

Fourth Overall Performance Study (OPS4) of the GEF



1818 H Street, NW
Washington, DC 20433
202-473-4054
www.gefo.org

Terms of Reference for OPS4

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Introduction

1. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is a mechanism for international cooperation to provide new and additional funding to meet the agreed incremental costs of securing global environmental benefits, working in partnership with GEF Implementing Agencies (UNEP, UNDP, and the World Bank), seven Executing Agencies, national governments, and civil society. More information can be found at its website: www.thegef.org.
2. The GEF is replenished by donors every four years. All replenishments have been informed by “overall performance studies”, which have provided an independent assessment of the achievements of the GEF up to the time of the study. The Third Overall Performance Study was presented to the replenishment process in June 2005 and was an official document of the Third Assembly of the GEF in Cape Town, South Africa, in August 2006. The Assembly requested the Council at that occasion to ensure the preparation of a fourth overall performance study of the GEF for submission to the next assembly meeting.¹
3. The GEF Evaluation Office proposed to Council in its Four-Year Rolling Work Plan and Budget for fiscal year 2008 in June 2007 to undertake the Fourth Overall Performance Study (OPS4) as part of its regular work program. Council approved the principle that OPS4 would be managed and implemented by the Evaluation Office, except for study components where this would pose a conflict of interest.²
4. The Work Program contained a plan for OPS4 which included issues that should be evaluated by experts from outside the Evaluation Office, to minimize conflicts of interest. Three areas of work fall in this category: 1) an assessment of stakeholders’ perceptions and opinions; 2) case study evaluations of the governance of the GEF, the Trustee, and the GEF Focal Points; and 3) an assessment of the GEF M&E system. In addition, the Office

¹ Chair’s Summary of the Third GEF Assembly, Cape Town, South Africa, August 29-30, 2006, paragraph 12.

² Joint Summary of the Chairs, GEF Council Meeting, June 12-15, 2007, paragraph 14.

proposed to set up a quality assurance mechanism (through the appointment by Council of quality assurance advisors).

5. The Work Program for fiscal year 2009, presented at the GEF Council meeting in April 2008, contained a more elaborate proposal for OPS4, on the basis of preliminary work done in the previous months. The Office proposed to Council to prepare an approach paper for OPS4, which would be published on its website, and solicit comments and suggestions from stakeholders. On the basis of these, draft terms of reference would be sent to Council, for a round of comments and suggestions. This should then lead to proposed final terms of reference, which would be sent to Council for approval by mail before July 2008. Council decided accordingly.³
6. The Fourth Overall Performance Study will ensure a broad and representative perspective on the achievements and challenges in the Global Environment Facility. An approach paper has been prepared to facilitate a first interaction with stakeholders on the key questions and methodology for OPS4. This paper was published and widely distributed on May 7 2008. Reactions, suggestions and comments were received from 18 parties: 9 from representatives of member countries; 3 from individuals; 3 reactions from within the GEF; 1 from a convention secretariat; 1 from an NGO and 1 from an Evaluation Office of a GEF Agency.
7. These comments and suggestions were taken into account in this first draft of the terms of reference of the Fourth Overall Performance Study, which was presented to Council Members and Alternates on June 17. The evaluation matrix has been expanded to provide information on targets and indicators for the sub-questions of OPS4, where possible, and where these targets and indicators are not yet available, the description how they will be derived in the process of undertaking OPS4. Comments and suggestions were received from five members. They have been incorporated into these final Terms of Reference.
8. These terms of reference indicate a highly ambitious Fourth Overall Performance Study. However, this level of ambition is possible because OPS4 will build on the evaluative evidence that has been gathered throughout the GEF in the past four years. It will provide a synthetic overview of that evidence and aim to fill in gaps to enable evaluative judgments which go beyond the evaluation reports that were presented to the GEF Council in the past three years.
9. Many sub-questions require relatively minor work to allow verification and updating of already existing data and analysis. Secondly, OPS4 aims to make full use of evidence and reports produced by others, where this is justified qualitatively in light of the evidence itself and the way it was gathered. Thirdly,

³ Joint Summary of the Chairs, GEF Council Meeting, April 22-25, 2008, paragraph 37.

the study will follow a phased approach, which will make it possible to start with the most strategic questions and will make it possible to ensure that sufficient time and energy is spent on them, rather than on sub-questions that could potentially be picked up later in the four year rolling work plan of the Evaluation Office in the next four-year period.

