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**REPORT ON ASSESSMENT OF SECOND CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF
INTERESTS (EOIs) FROM COUNTRIES TO PARTICIPATE
IN THE INTEGRATED PROGRAMS**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Acronyms.....	ii
A. Introduction	1
B. Preparations for the EOI Process	2
C. Trends in the EOI Submissions.....	4
D. Review and Assessment of EOIs.....	9
E. Results of the EOI Assessment Process.....	10
F. Next Steps	13
Annex 1. Notification sent to OFPs and GEF Agencies on Timeline Rolling Out IPs	15
Annex 2. Call Issued to OFPs and Agencies for EOIs in the GEF-8 Integrated Programs	17
Annex 3. List of EOI Assessment Committee Members and Meeting Details	20
Annex 4. Generic EOI Template for GEF-8 Integrated Programs.....	21
Annex 5. Full List of Country Submission and Selection Result	24
Annex 6. List of All Countries Selected in the Assessment	25

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADB: Asian Development Bank

AfDB: African Development Bank

AFR: Africa

AIS: Atlantic, Indian Ocean, and South China Seas

BOAD: West African Development Bank

CAF: Development Bank of Latin America

CFB: Critical Forest Biomes

CHO: Clean and Healthy Ocean

CI: Conservation International

DBSA: Development Bank of Southern Africa

EBRD: European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

ECA: Europe and Central Asia

EOI: Expression of Interest

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FECO: Foreign Economic Cooperation Office, Ministry of Environmental Protection of China

FS: Food Systems

FUNBIO: Brazilian Biodiversity Fund

GRID: Greening Transportation Infrastructure Development

IADB: Inter-American Development Bank

IFAD: International Fund for Agricultural Development

IP: Integrated Program

IUCN: International Union for Conservation of Nature

LAC: Latin America and the Caribbean

LDCs: Least Developed Countries

MDB: Multilateral Development Bank

OFP: Operational Focal Point

PFD: Program Framework Document

SC: Sustainable Cities

SIDS: Small Island Developing States

STAP: GEF's Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel

STAR: System for Transparent Allocation of Resources

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNEP: United Nations Environment Programme

UNIDO: United Nations Industrial Development Organization

WB: World Bank

WWF-US: World Wildlife Fund

A. INTRODUCTION

1. The GEF Secretariat initially conducted an Expression of Interest in January 2023 for 10 of the 11 Integrated Programs¹ (IPs) in the [GEF-8 Programming Directions](#). A detailed report of the process and outcomes was presented to Council in the document *GEF/C.64/Inf.11*.² Six (6) of the IPs were sufficiently subscribed to be included for Council approval in the June 2023 Work Program. They include the *Blue and Green Islands, Circular Solutions to Plastic Pollution, Ecosystems Restoration, Elimination of Hazardous Chemicals from Supply Chains, Net-Zero Nature-Positive Accelerator, and Amazon, Congo, and Critical Forest Biomes*.

2. This report describes the process and outcomes of a second call for country EOIs. The call involved the *Clean and Healthy Ocean IP*³ that was excluded from the first call, and the following four IPs that were not fully subscribed during the first call: *Amazon, Congo and Critical Forest Biomes, Food Systems, Greening Transportation Infrastructure Development, and Sustainable Cities*. The second call was also based on a *Guidance Note*⁴ for countries and GEF Agencies, the purpose of which was to provide information on how the IPs will be operationalized to maximize their potential for achieving the outcomes established in the GEF-8 Programming Directions.

3. For the programming of the remaining resources in the IP envelope, the GEF Secretariat notified countries and agencies on July 10, 2023, of the timeline and process for a second call for EOIs (see Annex 1). This notice outlined the steps for programming of the 5 IPs included in the second round, from submission of the expressions of interest (EOIs) by countries to preparations for the February 2024 Work Program. This report outlines trends in the interest expressed by countries, the review and assessment of EOIs, and the final list of selected country cohorts to be included in Program Framework Documents (PFDs) under each IP. The PFDs were then prepared by lead agencies of each IP and submitted to the GEF Secretariat for consideration and inclusion in upcoming Council Work Programs.

¹ The 11 IPs are: 1) Food Systems, 2) Ecosystem Restoration, 3) Sustainable Cities, 4) Amazon, Congo, and Critical Forest Biomes, 5) Circular Solutions to Plastic Pollution, 6) Blue and Green Islands, 7) Clean and Healthy Ocean, 8) Greening Transportation Infrastructure Development, 9) Net-Zero Nature-positive Accelerator, 10) Wildlife Conservation for Development, and 11) Elimination of Hazardous Chemicals from Supply Chains.

Note: Due to delay in selection of Lead Agency, the Clean and Healthy Ocean IP was not included in the initial call for EOIs.

² GEF/C.64/Inf.11, Report on Assessment of Expressions of Interests (EOIs) from Countries to Participate in the Integrated Programs, https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/2023-05/EN_GEF.C.64.Inf_11_Report_Assessment_Expression_Interests_Countries_Integrated_Programs.pdf

³ During the June 2023 Council Meeting, the Lead Agency for Clean and Healthy Ocean IP was approved, following a call for proposal that was issued to all 18 GEF Agencies on 13 April 2023. This meant that the Ocean IP could now be included in the next call for country EOIs.

⁴ GEF/C.62/Inf.13, Guidance Note for Countries and GEF Agencies on participation in the GEF-8 Integrated Programs; <https://www.thegef.org/council-meeting-documents/gef-c-62-inf-13>

B. PREPARATIONS FOR THE EOI PROCESS

4. To ensure that each IP achieves a robust programming towards impactful outcomes and results, the guidance note issued in June 2022 included IP-specific criteria to help countries target those IPs that offered them the best possible opportunities for supporting a green and blue recovery. This included details on objectives, priorities, and requirements for each IP, which countries can use to assess their interest and eligibility to participate. Given the linkages between the programs, countries were also encouraged to consider IPs with criteria that offer the best possible opportunity for harnessing national-level policy options toward impactful environmental outcomes. This may include, for example, alignment with large-scale development initiatives as baseline for co-financing, approach to achieving policy coherence, and existing or planned institutional frameworks or policies to scale-up financing for global environmental benefits.

