



Global Environment Facility
Guidance Note on Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations

November 12, 2024

The Guidance Note is meant to assist GEF Agencies and other partners in the efficient planning and execution of GEF projects and programs in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations (FCS). It responds to requests and recommendations for guidance to manage risks and help plan and carry out GEF operations in countries and contexts affected by fragility and conflict. It does not constitute GEF policy. The suggested actions described herein are not mandatory; however, they aim to enhance GEF's engagement in FCS and provide recommendations to increase the likelihood of achieving sustainable global environment benefits (GEBs).

The GEF Secretariat would like to extend its appreciation for the inputs provided by the GEF Agencies (in particular ADB, AfDB, Conservation International, FAO, IUCN, UNDP, UNEP, and World Bank), the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) of the GEF, and the climate funds (AF, CIF, GCF) in the preparation of this guidance.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FCS	Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GEBs	Global Environment Benefits
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
MSMEs	Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises
MTR	Mid-Term Report
PFD	Program Framework Document
PIF	Project Identification Form
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
SEA/SH	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment
SOGI	Sexual Orientations and Gender Identity
STAP	Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel
TE	Terminal Evaluation
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WBG	World Bank Group

INTRODUCTION

This note provides guidance on designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating projects and programs funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations (FCS). It includes information on useful tools, training resources, and best practices to enhance project and program effectiveness in these challenging contexts. It also outlines the specific requirements of GEF policies applicable at different stages of projects and programs. This document serves as a resource only and does not constitute a GEF policy or guideline.

BACKGROUND

At the 66th GEF Council meeting, the GEF Secretariat presented a [Gap Analysis of GEF-Funded Activity and Engagement in Fragility, Conflict, and Violence-Affected States](#) (GEF/C.66/09). In response, the Council directed the Secretariat to implement the proposed actions ([Decision 11/2024](#))¹, emphasizing the need for enhanced coordination and harmonization across climate and environmental funds. These actions included developing specific guidance for GEF projects in FCS and facilitating knowledge exchange on operating in such contexts.

To address the Council decision and [respond to recommendations provided by the GEF Independent Evaluation Office](#) (IEO) regarding their evaluation of GEF Support in FCS², the GEF Secretariat committed to:

- a. Developing guidance on fragile and conflict-sensitive programming collaboratively with Agencies, and
- b. Leveraging existing knowledge platforms to enhance conflict sensitivity.

The development of this guidance builds upon ongoing initiatives, including streamlining the GEF project cycle³ and [GEF Strategy for Knowledge Management and Learning](#) (GEF/C.65/03/Rev.01) to ensure alignment with broader institutional efforts, and existing tools and guidance from the GEF Agencies and other sources. It also builds on the [GEF Risk Appetite](#) framework (GEF/C.66/13) which acknowledges *Political and Governance* as one of the risk categories, especially in situations of political instability, social fragility, or conflict. By addressing these risks, the GEF aims to promote a culture of risk awareness and management through its Risk Appetite Statement, implementing changes to risk management practices to effectively track and address key risk categories, including those related to FCS. Additionally, insights from the GEF's Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) reports⁴ were incorporated into this guidance.

¹ [Joint Summary of the GEF Council Co-Chairs](#) (Decision 11/2024)

² [Evaluation of GEF Support in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations](#) (2020)

³ [Streamlining the GEF Project Cycle](#) (GEF/C.67/05/Rev.1, June 14, 2024)

⁴ [Environmental Security: Achieving Durable Outcomes in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations](#) (GEF/STAP/C.66/Inf.03) and [Fostering Cooperation and Managing Conflict: A STAP Information Note on GEF Transboundary Water Projects](#) (GEF/STAP/C.67/Inf.04)

OBJECTIVE

The Guidance Note is meant to assist GEF Agencies and other partners in the efficient planning and execution of GEF projects and programs in FCS. It responds to requests and recommendations for guidance to manage risks and help plan and carry out GEF operations in countries and contexts affected by fragility and conflict. It does not constitute GEF policy. The suggested actions described herein are not mandatory; however, they aim to enhance GEF's engagement in FCS and provide recommendations to increase the likelihood of achieving sustainable global environment benefits (GEBs).

Scope

This guidance covers the three stages of the GEF project and program cycle of the different GEF administered funds⁵: 1) Project and Program Preparation; 2) Project Implementation; and 3) Project Completion. The considerations for each project and program cycle apply to full- and medium-sized projects, enabling activities (if appropriate) and programs. The Guidance Note largely focuses on reducing the likelihood that conflict or instability will undermine the success of projects and programs in delivering GEBs. This Guidance Note is a living document, subject to updates as necessary, in consultation with GEF Agencies.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The main audience of this Guidance Note includes GEF Agencies responsible for project and program design, implementation, monitoring, and reporting, as well as GEF Program Managers (PM) overseeing project and program review and screening.

Additionally, executing partners may find this guidance valuable for their regular operations. It may also be beneficial for other GEF partners such as GEF Operational Focal Points, civil society organizations (CSOs), and others.

GEF PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS IN FCS CONTEXTS

The GEF is one of the few organizations providing funding for environmental projects in fragile and conflict-affected recipient countries.⁶ Well-prepared projects in these contexts can have a catalytic effect, laying the groundwork for additional, larger investments by other institutions, thus amplifying the impacts of the GEF funding as well as those of other funding organizations.

The active GEF portfolio includes operations in areas affected by conflict or fragility. Based on the World Bank (WB)'s [FY24 List of Fragile and Conflict-affected Situations](#), nine percent (or \$ 819.3 million) of the GEF's active global portfolio is allocated to *conflict* situations, while six percent (or \$ 539.5 million) of the active portfolio is allocated to fragility situations (*institutional and social fragility*).⁷ Geographically, the distribution of GEF investment in *conflict* situations within the GEF's active portfolio is 76 percent in Africa, 14 percent in Asia, and 10 percent in Europe and Central Asia. Similarly, the distribution of GEF investment

⁵ These are the GEF Trust Fund, the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF)/Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), and the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF).

⁶ GEF IEO Report, [Evaluation of GEF Support in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations](#) (GEF/E/C.59/01) (2020) para 94, p. 37.

⁷ Based on the World Bank's [FY24 List of Fragile and Conflict-affected Situations](#) and active GEF portfolio as of June 2024.

in *institutional and social fragility* situations within the GEF’s active portfolio is 48 percent in Africa, 40 percent in Asia, and 12 percent in Latin America.⁸

Trends in fragile contexts related to violence, inequality, food insecurity, and forced displacement underscore the severity and scale of fragility.⁹ These trends pose challenges to progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including environmental issues. Given the interconnectedness between climate change, biodiversity loss, water insecurity, land degradation, fragility, and conflict, the relevance of the GEF is critical.

GEF projects seek to emphasize the importance of considering relevance, design, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability in countries affected by fragility and conflict. Eleven GEF Agencies¹⁰ –covering 91 percent of the active GEF portfolio in FCS— have developed frameworks and guidance to manage the risks linked to conflict and fragility.¹¹ While GEF Agencies are primarily addressing FCS issues in their wider programming, an increasing number of GEF-financed projects have addressed these risks, drawing valuable lessons from these experiences.