The GEF and Overall Performance Studies: A Brief Overview

10. The GEF was originally established in 1991 as a pilot program in the World Bank to assist in the protection of the global environment and to promote environmentally sound and sustainable development. In 1994 the GEF was restructured partly in response to the action plan of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environmental Development. Three entities became GEF Implementing Agencies: the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). In 2002 the second GEF Assembly amended the GEF Instrument, adding two new focal areas (land degradation and persistent organic pollutants) to the four existing ones (biodiversity, climate change, international waters, and ozone layer depletion). Seven other agencies have meanwhile gained direct access to GEF funding: the four regional development banks, as well as the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). Since 1991, the GEF has provided \$7.6 billion in grants for more than 2,000 projects in over 165 countries.
11. The GEF underwent an independent evaluation of its Pilot Phase in 1993. Three Overall Performance Studies of the restructured GEF were completed in 1998, 2002, and 2005. All of these evaluations provided a basis for and supported the decision-making process of the GEF Replenishment and Assembly. The three Overall Performance Studies were prepared by independent teams of evaluators, with substantial support of the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit and later the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Office (now the GEF Evaluation Office).
12. The Second Overall Performance Study concluded that GEF-supported projects had been able to produce significant results that address important global environmental problems. However, whether the results had had an impact on the global environment was difficult to determine. Given GEF's relatively short existence and the limited amount of funds made available, it was unrealistic to expect its results to be able to halt or reverse the deteriorating global environmental trends at the time. What was clear was that the GEF had produced a wide array of important project results – results that could be considered as reliable process indicators towards achieving future positive environmental impact.
13. The Third Overall Performance Study (OPS3) found that the GEF had achieved significant results, particularly at the outcome level, in the focal

areas of biodiversity, climate change, international waters, and ozone depletion, and was well placed to deliver substantial results in the newer focal areas of land degradation and persistent organic pollutants. The OPS3 team experienced difficulties in measuring program impacts and concluded that the GEF system for information management was inadequate. The Study recommended that to measure the results of the GEF, and to evaluate whether the GEF is programming optimally to achieve results, indicators should continue to be developed and refined in all focal areas to allow aggregation of results at the country and program levels. A comprehensive, reliable, and harmonized management information system could allow OPS4 to confidently report on the results of the GEF and the GEF's progress in meeting its operational principles.

14. However, as has been pointed out by this Office before: any impression that the GEF on its own would be able to solve global environmental problems needs to be qualified immediately.⁴ The world community currently spends approximately US\$0.5 billion a year on solving these issues through the GEF. The problems are immense. Any solution would need the strong involvement of many other actors. Greenhouse gas emissions continue to increase. Extinction of animal and plant species continues. Pollution and waste treatment pose enormous challenges. Access to safe water is not ensured and even endangered for many people. Land degradation is a huge problem in many countries across the world. The only global environmental problem that seems almost solved is that of the elimination of ozone depleting substances – but new challenges are appearing on the horizon. For most of these problems, the GEF contribution needs to be seen in its proper perspective: directly ensuring global environmental benefits on a relatively small scale and indirectly aiming to initiate and catalyze actions that would enable a broader impact in the longer run.
15. The Third Overall Performance Study benefited from a high level advisory panel. The panel recommended key questions that would enable the Fourth Overall Performance Study to go beyond summarizing previous findings to a more analytical and evaluative approach. This would allow an assessment of the value added of the GEF at the global level. It would enable a look at which aspects of the GEF partnership have performed well and which have not. To address these issues the panel recommended that OPS4 assess results at the local, regional, and global levels in each of the focal areas and assess the implications of the views among and within GEF's various stakeholder groups. This should allow the Study to evaluate the GEF system as a network. The Fourth Overall Performance Study should also address the substantive and not just the management issues of the GEF by drawing on the current state of scientific literature in often contentious areas such as the

⁴ See the Statement of the Director of Evaluation to the Assembly on August 29, 2006 - www.thegef.org/uploadedFiles/GEFEO%20Director%20Statement-Assembly.pdf (May 5, 2008) and OPS3: Progressing Toward Environmental Results, Executive Version, Foreword.

congruence and competition in the realization of the objectives of biodiversity conservation and poverty alleviation, and country experience and client perspectives in a deeper way.

16. The findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the Fourth Overall Performance Study will be incorporated into the discussions and negotiations of the fifth replenishment of the GEF. The replenishment process is scheduled to begin with a formal meeting in November 2008. Two or three meetings are planned in 2009 with a possibility of one more early 2010. An interim report of the Fourth Overall Performance Study will be presented to the replenishment meeting in the spring of 2009. Based on the interim report the GEF Secretariat will prepare for discussion at the meeting proposed policy recommendations relating to the strategic issues to be addressed by the Council during the GEF-5 period. The final Fourth Overall Performance Study report will be presented in the summer of 2009 and the GEF Secretariat will present revised policy recommendations based on the discussions of the previous meeting.