5. In addition to the criteria specific to each IP, countries were also expected to demonstrate alignment and consistency with the following GEF priorities:

- *Delivery against core indicator targets* – Focus will be given to countries and their respective projects that offer demonstrable evidence of their potential to deliver significant contribution to the GEF-8 core indicator targets through IPs. The GEF-8 Results Framework and proposed targets will serve as the basis for assessing potential contributions by country.
- *Leverage potential* – The updated GEF-7 Policy on Co-financing emphasizes the need for countries to mobilize significant co-financing, including leveraged investments. The IPs are expected to play an important role in achieving portfolio level co-financing targets.
- *Private sector engagement* – The GEF-7 Programming Directions include an emphasis on engagement with the private sector. Countries will need to demonstrate commitment to engaging the private sector through, (i) the potential to influence businesses toward sustainable practices and options that generate multiple environmental benefits, and (ii) the potential to catalyze investment opportunities that can scale-up innovative technologies for global environmental benefits.
- *Gender integration* – In accordance with the goals and principles as set out in the GEF's Policy on Gender Equality, all GEF investments are required to address gender equality as a priority. The GEF Gender Implementation Strategy outlines strategic entry points for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of the GEF-8 programming.

Briefings for Countries and Agencies

6. In preparation for the second call for EOIs, and building on the earlier regional workshops and national dialogues, two Virtual IP Briefings were organized to inform countries about the status of the IP programming and provide specific details on the five IPs that were included in the second call for country EOIs. These virtual briefings were open to all OFPs and GEF agencies and scheduled to allow for participation from all regions and time zones. In addition to the virtual briefings, several national dialogues and constituency meetings also provided opportunities for countries to discuss their priorities and participation in the GEF-8 IPs included in the second round (See Table 1 below).

Table 1. Summary of Meetings in Preparation for the Second Round of Country EOIs

Date	Meeting	Country	Venue
3/16-17/2023	National Dialogue	Mozambique	Maputo
3/20-24/2023	Southern Africa Extended Constituency Workshop	Angola, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe	Maputo
4/11-14/2023	National Dialogue	Nicaragua	Managua
4/13-14/2023	National Dialogue	Togo	Lomé
4/17-18/2023	National Dialogue	Benin	Cotonou
4/19-20/2023	National Dialogue	Cook Islands	Rarotonga
5/8-9/2023	National Dialogue	Malaysia	Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya
5/16-17/2023	National Dialogue	Maldives	Male
5/18-19/2023	Switzerland-Central Asia Constituency Meeting	Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan	Dushanbe
6/14-15/2023	South Asia Constituency Meeting	Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Maldives, Sri Lanka	New Delhi
7/6-7/2023	National Dialogue	Honduras	Tegucigalpa
8/15/2023	IP 2 nd round briefing, session 1	Open to all countries	Virtual
8/16/2023	IP 2 nd round briefing, session 2	Open to all countries	Virtual

7. These Virtual IP Briefings, Extended Constituency Workshops and National Dialogues supported countries to be better positioned to identify and prioritize the IP(s) for which they are best placed to demonstrate efficient use of their remaining STAR, maximize potential for generating global environmental benefits, and contribute significantly to the program level goals of each IP. As evident from Table 1, LDCs and SIDS were given particular attention to ensure that they are prepared to fully explore suitability of the IPs for their national interest, and in some cases, sub-regional or transboundary engagement. Countries that did not participate in the first round were also better prepared to respond to the second call when launched by the GEF Secretariat.

Second Call for EOIs

8. On July 24, 2023, the GEF Secretariat launched the second Call for EOIs. This call prioritized the IPs that were not considered in the first round: *Clean and Healthy Ocean*, and *Greening Transportation Infrastructure Development*. In addition, countries were given the possibility to express interest in the following IPs with resources left to program: *Amazon, Congo, and Critical Forest Biomes*, specifically the Indo-Malay and Guinean Forests Biomes; *Food Systems*; and *Sustainable Cities*. The deadline was established for September 8, 2023 (see Annex 2), meaning that countries were given six weeks to decide on their priority IPs for which to complete and submit an EOI.

9. The second call for EOIs followed the same steps as the first call, building on the successful procedure with a high rate of applications in the first call and meaning that countries were already familiar with the process. As in the first round, countries interested in participating in any IP were required to complete a standard EOI template. The templates were posted on the GEF website for each of the IPs included in the call and accompanied by a memo with instructions for their completion and submission.⁵ Countries were allowed to submit EOIs for the IPs they deem as appropriate to their national interest. However, only one EOI per IP was allowed for any country.

10. Countries were also required to select and designate a GEF Agency who will help prepare and submit the EOI, and subsequently be responsible for designing the child project if the country was selected for an IP. The process for preparing the EOI was therefore a timely opportunity for countries to engage with the GEF agency, and to ensure that agency was well-placed to provide technical support and address any concerns from countries related to GEF requirements for the IPs. To ensure full ownership of the process, all completed EOIs were required to be signed by the Operational Focal Point (OFP) or designated government representative or accompanied by a signed official letter from the OFP.

C. TRENDS IN THE EOI SUBMISSIONS

11. In this second round, 44 EOIs were submitted by 37 (25.69%) of the GEF eligible recipient countries. The Clean and Healthy Ocean IP, for which this EOI call was the first, had the most submissions (18). This was followed by Food Systems (10), Sustainable Cities (7), Greening Transportation Infrastructure Development (6), and the Amazon, Congo, and Critical Forest Biomes (3).

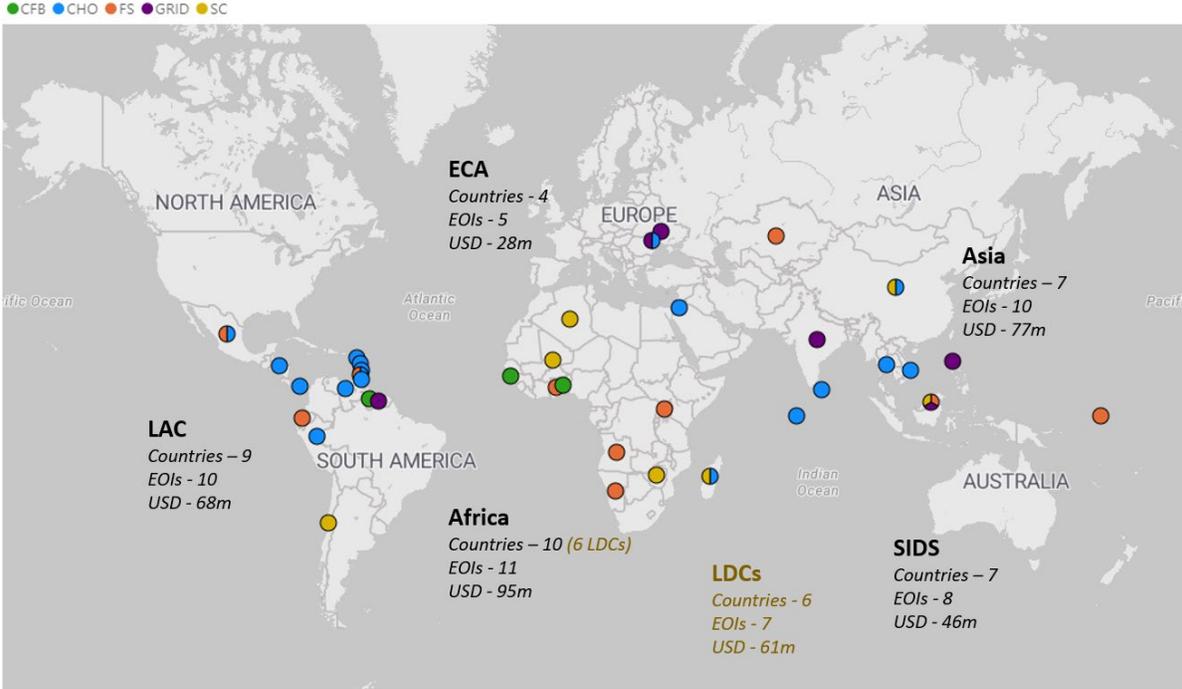
Distribution of EOIs Submitted by Countries

