

- *Gender mainstreaming*¹ through analyses to identify and account for differences in needs, roles and responsibilities, and opportunities for equal engagement of women and men; and

- *Systems resilience*² in the context of drivers being tackled through each program.

To maximize potential for impactful outcomes, each of the IAP programs was designed following the GEF [Project Cycle Guideline](#) for programs. A program is defined as “a strategic arrangement of individual yet interlinked projects that aim at achieving large-scale impacts on the global environment.” The program framework documents for all three were [approved by GEF Council](#) in June 2015.

1 [GEF Policy on Gender Equality](#) outlines GEF’s ambition to shift from a gender-aware, “do no harm” approach to a “do good”, gender-responsive approach that seeks to seize opportunities to address gender inequalities and promote the empowerment of women.

2 Defined here as “the capacity of a social–ecological system to absorb shocks and trends (e. g. drought) and reorganize so as to retain the same functions, structure, and feedbacks (i.e. the same identity).”

TABLE 2: UNDERLINING PRINCIPLES FOR ADVANCING THE INTEGRATED APPROACH

PRINCIPLES	RELEVANCE
Demonstrating Value-Add of the GEF	GEF value-add lies in its mandate as financial mechanism for the major multi-lateral environmental agreements. The GEF is uniquely positioned to incentivize countries and global actors to work in an integrated manner across connected issues and root causes. GEF works with national governments, which are key for sectoral transformation.
Demonstrating Program Additionality	By embracing a programmatic approach, the IAP programs were designed to ensure that the whole of the program is greater than sum of the parts. GEF financing also offers the possibility of additional targeted investments directed at reversing disquieting trends in the global environment that directly affect goals and targets of MEAs that the GEF serves.
Creating Institutional Framework for Stakeholder Engagement	The IAP programs could harness GEF's wider partnership to bring stakeholders together for engagement on the priority global issue. The collaborative process was key to defining the best niche for GEF funds to enable and scale up the work of others, including stimulation of increased private sector engagement. Another key aspect of engagement is the opportunity to harness strengths and expertise of different GEF agencies, which introduced new challenges for governance and coordination of the programs.
Dealing with Complexity	The challenges of urbanization, commodity-driven deforestation, and smallholder agriculture as drivers of environmental degradation are inherently complex. The complexity is reflected in the economic, social, and institutional dimensions, and hence require a holistic and systems approach to advancing transformational change.
Achieving Results by Promoting Systemic Shifts	The programs sought to promote the sustained flow of multiple global environmental benefits while ensuring that progress in one dimension of the global environment does not negatively affect other related objectives. This required a systems approach to incorporate spatial and vertical dimensions of the environmental challenge.
Leveraging the Private Sector	Across all three programs, the integrated approach created opportunities for a range of options to crowd-in the private sector, from co-financing and parallel financing to creation of institutional platforms for catalyzing change. The IAP program design activities involved a wide range of private sector entities at national, regional, and global levels.



The Learning Process

As of June 2020, the IAP programs are in advanced stages of implementation, with most country projects close to or past mid-term. In addition, the coordination child projects under each program have created platforms for ensuring coherence during implementation, and for engaging with relevant stakeholders and initiatives to promote knowledge sharing and collaborative actions. In January 2020, the GEF Secretariat and the three lead agencies initiated a joint learning exercise to synthesize emerging lessons and experiences from implementation of the programs. The focus was on understanding progress made with the integrated approach, based on the key principles and priorities of the GEF.

A particularly critical and relevant aspect was the overall *governance framework* to support implementation across multiple scales (local, national, regional and/or global). At the local and national level, countries have political and institutional structures that distribute sectoral mandates, and the incentives for effectively engaging in integrated projects may not initially be obvious. At the regional or global level, a similar

challenge was posed with different GEF agencies having to work collectively in delivering projects that are designed to be part of a coherent and transformative program. Lessons gained from how these complex governance issues are being tackled was considered invaluable for advancing the integrated approach.

The learning exercise involved consultative meetings and interactive exchanges, learning missions to countries, and portfolio review of reports and documents for each program. In addition, other relevant reports and assessments undertaken by the GEF's Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) and Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) were also taken into consideration (see Text Box 1). A virtual technical workshop was organized in May 2020 involving GEF Secretariat, STAP, IEO, and agencies, during which initial findings from the exercise were shared and discussed. Following the workshop, the draft reports were updated and finalized jointly by GEF Secretariat and the three lead agencies.

BOX 1: KEY GEF RESOURCES ON THE INTEGRATED APPROACH

The IEO, as part of its [Sixth Overall Performance Study \(OPS6\)](#), conducted a [formative review of the IAP programs](#). In its final OPS6 report, *The GEF in the Changing Environmental Finance Landscape*, the IEO concluded that “[T]he GEF should continue pursuing an integrative principle in its programming based on scientific and technical merits. A strong, cogent rationale for designing integrated programs and multi-focal area projects—based on demonstrated additionality, GEF experience, GEF comparative advantage, innovative contributions, environmental need, and national relevance—must be the basis for such interventions.”

The STAP produced a “think-piece” on the [science of integration to solve complex environmental problems](#). The STAP document notes that “integrated approaches which use systems thinking have proved effective in solving problems with complex and varied interactions, for example: problems that require stakeholders to grasp the ‘big picture,’ beyond their own role; problems that recur or have been exacerbated by previous interventions; problems where an action affects the surrounding environment; and problems without an obvious solution.” While recognizing that balancing complexity and efficiency remains a challenge as the GEF seeks transformational change and lasting outcomes, the report called for the GEF “to continue pursuing integrative projects based on systems thinking;” and noted that “these actions will lead to more efficient and effective approaches to planning, monitoring, and implementing projects addressing complex human-environment interactions.”

STAP also published a [Primer on Theory of Change \(ToC\)](#) in the context of GEF programming. In addition to brief overviews on the origin, definition, and rationale for developing and carrying out a ToC, the document provides a succinct guide on how to develop a ToC, including distinctions between projects and programs. The Primer also “consolidates sources of ToC advice for a GEF context, following the [Resilience, Adaptation Pathways and Transformation Approach \(RAPTA\)](#) in emphasizing a systems-based approach, to have the best chance of contributing to interventions that meet GEF’s goals of being transformative and durable.