Emerging Issues and Questions

17. The Evaluation Office started brainstorming on the Fourth Overall Performance Study in January 2008 and circulated a first draft of emerging key questions to its senior advisors in March. A revised version of the emerging key questions was included as an annex in the Four-Year Rolling Work Plan and Budget for fiscal year 2009 that the Evaluation Office presented to the GEF Council on 22 April 28, 2008. Comments and suggestions made during the GEF Council week were taken into account in an approach paper, which was published on May 7, 2008. Suggestions and comments on that approach paper were taken into account in these draft terms of reference.
18. Following the overall objectives of previous overall performance studies and bearing in mind specifically articles 14a and 15 of the Instrument, the overall objective of the Fourth Overall Performance Study will be:

To assess the extent to which the GEF is achieving its objectives and to identify potential improvements

19. OPS4 will be based on the GEF objectives as laid down in the GEF Instrument and in reviews by the Assembly, and as developed and adopted by the GEF Council in operational policies and programs for GEF-financed activities.
20. More than in previous overall performance studies, OPS4 will report on portfolio outcomes, the sustainability and catalytic effect of those outcomes and the impacts that were achieved in its focal areas. There are five clusters of questions on which the study will focus. On many of the questions and sub-

questions in these clusters the GEF Evaluation Office has already reported to the Council on achievements and progress made. OPS4 will build on these reports, identify gaps to be reviewed and integrate findings in an overall achievement report to be presented to the Council and the replenishment process. This report will contain lessons learned and recommendations.

21. The **first cluster** will assess the role and added value of the GEF. This section will aim to assess the relevance of the GEF for the international architecture for tackling global environmental problems, of which the various multilateral environmental agreements are important building blocks. This international architecture is changing, also to address emerging issues and to ensure harmonization of international support. Furthermore, there is growing recognition that sustainable development can only be achieved if dynamic changes in natural resources management are adequately addressed. The GEF is not the only actor and depends on collaboration, often through co-funding, with other partners to achieve its objectives as a financial instrument of several multilateral environmental agreements. The principle of additionality has promoted the partnership mode of the GEF. Furthermore, the Paris and Rome declarations of aid effectiveness and harmonization will be taken into account. The role and added value of the GEF will be looked at from the perspective of its current mandate. This cluster will also be described as the **role cluster**.
22. The first cluster will be based on a desk review of available literature, documents and reports and will not require major investment. The work will be done mostly in-house, but will require peer reviews of the desk review, to ensure quality.
23. The results of the GEF constitute the **second cluster** for assessment. OPS4 will respond to questions regarding the concrete, measurable and verifiable results (outcomes and impacts) of the GEF in its six focal areas, and in multi-focal area efforts and how these achievements relate to the intended results of interventions and to the problems that they were targeted at. Furthermore, the results will be reported on different levels: global, regional, national and local. The balance between local and global benefits will be assessed as well as changes in the behavior of societies which ensure sustainability of benefits. The issue of the sustainability of results will be further explored through an in-depth look at the impacts of the GEF in its focal areas, global, regional, national and local. OPS4 will also relate the achievements to groups of countries, such as Small Island Development States (SIDS) and the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). This cluster will also be described as the **results cluster**.
24. This cluster will build on OPS3 as well as a large number of GEF Evaluation reports, starting with the Program Studies that were undertaken for OPS3, which will provide a basis for an update of the three major focal areas, as well as the Local Benefits Study, the Biosafety Evaluation, Country Portfolio

Evaluations, the Joint Evaluation of the Small Grants Programme, the Annual Report on GEF Impacts, and the evaluative work on the catalytic role of the GEF and capacity building. In addition, two more Country Portfolio Evaluations will be undertaken during OPS3, as well as an impact evaluation of the Ozone focal area. Even though this is already an extensive coverage, major additional work will need to be undertaken: updating the program studies and ensuring coverage of all focal areas, as well as field (verification) work to ensure representativeness of findings.

25. The **third cluster** consists of the relevance of the GEF to the conventions and to recipient countries. First and foremost OPS4 will report to what extent the guidance of the conventions has been followed by the GEF. In international waters, the extent to which the GEF has been able to promote and support international collaboration will be taken as a measure for relevance. Second, the relevance of the GEF for national environmental and sustainable development policies will be assessed. Another question tackled in this cluster is the extent to which the GEF has been able to support national sustainable development policies, and to what extent it has been able to integrate the concern for global environmental benefits into these policies, based on the needs and priorities of the countries concerned. This cluster will also be identified as the **relevance cluster**.
26. Building on OPS3 and the Country Portfolio Evaluations, as well as other evaluation reports such as the Biosafety evaluation, this cluster will require mainly desk reviews of documents and reports, to be enhanced and verified through interviews, country and agency visits as well as stakeholder opinions. Two additional Country Portfolio Evaluations will be undertaken during OPS4.
27. Performance issues affecting results of the GEF will be assessed as the **fourth cluster** to investigate whether the performance is up to the best international standards or whether improvements are needed. OPS4 will look at the governance system of the GEF and assess to what extent it is adequate and manages the GEF well. It will look at the extent to which the policy recommendations of the Fourth Replenishment were implemented. The Mid-Term Review of the Resource Allocation Framework (RAF) will be updated to a final assessment of the extent to which the RAF promotes global environmental benefits. The cost-effectiveness of GEF operations and interventions will be assessed. The roles of the components of the GEF will be looked at in this section. A series of questions will be directed at monitoring and evaluation, science and technology and knowledge sharing: activities that focus on enhancing the quality of interventions through lessons learned and infusion of the highest available technical expertise. OPS4 will assess the extent to which the GEF is a learning organization and achieves levels of best international practice on these issues. This cluster will also be known as the **performance cluster**.