The GEF has developed tools for addressing project risks. The [GEF Risk Appetite](#) framework, approved in February 2024, is expected to address comprehensive programming risks associated with operating in FCS. Conflict and post-conflict risks are considered in projects and programs under the GEF [Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards](#) (ESS), which has been applied to all GEF projects and programs since July 2019.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR GEF PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS DEVELOPMENT IN FCS

The following sections provide detailed GEF guidance on incorporating FCS issues throughout the various phases of the project and program cycle. It stresses the importance of integrating sensitivity to Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations during the project design phase, adopting adaptive programming and risk management, and fostering learning and collaboration.

This includes considering risks posed by FCS contexts to the project itself and the FCS-related risks caused by the project intervention. It is critical to clarify and differentiate between these risks, and based on that, the risk analysis and mitigation measures will need to be tailored to address both types of risks, as relevant.

Figure 1 summarizes a flow of considerations for GEF projects and programs development in FCS.

⁸ Based on the World Bank’s [FY24 List of Fragile and Conflict-affected Situations](#) and active GEF portfolio as of June 2024.

⁹ [OECD 2022, States of Fragility 2022](#) (p. 20) The report identifies the 60 fragile contexts in terms of their income levels, geography, political nature and conflict status (p. 31).

¹⁰ Asian Development Bank (ADB), African Development Bank (AfDB), Conservation International (CI), Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), World Bank (WB), and World Wildlife Fund-US (WWF-US)

¹¹ [Gap Analysis of GEF-Funded Activity and Engagement in Fragility, Conflict, and Violence-Affected States](#) (GEF/C.66/09) (Para 18, p. 4-5)

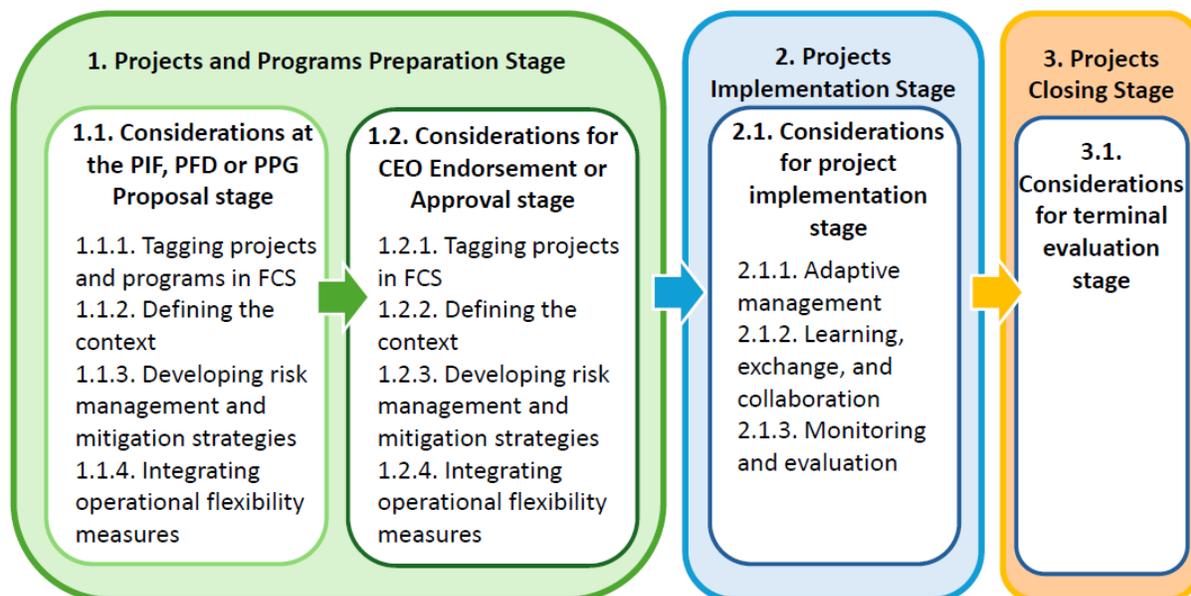


Figure 1: Flow of Considerations for GEF Projects and Programs Development in FCS

1. PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS PREPARATION STAGE

Conducting substantive contextual and risk analysis is crucial at the project and program design stage. During the development of a Project Identification Form (PIF), Program Framework Document (PFD), or Project Preparation Grant (PPG) Proposal, as well as CEO Endorsement or Approval, it is critical to understand the contexts, develop risk management and mitigation strategies, and integrate operational flexibility in projects and programs. These interconnected aspects should be considered early in the project design to integrate them through the Theory of Change. These considerations should be enhanced further during the PPG and by CEO Endorsement or Approval stage based on additional assessment and analysis of fragility and conflict-affected situations and changes in the context.

The following sections introduce specific actions that need to be considered during the PIF, PFD, or PPG Proposal stage, and CEO Endorsement or Approval stage.

1.1. CONSIDERATIONS AT THE PIF, PFD, OR PPG PROPOSAL STAGE

Projects and programs in FCS contexts require various considerations for the effective and sustainable achievement of GEBs. Depending on the contexts and identified risks, projects and programs should integrate risk management and mitigation strategies in their design and budget. Thus, incorporating these factors in the Theory of Change is essential, through an early fragile and conflict assessment.

1.1.1. Tagging Projects and Programs in FCS

Fragile and conflict-sensitive programming requires flexibility and risk management throughout the project cycle. Projects and programs in FCS settings should be tagged in the GEF Portal early in the project design stage and continuously updated throughout the project cycle.

If the targeted landscapes are in fragile and conflict-affected areas, projects and programs should be **tagged as being in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations** for easier reference and action in the

Portal¹², recognizing the dynamic nature of such context. The GEF adopts the [WB's List of Fragile and Conflict-affected Situations](#) for reference.¹³ Agencies can use their own FCS classification and provide supportive evidence in the Portal. Changes in the situations can be reported in the monitoring reports (Project Implementation Reports (PIRs), Mid-Term Review (MTR), and Terminal Evaluation (TE)).

1.1.2. Defining the Context

Effective assessments of fragility and conflict are essential tools for understanding the context within FCS across areas, countries, and regions.¹⁴ These assessments identify FCS-related risks that require mitigation and inform the integration of fragile and conflict-sensitive elements into all stages of project development. They guide priority setting, project design, programming entry points, the Theory of Change, implementation strategies, and monitoring frameworks.

Starting these assessments in the early stage of the project formation is imperative, as analyzing fragility and conflict can be time intensive.¹⁵ Moreover, these assessments should consider how FCS contexts uniquely impact vulnerable groups, including women, children, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, individuals of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities (SOGI), and minorities.

Various agencies - including ADB, AfDB, FAO, UNDP, and WB - conduct fragility, conflict, and resilience assessments within FCS settings. These assessments may occur at the country level or focus on specific areas within a country or across borders. Further guidance and tools are provided in Annex II.