The IAP Programs in Action

RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEMS (RFS) PROGRAM

The RFS program aims to generate multiple global environment benefits (GEBs) by enhancing long-term sustainability and resilience for food security in sub-Saharan Africa. Specifically, the program is helping 12 countries across the drylands region to tackle major drivers of environmental degradation in smallholder agricultural systems. The program operates at scale across the targeted agro-ecological systems that are seriously affected by environmental degradation and loss of ecosystem services, resulting in persistently low crop and livestock productivity, and increased food insecurity. The targeted agro-ecological systems include the Sahel, Horn of Africa, Eastern African highlands, and Southern Africa. GEF investment prioritizes the management of natural capital—land, water, soils, trees, and genetic resources—in ongoing efforts to transform the agricultural sector and ensure sustainable food production in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Theory of Change of the RFS program was anchored in three principles: (i) *Engage*: Engage stakeholders to create an enabling environment for collective action and coherent policies from the community to the regional level; (ii) *Act*: identify and apply methods and interventions for large-scale transformation of agroecosystems, including market opportunities for smallholder green value chains; and (iii) *Track*: evaluate GEBs, sustainability, and resilience in order to improve decision making in agriculture and the consequences for food security. This framework

was reflected in the design of all child projects under the program to ensure coherence and consistency in delivery. At the country level, each of the 12 countries targeted specific landscapes where good practices are being promoted for long-term sustainability and resilience of food production, which will contribute to reducing land degradation and biodiversity loss, recovering natural vegetation, and increasing soil carbon. A regional hub project provides overall coordination of the program and specific activities for delivery at regional and country levels.

At the regional level, the program brings together different stakeholders working in common landscapes and establishes links with partners and existing platforms across Sub-Saharan Africa. This is helping to build coherence for influencing systemic changes at the regional level; influencing policy, regulations, and practices; and facilitating mechanisms/approaches for collective action and dissemination of scientific knowledge and best practices to inform policy dialogue. The program is also pursuing closer engagement with major sub-regional institutions such as the African Union and the African Risk Capacity. The program also is making use of inter-state collaboration within countries as well as exchange visits among countries to expand the level of impact and deliver GEBs across geographic landscapes and at scale. The south-south exchanges are facilitated through development and sharing knowledge products.



GOOD GROWTH PARTNERSHIP (GGP) PROGRAM

The GGP program is advancing an integrated supply chain approach to take deforestation out of supply chains for beef, soy, and palm oil, working closely with the governments of Brazil, Indonesia, Liberia, and Paraguay. The program aims to shift these important commodity markets towards reduced-deforestation production, while delivering continued social and economic development to farmers and their communities, and businesses working in these sectors.

The GGP program is being delivered through integration across the supply chain, with a *production* project focused on dialogue platforms, policy reform, land use planning, farmer training, and support for sustainable commodity production; a *demand* project that is helping to raise awareness and strengthen demand for sustainable beef, palm oil, and soy among consumers, policymakers, companies, and investors; and a *transactions* project helping to make sustainable financing more accessible for businesses, farmers, and ranchers who require additional capital to invest in more environmentally-sound practices. A separate project being implemented in Brazil combines the production, demand, and transaction streams into a single project, with an explicit focus on soy supply chain in the MATOPIBA region. Coherence and consistency within the Program are being assured through the Adaptive Management and Learning (A&L) project, or “umbrella

project,” which has established mechanisms for coordination, engagement with other initiatives and organizations for GGP-Program level partnerships, and a knowledge management and communications strategy.

The GGP program is supporting governments to increase assistance to producers and small-scale farmers and strengthen the enabling environment for sustainable production and land use policies by convening industry stakeholders for national and subnational action. Through technical guidance on policy, effective land use planning, conservation agreements, private sector partnerships, and strengthening farmer support services, the program is helping to catalyze the systemic transformation necessary to change the way commodities are produced. It is also raising awareness and building tools and capacity to influence the global demand for sustainably-produced agricultural commodities and supply chain transparency, in addition to engaging the finance sector with new opportunities for investment. At the landscape level within the participating countries, the GGP program has helped identify and is now working to protect more than half-a-million hectares of high conservation value forest. Through these efforts, the program is evolving models for intervention that can be replicated across a wide range of commodities and additional geographies, with the potential to accelerate a reduction in deforestation from commodity expansion.

SUSTAINABLE CITIES (SC) PROGRAM

The SC program promotes the integration of environmental sustainability in planning and management initiatives for cities. The program operates through two interrelated and complementary components: (i) direct investments in innovative sustainability solutions in 28 cities across 11 countries; and (ii) a Global Platform for Sustainable Cities (GPSC) as a global convening space for developing and sharing knowledge to promote integrated urban planning. The GPSC also engages a Resource Team of city-based organizations and technical entities (C40, ICLEI, and WRI) to expand engagement with cities in the program and beyond. The program is building a foundation for transformational change by helping cities overcome barriers, such as governance structures that tend to be organized in silos. For example, the program has developed the *Urban Sustainability Framework*, which helps cities bring together multiple dimensions of urban development and leverage indicators to support sustainability benchmarking efforts.

The program promotes a multi-sectoral approach and opens new opportunities for integrating environment, climate change, and biodiversity considerations into urban planning and development strategies. At the city level in each of the participating countries, the program is supporting the transition from single sectoral interventions to integrated approaches by promoting strategies such as transit-oriented development, integration of land-use planning into climate action with modeling tools for cities to understand the implication of urban expansion on their greenhouse gas emissions, and integration of urban biodiversity considerations and nature-based solutions into urban ecological plans. These efforts are supported by a data-driven approach, including use of evidence-based planning and where possible providing geospatial knowledge and tools to support the work.

The GPSC provides policy guidance and intellectual leadership through good practice compendiums

on integrated approaches and producing analytical reports, such as *Greater Than Parts: A Metropolitan Opportunity*, which provides guidance on how metropolitan areas can harness integrative approaches to reap global environmental benefits. The GPSC convenes a worldwide network of development partners and leverages their resources, expertise, and connections to bring cutting-edge knowledge to cities. Since the work in cities covers multiple urban knowledge areas, there is added importance to drawing on a broad array of expertise. The broad range of activities at different scales (global, regional, and national) is helping cities to incorporate global knowledge, while having content contextually relevant to specific locations. Although coordination between the different stakeholders is complex, the GPSC is building a strong and more impactful program, combining political engagement with city leaders and urban practitioners. The program is also helping cities address municipal financing as a critical priority for advancing sustainability. For example, the GPSC has provided creditworthiness training to cities and is piloting city self-assessments through the Municipal Public-Private Partnerships Framework and through engagement with the International Finance Corporation.