28. This cluster will make extensive use of existing evaluation reports, most prominently the Annual Performance Reports, and the mid-term review of the Resource Allocation Framework, as well as the Joint Evaluation of the GEF Activity Cycle and Modalities. OPS3, The Joint Evaluation of the Small Grants Programme and the Country Portfolio Evaluations also provide important evidence that will be incorporated in this cluster. The on-going work for the Annual Performance Report will be integrated into OPS4, as will the mid-term review of the RAF. As a result, the additional work needed, including further analysis of Terminal Evaluations, field and country and agency visits, as well as stakeholder perceptions, can be kept within reasonable bounds.
29. Resource mobilization and financial management on the level of the Facility itself is the **fifth cluster** that OPS4 will tackle. A series of questions will assess the replenishment process and financing of the GEF throughout its history, and the management of the GEF Trust Fund. Furthermore, the GEF's fiduciary standards, accountability and transparency on general financial issues will be reported on. This cluster will build on OPS3 and identify additional work that would need to be done, mainly through data and portfolio analysis, desk reviews and expert involvement in analysis and reporting. This cluster will also be described as the **resource cluster**.
30. These five clusters of questions have led to a first identification of key and sub-questions to which OPS4 will need to provide an answer, or for which it will need to identify what needs to be done to ensure that answers will be provided in future evaluations of the GEF Evaluation Office, or the Fifth Overall Performance Study.

Key Questions

31. This chapter presents the key questions in five clusters. Many of these questions require several sub-questions to allow for an informed answer in OPS4. The sub-questions have been incorporated in the first version of the evaluation matrix, which has been included as annex to these terms of reference – as a “work in progress”.

First Cluster: Role and Added Value of the GEF

1. What is the role and added value of the GEF in tackling the major global environmental and sustainable development problems?

This key question will establish the context and international framework in which the GEF operates. It will look at the current understanding of global environmental problems, their dynamic and trends, what is known about their causes and how they could be addressed, as well as at the role of the multilateral environmental agreements and the GEF in addressing these issues. The general assessment of OPS4 on the GEF's achievements will then be matched to the international framework to conclude on the added value of the GEF's support vis-à-vis that of other

actors and its resulting role in tackling global environmental and sustainable development problems.

Second Cluster: Results of the GEF

2. Which concrete, measurable and verifiable results have been achieved by the GEF in the six focal areas and in multi-focal area activities?

This assessment will provide an overview of results in regular and multi-focal area activities per focal area – biodiversity, climate change, international waters, ozone depletion, persistent organic pollutants and land degradation – and provide lessons learned on each of the strategic objectives within the focal areas, where applicable. It will also report on the geographical distribution of these achievements.

3. Which concrete, measurable and verifiable results have been achieved by the GEF in supporting national and local priorities for sustainable development?

OPS4 will assess the extent to which the GEF has enabled recipient countries to meet their obligations under the conventions, as well as build up the national and local capacity to do so, and the extent to which this has led increased global environmental benefits. The role of technology transfer in the latter will be looked at as well, and finally the distribution of these achievements over groups of countries, such as SIDS and LDCs, will be reported on, as well as the distribution over geographical regions.

4. To what extent has the GEF achieved sustainable impact on global environmental problems?

This question will build on the work done for the Annual Report on Impacts. Additional assessment will take place on theories of change and assumptions on why interventions will achieve impact. This links into an assessment of sustainability of the achievement of global environmental benefits.

Third Cluster: Relevance of the GEF

5. To what extent has the GEF followed the guidance of the conventions for which it is a financial instrument?

OPS4 will relate the guidance of the conventions to the GEF strategies, modalities and operations, as well as its achievements as assessed in previous questions. This will enable a judgment on whether the GEF has been following the guidance.

6. To what extent has the GEF been able to promote international cooperation in environmental areas that have not previously been covered by agreements?

OPS4 will provide an assessment of the GEF's support to countries to enter into and implement transboundary agreements on international waters.

7. To what extent has the GEF been able to provide feedback to the conventions on their guidance, the implementation of that guidance and the results achieved, including on multifocal area issues?

OPS4 will assess the communication between the GEF and the conventions on the feedback that the GEF has given to the conventions on its results, experiences and lessons learned, as well as on multifocal area issues and activities, and whether that feedback has been helpful to the conventions in improving their guidance and to promote synergy and minimize conflict between the conventions.

8. To what extent has the GEF been relevant to national policies on environment and sustainable development?

This question aims to address the issue of how GEF support has contributed to countries' sustainable development agenda and environmental priorities, and whether it was possible to integrate global environmental issues into the poverty and/or development agenda of the recipient countries, including the question of trade-offs. Whether the portfolio was owned by the country will be addressed here as well.