In project documentation (PIF, PFD, or PPG Proposals), particularly within sections such as project background, baseline, incrementality, and stakeholder engagement, the project or program should outline **the conflict and fragility context**. This includes an analysis of root causes, barriers, opportunities, and related risks, with comprehensive **stakeholder identification and analysis**. The findings from the assessment should directly inform the project or program design,¹⁶ and a summary of the FCS risks should be included in the Portal's key risk table (*Political and Governance*, and *Environmental and Social risk*), along with any other relevant categories.¹⁷ If available, standalone fragile and conflict assessments should also be uploaded to the Portal.

¹² For LDCF and SCCF, FCS information is in the "Meta information" section, asking whether the *Project involves at least one fragile and conflict affected state [or situation]*.

¹³ The list of fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCS) is released annually by the World Bank Group (WBG) and aims to inform strategic and operational decision-making within the WBG. The list distinguishes between countries based on the nature of the issues they face. The classification uses the following categories: a) Countries with high levels of institutional and social fragility, identified based on indicators that measure the quality of policy and institutions, and manifestations of fragility. B) Countries affected by violent conflict, identified based on a threshold number of conflict-related deaths relative to the population. More details of the typology of FCS and methodology of classification is available [here](#).

¹⁴ Assessments and analysis of fragility and conflict can be a standalone assessment, part of environmental and social assessment, or joint assessment with gender assessment and/or environmental and social assessment. Please see some existing tools in the Annex II.

¹⁵ Undertaking an FCS assessment during the inception phase can be too late due to an ability to revise project elements.

¹⁶ The agencies using their own policies can follow their own policies on FCS risk management procedures.

¹⁷ Many of the risk categories pertain to FCS, especially in the context of Execution, *Capacity for Implementation* and *Fiduciary* risks.

Key considerations for defining the FCS context include:

- Understand the **causes and drivers** of fragility, conflict and insecurity. It is important to analyze the complex relationships among these underlying factors.
- Assess **how the FCS context fragility may influence the project, and how the project may affect conflict dynamics**, including transboundary dimensions.
- **Map out key stakeholders** and their relationships to each other.
- **Identify the vulnerable groups** specifically affected by the situation.
- Determine whether a **human rights-approach** is necessary in response to the FCS context.
- Assess levels of **risk exposure** for project teams and beneficiaries, including **health and safety** concerns.
- Identify **existing platforms or coordination mechanisms** for information exchange, early warning systems, and continuous learning.

The [STAP](#) suggests four questions to unpack the complexity of FCS in environmental contexts¹⁸ :

- (a) How do ecosystem goods and services in the intervention area support human well-being and security?
- (b) How might conflict and fragility impact the viability or sustainability of investments in environmental protection?
- (c) How could ecosystem degradation, resource competition, or inequitable resource distribution exacerbate vulnerability and conflict risk?
- (d) How can environmental cooperation strengthen conflict management, prevention, and recovery capacity?

The **Theory of Change** should set an overarching, long-term goal and a strategy that incorporates fragile and conflict-affected situations as pivotal factors. According to STAP, in the FCS context, a Theory of Change can identify linkages between conflict risk and environmental outcomes, as well as articulate how issues such as human rights, tenure security, gender equality, and social inclusion interact with conflict risk. These factors may serve as barriers to, or enablers of, the desired outcomes.¹⁹

1.1.3. Developing Risk Management and Mitigation Strategies

Effective FCS risk management in GEF projects and programs often involves the identification of risks and **mitigation strategies** such as institutional capacity building, monitoring security, meaningful consultations, participatory approaches, dispute resolution mechanisms, partnerships with local communities to gain local ownership, creating local employment, enhancing livelihoods, and adaptive

¹⁸ STAP (2018) [Environmental security: dimensions and priorities](#) (p. 6-9)

¹⁹ STAP (2024) [Environmental Security: Achieving Durable Outcomes in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations \(GEF/STAP/C.66/Inf.03\)](#) (p. 4)

management approaches. These strategies, when embedded in the project design, have proven helpful in achieving results under challenging local conditions.

For instance, **enhancing sustainable and resilient livelihoods** can provide sustainable economic opportunities for young men and women, reducing the risk of them joining armed groups. **Creating dialogue space with vulnerable groups** (including women, children, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disability, SOGI, and minorities) and **ensuring secure land tenure rights**, particularly for Indigenous Peoples, can be effective mitigation measures to reduce risks of further conflict and social impacts. **Avoiding gender-based violence** and **improving access to scarce natural resources** such as food and water security, are also critical risk mitigation strategies to consider during the project design.²⁰

Projects and programs should integrate appropriate risk management and mitigation strategies based on the identified risks. These risk management measures need to be incorporated into project and program design and summarized in the key risk table (*Political and Governance* risk and *Environmental and Social* risk) of the Portal, as well as any other relevant categories.²¹ Detailed risk management and mitigation strategies should be finalized by CEO Endorsement or Approval stage.

The following three aspects are central to risk management and mitigation strategies: a) strengthening resilience and capacity building, b) collaboration with various stakeholders including local partners, and c) catalyzing private sector engagement, particularly the engagement of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs).

Strengthening Resilience and Capacity Building

For successful project implementation in FCS, it is critical to strengthen resilience and build capacity. These components often require supplemental financial support to invest in human capital and institutional capacity. Many GEF Agencies have special financial allocations to support a transition from fragility, which could be leveraged by GEF projects. Given the heightened risks in FCS, achieving GEBs requires a focus on the co-benefits of project interventions –conflict sensitivity– such as improved food and water security and better livelihoods. These co-benefits –conflict sensitivity– can secure targeted environmental outcomes, and help reduce conflict and promote cooperation, thereby enhancing the sustainability of GEBs.

Projects and programs should aim to **enhance local and institutional capacity** to understand and mitigate fragile and conflict-affected risks. This includes bolstering adaptive capacity and implementing effective conflict management mechanisms as part of the project design.²² It can be beneficial to include **a flexible sub-grant component for local communities** as part of the project design, which can be used to improve local sustainable and resilient governance and livelihoods based on the needs of local communities.

²⁰ UNEP, EU, adelphi (2022) Guidance Note and Tools to [Address Climate-Related Security Risks](#)

²¹ Many of the risk categories pertain to FCS, especially in the context of Execution, *Capacity for Implementation* and *Fiduciary* risks.

²² World Bank (2022) Defueling Conflict: Environment and Natural Resource Management as a Pathway to Peace. Table 4.1 General Principles for Programming in FCS (p. 76).

Key considerations include:

- Does the project or program support strengthening local and institutional capacity to understand and manage fragile and conflict-affected risks?
- Are there any opportunities to collaborate with other projects and/or organizations to enhance local and institutional capacity to mitigate fragile and conflict-affected risks?
- Does the project or program leverage any complementary initiatives that aim to address conflict and fragility?
- Does the project include any intervention that could directly contribute to a reduction of conflict and fragility?
- Does the project focus on improving the governance²³ and livelihoods of conflict-affected communities through sustainable natural resource management?
- Are there conflict reduction opportunities embedded in project activities?
- Does the project design incorporate successful strategies from other projects and Agencies?

Collaboration with Various Stakeholders including Local Partners

In FCS settings, expanding collaboration with civil society organizations (CSOs) and local organizations is vital. These organizations often work with the most vulnerable populations, complementing traditional partners like international institutions including MDBs and bilateral partners, UN agencies, and regional entities (e.g. African Union or Organization of American States). Local CSOs, in particular, play a key role in delivering the last mile of project implementation by partnering with project executing entities and building trust and local ownership in these contexts.