Experiences and Emerging Lessons

The following synthesis reports were produced to document and synthesize the learning:

- *Advancing the integrated approach*—Focus on progress with application of the key principles for each program, and challenges and opportunities for future programming
- *Approach to governance*—Organizational structure and operational modalities for achieving coherence within the programs and linking externally to other entities and initiatives
- *Experience with key cross-cutting priorities*—Approaches to gender mainstreaming, integrating systems resilience, stakeholder engagement, leveraging the private sector, and knowledge management and learning

ADVANCING THE INTEGRATED APPROACH

RFS Program—Fostering Sustainability and Resilience for Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa

GEF VALUE-ADD: The RFS program was designed in an integrated manner to maximize synergies and generate multiple GEBs across the conventions in the context of smallholder agriculture production. The GEF convening power and catalytic role is to ensure that investments in food security underpins the achievements of GEBs. Hence the RFS program is catalytic in supporting participating countries to implement commitments under the conventions. Several country projects are also addressing priorities in National Adaptation Programs of Action (NAPA) to meet urgent and immediate needs to adapt to climate change.

PROGRAM ADDITIONALITY: The GEF programmatic approach maximizes the potential for generating GEBs through several means: (i) IFAD as lead agency brought significant co-financing resources to match GEF resources and maximize comprehensive investments from regional, national, and local levels; (ii) the comparative advantage of participating GEF agencies created a critical mass for information and knowledge flow; (iii) the regional hub project is creating a community of practice that connects the different layers and workstreams from the regional to the local level.

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: The RFS program is helping strengthen and/or establish institutional frameworks for implementation at multiple levels: regional, project portfolio, and project specific. At the regional level, the framework established to engage directly with the African Union aims to create opportunities to tap into regional initiatives and help leverage these at country level, and vice versa. The regional hub project serves as an anchor for technical expertise resources. At the country level, different types of frameworks for agricultural transformation are being utilized, including intra-governmental coordination mechanisms and multi-stakeholder platforms.

DEALING WITH COMPLEXITY: Complexity is inherent to the RFS program because smallholder agriculture and agroecosystem services are critical for food security and resilience. Furthermore, the complexity is compounded by the diversity and number of agencies and partners, multiple countries across the continent, and a multi-scale

and multi-focal approach. Different aspects have helped in dealing with this complexity: (i) a clear Theory of Change to show a path towards resilience and transformation; (ii) the pivotal role of multi-stakeholder platforms in bringing together environment, agriculture, and food security (e.g., for conflict resolution in Nigeria, for payment for ecological services in Ghana, for policy change with the Africa Union); and (iii) facilitating information and knowledge flows to promote policy integration and best practices.

ACHIEVING RESULTS BY PROMOTING SYSTEMIC SHIFTS: The Theory of Change summarized by the three guiding principles—engage-act-track—constitutes the bedrock of the two main intended impact pathways: (i) the successful improvement of policies and incentives for smallholder agriculture and scaling up of the public and private sector investments in integrated natural resource management in Sub-Saharan Africa; and (ii) governments and private sector in Sub-Saharan Africa continue to be committed to sustainable agriculture intensification/ Integrated Natural Resource Management and support the process with national means and inclusive value chains. These two pathways remain undeniably related to the acceptance and recognition by concerned stakeholders of the importance of integration for improving agricultural practices, food security, and ecosystem services in Sub-Saharan Africa.



LEVERAGING THE PRIVATE SECTOR: Smallholder farmers are the basic unit of the private sector for smallholder agriculture. The engagement of other private entities, from cooperatives, small- and medium-sized enterprises, to big international groups, is a critical path along different food-related value chains. The banking sector appears as a key stakeholder to mobilize and foster greater access to financing for farmers, as shown, for example, by the agricultural credit risk assessments in Niger. Country cases have emerged, such as the water funds in Kenya, market opportunities in Eswatini, and the banking sector in Ethiopia and Niger. The program is promoting capacity reinforcement and grant support for greening agricultural food value chains to build resilience and sustainability.

MAINSTREAMING GENDER: Gender mainstreaming was a major focus in the design of country projects, and the RFS program has helped highlight gender as a key determinant of resilience. The program is

helping to increase understanding of how gender roles and norms mediate people's relationships to the environment and ecosystem services. The regional hub has also been instrumental in shifting from a list of indicators to capture gender mainstreaming to a best practice model following an approach developed by the International Food Policy Research Institute. Mainstreaming gender is now understood as empowering women to secure access and rights on lands, water, forests, financial services, technology, increased incomes, improved literacy, market/economic activities, and better daily time management. Difficulty with finding the right expertise for gender mainstreaming has emerged as a major challenge at the country level.

INTEGRATING SYSTEMS RESILIENCE: Resilience is a central aspect of the RFS program because a resilient food system is able to maintain food access, availability, and utilization in the face of chronic and acute stresses and shocks. The improvement of community resilience to climate change and disaster shocks is being addressed through a focus on value chain approaches, job opportunities, and incomes. The RFS program emphasizes diversification of production systems, using multiple species, breeds, or varieties, as well as integration of crops, livestock,

forests, and aquatic biodiversity. From an ecosystem perspective, sustainable land management practices contribute to resilience and generate GEBs related to land degradation and climate change mitigation, and biodiversity. Several approaches, tools, and monitoring frameworks were proposed and promoted across the program, although this makes consolidation of efforts at the regional level difficult. A global indicator to monitor resilience has been refined by Conservation International and the *Trends.Earth* platform.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND LEARNING: Three key workstreams are included in the regional hub for knowledge management: (i) science-policy interface; (ii) feedback of lessons to policy makers at national and regional levels; (iii) dissemination of program results, communication, and advocacy. ICRAF is facilitating the exchange of knowledge and lessons between stakeholders from different research and development areas in connection with the agriculture agenda in Africa, as well as through contact with major regional organizations (eg Africa Union, TerrAfrica). Knowledge management is not yet fully embraced by all country projects, and staffing for relevant positions remains a challenge.



GGP Program—Taking deforestation out of Commodity Supply Chains

GEF VALUE-ADD: The GEF’s convening power and catalytic role has been key for mobilizing the targeted producer countries and other diverse stakeholders along the supply chain. The focus on integration helped the GGP agencies overcome early design challenges and join forces to implement the projects in best way possible. The GEF’s flexibility and recognition of adaptive management as a key component of project management was also decisive in GGP design and implementation. This has enabled the program to: a) test the supply chain approach despite operational challenges; b) create trust between GEF agencies leads and project managers, and foster collaboration beyond GGP child projects; c) reflect on the key levers of change that could be prioritized for bigger impact and systems change; and d) provide inputs and share lessons in the design of the GEF-7 Food Systems, Land Use, and Restoration Impact Program.

PROGRAM ADDITIONALITY: The process of planning activities in an integrated manner across the entire supply chain has created opportunities for linking beneficiaries, activities, and scale. The coordination or umbrella child project is the key instrument ensuring coherence and consistency within the program, including mechanisms for coordination and coordinating program-level monitoring and evaluation, engagement with initiatives and other organizations for GGP program-level partnerships, and a knowledge management and communications strategy. The umbrella project is the engine that helps demonstrate that the whole of the program is greater than the sum of its parts as a result of integration.