12. Regionally, Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) had highest participation rate of 45.00% followed by Asia (41.18%), SIDS (20.59%), Africa (20.41%), and ECA (16.67%). Out of the countries

⁵ Expression of Interest Templates for GEF-8 Integrated Programs, <https://www.thegef.org/documents/expression-interest-templates-gef-8-integrated-programs>

defined as LDCs, 6 (13.04%) of 46 countries participated in the EOI submission process (Figure 1). This lower submission rate for LDCs as a group was because majority of the countries were successful in the first round of EOI submissions.

Figure 1. Global Distribution of EOIs Submitted by Countries

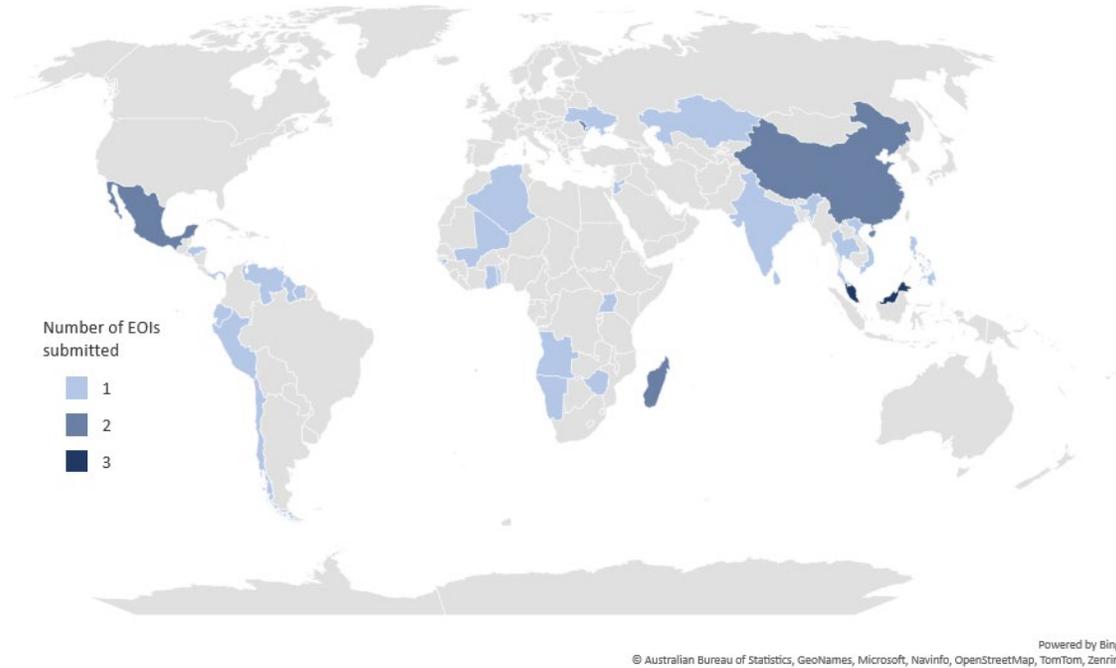


13. A majority, 31 out of 37 of the countries (83.78%), submitted only one EOI in this round (See Figure 2, and Annex 5 for the full list of countries). A smaller group of countries submitted EOIs for two or more IPs as follows:

- Two EOIs – Mexico, Moldova, Madagascar, Grenada, and China;
- Three EOIs – Malaysia.

14. Eleven (11) out of 37 countries were submitting an EOI for the first time (Algeria, Dominica, Grenada, Guinea-Bissau, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Nauru, St Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and Grenadines, Togo, Ukraine, and Zimbabwe), and three countries (Ghana, Moldova, and Namibia) were resubmitting EOIs after being unsuccessful in the first round. Most of the countries (23 countries, 63%) submitting EOIs were successful for one or more IPs in the first round.

Figure 2. Map Showing the Number of EOIs Submitted per Country



Distribution of EOIs Submitted by Agencies

15. Twelve (66.67%) of the 18 GEF agencies were involved in the EOI submissions in the second round (Table 2). Six agencies (AfDB, BOAD, CAF, DBSA, FECO and FUNBIO) did not submit or were unassociated with EOIs for any IP. UN agencies (FAO, UNDP, UNEP and UNIDO) together accounted for 63.64% of the total number of EOIs submitted in the second round, MDBs (including IFAD) for 20.45%, which is a significant increase compared to the first round. Only 12 (27.27%) of the total 44 EOIs submitted directly involved the agencies that are Lead or Co-Lead of an IP, suggesting that countries were choosing agencies irrespective of their role as Lead or Co-Lead.