Partnerships bring diverse mandates, capacities, and skills into FCS settings. Projects and programs should engage and collaborate with a wide range of stakeholders in their design beyond traditional partnerships in FCS contexts. Meaningful consultations and partnerships can lead stakeholders to play a more active role as executing partners. Stakeholders and partners include local, national, and international CSOs with on-the-ground experience, international and regional institutions, humanitarian organizations, security and peace actors, and affected populations in FCS.

Multi-stakeholder engagement should start early in the project design and throughout the project cycle and key stakeholders can play a vital role as executing partners during project implementation. Maintaining regular dialogue with security personnel, raising awareness concerning project grievance mechanisms including Gender-based Violence (GBV) and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH), and targeting engagement techniques to involve specific excluded groups are recognized as good practices. Consideration of grievance mechanisms adapting to the specific needs and challenges of FCS environments including cultural sensitivity, conflict sensitivity, security and confidentiality, and integration with broader conflict resolution efforts will be beneficial.

²³ It includes strengthening governance on local levels including secure rights and access to natural resources, land and water.

Additionally, projects and programs should focus on capturing lessons learned, sharing them with partners, and strengthening collaboration for effective and innovative risk management in FCS.

Key considerations include:

- Do local CSOs engage in the project design and participate in the project as a part of the project executing partners?
- Does the project engage with community groups that are vulnerable to conflict and fragility?
- Is the project designed to engage with multi-stakeholders throughout the project cycle?
- Is the project designed to increase cooperation among development partners and local groups?
- Does the project include components to capture and share learning and to strengthen collaboration with development partners?

Catalyzing Private Sector Engagement

Private sector engagement generates economic activities and employment to stabilize FCS settings. Agencies such as ADB, AfDB, and WB emphasize the importance of engaging the private sector, particularly MSMEs and local companies, including household enterprises, cooperatives, social enterprises, and self-employed workers in FCS settings.

It is recommended that projects and programs include a plan to engage with local MSMEs to create local employment and socio-economic activities while delivering global environmental benefits. This engagement is crucial for fostering economic stability and sustainability in FCS settings.

Key considerations include:

- Does the project have components to engage with local MSMEs including household enterprises and create local employment and socio-economic benefits?

1.1.4. Integrating Operational Flexibility Measures

Developing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating projects and programs in FCS requires operational flexibility. GEF Agencies employ various flexibility measures to enhance effectiveness in these challenging settings. Agencies such as ADB, AfDB, and WB have operational policies designed to ensure flexible design, delivery, and monitoring of operations in FCS. These measures include procurement processes, safeguards application, operations and engagement with de facto governments, development and integration of digital technologies that support country and project performance monitoring and evaluation, and supplemental funding to strengthen the capacity of government agencies.

Project and program design should incorporate flexibility measures to adapt to the evolving dynamics of fragility and conflict situations. It is pivotal to ensure that the project and program design remains simple and avoids unnecessary complexity while maintaining fragile and conflict sensitivity. It is also advisable to allocate enough time and set a flexible timeline for project implementation in case of unexpected events. A more frequent and conflict sensitive monitoring exercise is also critical for operational flexibility. Projects and programs can also consider using process indicators based on local

situations to understand progress on the ground. The GEF Policies provide some flexibility in the execution of projects by GEF Agencies.²⁴

Budgetary Flexibility

Creating a budget that allows for flexibility in planning is particularly important to manage fragility and conflict-related risks. Agencies such as WB, UNDP, and Conservation International, as well as private foundations and NGOs often have provisions for budget contingencies.²⁵

While the GEF **budget** process does not accommodate contingent costs, projects can integrate components that enhance flexibility, effectiveness, and sustainability with appropriate mitigation strategies.²⁶ These components may include, among others:

- **Institutional Capacity Building:** Strengthening institutional capacity to manage and respond to conflict and fragility risks.
- **A Flexible Sub-Grant Component for Local Communities:** Including a flexible sub-grant component for local communities, which can be used to improve local livelihoods based on the needs of local communities.
- **Targeted Activities for Vulnerable Communities:** Designing activities specifically aimed at supporting vulnerable groups, such as women, children, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, SOGI, and other marginalized populations.
- **Continuous Consultations and Stakeholder Engagement:** Allocating funds for consultations and engagement with vulnerable groups and multi-stakeholders to ensure their voices are heard and integrated into project implementation throughout the project cycle.
- **Frequent Monitoring:** Implementing frequent and conflict sensitive monitoring particularly dynamic changes in FCS to promptly identify and address emerging issues by adaptive management.
- **Technical Monitoring Tools:** Utilizing technical tools (e.g. third-party monitoring or geospatial data monitoring) for effective and real-time project monitoring and evaluation in FCS settings.
- **Conflict and Fragility Experts:** Including budget lines to engage technical experts in managing fragile and conflict situations.

Project Results Framework, Theory of Change and Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

Leveraging existing practices, GEF Agencies could benefit from adopting conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) tools tailored to the FCS context. This starts with ensuring that the project's Theory of Change effectively addresses the complexities and contribution of FCS settings to the

²⁴ See relevant GEF Policies in Annex 1.

²⁵ GEF IEO: [Evaluation of GEF Support in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations](#) (GEF/E/C.59/01) (2020) (p. 87).

²⁶ A flexible budget is key to accommodating needs not foreseen at the design stage. Some GEF agencies have tight rules on capping reallocations across budget lines - let alone creating new ones. Sometimes an approach to add a "budget line with a zero USD budget" at CEO Endorsement can aid in getting around this.

achievement of the project objective. The project objective itself may benefit from reflecting FCS considerations, including a long-term outcome orientation.

By proactively embedding FCS considerations in project results frameworks during the design phase, Agencies can better capture the unique challenges and extent of impacts specific to these contexts. The incorporation of participatory and inclusive processes, for instance, can enrich indicator selection and measurement strategies, enhancing the project’s alignment with FCS-focused outcomes.

When identifying the project M&E framework, Agencies may be intentional in ensuring that the results framework is realistic, accounts for ethical considerations in data management, and adopts a conflict-sensitive lens, capturing both short- and longer-term results. In the short term, this involves clarifying that immediate results may not be apparent quickly, while relying on process indicators to highlight progress and promote adaptive management. In the longer term, this means capturing the path to lasting change by relying on indicators tracking institutional development and stakeholder empowerment.

Table 1 summarizes examples of types of risks (to and from the project or program) and potential mitigation measures.²⁷

Table 1: Examples of types of risks and mitigation measures

Types of risks	Mitigation measures
Risk of unstable livelihoods of local communities	Enhancing sustainable and resilient livelihoods to provide sustainable economic opportunities for young men and women, reducing the risk of them joining armed groups
	Including a flexible sub-grant component for local communities, which can be used to improve local livelihoods based on the needs of local communities and access to scarce natural resources for local communities, such as food and water security.
	Including a plan to engage with local MSMEs and local companies , including household enterprises, cooperatives, social enterprises, and self-employed workers to create local employment and socio-economic activities for fostering economic stability and sustainability in FCS settings.
Risk of excluding the most vulnerable groups from the project/program	Designing activities specifically aimed at supporting vulnerable groups , such as women, children, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, SOGI, and other marginalized populations.
	Targeting engagement techniques to involve specific excluded groups, such as creating dialogue space with vulnerable groups (including women, children, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disability, SOGI, and minorities)
	Allocating funds for consultations and engagement with vulnerable groups and multi-stakeholders to ensure their voices are heard and integrated into project implementation throughout the project cycle.