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: The GGP operates as a framework for mobilizing and engaging all stakeholders involved in the supply chain for the three commodities. The program’s approach relies on supply chain integration, which can provide opportunities for systems shift and transformational change. This has led to collaboration between



stakeholders working on the sustainable production, financing, and demand sides of targeted supply chains, which enabled the creation of synergies. The participating GEF agencies bring unique experiences and networks to the program through their work with recipient country ministries, global and national CSOs, and private sector entities. The institutional framework for engagement with supply chain actors also includes use of existing global, regional, national, and subnational multi-stakeholder platforms. Such platforms have proven invaluable to engage and mobilize all key actors in a collaborative manner.

DEALING WITH COMPLEXITY: The challenge of commodity-driven deforestation is multidimensional— economic, environmental, social, governance, behavioral (incentives and motivations)—and cannot be tackled by looking at a single or even a few dimensions. While bringing together multiple organizations with various strengths and expertise generates additional value, it also results in more complex communication, coordination, collaboration, and governance arrangements between agencies and sub-grantees. The GGP program is working to overcome this complexity through: (a) interventions that tackle the range of root causes of the identified challenge in a holistic manner; (b) an appropriate coordination mechanism; (c) engagement of all key stakeholders in dialogues through national and subnational platforms to ensure all perspectives on the issue and its solution are captured, and to ensure local ownership throughout the process; (d) the use of adaptive management to ensure that the project can quickly react to changes brought about by the complex, nonlinear nature of the problem being addressed; and (e) effective learning processes that reuse existing knowledge and generate new knowledge that supports replication and scaling-up across geographies—subnational to national to regional and global.

ACHIEVING RESULTS BY PROMOTING SYSTEMIC SHIFTS: The GGP program is designed to address the issues related to sustainable commodity promotion in a global, integrated, and holistic manner. It is





supporting sustainable production, strengthening demand for sustainable products and ensuring that financial and economic incentives are in place and support sustainable production. The approach contributes to climate change mitigation through avoided deforestation, biodiversity conservation through protection of high conservation value forests, and land degradation through improved and sustainable management of production landscapes. The program also focuses on livelihoods and coping mechanisms of smallholder farmers involved in commodity production. The integrated approach is key to achieving these results and ultimately shifting the supply chain toward sustainability.

LEVERAGING THE PRIVATE SECTOR: The private sector plays a key role in this program, which will be further strengthened under the GGP platform. Emerging trends show an increased number of sustainability commitments from private sector actors, but that they are challenged in delivering these commitments, including due to a limited (but increasing) capacity and limited experience in collaboration with other stakeholders, as well as due to the lack of premiums for sustainably produced commodities such as soy and palm. Given this context, GGP prioritizes the following means of engagement:

- Linking with global, regional, national, and subnational multi-stakeholder platforms to drive coordination and alignment.
- Developing tools/guidelines to support the private sector transition, including the finance sector, to sustainable supply chains.
- Enabling new supply chain partnerships at the country level.
- Strengthening the ability of financial actors to lend and invest sustainably.
- Accelerating sustainable sourcing and improving traceability and supply chain transparency by building capacity and supporting companies.
- Improving access to information and knowledge exchange.
- Leveraging co-financing provided by the private sector.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT: The GGP program has undertaken extensive external stakeholder consultations and outreach to industry and private and public organizations to gain a greater understanding of how business tackles deforestation. Further, given the complexities and challenges in each commodity supply chain, platforms, and relevant roundtables

at global, regional, national, or subnational levels are interwoven into the implementation of the child projects to create space for dialogue and collaboration on an ongoing basis, in addition to more traditional bilateral stakeholder engagement, and contribute to the delivery of targeted outcomes. Emerging lessons from stakeholder engagement include:

- Implementing agencies and the GEF do not have enough influence over governments to drive rapid change.
- Engagement of individual stakeholders is not enough; multi-stakeholder collaborations are also required.
- Success of engagement through platforms following a multi-stakeholder collaboration approach depends upon consensus building and a framework for stakeholders to align and coordinate their actions.
- It is important to link national and subnational engagement with real action.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING: The GGP program initially focused on gender mainstreaming through analyses to identify and account for gender differences in needs, roles, and responsibilities. A [knowledge product](#) on gender and commodity supply chains was published as a resource on entry points for the production, financing, and demand aspects. The knowledge product stresses the added value of using a gender lens in the design and implementation of activities in agricultural supply chains, and reflects current trends in gender mainstreaming, opportunities to accelerate action, and critical lessons-learned from initiatives that have already been implemented.

INTEGRATING SYSTEMS RESILIENCE: Supply chain resilience considerations were embedded in the design of GGP program, including market risks and shocks associated with the commodities, as well as extreme weather events that may significantly affect production. These may lead to pressure on expanding production and reducing support for setting aside forests of high conservation value and





for sustainably sourced commodities, potentially undermining prospects for achieving deforestation-free production of the commodities. During program implementation, shocks related to climate change induced-disasters, diseases outbreaks, market demand changes, and political changes have emerged. Approaches to building resilience include capacity building of stakeholders, adaptive management, regular risks analyses/definition of mitigation practices, and provision of alternative livelihoods. Considering the COVID-19 crisis, GGP highlighted the importance to transition towards greener and more resilient supply chains, promoting how the activities of the projects contribute to the response and recovery.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND LEARNING:

The umbrella project is capturing lessons learned from each child project through different mechanisms. These lessons are being gathered in a database that has been developed to keep track of the lessons learned around different thematic such as project design, management, gender, communications, and community of practice, among others. Most child projects use the same mechanisms to gather lessons, such as quarterly reports and Steering Committee meetings. GGP tools and techniques to generate, capture, and disseminate knowledge include:

- The Green Commodities Community CoP and its biennial in-person gathering.
- *Evidensia*, which aims to be a global repository of credible evidence on the impacts and effectiveness of standards and other sustainability tools.
- Participation in events and communications activities such as the Good Growth Journalist Initiative.
- Monitoring and Evaluation mechanisms capturing lessons learned across the Program.
- Each child project also has its own processes and techniques including development of tools and knowledge products and their dissemination.

SC Program—Promoting Integrated Urban Planning and Implementation

GEF VALUE-ADD: Through the program, the GEF introduced a multi-sectoral and integrated approach for urban sustainability, building on its rich country engagement experience and convening power to mobilize partners from diverse backgrounds. The program design, which focuses on knowledge and partnership, also builds on the important GEF values of knowledge and learning for achieving large-scale global environmental benefits and systems change. Finally, the GEF's value-add also came from focused, reliable, and flexible funding for cities and its partner agencies that enabled them to think beyond sectoral silos and adopt a more comprehensive and multi-sectoral approach to urban sustainability.