Fourth Cluster: Performance Issues Affecting Results of the GEF

9. Is the governance system of the GEF adequate and up to international standards?

This question will build on OPS3 and look at the role and effectiveness of the Council, and the extent to which the GEF has a transparent system of governance. This system will be compared to governance in the United Nations, the International Financial Institutions and similar Global Programs and Funds. The responsiveness of the Council to guidance of the conventions and also to the needs of the recipient countries will be assessed, as well as the way the Council has kept track of the adoption of its decisions.

10. To what extent has the RAF succeeded in allocating funding to ensure a maximization of global environmental benefits?

The mid-term review of the Resource Allocation Framework will have been presented to Council in November 2008. The terms of reference of the

mid-term review contain the questions that will be addressed and the findings will be incorporated into OPS4. In the remaining months to conclude OPS4 these findings will be updated with the latest information and data on approval and new evidence that can be gathered and analyzed.

11. To what extent has the GEF been efficient and cost-effective in achieving results in each focal area?

OPS4 will assess the extent to which the GEF has been efficient in terms of funding, human resources and time spent. As far as possible these costs will be compared to similar activities of other agencies, leading to an assessment of the cost-effectiveness of GEF interventions. The possibility will be explored to report per focal area on geographical distribution and distribution per groups of countries, as well as per GEF agency and modality, which will be related to the comparative advantage of these agencies to address specific issues within the GEF. Furthermore, issues like the reform of the project cycle, as well as co-funding will be raised here, as they have an impact on the cost-effectiveness of GEF investments.

12. To what extent are the GEF's composition, structure and division of roles and responsibilities meeting its mandate, operations and partnerships?

Building on OPS3, this question will address the networking and partnership aspects of the GEF – is the current organizational model the best possible for the GEF? What are its associated costs and to what extent is it functional and efficient? The role and tasks of all components of the GEF will be assessed here, as well as the performance and comparative advantage of GEF Agencies.

13. Are the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy and its implementation up to international standards?

OPS4 will assess whether the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy is up to international standards and the extent to which its implementation has been successful. The evaluation part of it, especially the role and performance of the GEF Evaluation Office, will be independently assessed by a Professional Peer Review panel, composed of internationally recognized panel members who will follow a framework for the review which has been adopted in the three professional evaluation communities (OECD/DAC Evaluation Network, UN Evaluation Group and Evaluation Cooperation Group of the International Financial Institutions). The monitoring issues and the quality of evaluation in the agencies will follow up on work of the Annual Performance Report.

14. How successful has the GEF been as a learning organization, including state of the art science and technology?

Knowledge sharing and feedback mechanisms will be reviewed to see to what extent the GEF is a learning organization which ensures that its future builds on past experiences. Special attention will be paid to how the GEF has learned from best practices, including science and technology, as well as the role of STAP in improving the GEF's strategies and interventions.

Fifth Cluster: Resource Mobilization and Financial Management

15. How effective has the GEF been in mobilizing resources for tackling global environmental and sustainable development problems?

OPS4 will assess the efforts to communicate the GEF's procedures, strategies and successes. A historical perspective on the replenishment process and how it has mobilized resources for global environmental issues will lead to an assessment to what extent these resources have enabled the GEF to meet the guidance of the conventions and tackle global environmental problems. GEF funding will be compared to replenishments and funding of other international organizations, global programs and funds. The additionality of funding will also be reviewed.

16. How have human, financial and administrative resources been managed throughout the GEF?

OPS4 will assess the role and functioning of the GEF Trustee, as well as the fiduciary standards of the GEF, and how human and administrative resources are managed to ensure the best support to the GEF's interventions.

Scope and Methodology

32. The **scope** of OPS4 will be defined per cluster and key question, ranging from the full history of the GEF to a snapshot of the situation at a certain moment in time, from a few representative interventions to the full portfolio of the GEF. Different questions ask for a different scope. In each case the specific approach will be based on scope and methodology as has been developed in evaluations of the GEF Evaluation Office, such as the Country Portfolio Evaluations, the Annual Performance Report and the Annual Report on GEF Impacts.
33. The first cluster will focus on the international situation as it will be developing in the coming 12 months. The second cluster will report on results and achievements as they can be reported now, but will look at the full portfolio of the GEF, especially when considering impact questions. It will build on the

scope and methodology of OPS3, the Program Studies, other GEF Evaluation Report where appropriate, and the Annual Report on GEF Impacts.

