

Knowledge management and learning in the GEF: learning from agency experience with integrated programming

Date: 4 May 2023

7:00 to 10:30 AM EDT

Location: Virtual

Organized by the GEF Secretariat and the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP)

Objective

The objective of this workshop is: to learn from GEF agencies' experience with knowledge management (KM) platforms developed for the Integrated Approach Pilots (IAP) and Impact Programs (IP) to see how this could benefit the Integrated Programs; to encourage cooperation and collaboration in the development of Knowledge and Learning (KM&L) platforms for the Integrated Programs; and to consider the implications for the new GEF knowledge management strategy.

KM and the Integrated Programs

The criteria for selecting agencies to lead the Integrated Programs included, "recognition for knowledge innovations", specifically "the lead agency must have an established track record in creating and mobilizing knowledge innovations that help countries make informed decisions about transforming key economic systems."

The functions and responsibilities of the lead agency include a global or regional coordination child project which is, " ... critical for linking the country-specific child projects to a "knowledge platform" that will facilitate learning and exchange between countries. The platform will also create a "space" for countries to access innovations, tools and good practices; seek technical assistance on relevant thematic aspects. This includes providing training and capacity development opportunities, establishing standards for monitoring and assessment of outcomes, and creating communities of practice on key thematic issues."¹

IEO evaluation of KM

The recent IEO evaluation of knowledge management² noted the benefits of knowledge which is "consistently integrated, easily searchable, and accessible through online repositories", which can help identify good practices and solutions for replication and scaling up to increase the GEF's impact. The evaluation also noted that, "the lack of effective approaches to knowledge management (KM) can lead to duplication of effort, missed opportunities, and failure to learn from the experience across the GEF partnership"; and that "a standard approach to or guidance on transforming data and information into usable formats that can be shared is still needed." Stakeholders had highlighted concerns about "the accessibility and curation of knowledge products that would allow the products to be easily searched and accessed."

The IEO recommended a strategy which should "set out principles and standards for the KM steps—knowledge capture, development, sharing, dissemination, and application—articulated in reinforced project-level

¹ [GEF/C.62/05/Rev.01](#). GEF-8 Integrated Programs Lead Agency Terms of Reference and Selection Process. June 22, 2022. Washington, D.C.

² Knowledge Management in the GEF [Evaluation Report No. 152](#) October 2022

guidelines, requirements, and common KM metrics.” And a technical solution with “the ability to capture KM data, lessons, and good practices and to present them in a usable and accessible format for both GEF stakeholders and externally.”

Agency applications to lead Integrated Programs

In reviewing lead agency applications STAP observed that KM was largely treated in familiar ways: all the proposals discussed a knowledge management and learning system as part of the global child project, and all intended to establish a knowledge management platform to support knowledge curation, learning, and dissemination, capacity-building, technical assistance, and, in some cases, advisory services.

In screening the Integrated Program Framework Documents on knowledge management and learning, STAP will look for, in particular how they propose to generate knowledge, how this knowledge will be managed and exchanged (including with other GEF or externally supported activities), and how lessons learned will be captured for the benefit of future projects.

KM platforms and integrated programming

For new Integrated Programs where there is no preceding IAP or Impact Program on the same or a similar theme a simple set of common principles could be useful. For example, developing KM platforms which are interoperable, easily accessible to all, both inside the IP and externally, and organized in compatible ways, e.g. by type of intervention, like the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT). This would provide project developers with useful information on what works, how, in what circumstances, and why, and what doesn't work.

For several Integrated Program themes, notably food, cities, and forests, there is already one or more platforms already operating. There may be opportunities for lead agencies to work with existing platforms, rather than create a new one. When STAP reviewed the lead agency applications, some proposals intended to build on existing platforms, both within and outside the GEF. For example, the World Bank's proposals referred to learning the lessons from preceding integrated programming: on wildlife conservation for development, from the Global Wildlife Program; and on sustainable cities, with the existing global platforms (the Bank's Global Platform for Sustainable Cities (GPSC), and UNEP's UrbanShift).

However, it was not always clear whether lead agencies intended to work with existing platforms or create new ones, and, if so, whether they would be compatible with what already existed. For example, there are already platforms for the Good Growth Partnership (UNDP), resilient food systems (IFAD), and Food, Land Use and Restoration (FOLUR) (World Bank). The same issue arises on forests, with Integrated Programs on the Amazon (World Bank), and Congo (UNEP), and three new critical forest biomes to be added, Indo-Malay (IUCN-FAO), Meso-America (IUCN), and West Africa (CI).

Most proposals did not consider the links between Integrated Programs, and there may be opportunities for collaboration and synergy, for example, between plastics and sustainable cities, and food systems and ecosystem restoration.

There may also be opportunities to develop joint KM platforms, where it makes sense to do so, for example, blue and green islands and clean healthy oceans, and the elimination of hazardous chemicals from supply chains and circular solutions to plastics pollution. And more broadly there may other ways to link up Integrated Programs with each other, for example, links between circular solutions for plastics, net zero, nature positive, and cities.

GEF KM strategy

Investment in the Integrated Programs represents about 1/3 of the total GEF-8 portfolio. The selection of lead agencies was in part determined by the ability to create and mobilize knowledge as a key element in securing transformation in global systems. How these KM platforms are developed will therefore have a profound effect on the development of the GEF's new KM&L strategy.

Questions for discussion

- (i) How are knowledge management platforms organized and on what principles?
- (ii) How do knowledge management platforms relate to KM&L more broadly in the GEF portfolio, including to other integrated programs?

Annex: agenda

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Introduction and welcome (10 minutes): Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, GEF CEO - invited

Overview and objectives (10 minutes): Rosina Bierbaum, STAP Chair

World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) (10 minutes):
Nicole Harari, Centre for Development and Environment (CDE) - invited

Moderated discussion including Q&A

3 sessions (food, forests, and cities) of up to 30 minutes each with a short break after the first session:
Facilitator: Blake Ratner, STAP member for International Waters

1: Food

Presentation: Food, Land Use and Restoration (FOLUR) GEF 7 IP, World Bank
Gayatri Kanungo (10 minutes) - invited

Responses invited from:

Resilient Food Systems GEF 6 IAP, IFAD
Good Growth Partnership GEF 6 IAP, UNDP

Discussion, including implications for GEF 8 Food Systems (FAO-IFAD), and Ecosystems Restoration
(Conservation International) Integrated Programs

BREAK

2: Forests

Presentation: Amazon Sustainable Landscapes GEF 6 IAP and GEF 7 IP, World Bank
Ana Maria Gonzalez Velosa (10 minutes) - invited

Responses invited from:

Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes GEF 7 IP, UNEP
Drylands Sustainable Landscapes GEF 6 IAP, FAO

Discussion, including implications for GEF 8 Critical Forest Biomes Integrated Programs
Amazon, World Bank
Congo, UNEP
Indo-Malay, IUCN-FAO
Meso-America, IUCN
West Africa, Conservation International

3: Cities

Presentation: Sustainable Cities GEF 6 IAP, GEF 8 Integrated Program, World Bank
Xueman Wang (10 minutes) – invited

Response invited from:

Urban Shift GEF 7 IP, UNEP

Discussion on cities

Facilitated discussion on the lessons learned and key principles for GEF 8 Integrated Program platforms

Wrap up, next steps, and thank-you.