PROGRAM ADDITIONALITY: The SC program's two-track approach is premised upon the program's concept of the whole being greater than the sum of its parts. The GPSC ties together the individual country/city projects into a greater whole by bringing together a cohort of countries and cities willing to adopt integrated approaches for urban sustainability. It attempts to do so by creating an institutional framework for stakeholder collaboration both at the national and global levels. The added value is created by way of developing common approaches for sustainability and integration and useful knowledge on key urban issues in participating cities. While the programmatic approach in this pilot phase assumed its maturity a bit later over the course of implementation, it was able to contribute to the rising global importance of cities in achieving climate goals and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It laid a good foundation for integration approaches for urban sustainability and the need for a collaborative approach to addressing the complex challenges facing the cities.

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: The GPSC is becoming an important global forum grounded upon a collaborative institutional framework. Led by the World Bank and the program's implementing agencies, this framework brings together not only city participants, but also International Financial

Institutions (i.e. multilateral, regional, and national development banks), technical organizations (at the international, national, and domestic levels), and even city-level governments (i.e. Mayors and City Halls). In addition, the GPSC engaged with the Resource Team (C40, ICLEI, and WRI) through a separate GEF Medium-Sized Project to engage cities. While this was useful in the dissemination of knowledge and peer exchange between cities, it also added administrative complexity in project management. At the country level, having more than one implementing agency in some instances brought a comparative advantage for the agencies, but has added extra complexity to the governance structure. For example, having two implementing agencies involved in a child project has required additional coordination for reporting of outputs for the child project. Clearer reporting channels and communication modalities are key requirements in such cases.

DEALING WITH COMPLEXITY: By spanning 28 cities in 11 countries around the world, the SC program is inherently complex. Furthermore, cities are typically complex in the way they are planned and governed. This complexity varies across geographies and are multi-dimensional, linking environmental challenges with socio-economic challenges. Recognizing these challenges and opportunities, while also realizing the unique window of opportunity that comes with rapid urbanization, the SC program adopted a two-track approach—the GPSC for coordination and knowledge sharing, and country projects for activities on the ground. While country projects tackle each city's priority urban sustainability problems, the GPSC acts as a platform for partners to share knowledge and experiences. The GPSC is primarily designed for sharing knowledge to support local strategic planning processes and implementation efforts in the cities. Connecting cities and sharing knowledge is key to advancing the integrated approach under such complex circumstances. At the country level, complexities are dealt with through coordination units that facilitate communication across sectors, both at high-level steering committees or at the working level, such as project management units and technical advisory panels.



ACHIEVING RESULTS BY PROMOTING SYSTEMIC SHIFTS: Recognizing the unique window of opportunity for global environmental benefits that comes with rapid urbanization, the SC program seeks to promote the creation and implementation of comprehensive sustainability planning and management initiatives. The systemic shift towards urban sustainability is catalyzed by the program through support to cities in adopting integrated urban planning approaches using derived frameworks and knowledge products, building their capacity on adopting these approaches at the city level, and leveraging broader relationships and networks to uncover comparable lessons and feasible solutions. The GPSC and its network partners are also contributing to the global discourse on urban sustainability through global events led by GPSC, participation in the UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties, and other urban forums.

LEVERAGING THE PRIVATE SECTOR Engagement with the private sector is critical to create opportunities for systems shift in the planning of cities, financing for development, integrated management, and resource utility. The SC program acknowledges the importance of the private sector and through knowledge and capacity building activities aims to create an enabling environment for public-private partnership (PPP) approaches. So far, the country child projects have indicated that their work has mobilized almost \$3.5 million in private sector investment. The GPSC's *Municipal Public-private Partnerships Framework* has been quite relevant in this context, and it has also

been rolled out to capacity developing training events. In terms of innovation and scaling-up activities through private sector engagement, GPSC includes private sector companies, such as planning consultancy firms, in order to inform the development of transit-oriented development tools with the insights of private sector stakeholders in infrastructure and land development. At the national level, cities in India, Brazil, and Malaysia have adopted PPP models for implementation of sustainability solutions such as waste management.

MAINSTREAMING GENDER: Cities have traditionally reinforced and exacerbated existing gender inequities. A significant reason for this is because of the absence of women, girls, and sexual and gender minorities as stakeholders in the planning and design of the built environment. Gender mainstreaming must work in tandem with the other systems of integration to achieve sustainability and leverage global environmental benefits. The SC program has, however, not yet developed a gender-specific index in line with the GEF's gender policy, which was developed subsequent to the design of the program. Nevertheless, some country projects (e.g. Viet Nam, Cote d'Ivoire, and Senegal) are demonstrating gender mainstreaming through a range of frameworks, assessments, and indicators. Future programs would benefit from lessons learned from the pilot as well as recently published guidelines on gender-inclusive urban development that were not available during the design phase of country child projects.

INTEGRATING SYSTEMS RESILIENCE: Urban resilience describes the ability of cities, under the impact of shocks and stresses, to continue to function so that the people who live and work there—especially the poor and the vulnerable—survive and prosper. Climate change and necessary climate resilience actions, such as resilience to urban flooding, are critical and important considerations in seeking global environmental benefits. However, resilience considerations in urban settings should be considered in broader sense—to include resilience to shocks such as the recent COVID-19 pandemic and its socio-economic effects on cities. Resilience is considered a critical aspect of the knowledge pillars of the SC program: integrated urban planning and management, municipal finance, and sustainability indicators and tools. Climate resilience principles are integrated into cities’ plans and social resilience principles are ingrained in affordable housing activities. Fiscal resilience is being addressed through all work in the municipal finance pillar. The program’s Urban Sustainability Framework, which guides cities on how to develop sustainability initiatives and track their progress through a system of indicators, also includes a specific dimension on resilience. A number of country projects have adopted resilience in their planning by focusing on flood risk management.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND LEARNING: Overall, the knowledge management and learning aspects of the SC program is on demonstrating how cities can combine their experiences and build mutual capacities. As of October 2020, the program has held at least 446 events and capacity development workshops, created 490 knowledge products, and published 83 program documents. The program is perhaps the first international development initiative linking multi-focal urban strategy and knowledge with a network of local city-level investments. The program is scaling-up knowledge management and learning through: (i) the broad range of child project activities to identify key cross cutting knowledge themes; (ii) global reach of the SC-IAP’s country child projects and potential for regional clustering; (iii) investment in child project funding for participation in knowledge sharing; and (iv) linking national platforms and the global initiatives. The differences in start and end dates of different child projects to some extent impacted the knowledge management and learning activities. In future program iterations, creating a method to harmonize project schedules as much as possible would greatly benefit the effectiveness of knowledge management and learning activities. A concrete, long-term knowledge management and learning schedule could also enhance effectiveness of knowledge management.