Table 2. Numbers of EOIs Submitted by Agencies for Each IP

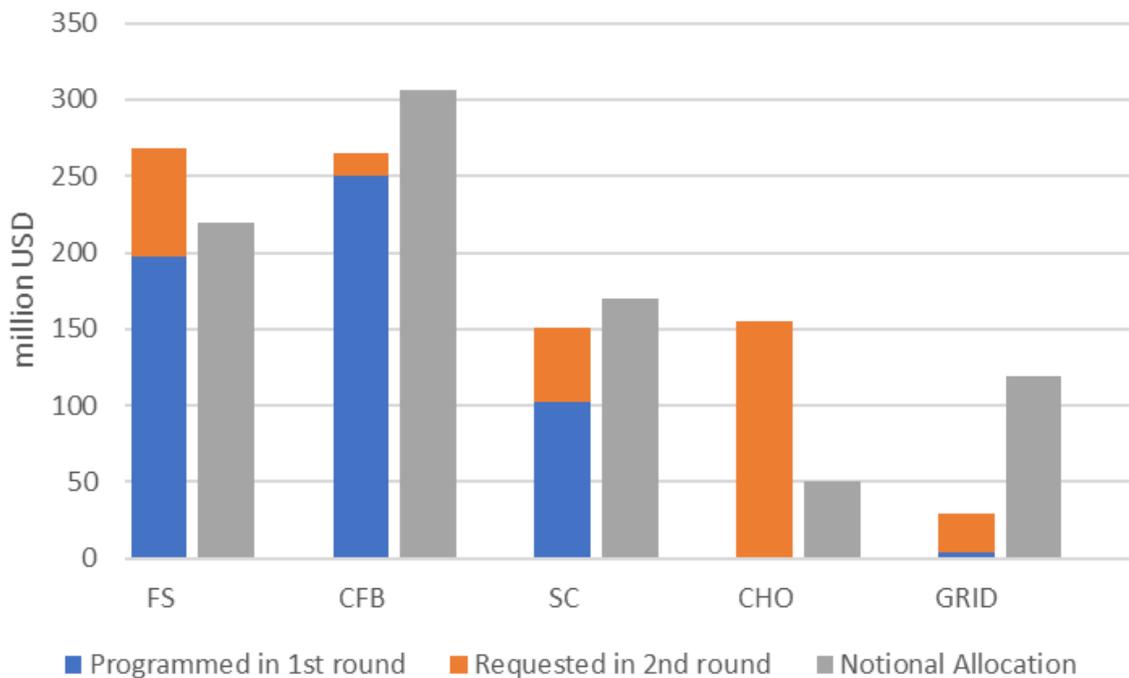
	MDBs + IFAD									UN				NGOs + others				Total	
	ADB	AfDB	BOAD	CAF	EBRD	DBSA	IADB	IFAD	WB	FAO	UNDP	UNEP	UNIDO	CI	FECO	FUNBIO	IUCN		WWF-US
Amazon, Congo and Critical Forest Biomes										2							1		
Amazon CFB									1										1
West-Africa CFB										1								1	2
Food Systems								3	1	4	2								10
Greening Transportation Infrastructure Development	1				1							2					1	1	6
Sustainable Cities										3	1		3						7
Clean and Healthy Ocean					1		1		1	3	4	4		4					18
Total	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	3	2	12	7	6	3	4	0	0	2	1	44
	20.45%									63.64%				15.91%				100%	

IP Co-Lead IP Lead

Financing Requested by Countries in the EOIs

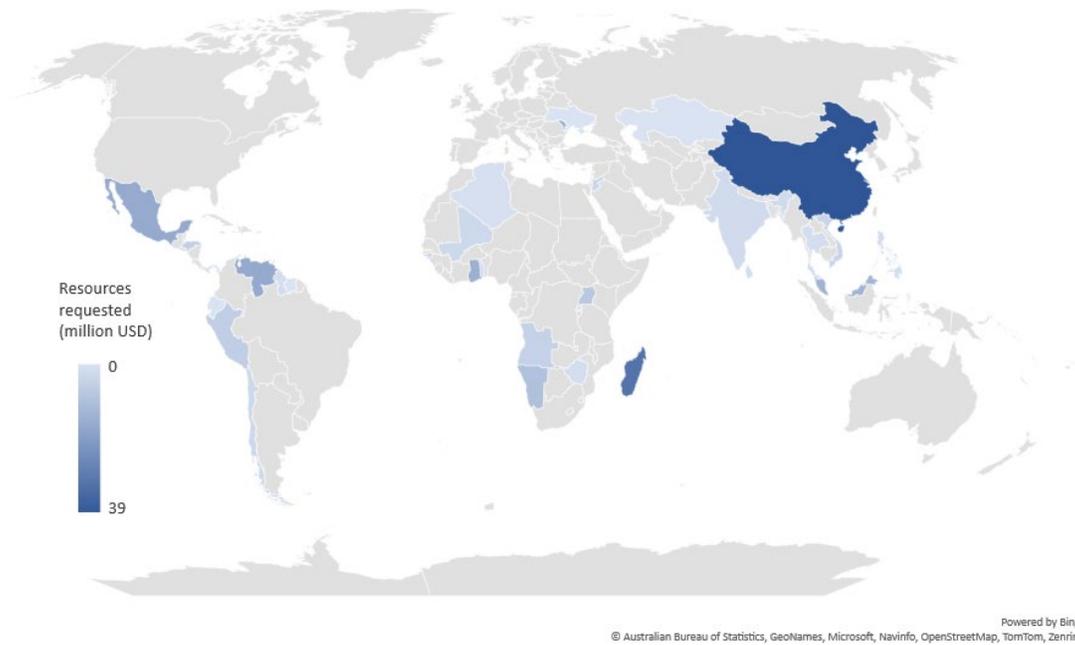
16. Through the 44 EOIs submitted, countries requested GEF financing amounting to USD 313.48 million including STAR focal area resources, matching incentive, and non-STAR focal area contributions. The total amount requested for all IPs was around 18% higher than the USD 264.37 million of IP allocations left to program for country projects after the first round of EOIs had been completed (Figure 3). The financing requested under the Clean and Healthy Ocean IP was more than three times the notional amount. For the four IPs from the previous call for EOIs, only Food Systems IP had additional financing requests to exceed the notional allocation. Financing requested for the Amazon, Congo, and Critical Forest Biomes (CFB), Sustainable Cities (SC), and Greening Transportation Infrastructure Development (GRID) were still within the notional amounts.