²⁷ These are list of potential mitigation measures of FCS related risks from the GEF Agencies guidance materials and GEF project experience (See the Annex II). Project or program need to adjust these measures to be more profound depends on FCS contexts.

	Expanding collaboration with CSOs and local organizations in the project design as project executing partners to reach out the most vulnerable population.
Risk of conflict among various ethnic groups from the project/program	Ensuring secure land tenure rights , particularly for Indigenous Peoples, to reduce risks of further conflict and social impacts
	Holding separate meetings among different ethnic groups to avoid unnecessary conflict among them.
Risk of grievances and GBV and SEA/SH from the project/program	Raising awareness concerning project grievance mechanisms including separate grievance mechanisms specific to Gender-based Violence (GBV) and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH)
	Considering grievance mechanisms adapt to the specific needs and challenges of FCS environments including cultural sensitivity, conflict sensitivity, security and confidentiality, and integration with broader conflict resolution efforts
Risk of changing fragile and conflict situations	Implementing frequent and conflict sensitive monitoring particularly dynamic changes in FCS to promptly identify and address emerging issues by adaptive management.
	Utilizing technical tools (e.g. third-party monitoring or geospatial data monitoring) for effective and real-time project monitoring and evaluation in FCS settings.
	Including Third Party Monitoring , involving specialized firms or UN agencies, and using local facilitators to build trust and improve access in monitoring, compliance verification, and implementation support.
	Conducting rapid response survey data to provide critical information for interventions.
	Improving the project M&E systems to enhance national systems and provide more reliable data to support evidence-based policymaking.
	Maintaining regular dialogue with security personnel
	Including budget lines to engage technical experts in managing fragile and conflict situations.
Safety and security of project personnel	Developing guidelines on risk assessments, emergency response plans, and security training tailored to FCS contexts
Risk of weak project/program implementation capacity	Strengthening institutional capacity to manage and respond to conflict and fragility risks
	Seeking opportunities to collaborate with other projects and/or organizations to enhance local and institutional capacity to mitigate fragile and conflict-affected risks.
	Seeking opportunities to leverage any complementary initiatives that aim to address conflict and fragility.
	Detail the approach to training, monitoring, partnering with local organizations, and dispute resolution mechanisms including Gender-based Violence (GBV) and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH).
Overall risk in FCS to the project/program	Indicating specific risk management plans and designing suitable mitigation strategies to address identified risks, including timeline and budget.

	Including interventions that could directly contribute to a reduction of conflict and fragility.
	Incorporating successful strategies from other projects and Agencies.
	Engaging and collaborating with a wide range of stakeholders in the project design beyond traditional partnerships , such as local, national, and international CSOs with on-the-ground experience, international and regional institutions, humanitarian organizations, security and peace actors, and affected populations in FCS and have meaningful consultations and partnership with them as executing partner.
	Providing specific support and training for the project team and stakeholders to identify fragile and conflict-affected situations.

1.2. CONSIDERATIONS FOR CEO ENDORSEMENT OR APPROVAL STAGE

Situations in fragile and conflict contexts may drastically change in a short timeframe. It is crucial to review, revise, and further elaborate project design by CEO Endorsement or Approval stage.

1.2.1. Tagging Projects in FCS

As the project design is refined and further consultations with stakeholders are conducted, the **identification of risks in FCS need to be updated.**

1.2.2. Defining the Context

The project documentation should provide **specific details and updates regarding the conflict and fragility context**, including root causes, barriers, and opportunities, in the relevant sections of CEO Endorsement or Approval templates, including project background, baseline, and incrementality. The context analysis should be enhanced based on further assessments conducted and through in-depth stakeholder consultations during the PPG stage. This update should include detailed information on FCS-related risks regarding project sites, stakeholders and prevailing power relations among them, identification of vulnerable populations, among others. Key considerations for the PIF, PFD, or PPG proposal stage (section 1.1.2) should be revisited. This analysis should cover the causes, actors, and dynamics of the conflict situation and be reflected in the Theory of Change. If a separate fragile and conflict assessment is available, it should be uploaded to the Portal.

The project design needs to articulate a coherent Theory of Change that incorporates the results of these assessments and analyses. Additionally, the project should consider establishing a fragile and conflict-relevant baseline to inform subsequent monitoring and evaluation strategies.²⁸

1.2.3. Developing Risk Management and Mitigation Strategies

At CEO Endorsement or Approval stage, the project needs to include updated risk identification, **risk management, and mitigation strategies.** The key considerations for the PIF, PFD, or PPG proposal stage (section 1.1.3) should be revisited. A summary of FCS-related risks and mitigation measures should be updated in the Portal key risk table (*Political and Governance* risk and *Environmental and Social* risk), as

²⁸ World Bank (2022) Defueling Conflict: Environment and Natural Resource Management as a Pathway to Peace. Table 4.1 General Principles for Programming in FCS (p. 76).

well as any other relevant categories.²⁹ The following elements need to be included as a part of the risk management and mitigation strategies:

- **Design suitable mitigation strategies** to address identified risks, including a timeline and budget based on finding of fragile and conflict assessments.
- Detail the approach to **training, monitoring, partnering with local organizations**, and dispute resolution mechanisms including Gender-based Violence (GBV) and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH).
- Indicate whether the project team and stakeholders have received specific **support and training** to identify fragile and conflict-affected situations. If not, propose a training plan suitable for each context.

Strengthening Resilience and Capacity Building

Project design to enhance resilience and local and institutional capacity should be elaborated further by CEO Endorsement or Approval stage. The **identification of opportunities** specific to each project should be stressed, focusing on those that can bolster resilience by strengthening governance structures and capacity building, increasing collaboration with other organizations, improving local livelihoods, and embedding conflict reduction. It can be beneficial to incorporate **a flexible sub-grant component for local communities** to improve their sustainable and resilient governance and livelihoods depending on their needs.

Collaboration with Various Stakeholders including Local Partners

Projects should describe **plans to engage various stakeholders including local partners** throughout the project cycle. These plans need to include further context analysis and the development of future narratives. They should also aim at identifying outcome targets, designing change pathways reflected in the Theory of Change, as well as assessing risks and mitigation strategies. Additionally, the design of the knowledge management and learning activities in FCS settings should be elaborated further, in collaboration with local partners.

Catalyzing Private Sector Engagement

Projects should provide evidence and detailed plans for engaging local MSMEs, creating local employment, and providing socio-economic benefits while delivering GEBs.