APPROACH TO GOVERNANCE— ORGANIZATIONAL AND OPERATIONAL MODALITIES

Overall, all three IAP programs have taken important steps toward establishing governance frameworks and mechanisms necessary for advancing transformational change in the key sectors targeted. As was envisioned from the outset, the benefits of having the established multi-agency platforms and governance frameworks greatly outweigh the challenges and issues encountered during the “building” phase of these complex governance structures. The experience so far suggests that GEF agencies are working collectively to ensure that coherence and consistency is achieved in delivering the IAP programs through the child projects. In addition, the coordination child projects are proving to be invaluable for anchoring the governance mechanisms at the regional level (for RFS) and global level (for GGP and SC), although experience and progress have been different for the programs.

The assessment identified the following four key emerging lessons, which may be invaluable for future programming to advance the integrated approach:

1. Ensuring clarity of roles and responsibilities between global/regional and country child projects is a critical aspect of program governance to support internal coordination.
2. Governance frameworks and mechanisms have evolved at multiple scales to support implementation of the IAP programs.
3. The IAP program governance framework creates space for GEF agencies to harness their comparative advantages in collectively supporting countries and mobilizing diverse stakeholders and initiatives for influencing transformational change.
4. Advancing a governance framework that balances internal program coordination with external engagement is a key function of the global/regional child projects.

The experiences and emerging lessons clearly suggest that multi-scale governance is a critical aspect of the integrated approach to tackling major drivers of environmental degradation. Governance frameworks and mechanisms help ensure that the program embraces complexity, accommodates diverse stakeholders, and builds ownership through dialogue and collective action. In this regard, the following specific highlights capture what we have learned so far and that may warrant consideration in future programs advancing the integrated approach:

Reinforcing the important role of coordination platforms for program governance: Although designed and considered as a child project under each program, these platforms are proving to be critical for keeping the programmatic wheels turning from the outset. Their timely preparation and submission, potentially soon after Council approval of the program framework document, could further strengthen alignment and linkages with other child projects during their design phase. Budgetary implications can be resolved to ensure appropriate funds are made available for regional/global level activities and coordination in all child projects that are part of the program.



Importance of balancing internal coordination with external linkages: Programs by design are expected to deliver targeted outcomes through the child projects, while at the same time influencing systemic change in institutions and policies that extend beyond the program. Governance mechanisms can play a critical role in supporting this dual function at multiple scales across the program, which will reinforce multi-stakeholder dialogues and participatory processes to promote the integrated approach to tackling environmental degradation.

Importance of having a dedicated focal point in child projects: To streamline internal program governance mechanisms and increase ownership by countries and participating entities, it is invaluable for the coordination platforms to have access to a dedicated focal point in each of the child projects. This will increase efficiency in decision-making for a coordinated approach to implementation and tracking progress and achievements. The child projects will also be able to allocate resources to support this important function.

Importance of having governance reflected in the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework at global/regional and country level: By ensuring early engagement with child projects during the design phase, the coordination platform will be best positioned to assess and accommodate priority indicators and tools for a coherent and consistent M&E framework. This will ensure a cost-effective approach to align and implement M&E activities across the program. Building indicators on coordination and global/regional activities in each child project can be a way to incentivize them and ensure contributions from all child projects.

Governance mechanisms are critical for long-term sustainability and systems resilience: Because GEF financing is seldom committed beyond the life of a program, it is essential that programs establish governance frameworks with strong ownership that will endure and ensure the sustainability of strategies that the platforms have developed. This requires mechanisms that foster integration of the



program priorities and strategies within relevant policy processes at multiple scales. The potential for managing and mitigating risks or shocks is an essential aspect of the integrated approach to systems transformation. An effective governance framework is key to building a program-wide understanding of options and approaches to enhancing systems resilience.

Multi-layer governance framework facilitates an effective bottom-up approach and strengthen ownership at country level: The different layers can facilitate coherence and coordination of the project through shared membership, planning, and inputs to the decision-making framework. Having country-focused projects tends to increase ownership of the project from local stakeholders, including national and sub-national governments. Programs with governance frameworks at different scales (national, district, community/village) can serve as important vehicles for information and knowledge-sharing. They link community members to project activities and decision-makers at different levels and vice versa.

Roles and responsibilities for each institution under the governance framework should be adequately defined: In the project design phase, institutions with a clear mandate and ownership for the sector should be identified. In the project preparation phase, roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined and documented with flexibility for adaptive management during project implementation.



CROSS-CUTTING PRIORITIES

Drawing on the experiences of all three IAP programs, trends and progress were assessed for the following cross-cutting priorities: mainstreaming gender, integrating systems resilience, stakeholder engagement, leveraging the private sector, and knowledge management and learning.

Gender Mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming actions across all three IAP programs was initially guided by the GEF 2020 Strategy and 2011 GEF Policy on Gender Mainstreaming, emphasizing the need to support transformational change and achieve impacts on a broader scale and highlighting the importance of gender equality in environmental management policies and programs. Since then, the GEF's renewed focus on gender equality and women's empowerment has been translated into a new Policy on Gender Equality approved by the GEF council in 2017, as well Guidelines and an Implementation Strategy.

While the IAP programs were not directly guided by these new directives on gender equality, many principles and key elements of the new Policy have been incorporated in their design and implementation. Highlights of experiences and emerging lessons include the following:

- Efforts to advance coherent gender mainstreaming interventions are being facilitated by the coordination child projects or the supported

knowledge platforms, each adopting different approaches to advance coherent gender mainstreaming interventions. Both the GGP and RFS programs facilitated consultations, knowledge exchanges, and training opportunities on gender among program partners. The GGP program carried out a knowledge study to provide information on how to generate and disseminate knowledge on gender in supply chains; RFS program develop monitoring guidelines; and SC program activities were designed to be gender inclusive.

- Conducting gender analysis at the child project level is key to developing relevant actions plans to address gender gaps and promote women's empowerment. While some similarities can be found across IAP child projects, gender inequalities and actions to address them are context and culturally specific.
- Operationalization of gender actions plans is dependent on capacity, resource allocations, projects timeframes and/or commitment by project stakeholders. The coordination child projects or supported knowledge platforms are deploying different strategies to address these issues. RFS plans to continue offering gender training to countries; the GGP has used gender experts in the different components to provide training and guidance to projects; and in other cases, such as the SC South Africa project, gender experts are being hired to support implementation.