Figure 3. IP Resources Programmed the 1st Round and Amounts Requested in the 2nd Round Compared to the Notional Allocation



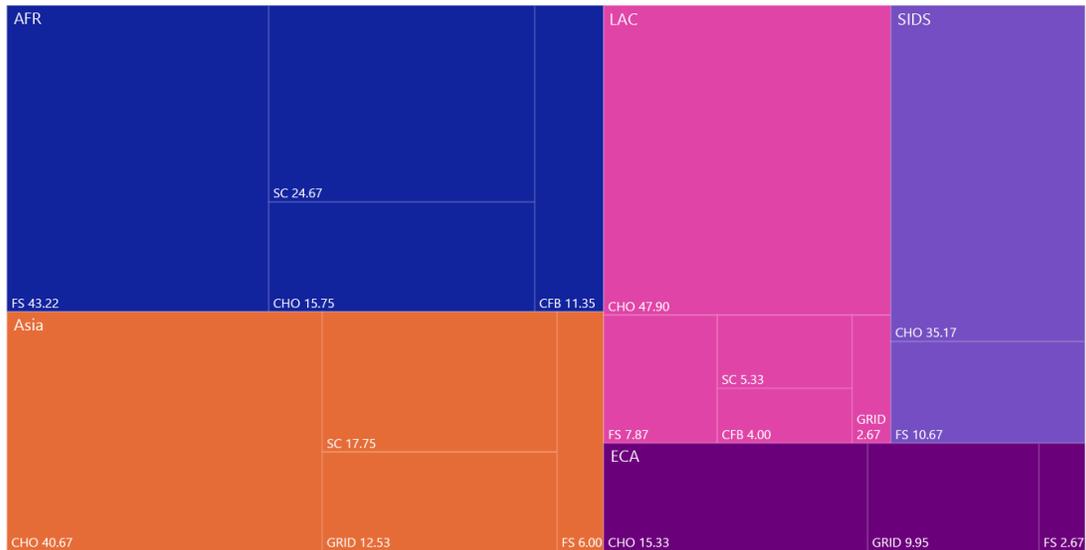
17. The resources requested in each EOI under the IPs ranged from USD 2.67 million (i.e., USD 2 million minimum required to trigger matching incentive plus USD 0.67 million with a 3:1 ratio) up to USD 26.33 million. Figure 4 shows the distribution of total resources requested by each country, with China, Malaysia, Madagascar, Mexico and Venezuela amongst the countries requesting the highest amounts across all IPs.

Figure 4. Total Amount of Resources Requested for all EOIs Submitted per Country



18. Regionally, countries in the Africa region requested the highest total funding of USD 94.98 million (30.30%), followed by Asia (USD 76.95 million, 24.55%), LAC (USD 67.77 million, 21.62%), SIDS (USD 45.84 million, 14.62%) and ECA (USD 27.95 million, 8.92%). Figure 5 shows how the share of these resources in each region are distributed across the IPs. The Clean and Healthy Ocean IP dominates in most regions, which was expected given that this was the first call for that IP. In the Africa region, Food System was the IP with the most resources requested by countries.

Figure 5. Distribution of IP Resources Requested by GEF Region



19. With respect to GEF agencies, EOIs with UNDP had the highest share of submission with USD 85 million (27%), followed by FAO (USD 66 million, 21%) and the World Bank (USD 25 million, 8%). The total financing requested in EOI submissions from MDBs and IFAD was USD 64 million (20%).

D. REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT OF EOIS

20. The review of the submitted EOIs and selection of countries was facilitated by the GEF Secretariat in consultation with the IP Lead Agency, and with inputs and recommendations by a committee that included representation from the GEF Secretariat, STAP, IP Lead Agency(ies), and an external expert. Participation of external experts ensured that each committee benefited from an independent assessment of the country EOIs. Annex 3 provides a detailed composition of the EOI review committee for each IP.

21. For the IPs to achieve maximum impact, the EOI review and decision on country selection by the committees initially prioritize criteria defined under each individual IP. The assessment was therefore done using a generic template (see Annex 4) that was customized for each IP based on the established criteria. In addition, the assessment also considered the following priorities for advancing systems transformation:

- extent of contributions to GEBs,
- integration of cross-cutting themes and levers for transformation,
- potential for financial leverage, and
- commitment to engage with coordination platform.

22. To avoid conflict of interest, the Lead Agency for an IP recused itself from reviewing or assessing any EOI for which it was the Agency selected by the country. The review and assessment committees for each IP decided on the most appropriate methods for rating or scoring the EOIs. This allowed each committee the flexibility to assess the quality of EOIs relative to the IP criteria, and at the same time determine the cohort of countries that collectively represent the best opportunity for influencing transformative change through the IP. In cases where the EOI raised questions that needed clarification, the committee flagged these for follow-up where necessary.

23. Each IP committee submitted an assessment report with recommended countries to the GEF Secretariat management for final decision on selection. The report documented the process and methods undertaken by each committee, as well as final ratings collectively derived and on which the final recommendations were based. Finally, the reports also offered scenarios for GEF management to consider in addressing limitations related to financing requested by recommended countries. This was critical for accommodating the considerable interest shown by countries in the Clean and Healthy Ocean IP and ensure a strong and diverse cohort of countries.

E. RESULTS OF THE EOI ASSESSMENT PROCESS

24. From a total of 44 EOI submissions, 39 EOIs (88.63%) were recommended by the assessment committees as technically sound and suitable for inclusion in an IP (Table 3). The submissions for the Amazon, Congo and Critical Forest Biomes IP, Food Systems IP and Sustainable Cities IP were all recommended, while only 4 and 1 were not recommended for Clean and Healthy Ocean and Greening Transportation Infrastructure Development, respectively.

Table 3. Overall Summary of EOI Assessment Outcomes

Integrated Program	Submission	Yes	No
Amazon, Congo, and Critical Forest Biomes	3	3	-
Clean and Healthy Ocean	18	14	4
Food Systems	10	10	-
Greening Transportation Infrastructure Development	6	5	1
Sustainable Cities	7	7	-
Total	44	39	5

25. The EOI acceptance rate was high for all GEF regions, with 100% for Africa and ECA, followed by LAC (90%), Asia (80%) and SIDS (75%) (Table 4). EOIs were submitted from SIDS countries for all except the Sustainable Cities IP, for which SIDS were well represented in the first round with the highest overall acceptance rate of all GEF regions. Taken together with the 75% acceptance rate in this round, the SIDS region is well represented across all IPs. The acceptance rate for LDCs was 100%, with all the 7 EOIs recommended as technically sound.

Table 4. Assessment Outcomes of EOIs by GEF Administrative Regions

Region	Submissions	Yes	No	Acceptance Rate
Africa	11	11	-	100.00%
Asia	10	8	2	80.00%
ECA	5	5	-	100.00%
LAC	10	9	1	90.00%
SIDS	8	6	2	75.00%
Totals	44	39	5	88.64%
LDCs	7	7	-	100%

26. Regarding agencies, the acceptance rates were high for MDBs and IFAD, with all 8 EOI submissions (100%) recommended. The acceptance rate for UN agencies was 93% and for other agencies 57%. All agencies that submitted EOIs had at least one EOI recommended (Table 5).

- For the Amazon, Congo, and Critical Forest Biomes IP, and Greening Transportation Infrastructure Development IP – No adjustments were required to the amounts requested in the recommended EOIs.