1.2.4. Integrating Operational Flexibility Measures

Project design should incorporate flexibility measures to adapt to the evolving dynamics of fragility and conflict situations. Attention should be given to the **budgeting and financial structure** of the projects at this stage, ensuring that financial planning is robust and adaptable to changing circumstances. Financial management, procurement, and disbursement capacities of local partners are often weak in FCS settings. Financial and project management intermediaries are often needed until capacities in the country have been strengthened. Projects can integrate components to enhance the flexibility and

²⁹ Many of the risk categories pertain to FCS, especially in the context of Execution, *Capacity for Implementation* and *Fiduciary* risks.

sustainability of outcomes with appropriate mitigation strategies and conflict-sensitive M&E tools as suggested in section 1.1.4. Building in Operational Flexibility Measures.

2. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION STAGE

Sensitivity to conflict and fragility issues during project implementation requires exceptional attention to detail, continuous monitoring, adjustment of project activities, as well as learning and collaboration.

2.1. CONSIDERATIONS FOR PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION STAGE

Due to the dynamic nature of risks in FCS, adaptive management, learning and collaboration, and frequent monitoring and evaluation are crucial. Projects in this context require more frequent monitoring than other projects.

2.1.1. Adaptive Management

Adaptive management is particularly important in unstable, fragile, and transitional environments where the context, methods, or opportunities can change significantly.³⁰ This approach requires regular updates to risk assessments and adjustment of mitigation measures throughout the project cycle.

FCS-sensitive monitoring mechanisms (PIRs, feedback mechanisms, monitoring visits, etc.) may identify certain activities or implementation modalities as contributing to the conflict dynamics (distribution effect, substitution effect, market effect, etc.). Thus, measures would therefore need to be taken to mitigate these FCS risks. They may not appear in a risk register but instead, be identified during the implementation.

In line with GEF's guidelines³¹, adaptive management may involve the flexibility to adjust **outcome indicators and targets, activity plans, implementation sites, timelines, budgets, and co-financing arrangements**. Agencies are expected to report on any minor changes³² to projects in the next Project Implementation Report. Since risks tend to be very dynamic in FCS, the actual risk profile may change significantly from the time of the initial project identification and eventual implementation. This may require an **update of risk assessments during the project implementation stage**, allowing for their validation or modification as the situation evolves. Mitigation strategies may also involve regular review processes and contingency plans can be promptly activated if required.³³

In cases where project implementation conditions deteriorate due to conflict or fragility, the GEF Agency and the GEF Secretariat may **recommend amending, dropping, suspending, or canceling a project**.³⁴ Such decisions may result from changes in the national priorities or operating environment, poor

³⁰ STAP (2024) [Environmental Security: Achieving Durable Outcomes in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations \(GEF/STAP/C.66/Inf.03\)](#) (p.6)

³¹ Annex 9, Project and Program Cycle Policy Guidelines (2020 Update), (GEF/C.59/Inf.03).

³² Definition of minor and major amendments and procedures need to be taken are in the [GEF Guidelines of Project and Program Cycle Policy \(2020 UPDATE\) \(GEF/C.59/Inf.03, July 20, 2020\)](#) (Annex 9: Project Amendment, drop, suspension and cancellation, page 55, para 2-3)

³³ STAP (2024) [Environmental Security: Achieving Durable Outcomes in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations \(GEF/STAP/C.66/Inf.03\)](#) (p.5-6)

³⁴ Please see annex 9 of the [GEF Guidelines of Project and Program Cycle Policy \(2020 UPDATE\) \(GEF/C.59/Inf.03, July 20, 2020\)](#)

implementation performance, the inability to meet project objectives, or unmet benchmarks for project preparation, among other factors.

2.1.2. Learning, Exchange, and Collaboration

Learning and exchanging different approaches to FCS risk management and mitigation strategies, as well as collaborating with other projects and programs implemented in the same FCS areas, are essential for improving project performance. Leveraging existing knowledge platforms supported by the GEF, such as the Impact Programs (Congo, Amazon, and others) and the Global Wildlife Program, can facilitate real-time learning, exchange, and technical assistance.

GEF projects and programs should actively seek opportunities for learning, exchanging different risk management and mitigation approaches, and promoting collaboration with other projects and programs in the same FCS areas. Since conflict sensitivity is a cross-cutting issue, sharing different approaches and experiences can enable project coordinators to improve project performance quickly and effectively. These exchanges can facilitate peer support and learning for teams facing similar challenges, creating a network for collaboration. Improved collaboration among different projects and programs, such as joint analysis, strategies, and studies, also helps recipient governments and communities manage various projects and programs in the same FCS areas.

For example, the UN addresses climate-related security risks at a regional level through the following approaches which emphasize learning, exchange, and collaboration:

- **Regular Information Sharing:** Continuous updates and exchanges on ongoing UN work to address climate-related security risks in the short and long term.
- **Joint Analyses and Projects:** Developing joint analyses and projects that strengthen conflict prevention, support natural resources management, and promote climate resilience. Examples include studies on transboundary water resources, land governance, and climate impacts on human mobility in border areas to identify areas and communities most affected.
- **Partnerships on Climate Security:** Deepening partnerships with regional entities, such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the African Union.³⁵

2.1.3. Monitoring and Evaluation

Key challenges for results orientation and M&E in FCS contexts include fragile institutional capacity, restricted access due to insecurity, a high-risk and rapidly changing environment, and the complexity of measuring FCS issues. These challenges require dedicated M&E tools and practices. Regular monitoring in FCS contexts helps identify problems, adjust project activities, and collect information for further improvement. Key lessons should be documented in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) reports. Effective monitoring in FCS settings can involve Third Party Monitoring and using local facilitators to build trust and improve access.

For instance, the WB emphasizes the importance of a robust monitoring system in FCS contexts. New tools, methodologies, and technologies such as [Geo-Enabling for Monitoring and Supervision](#) can generate data, track quantitative and qualitative indicators, and empower beneficiaries by providing

³⁵ UNEP, EU, adelphi (2022) Guidance Note and Tools to [Address Climate-Related Security Risks](#)

real-time access to FCS areas. Third-party monitoring, involving specialized firms or UN agencies, can aid in monitoring, compliance verification, and implementation support. Rapid response survey data also provides critical information for interventions. Improving the project M&E systems can enhance national systems and provide more reliable data to support evidence-based policymaking.

Project Implementation Reporting

Transparent and candid reporting is fundamental for conflict-sensitive implementation. The annual Project Implementation Report (PIR) could serve as a project management and communication tool on the evolution of risks and mitigation measures related to fragile and conflict sensitive situations. PIRs should provide a repository on how Agencies have been maintaining flexibility in FCS settings by monitoring, learning, and adapting continuously throughout project implementation.

A specific emphasis on evolving risks, progress of mitigation measures, and challenges in FCS contexts, including a way to address FCS-specific challenges, need to be described as progress and challenges in the context of the PIR. A dedicated text field on challenges will be established.³⁶ This will facilitate analysis and simplify the collection, collation, and access of relevant information on projects in FCS settings. Tooltips in the Portal will be updated to invite Agencies to provide FCS-specific context and findings for projects in fragile and conflict-affected areas.³⁷ It is also important to capture lessons learned in the PIR, when available.

Given the annual nature of the PIR, it is suggested to have regular communication with GEF Program Managers on conflict and fragility dimensions to provide early notice and discuss potential mitigation measures and adaptive management for rapidly evolving circumstances.