- The governance paper provides an overview of the frameworks and syntheses of emerging lessons from their use in supporting implementation of the programs at the different levels. To ensure that IAP programs achieve coherence and consistency, and at the same time align with diverse stakeholders and initiatives, an overall governance framework is required to support their implementation across multiple scales. Since each program was designed using the GEF programmatic approach, this critical function is addressed through a separate coordination project for each of the programs.

Systems Resilience

At the time of the start of the IAP programs, systemic resilience was a new approach for GEF programming—and indeed, for the development practitioner world, which was focusing on addressing specific threats such as climate change, disaster risk, etc. Thus, the GEF needed to build a certain degree of awareness and capacity around the concept among some partners. The GEF Secretariat prepared and shared a Note on GEF Perspectives on Resilience in Relation to the IAP Programs, which the lead agencies used as basis for discussions on system-scale resilience as part of the Inception Workshop for each of the programs. Given the highly context-specific nature of these issues, it was envisioned that the lead agency, together with other agencies and technical partners, would work with countries to identify relevant shocks and stresses for each child project, as well as appropriate tools and methodologies to address these and track progress.

Overall, the learning exercise established that efforts are underway to integrate resilience considerations across all three programs. Although the experiences vary between the programs, emerging lessons suggest that the resilience agenda is a critical aspect of the integrated approach to advancing systems transformation. The following are key observations and lessons drawn from the synthesis:

- The IAP programs are building general resilience based on standard principles that include broad participation, exchange of knowledge, dealing with

complexity, gender equality, and good governance. The fact that each also takes a systems approach means that interrelationships across system elements—e.g., within food value chains or urban contexts—are being better understood.

- Specific resilience issues are also being addressed across the programs, such as adaptation to climate change, better management of forest fires, and coping with changing political conditions. In Senegal, for example, where climate change is expected to exacerbate existing flood risk issues in the capital Dakar, the country's project under the SC program includes investments and policy considerations relating to flood risk management.
- The IAP programs are helping partners gain experience in applying resilience monitoring tools and methodologies. Agencies and countries have been dealing with shocks and stresses in a development context for a long time, yet at the time the programs were being designed, 'systems thinking' was a relatively cutting-edge programming approach for practitioners. Thus, though systemic resilience was identified as a key cross-cutting issue from the outset, it has been addressed in an ad hoc manner by the programs. Furthermore, and in the absence of standard GEF guidance, it has been a challenge for program partners to identify appropriate methodologies, and frameworks for long-term resilience monitoring across each of the programs.
- Investment in resilience is being pursued through resources for exploration, analysis, and capacity building, which enables project teams to use appropriate tools and methodologies to address resilience issues. While the degree to which the various child projects allocated the necessary funding for this purpose varied across programs, the efforts highlight the potential of the GEF Trust Fund to support resilience in the context of generating global environmental benefits. This opportunity can be harnessed to address systemic resilience considerations in future integrated approach programs dealing with complex systems.



Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement is a critical element of all programs or projects financed by the GEF. The IAP programs were all designed before the GEF Updated Policy on Stakeholder Engagement was approved by the GEF Council in November 2017, and before there were any formal guidelines regarding appropriate and meaningful stakeholder engagement. Nevertheless, design of each program was founded in several of the core principles for effective engagement of stakeholders, as contained in the approved Policy.

The learning exercise identified some emerging lessons for consideration in future projects and programs. They include the following:

- The engagement of different stakeholders in the IAP Programs has allowed for the establishment of inclusive governance systems designed to tackle the complexities and linkages of the issues and the possibility of influencing systemic change.
- The stakeholder engagement platforms have allowed for more transparency, contributing to strengthening country ownership. The design of these platforms contributes to the replication of actions and leveraging of stakeholder capacities and help ensure sustainability in the long-term.
- Engaging many partners and diverse stakeholders may have increased the complexity of the programs and render the coordination process more challenging. The transaction costs associated with coordinating stakeholder engagement during the design phase may therefore be high, but hopefully outweighed by subsequent benefits.
- Given the need for integration, and the multiplicity of stakeholders, there is also a need for good coordination and coherence of actions across different levels by the partners to achieve relevant outcomes. This has been achieved through the coordination mechanisms and the engagement of key agencies leading the processes.
- Engagement at all levels has allowed for the whole of the program to be greater than the sum of its parts, with stakeholders being part of a larger process rather than just their immediate sphere of action. As the IEO concluded in the 2018 Formative Review of the IAP programs, “the intersectoral approach at the country level, introduced by the IAP programs constitutes one of the main strategies for achieving impact at scale.”
- The multi-stakeholder participatory frameworks promoted ownership at multiple scales and allowed for the sharing of information and best practices among the project stakeholders and decision-makers at different levels. The frameworks harnessed different capacities and strategic partnerships with national and international stakeholders across focal areas.
- Broad stakeholder engagement is contributing to strengthening other cross-cutting elements of the IAP programs such as gender equality, private sector participation, resilience, and knowledge sharing.



Private Sector Engagement

The private sector, as an actor in the transformation of markets, is a critical stakeholder group across all three IAP programs. The integrated approach created opportunities in all the programs for a range of options to crowd-in private sector, from co-financing and parallel financing to creation of institutional platforms for catalyzing change. The IAP program design activities involved a wide range of private sector entities at national, regional, and global levels.

Across the three IAP programs, observable trends have been developing in the processes and modalities of engagement with the private sector entities. While each program has its own focus and program design, there are commonalities between them both in terms of the approach and features of private sector engagement and also across activities that may well be explored to further build private sector engagement into the programs. Overall experience to-date suggests the following emerging trends and lessons:

- The IAP programs are demonstrating that private sector engagement can be successfully advanced through a wide range of platforms deployed at local, subnational, national, regional, and global scales. The high level of private sector engagement is enhanced by operating at multiple sales, thus providing multiple entry points for the private sector with solutions and contributions relevant at each level. This approach supports more systemic transformation across sectors and reaches into markets and demand centers.
- The IAP programs are mobilizing diverse private sector entities, with many industry sectors represented. The finance sector in particular is strongly engaged across the IAP programs and is itself a 'cross-cutting' theme in the programs. However, some gaps remain in the engagement of key landscape actors and technology providers.
- Multi-stakeholder platforms feature strongly across all IAP programs with representation and participation of private sector entities. Engagement through platforms allows the IAP programs to develop outputs addressing the most common needs identified across stakeholders, including the private sector, and to co-create solutions, increasing the likelihood of buy-in and adoption. This form of multi-stakeholder engagement also allows participants to work more effectively on enabling conditions, which often requires involvement and action from distinct actors.
- Stakeholder platforms need to have appropriate governance and a robust business model incorporating sustainability strategies to support multi-stakeholder collaboration and knowledge exchange between competitors and between buyers and sellers. New technology platforms for enhanced traceability, the use of third-party service providers, and a well-developed understanding of governance and training on issues related to the pre-competitive environment could be incorporated as the IAP programs evolve.