29. The overall breakdown of resources between regions was consistent with demands expressed by countries (Figure 6). Proportionally, the Africa region accounted for the largest share with USD 82.27 million (33.93%), followed by LAC (USD 66.00 million, 27.22%), Asia (USD 42.45 million, 17.50%), SIDS (USD 27.33 million, 11.27%) and ECA (USD 24.45 million, 10.08%). The final envelope for each IP will be determined by the actual amounts endorsed by countries and the amount allocated for the global or regional coordination platform.

Figure 6. Share of IP resources by Region for the Recommended EOIs



30. The share by GEF Agencies of total IP resources approved is presented in Figure 7. FAO (USD 59.96 million, 24.73%), UNDP (USD 59.33 million, 24.47%) and World Bank (USD 24.47 million, 10.09%) account for the largest share. The overall share for MDBs and IFAD was USD 61.38 million, accounting for 25.31% of the IP envelope approved in the second round.

Figure 7. Share of IP Resources by Agencies of Recommended EOIs



Final Country Selections and Resource Envelopes for IPs

31. The 39 recommended EOIs included 33 countries, with majority of the countries having only one EOI. A smaller group of countries had two or three EOIs recommended as follows:

- Two EOIs – Mexico, Moldova, Madagascar, and Grenada;
- Three EOIs – Malaysia.

32. The number of countries recommended EOIs per IP and GEF region is available in Table 7, and Annex 6 shows a list of all countries that were recommended for selection by the assessment committees. The selected 33 countries represent 89.19% of the total 37 that submitted at least one EOI for consideration under an IP and 22.92% of the total 144 eligible recipient countries.

Table 7 Number of Countries Accepted for Each IP by GEF Region

	CFB	CHO	FS	GRID	SC
AFR	2	1	4	-	4
Asia	-	3	1	2	2
ECA	-	2	1	2	-
LAC	1	4	2	1	1
SIDS	-	4	2	-	-
Total	3	14	10	5	7

33. With the adjustments made to accommodate all recommended EOIs, the total resource envelope for the IPs from the second round was USD 242.50 million for country projects. An additional USD 23.62 million was allocated for the global platforms for the Clean and Healthy Ocean IP and the Greening Transportation Infrastructure Development IP.⁶ As a result of this successful programming for both countries and platforms, the resources allocated for IPs in the GEF-8 replenishment are now all but fully utilized.

F. NEXT STEPS

34. Countries were notified of the selection decisions on September 26. For those countries that were not selected, the GEF Secretariat was available to respond to request for details on the assessment of their EOIs. For those countries selected to participate in each IP, the Secretariat requested for them to work with their respective GEF Agencies to complete and submit a Concept Note that outlines the proposed project in accordance with the GEF requirements. The Concept Note was intended to build on information provided in the EOI and provide specific details on how the proposed project will deliver multiple global environmental benefits through the IP

⁶ The Regional and Global Platforms for the Amazon, Congo, and Critical Forest Biomes IP, Food Systems IP, and Sustainable Cities IP were programmed as part of the first round.

approach to systems transformation. It also outlined how GEF policies and guidelines on Environmental and Social Safeguards, gender equality⁷ and stakeholder engagement,⁸ and specifically with Indigenous Peoples⁹ where such engagement is critical for achieving program goals. The completed Concept Notes were to be accompanied by Letters of Endorsement (LOEs) from GEF Operational Focal Points (OFPs) as confirmations of amounts allocated.¹⁰

35. The Concepts Notes were made available directly to the IP Lead Agency, which is responsible for preparation of the Program Framework Document (PFD). The PFD is prepared in accordance with GEF project cycle guidance and serves as basis for subsequent development and design of all child projects, to ensure overall coherence and consistency in delivering the IP. It also includes explicit guidance to all participating countries on specific issues that must be addressed during child project design stage.

36. Depending on resource availability in the Trust Fund, the GEF Secretariat will decide on the IPs to be included in the Work Program for consideration by Council at its meeting in February 2024. In addition to resource considerations, the IPs will be prioritized based on the need to present a compelling Work Program that demonstrates appropriate balance in programming across the GEF focal areas, and representation across regions and between agencies. IPs that are not considered for the February Work Program will be deferred to the following Council meeting.

37. Upon approval of the PFD by the Council, Agencies selected by participating countries, in coordination with the Lead Agency and other participating stakeholders, will proceed with preparing their respective Child Projects for CEO Endorsement/Approval. Consistent with existing policies, and with the expectation that most of them are submitted within the Program Commitment Deadline, all child projects under the IPs will be circulated to Council for review and comment four weeks in advance of CEO Endorsement/Approval.

⁷ GEF Policy and Guidelines on Gender Equality, <https://www.thegef.org/documents/gender-equality>

⁸ GEF Policy and Guidelines on Stakeholder Engagement, <https://www.thegef.org/documents/stakeholder-engagement>

⁹ GEF Policy and Guidelines on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples, <https://www.thegef.org/documents/indigenous-peoples>

¹⁰ Note: During this period of preparing Concept Notes, countries could choose to adjust STAR amounts approved by the GEF as long as the amount was not increased. Additionally, countries could also choose to withdraw from participating in an IP for which they were selected.

ANNEX 1. NOTIFICATION SENT TO OFPPs AND GEF AGENCIES ON TIMELINE ROLLING OUT IPs

10 July 2023

To: GEF Operational Focal Points and Agencies

Re: Second Round Timeline and Process for GEF-8 Integrated Programs (IPs)

During its 64th meeting, the Council approved Program Framework Documents (PFDs) for six of the eleven (11) IPs and endorsed FAO in a co-lead arrangement with ADB, CAF and EBRD as Lead Agencies for the *Clean and Healthy Ocean IP*.¹¹ Building on this achievement and on information in the document [GEF/C.62/Inf.13](#), *Guidance Note for Countries and GEF Agencies on participation in the GEF-8 Integrated Programs*, the GEF Secretariat has set forth the following timeline and some key deadlines for a second round of programming for the IPs:

- an official call and template for “Expression of Interests” (EOIs) for participation in the IPs will be released by **24 July**.
- this call for EOIs will prioritize the following two IPs that were not considered in the first round:
 - *Clean and Healthy Oceans*
 - *Greening Transportation Infrastructure Development*

In addition, and depending on IP resources available for programming, consideration will be given to additional countries interested in the following IPs:

- *Amazon, Congo, and Critical Forest Biomes*, specifically the *Indo-Malay* and *Guinean Forests Biomes*
- *Food Systems*
- *Sustainable Cities*
- the EOI template for each IP will contain detailed instructions and requirements so interested countries can provide the best possible representation of their commitment to contribute toward program targets and outcomes, and the agency they choose to work with for their child project.
- countries already selected for IPs in the first round do not need to submit any EOI for those IPs; they can, however, choose to consider additional IPs from the list of priorities for submission of EOIs.