34. The third cluster focuses on recent years, but will take the history of developments in the conventions, the member countries of the GEF and the GEF itself into account, in order to ensure that judgments on relevance are not ahistorical. It will follow scope and methodology as has been developed in the Program Studies and OPS3 (as regards convention guidance) and the Country Portfolio Evaluations (as regards the relevance for national priorities). The fourth cluster will build on the scope and methodology developed for the Annual Performance Report. The last cluster will have different scopes: a historical perspective for the first key question and a focus on the current situation for the second key question.
35. **Methodology development.** In collecting and analyzing data and drawing conclusions and recommendations OPS4 will be based on a wide variety of sources of information, methods of analyzing them and appropriate meta-evaluation techniques to ensure that OPS4 will be a valid, credible and legitimate report. The Evaluation Office will follow a “mixed methods” and “theory based” approach to ensure that questions are properly understood and presented, underlying assumptions have been analyzed and the resulting data gathering and analysis deliver aggregate and synthetic qualitative and quantitative judgments on the basis of diverse material, from desk studies, interviews, surveys, portfolio analysis, field visits and verification to stakeholder consultations. For this purpose, qualitative material will be further analyzed through specialized software.⁵
36. Specific frameworks for analysis for the clusters, key-questions and sub-questions will be prepared, on the basis of current state of the art insights in natural resources management, ecosystems services and the linkages between the environment and social and economic development. Where needed special methodology to gather and analyze data will be developed and adopted.
37. **Gender aspects** will be taken into account where appropriate and relevant. This will especially be the case when developing methodology for the country, agency and field visits and the stakeholder consultations, but gender aspects may be incorporated elsewhere as well.
38. Special attention will be paid to the identification of **targets and indicators**. Per cluster and per key question targets and indicators will be derived from the GEF-4 replenishment agreement, GEF strategies as approved by Council, and monitoring data. Where targets and indicators do not exist, they will be derived from existing literature, relevant GEF documents, and international best practice or from analysis of program and project documents. The further

⁵ Using Atlas-ti – see www.atlasti.de.

development of the evaluation matrix of OPS4 will incorporate the identified targets and indicators.

39. The **terminology** to be used in OPS4 will be defined in a consistent manner and relate to international usage of the terms concerned.
40. Several key questions will be underpinned through **literature reviews**. For the first cluster, a study will be undertaken of existing documents on global environmental issues. Major publications will include those of the conventions, IPCC, GEO, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, OECD Environmental Outlook, International NGOs, as well as relevant research reports. This will provide a background against which the specific achievements and challenges of the GEF can be placed.
41. **Document reviews** will be undertaken for several key questions, focusing on documents of the GEF and its activities, as well as from related institutions, as well as Terminal Evaluations and their reviews. Protocols will be developed or existing protocols, such as the terminal evaluation review guidelines, will be used. Evaluations of the GEF Evaluation Office and independent evaluation offices of the GEF agencies will be considered essential sources of information.
42. **Portfolio analyses**. The database developed for the Joint-Evaluation of the GEF Activity Cycle and Modalities and updated for the Mid-Term Review of the Resource Allocation Framework, will be used to incorporate the additional data needed to assess the GEF's portfolio in all its aspects. Special attention will be paid on how data can be aggregated over countries.
43. **Stakeholder Consultations**. An independent stakeholder consultation process will be outsourced to a qualified consultancy firm to ensure that stakeholder opinions will be gathered on all aspects of the GEF, ensuring that this will reach out also to civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, as far as possible. The tender process will involve appropriate expertise to judge the suitability of offers. Special care will be taken that the qualitative data analysis will be undertaken with the same methodology as used for other qualitative data in OPS4, so that the results of the Stakeholder Survey can be integrated in OPS4 with the same level of validity.
44. **Semi-structured interviews**. These will be undertaken on specific questions with specific stakeholders, mainly the GEF agencies and the governments of recipient countries. Again, special care will be taken that the qualitative data will be analyzed using proper analytical tools and techniques (see the introductory paragraph to this section).
45. **Country and agency visits**. These will collect data, information and opinions (through interviews and/or focus groups) on the GEF from country recipient

governments, focal points and project stakeholders and beneficiaries, as well as from GEF agency representatives. Visits to GEF interventions will serve to gather data, verify available reports and documents, and interview beneficiaries and local stakeholders, including local government, communities and representatives from civil society.

46. **Field visits** to GEF interventions will be undertaken to record or verify results and achievements. The results cluster will develop a framework and protocols for field visits to ensure that visits will be representative for the focal areas, as well as for geographic regions and groups of recipient countries.
47. **Participation in international meetings.** Where possible, the OPS4 team will request feedback on the GEF from participants present at international meetings, either through the stakeholder consultation process, semi-structured interviews or focus group meetings.
48. **Peer Review.** An independent professional peer review will take place on the implementation of the GEF Monitoring & Evaluation Policy. The peer review panel concerned will publish an independent assessment, of which the conclusions will be included in OPS4. The peer review panel will operate under its own terms of reference and any issues that they will not address, for example on monitoring, will be outsourced as a study component which will be integrated into OPS4.
49. **The Delphi approach and expert panels.** These may be used where an independent and objective assessment is needed on the comparison of GEF issues to best international standards. Any assessments done on this basis will be published as case study for OPS4 and the results will be integrated into OPS4.
50. **Case studies and study components.** Where necessary, independent and high-level experts will be hired to undertake studies of specialized subjects for which the expertise is not available in the GEF Evaluation Office. Where appropriate, such studies will be published as evaluation documents for OPS4 and the results will be integrated into OPS4.
51. **Comparison studies.** Where needed, comparisons will be made with other organizations of a similar nature, or with similar mandates and tasks. These comparisons can be done on legitimate grounds between the GEF portfolios of the GEF agencies and their other environmental portfolios (if existent) and between the GEF and international organizations and global initiatives of similar size and similar modes of operation. In each case, full justification of the comparison will be provided as well as the limitations of the nature and validity of the comparisons.