Mid-Term Review

The Mid-Term Review (MTR) process provides an opportunity for in-depth analysis of how existing or emerging fragile and conflict situations are affecting project performance and results delivery during project implementation. The MTR involves key project stakeholders in reviewing progress and performance and supporting decision-making processes to strengthen the sustainability of project results. It is an opportunity to discuss with the country and project beneficiaries the continued relevance of the project objectives as well as the likelihood of their achievement during the remaining implementation period.

Anticipating possible adjustments in project design, combined with ongoing monitoring of conflict dynamics, can lead to effective MTR recommendations for project restructuring and allow for project staff to be proactive as conflict and fragility situations evolve.

A tooltip in the Portal will invite Agencies to emphasize FCS-specific challenges, evolving risks, and the progress of mitigation measures in the MTR.³⁸ Key lessons learned from the project at mid-term need to be described in MTR as well in the Portal. Additionally, the *Political and Governance* risk and *Environmental and Social* risk sections in the risk framework table should be revised to include an

³⁶ A dedicated text field on challenges will be established in the PIRs template in the Portal by the end of June 2025.

³⁷ Tooltips in the Portal will be updated by the end of June 2025.

³⁸ Tooltips in the Portal will be updated by the end of June 2025. The “Main findings of the MTR” in the Portal will invite *providing information on FCS-specific challenges for the projects in the FCS setting*.

updated summary of FCS risks and mitigation measures as needed, as well as any other relevant categories.³⁹

3. PROJECT CLOSING STAGE

The dynamics of fragile and conflict situations can cause delays throughout the project cycle, potentially extending the project beyond its original closing date. It is therefore essential to plan for sustainability and to ensure smooth transitions for local structures to absorb and sustain the benefits of the project upon termination of funding and staff removal.

3.1. CONSIDERATIONS FOR TERMINAL EVALUATION STAGE

Project closure and Terminal Evaluation (TE) processes are particularly important in fragile and conflict-affected situations. Sustaining progress made during project implementation is crucial for continuing global environment benefits.

The TE report should emphasize lessons learned at all stages of the project (design, implementation, and monitoring) to inform future project design and ensure long-lasting benefits. These lessons can also facilitate project development and implementation in other conflict and fragility contexts.

A tooltip in the GEF Portal will invite Agencies to emphasize FCS-specific challenges, risks, and mitigation measures in the TE module.⁴⁰

While the GEF will maintain its programming directions, strategies, and eligibility criteria for funding, considering conflict and fragility issues systematically and consistently in project design will enhance the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of the GEF portfolio. The experience and skills developed in the GEF investments by working in fragile and conflict-affected situations are valuable assets. They can improve the ability of projects and programs to handle emerging crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing extreme weather events, other natural disasters, and deliver resilient and sustainable outcomes, directly contributing to increased global environmental benefits.

³⁹ Many risk categories pertain to FCS, especially in the context of Execution, *Capacity for Implementation*, and *Fiduciary* risks.

⁴⁰ Tooltips in the Portal will be updated by the end of June 2025. The “Main findings of the TE” in the Portal will invite *providing information on FCS-specific challenges for the projects in the FCS setting*.

ANNEX I. GEF POLICIES

The GEF has policies, guidelines, and strategies to address Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations (FSC) during the project design and implementation stages. These have been organized by the different project cycle stages below.

PROJECT AND PROGRAM PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION STAGE

Under the [GEF Risk Appetite](#)⁴¹, the Agencies should : (1) **describe the nature of the risk**; (2) **identify relevant mitigating measures**; and (3) assign a rating (Low, Moderate, Substantial, or High) to the level of residual risk in the PIF or PFD and update it at CEO Endorsement or Approval stage and MTR. One of the key risk categories is the *Political and Governance* risk of investing in fragile environments and challenging security contexts, which include exposure to political instability, potential armed conflict, and violence. The GEF's risk appetite for *Political and Governance* risk is substantial to support the improvement of global environmental benefits in fragile and conflict-affected areas.

The [GEF Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguard](#)⁴² requires projects and programs to conduct **assessments** specific to conflict or post-conflict context to identify associated risks in case GEF projects or programs are considered to have **particular risks in a conflict or post-conflict context**. Based on the assessments, projects or programs should **develop appropriate measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate identified risks**. The management of these risks and the implementation of mitigation measures need to be monitored and reported in MTR.

The [GEF Policy on Gender Equality](#)⁴³ requires ensuring **gender analysis, socio-economic assessments**, or the equivalent to inform gender-responsive design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, including budgeting and staffing, which include in FCS settings.

The [GEF Stakeholder Engagement Policy](#)⁴⁴ requires that stakeholders are engaged in meaningful consultations and are able to express their views on project plans, benefits, risks, impacts, and mitigation measures that may affect them including in FCS settings.

The GEF Policies provide some flexibility in the execution of projects by GEF Agencies, and co-financing. The [Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy](#)⁴⁵ stipulates criteria for exceptions under which a **GEF Agency can also provide executing services**.

On an exceptional basis, the [Policy of Co-financing](#)⁴⁶ provides **flexibility for co-financing** in GEF projects in response to an emergency or other unforeseen circumstance depending on the justification of achieving the objective of the project and its assessment.

⁴¹ [GEF Risk Appetite](#) (GEF/C.66/13)

⁴² Under the Minimum Standard 9: Community Health, Safety and Security of the GEF [Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards \(ESS Policy\) \(para 17, p. 30\)](#)

⁴³ The GEF [Policy on Gender Equality](#) (SD/PL/02, 2017) (para 19, p. 8)

⁴⁴ [GEF Stakeholder Engagement Policy](#) (SD/PL/01) (para 16, p. 6)

⁴⁵ [GUIDELINES ON THE PROJECT AND PROGRAM CYCLE POLICY \(2020 UPDATE\)](#) (GEF/C.59/Inf.03, July 20, 2020) (para 13-15, p, 44-45)

⁴⁶ [Policy on Co-financing](#) (FI/PL/01, 2018) (para 13-14, p. 6)

The [GEF Strategy for Knowledge Management and Learning](#)⁴⁷ requires all GEF investments to **incorporate knowledge and learning into project design** by elaborating a knowledge management approach and implementation plan. This will ensure that all projects allocate sufficient funding for direct investments in knowledge exchange and learning following GEF programming priorities. These direct investments will support interventions that prioritize knowledge generation, capture and share knowledge around innovative solutions in a target system, and promote efforts to enhance knowledge and learning in priority areas to inform the larger GEF portfolio.

During project preparation or implementation, **changes to the project design, implementation modality, or timeline** may be required to allow the project to continue preparation or implementation. Such changes can be either *major or minor amendments* under the [Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy](#)⁴⁸.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION STAGE

Under the [Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy](#)⁴⁹, **GEF projects can be suspended** (temporary stoppage or an interruption of project implementation or disbursement of funds) upon the advice of the GEF Agency, the Secretariat, or the country, and as warranted by special circumstances, such as conditions in the country that presented an imminent danger for undertaking project activities by either the GEF Agency or local staff.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION & CLOSING STAGE

The [Policy on Monitoring](#)⁵⁰ states that the Secretariat makes available on the GEF website all **Project Implementation Reports, Mid-Term Reviews, and Terminal Evaluations** that are not restricted from public access in accordance with the applicable [Policy on Access to Information](#)⁵¹.