¹¹ See Joint Summary of Co-Chairs: <https://www.thegef.org/council-meeting-documents/gef-c-64-jointsummary>

- taking into consideration the 7th GEF Assembly, the deadline for submission of completed EOIs will be **8 September**.
- in accordance with the GEF-8 Programming Directions Document, the GEF Secretariat and Lead Agency in consultation with STAP, will evaluate and select qualified submissions for each of the IPs and incorporate them into Program Framework Documents (PFDs); countries selected will be notified and requested to complete and submit Concept Note templates for their child projects to be included in the PFD by **7 October**.
- subject to extent of subscription by countries and availability of funds, IPs with fully developed PFDs will be considered for presentation at the next **Council meeting** planned for **January 2024**, following the regular calendar for composition of Work Program.
- fully subscribed IPs with PFDs that do not make it into the January 2024 Work Program will be considered for the **June 2024** Work Program.

We hope that this will help you plan accordingly. If you have any questions, please send a message to Mohamed Bakarr (mbakarr@thegef.org) in the GEF Secretariat.

ANNEX 2. CALL ISSUED TO OFPPs AND AGENCIES FOR EOIs IN THE GEF-8 INTEGRATED PROGRAMS

24 July 2023

FROM: GEF Secretariat

TO: GEF Operational Focal Points and Agencies

The GEF Secretariat is pleased to announce a **Second Call for Expression of Interest (EOIs)** from countries for joining the GEF-8 **Integrated Programs (IPs)**. The EOI process is intended to serve two major purposes: *first* is to enable countries to provide adequate information on the suitability of their proposed child projects within the IP(s); and *second* is to enable the GEF to assess eligibility and strategic positioning of the country to contribute toward systems transformation through the IP as described in the GEF-8 Programming Directions document. Countries are therefore expected to carefully evaluate the prioritization of the STAR allocations to the IPs, in line with their national priorities. Submission of an EOI is not a guarantee that the country will be selected to participate in the IP.

Please note that this call for EOIs will prioritize the following two IPs that were not considered in the first round: ***Clean and Healthy Ocean***, and ***Greening Transportation Infrastructure Development***. In addition, and depending on IP resources available for programming, consideration will be given to additional countries interested in the following IPs: ***Amazon, Congo, and Critical Forest Biomes***, specifically the Indo-Malay and Guinean Forests Biomes; ***Food Systems***; and ***Sustainable Cities***. **EOIs submitted for any IP other than those listed here will no longer be considered.**

Preparation of EOIs

Countries interested in participating in each of the indicated IPs are invited to complete the respective template provided here: <https://www.thegef.org/documents/expression-interest-templates-gef-8-integrated-programs> and taking notice of the [Guidance Note for Countries and GEF Agencies on participation in the GEF-8 Integrated Programs](#).

For the preparation of the EOIs, countries are encouraged to work closely with the GEF Agency(ies) of their choice and note the following provisions:

- Only one (1) EOI will be considered from a country for each of the IPs, but countries are welcome to submit EOIs for more than one IP if they choose to do so. The appropriate EOI template must be used for each IP, and due diligence must be exercised on word limits imposed when responding to questions in each section.
- Countries already selected to participate in an IP that is included in this second call do not need to resubmit an EOI.

- For an EOI to be considered under an IP, countries must commit the minimum threshold of US\$2 million from the country's STAR allocation to trigger the matching incentive based on the 3:1 ratio.

There is no fixed maximum limit for STAR funds that can be allocated by a country for a proposed child project under an IP. Because of the limited amount of incentive funds available under each IP, however, the GEF Secretariat will evaluate and consult on a case-by-case basis for what would be the most suitable grant envelope for an EOI that is selected.

- The amount of STAR funds allocated for the proposed child project can be drawn from any or, more likely, from a combination of resources from the STAR focal areas (Biodiversity, Climate Change, and Land Degradation). While these funds are flexible when allocated to the child project, the usage of focal area resources must be justified through the lenses of expected global environmental benefits, in accordance with GEF-8 targeted core indicators.
- For the ***Clean and Healthy Ocean IP*** where request for non-STAR resources is possible, this information is included in the EOI template. However, the amount requested will be adjusted if total demand for all recommended EOIs exceeds the notional GEF-8 resources allocated for the IP.

Submission of EOIs

- The EOI should be submitted by a GEF agency selected by the country for developing and implementing the proposed child project under the IP.
- The completed EOI must be signed by the GEF Operational Focal Point or Designated Official in the country and submitted as an email attachment with the following file name format: ***CountryName_IPName_CompletedEOIDate***
- Supporting documents are allowed if appropriately referenced in the EOI and sent as separate attachments in the same email. EOIs and accompanying information should be sent to the following address: integratedprogramseoi@thegef.org with Cc to: mbakarr@thegef.org, mcallenberg@thegef.org; tkim5@thegef.org
- The deadline for submission is **September 8, 2023**.

Review of EOIs

The GEF Secretariat and the Lead Agency for each IP will be responsible for reviewing the EOIs, in close consultation with the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP). During the review, agencies and countries may be consulted for additional information if needed. In cases where

the Lead Agency is also serving as the agency for a country’s child project, the GEF Secretariat will address potential conflicts of interest.

Countries selected will be notified by latest **September 22** and requested to complete and submit Concept Note templates for their child projects by latest **October 7, 2023**. Depending on availability of funds, Concept Notes of selected countries will be included in the respective PFD that will be prepared by the Lead Agency for each IP.