Process and Timetable

52. The key stages of the Fourth Overall Performance Study are outline in the table below.

Evaluation Process	Proposed timeframe
1. Preparatory work	January – May 2008
2. Approach Paper written and circulated for discussion. Comments incorporated in draft Terms of Reference	April – June 2008
3. Draft Terms of Reference circulated for discussion	June 2008
4. Final Terms of Reference circulated to GEF Council for approval	July 2008
5. OPS4 implementation	August 2008 – June 2009
6. Interim report submitted to replenishment meeting	April 2009
7. Progress on OPS4 reported to Council	June 2009
8. Final OPS4 report submitted to replenishment meeting	August 2009
9. Publication and dissemination	November 2009 – January 2010

Implementation of the Study

53. **Overall responsibility** for the implementation of OPS4 will rest with the Director, supported by a small team coordinating the preparation and implementation, thus ensuring a strong collaboration and interaction with other on-going work (RAF mid-term Review, Country Portfolio Evaluations, Impact evaluations, and the Annual Performance Report). For each cluster of key questions a task leader will be identified in the GEF Evaluation Office amongst the senior evaluators.

54. Furthermore, a **focal area perspective** will be required when developing specific methods, analytical frameworks and protocols, especially in the results and the relevance clusters. To ensure the quality of the work, high level evaluation experts will be hired as advisors for each focal area. Although the results and relevance clusters will incorporate a focal area perspective throughout OPS4, the implementation of the other clusters will incorporate focal area specific data as well, to ensure that if and when relevant, this can be reported on.

55. The basic evaluative work that needs to be done to answer questions can be grouped into several **support sections** within the GEF Evaluation Office to ensure that the work is done with consistent quality throughout OPS4. Evaluation officers will bear coordinating responsibility for the supportive work.

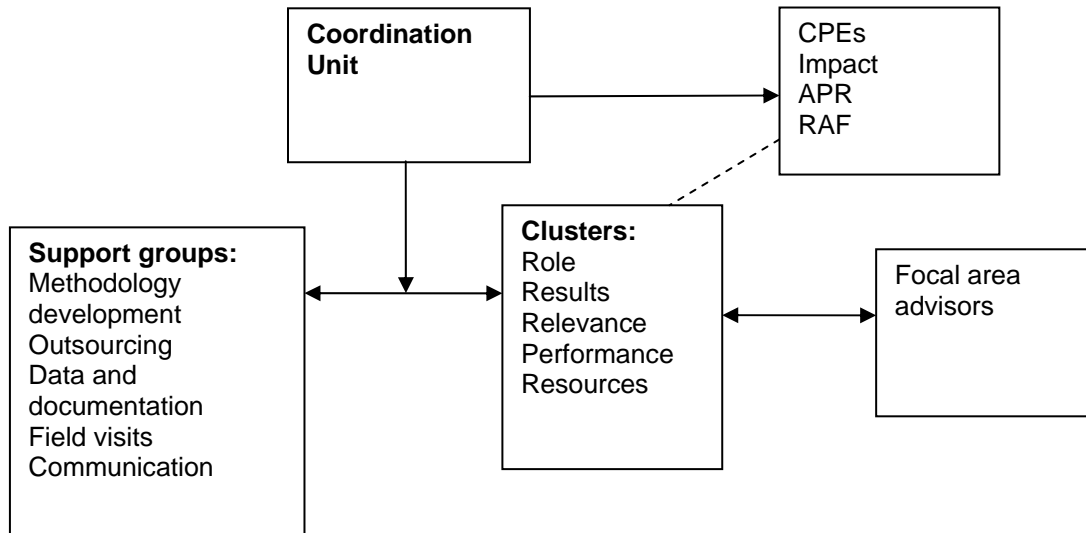
56. In the preparatory phase and during the first phase of implementation, **methodology development** will take place to ensure that all clusters, key

and sub-questions have analytical frameworks that will guide data gathering and analysis. The initial evaluation matrix will provide guidance to the development of appropriate methodology and will be completed at the end of development. This work will be done mainly by the senior evaluators of the office with support from external evaluation advisors.