Knowledge Management

Knowledge Management (KM) entails deliberate and strategic learning and sharing, as well as systematic management of knowledge assets, and it is a key feature of all GEF investments, including the IAP programs. The goal for KM in the GEF is to ensure that GEF programs/projects: benefit from existing knowledge and lessons learned at design; generate, capture, and disseminate knowledge during implementation, leading to enhanced impact; and facilitate learning, behavior change, replication, and scale up at local, national, regional, and global levels. By strategically sharing across the GEF partnership and beyond, upon completion, program/project outputs, results, and lessons learned can help to inform policy and investment decisions.

Experiences and emerging lessons from the IAP programs suggest three major pathways for KM and learning:

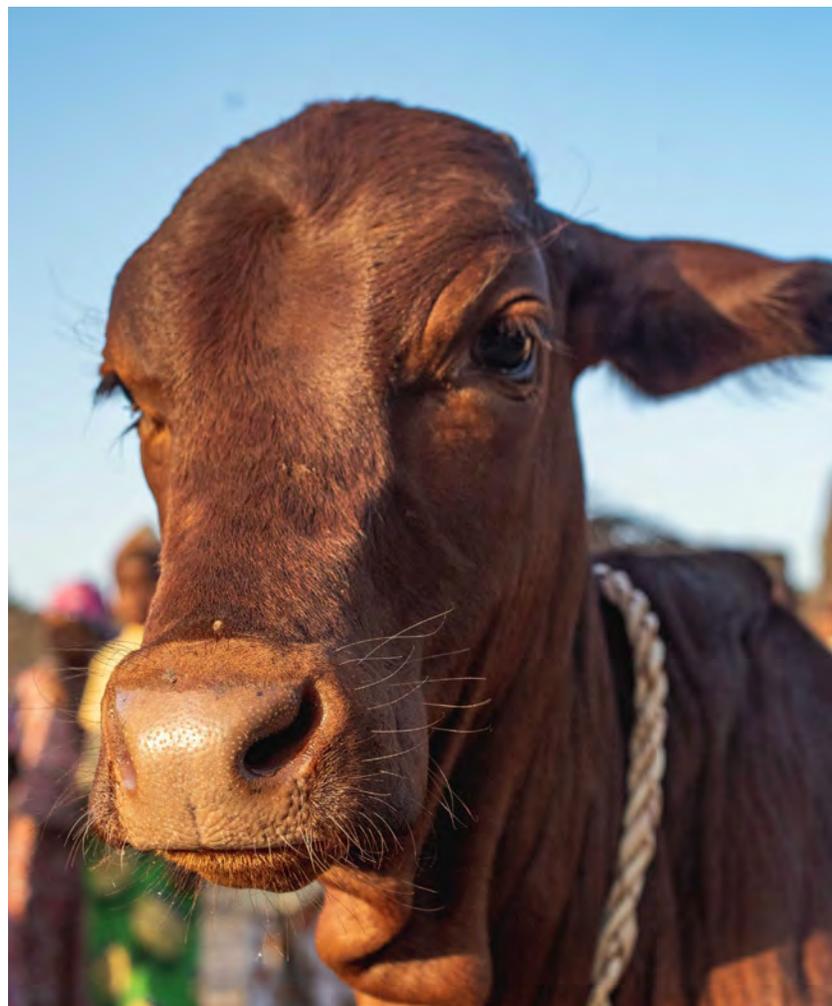
- Identification of a range of tools and techniques for KM and learning during the design phase ensures that this priority need is appropriately anchored and resourced for implementation. The coordination child projects for all three programs—the regional hub project for RFS, umbrella project for GGP, and GPSC project for the SC program—are playing a critical role in deploying diverse and innovative options for KM and learning, which is both helping to support the countries and position the programs for influencing systemic shifts.
- Diverse tools and techniques are being used to

generate, capture, and disseminate knowledge during implementation, including:

- Websites as hubs for KM and as the primary tool to disseminate knowledge across all projects.
- Program-level events or conferences that bring together all stakeholders participating in the program (and in some cases with inclusion of stakeholders and initiatives that are also operating in the program space), for knowledge sharing and learning by stakeholders as well as for synthesizing emerging lessons and achievements.
- Communities of Practice to develop knowledge products and synergistically create a virtuous circle that allows the creation of hands-on guidance knowledge products.
- Outreach events where program achievements are shared and disseminated to inform or influence action by relevant actors.
- Generating knowledge products on best practices, lessons, and achievements, highlighting importance of the programs as spaces for generating global public goods.

Learning and knowledge exchanges, including field visits, roundtables, workshops, and webinars, are being widely used to disseminate knowledge generated from project activities and build capacity of stakeholders that are critical for influencing system change. This operates at multiple scales, such as between actors across different sites or project teams between countries.





Conclusions

The learning experience and emerging lessons suggests that the IAP programs are being implemented in a coherent manner to promote synergy in generating multiple global environmental benefits. The programs have created space for learning based on key underlying principles to advance the integrated approach, including considerations of GEF priorities on gender mainstreaming, systems resilience, stakeholder engagement, leveraging the private sector, and knowledge management. Although much remains to be achieved, the experiences and emerging lessons to-date highlight opportunities for influencing systems transformation and impactful outcomes through integrated programming.

The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the urgency for transformation of key systems that are sources and drivers of global environmental degradation. The IAP programs are demonstrating the potential to tackle such drivers while ensuring that progress in any dimension of the global environment does not negatively affect other related objectives. Experience from the GEF-6 IAP programs reinforces the importance of global and regional platforms where countries and stakeholders can come together around common challenges. The [GEF-7 Impact Programs](#) are harnessing this experience to promote innovations toward transformative change in key systems. The GEF-8 strategic planning process will support and influence transformational change to maximize potential for impactful outcomes for a green and blue recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) was established 30 years ago on the eve of the Rio Earth Summit to tackle our planet's most pressing environmental problems. Since then, it has provided more than **\$21.5 billion** in grants and mobilized an additional **\$117 billion** in co-financing for more than **5,000 projects** and programs. The GEF is the largest multilateral trust fund focused on enabling developing countries to invest in nature, and supports the implementation of major international environmental conventions including on biodiversity, climate change, chemicals, and desertification. It brings together 184 member governments in addition to civil society, international organization, and private sector partners. Through its Small Grants Programme, the GEF has provided support to more than 25,000 civil society and community initiatives in **135 countries**.

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