For questions and any additional information on the EOI templates, please contact the respective GEF Secretariat lead as indicated below:

GEF-8 IP	GEF Secretariat Lead
Clean and Healthy Ocean	Andrew Hume, ahume@thegef.org
Greening Transportation Infrastructure Development	Mark Zimsky, mzimsky@thegef.org
Amazon, Congo, and Critical Forest Biomes	Jean-Marc Sinnassamy, jsinnassamy@thegef.org Pascal Martinez, pmartinez2@thegef.org
Food Systems	Peter Mbanda Umunay, pumunay@thegef.org
Sustainable Cities	Aloke Barnwal, abarnwal@thegef.org

ANNEX 3. LIST OF EOI ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND MEETING DETAILS

Integrated Program	Committee member				Review Committee Meeting
	GEF Secretariat	STAP	Lead Agency	External	
CFB					
Amazon	Pascal Martinez	John Donaldson, Alessandro Moscuza	Ana Maria Gonzalez Veloza (WB)	Maria DiGiano (Moore Foundation)	09/18/2023
West-Africa	Jean-Marc Sinnassamy	John Donaldson, Alessandro Moscuza	Charity Nalyanya (CI)		09/18/2023
FS	Peter Umunay, Remy Ruat, Mohamed Bakarr	Mark Stafford, Guadalupe Duron	Jeffery Griffin, Hernan Gonzalez, Adrian Barrance (FAO), Janie Roux, Paola Palestini (IFAD)	Tom Hammond (Environmental Consultant)	09/19/2023
GRID	Mark Zimsky, Hannah Fairbank	Ed Carr, Alessandro Moscuza	Kate Newman, Renae Stenhouse (WWF-US)	Roberto Mezzalama (WSP)	09/14/2023
CHO	Andrew Hume, Taylor Henshaw	Virginia Gorsevski	Lorenzo Galbiati (FAO)	Kirsten Isensee (Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO & Technical Secretary of the IOC Global Ocean Oxygen Network (GO2NE) expert working group)	09/19/2023
SC	Aloke Barnwal, Mia Callenberg	Sunday Leonard, Ngonidzashe Chirinda	Xueman Wang (WB)	Ripin Kalra (University of Westminster)	09/15/2023

ANNEX 4. GENERIC EOI TEMPLATE FOR GEF-8 INTEGRATED PROGRAMS

Proposed Format and Structure

WHY

Country Context and Rationale

This part should enable the country to provide an overall rationale and justification for the EOI, based on its strategic positioning relative to the systems transformation proposed. Essentially, the country needs to demonstrate that it has or is working to develop the national level framework (policy, institutional, etc.) and enabling environment to advance the IP approach, and to move relatively quickly with designing and delivering a project under the program.

Questions	Response (max 500 words)
National commitment, policies and links to MEAs	
Engagement with relevant regional / global fora / platforms	
Others?	

WHAT

Criteria for Child Project

This part will enable the country to describe how the proposed child project meets all the required criteria for GEF financing under the IP.

Max 500 words

Suitability for the Integrated Approach

This part will enable the country to justify how the integrated approach proposed for the IP is an appropriate and suitable option for tackling the systemic challenges identified, and to achieve the desired transformation with multiple global environmental benefits. This part should also include existing or planned baseline investments, and the incremental reasoning for GEF financing under the IP.

Questions	Response (max 500 words)
Description of the integrated approach to be developed and implemented	
Levers of transformation to be targeted	
Stakeholder engagement / roles / expectations	Government: Private sector: CSOs / IPs / CBOs: Technical / Research institutions:
Contribution to GEF8 GEB targets (core Indicators)	
Describe the project's potential to contribute to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.	

WHERE

Target Geographies

This part will allow the country to describe the specific geography (landscapes / cities / basins / watersheds / etc) targeted for the IP. The description will include details of the systemic drivers of environmental degradation relative to the IP agenda, with sound data to demonstrate the magnitude and scale of the challenges. Multiple geographies are allowed provided they are justified as part of a national strategy to achieve transformational change.

Target Geography: [... Name ...]	
Scale / coverage	
Importance	
Systemic challenges	
Affected population / beneficiaries	

RESOURCES

Financing for the Child Project

This part will summarize the proposed GEF financing and co-financing (including sources), as well as the GEF agency(ies) and other entities to be engaged.

Proposed GEF Agency(ies)¹	
Proposed executing entity(ies)²	
Potential sources, types and amounts of co-financing	
Indicative amount of GEF STAR resources to be requested³	LD: BD: CC:

EOI to be signed by OFP and submitted by GEF agency selected by country

¹ The choice of GEF Agency(ies) should be informed by a thorough consideration of which Agency(ies) is/are best equipped to support the implementation of the priorities identified for GEF financing.

² This refers to the institution(s) that would be directly responsible for implementing the priorities identified for GEF support, e.g. national government agency(ies).

³ A minimum of \$2 million from the country's STAR allocation is required to trigger the IP incentive; the STAR amounts will be matched at ratio of 3:1. STAR resources can be drawn from any of three focal areas, or proportionally across all three in accordance with the overall focus of the proposed project. All STAR resources programmed under the IP will be combined with the matching incentive as single GEF grant per country and should include amounts for Project Preparation Grant (PPG) and GEF Agency Fee.

ANNEX 5. FULL LIST OF COUNTRY SUBMISSION AND SELECTION RESULT

(Note: YES = EOI was recommended; No = EOI was not recommended)

	CFB	CHO	FS	GRID	SC
Algeria					Yes
Angola			Yes		
Chile					Yes
China		No			Yes
Dominica		No			
Ecuador			Yes		
Ghana			Yes		
Grenada		Yes	Yes		
Guinea-Bissau	Yes				
Guyana	Yes				
Honduras		No			
India				No	
Jordan		Yes			
Kazakhstan			Yes		
Madagascar		Yes			Yes
Malaysia			Yes	Yes	Yes
Maldives		Yes			
Mali					Yes
Mexico		Yes	Yes		
Moldova		Yes		Yes	
Namibia			Yes		
Nauru			Yes		
Panama		Yes			
Peru		Yes			
Philippines				Yes	
Sri Lanka		Yes			
St. Kitts and Nevis		Yes			
St. Vincent and Grenadines		No			
Suriname				Yes	
Thailand		Yes			
Togo	Yes				
Trinidad and Tobago		Yes			
Uganda			Yes		
Ukraine				Yes	
Venezuela		Yes			
Viet Nam		Yes			
Zimbabwe					Yes

ANNEX 6. LIST OF ALL COUNTRIES SELECTED IN THE ASSESSMENT

GEF Region	CFB	CHO	FS	GRID	SC
AFR	Guinea Bissau ^{† ‡} Togo [†]	Madagascar [†]	Angola [†] Ghana Namibia Uganda [†]		Algeria Madagascar [†] Mali [†] Zimbabwe
Asia		Sri Lanka Thailand Viet Nam	Malaysia	Malaysia Philippines	China Malaysia
ECA		Jordan Moldova	Kazakhstan	Moldova Ukraine	
LAC	Guyana [‡]	Mexico Panama Peru Venezuela	Ecuador Mexico	Suriname [‡]	Chile
SIDS		Grenada Maldives St. Kitts and Nevis Trinidad and Tobago	Grenada Nauru		

[†] LDCs

[‡] Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, and Suriname fall under the UN SIDS category but are categorized as other GEF administrative regions.