57. A team within the office, led by the Evaluations Operations Officer, will be responsible for the process of **outsourcing** supporting component studies, as well as the stakeholder consultations. The tender rules and procedures of the World Bank will be followed, and the ethics guidelines of the GEF Evaluation Office on conflicts of interest will be applied. This team will also support the stakeholder consultation process logistically and administratively where needed. This will be done in collaboration with the Country Support Programme of the GEF, to ensure that opportunities for consultations with stakeholders at sub-regional workshops will be captured as far as possible.
58. A more continuous effort will be to gather, classify, catalogue and review **portfolio data and documents**. Two databases will be built: one for data and one for documents. A team of evaluation officers and assistants will be assembled to support the clusters to review the large amount of data and documents in a consistent manner. Databases of the office currently in use for the Mid-Term Review of the RAF and the Annual Performance Report will be extended to incorporate data for OPS4. The experience gained with the terminal evaluation reviews for various evaluation reports (most prominently the Annual Performance Report) will be used to guide the documentation reviews.
59. After sufficient methodology development and a first desk review of the available documentation, **country, agency and field** visits will take place, with an emphasis on the data that need to be gathered for the results cluster, but with sufficient attention for the other clusters as well. A team will be set up within the office to ensure that the visits are coordinated and administratively and logistically supported. Country and field visits will be undertaken as much as possible with strong involvement of independent local evaluators.
60. To ensure a **representative sample** of (groups of) countries, interventions, geographical regions, and focal areas, a minimum of 10 countries will be visited during the implementation of OPS4. This number comes on top of the countries that will be visited for other evaluation efforts of the office (Country Portfolio Evaluations, Impact evaluations, Annual Performance Report and the Mid-Term Review of the RAF). Overall, evaluative evidence from more than 35 countries will be included in OPS4.
61. The final phase of **analysis and writing** of the report will be taken up within the cluster teams, with appropriate involvement of focal area advisors.

62. A **communication** team will provide editing support and ensure that the OPS4 team will be able to interact with its partners throughout the GEF and outside of the GEF in a consistent and transparent manner. This team will develop timely plans for the presentation and the publication of the report and ensure that it will be translated in the official languages of the GEF.

63. The internal organization within the GEF Evaluation Office to implement OPS4 is shown in the following organization chart:



64. The time line for the preparatory phase of OPS4 is represented in the following chart:

Preparation of OPS4	Jan-08	Mar-08	May-08	Jun-08	Jul-08
Development of key questions					
Approach paper					
Draft TOR					
Final TOR					

65. The tentative time line for the implementation of the OPS4 in the second half of 2008 will be as follows:

2 nd half of 2008	Aug-08	Sep-08	Oct-08	Nov-08	Dec-08
Methodology development					
Outsourcing					
Stakeholder consultations					
Peer review of evaluation function					
Component studies					
Database					
Documentation review					
Country, agency & field visits					

66. The implementation of OPS4 in 2009 up to the interim report to be presented in April will be planned as follows:

Interim report of OPS4	Jan-09	Feb-09	Mar-09
Outsourcing			
Stakeholder consultations			
Peer review of evaluation function			
Database			
Documentation review			
Country, agency & field visits			
Analysis			
Interim report			
Editing & communication			

67. The final phase of OPS4 could take place as scheduled below:

Final reporting and follow-up	Apr-09	May-09	Jun-09	Jul-09	Aug-09	Sep-09
Database						
Documentation review						
Country, agency & field visits						
Analysis						
Writing of final report						
Editing & communication						
Follow-up						To 2010

Budget

68. The table below presents the budget for OPS4 according to the estimated cost per cluster and other activities to be undertaken, distributed over four fiscal years. OPS4 will cost about \$1.6 million. This does not include the cost of GEFEO staff that will be working on OPS4 and other tasks that the Office will do during this period. This is somewhat higher than estimated by the Office in 2007, but still substantially lower than the cost of OPS3.

69. The higher costs in fiscal year 2009 are caused by the concentration of activities in fiscal year 2009, which was not foreseen in the original work plan of the Office. This implies that the resources requested for FY09 are about \$340,000 higher than estimated in the budget prepared by the Office and presented to Council in April 2008. This can be accommodated in the overall budget of the Office if the remaining funds of the budget for fiscal year 2008 are transferred to fiscal year 2009. In order to undertake all necessary activities for OPS4 in fiscal year 2009, Council will be asked to approve moving the balance of funds of fiscal year 2008 to fiscal year 2009.

Cost to implement OPS4: Consultants, travel, and inputs by GEFEO staff (number of days)

Clusters	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	Total	GEF EO staff inputs (# of days)
Role	-	\$79,313	\$11,897	-	\$91,210	65
Results	-	\$278,550	\$41,783	-	\$320,333	400
Relevance	-	\$117,563	\$17,634	-	\$135,197	160
Performance	-	\$104,063	\$15,609	-	\$119,672	160
Resources	-	\$42,165	\$16,866	-	\$59,031	110
Other Tasks and Activities						
Stakeholder Consultation	-	\$413,000	-	-	\$413,000	150
Panel of experts	-	\$31,500	\$26,000	-	\$57,500	50
Publishing	-	\$80,000	\$100,000	-	\$180,000	82
Documentation review	-	33,000			\$33,000	
Coordination	\$28,600	\$56,014	\$29,407	-	\$114,021	430
Follow up	-	-	\$50,000		\$70,000	0
Total	\$28,600	\$1,235,168	\$309,196		\$1,592,964	