⁴⁷ [GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY STRATEGY FOR KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND LEARNING](#) (GEF/C.65/03/Rev.01)

⁴⁸ [Project and Program Cycle Policy \(OP/PL/01, 2018\) and Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy \(2020 UPDATE\) \(GEF/C.59/Inf.03, July 20, 2020\)](#), Annex 9: Project Amendment, Drop, Suspension and Cancellation (para 3, 5, 7, p. 55-58)

⁴⁹ [Project and Program Cycle Policy \(OP/PL/01, 2018\) and Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy \(2020 UPDATE\) \(GEF/C.59/Inf.03, July 20, 2020\)](#), Annex 9: Project Amendment, Drop, Suspension and Cancellation (para 11, 12, p. 59-60)

⁵⁰ [POLICY ON MONITORING \(ME/PL/03\)](#)

⁵¹ [Policy on Access to Information](#) (GA/PL/04)

ANNEX II: EXISTING TOOLS AND GUIDANCE

Building internal capacity to work effectively in FCS is crucial for managing projects and programs in these challenging settings. Many GEF Agencies, such as ADB, AfDB, CI, FAO, IFAD, UNEP, and WB, have developed internal modules and online resources for their staff. Numerous guidance documents, tools, and training materials are publicly accessible. Some Agencies are enhancing their internal capacity by increasing the number of staff focused on FCS at headquarters and in national and regional offices and by providing specialized FCS training for project teams. Ensuring staff security, particularly for non-UN GEF Agencies, is a significant challenge, and exchanging information about security issues at the country level is critical. Below are some tools and references for designing and managing projects and programs in FCS settings.

Context Analysis

- Conservation International (2021) [Social Responsibility Assessment Tool for the Seafood Sector](#)
- Conservation International (2021) [The Social Responsibility Assessment for the Seafood Sector – A Manual for Trainers on Guidance for Assessment Implementation](#)
- FAO (2020) Participant's workbook- FAO Programme Clinic: Designing Conflict-Sensitive Interventions ([English](#)) ([Arabic](#)) ([French](#))
- FAO (2019) FAO Facilitators' guide- FAO Programme Clinic: Designing Conflict-Sensitive Interventions ([English](#)) ([Arabic](#)) ([French](#))
- FAO (2019) FAO Guide to Context Analysis: Informing FAO Decision-Making ([English](#)) ([French](#)) ([Arabic](#))
- The UN Climate Security Mechanism (in which UNEP partners with the UN Department of Political Affairs, UN Department of Peace Operations and UN Development Programme)
 - o Overview ([en/fr/sp](#))
 - o Briefing note on climate security ([en/fr/sp](#))
 - o Conceptual approach to risk assessments ([en/fr/sp](#))
 - o Relevant data sources ([en/fr/sp](#))
 - o Checklist to help climate-proof political analysis ([en/fr /sp](#))
- UN Development Group (2016) [Conflict-related Development Analysis](#)
- UNEP, EU, adelphi (2022) Guidance Note and Tools to [Address Climate-Related Security Risks](#)
- UNEP, EU, adelphi (2022) [Integrated Analysis Tool](#). Climate, Peace and Security: Understanding Climate-Related Security Risks through and Integrated Lens.

General Guidance

- ADB (2012) [A Peacebuilding Tool for a Conflict-Sensitive Approach to Development: A Pilot Initiative in Nepal](#)
- Adelphi and Climate Diplomacy (2020) [Linking Adaptation and Peacebuilding](#) (Toolbox)

- AfDB (2014) [Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the Strategy for Addressing Fragility and Building Resilience in Africa and for the Transition Support Facility](#)
- ARIA (Africa Resilience Investment Accelerator) (2023) [Conflict Sensitivity in Projects – Practical Measures for Private Sector Clients](#)
- FAO (2022) [Operationalizing pathways to sustaining peace in the context of Agenda 2030](#)
- IUCN (2024) [Planet on the Move](#): Reimagining conservation at the intersection of migration, environmental change, and conflict
- IUCN (2021) [Conflict and Conservation](#)
- STAP (2024) [Environmental Security: Achieving Durable Outcomes in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations](#) (GEF/STAP/C.66/Inf.03)
- STAP (2018) [Environmental security: dimensions and priorities](#)
- UN Development Group (2013) [Natural Resource Management in Transition Settings](#)
- UNDP (2016) [Local Governance in Fragile and Conflict-affected Settings: Building a Resilient Foundation for Peace and Development](#)
- UNDP (2016) [The Peace Promise](#)
- UNEP, UN Department of Political Affairs, and UNDP (2020) [Climate Security Mechanism- Briefing Note](#) <Toolbox>
- UNEP (2009) [Integrating Environment in Post-Conflict Needs Assessment: UNEP Guidance Note](#)
- UN Framework Team on Protective Action (2012) [Strengthening Capacity for Conflict-Sensitive Natural Resource Management](#)
- World Bank (2024) [Natural Resource Management Fragility, and Conflict Issues Guidance Note for County Climate and Development Reports](#)
- World Bank (2022) [Defueling Conflict: Environment and Natural Resource Management as a Pathway to Peace](#)
- World Bank (2022) [Fragility, conflict, and violence in middle-income countries](#)
- World Bank (2015) [A Practical Handbook for Environmental Regulations and Legislators Working in Situations Affected by Fragility, Conflict, and Extreme Violence \(FCV\)](#)
- World Bank (with Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment) (2005) [Strategic Environmental Assessment: Capacity Building in Conflict-Affected Countries](#)
- WWF (2001) [The Trampled Grass: Mitigating the impacts of armed conflict on the environment](#)

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Alliance for Peacebuilding (2024) [Eirene Peacebuilding Database](#)
- Environmental Law Institute (2023) [Toolkit on Monitoring and Evaluation of Environmental Peacebuilding](#)
- Pamina Firchow (2018) [Reclaiming Everyday Peace: Local Voices in Measurement and Evaluation After War](#), Cambridge University Press

Lessons Learned and Country Examples

- ADB (2016) [Mapping fragile and conflict-affected situations in Asia and the Pacific: The ADB experience](#)
- Conservation International (2022) [Conflict Sensitivity and Environmental Peacebuilding in Conservation: Lessons Learned from CI](#)
- FAO (2017) South Sudan: [Linking community-based animal health services with natural resource conflict mitigation in the Abyei Administrative Area](#)
- FAO (2021) Mali: Analysis of conflicts over the exploitation of natural resources ([English](#)) ([French](#))
- FAO (2021) Burkina Faso: Analysis of conflicts over the exploitation of natural resources ([English](#)) ([French](#))
- FAO (2022) Somalia: [Strengthening the resilience of rural communities through conflict-sensitive programming: Translating context analysis and conflict-sensitive recommendations into adjustment in project implementation in Lower Shabelle region](#)
- UNEP, UNDP, UN Women, DPPA/PBSO (2024) [Knowledge Platform on Gender, Natural Resources, Climate, and Peace](#)

Staff Safety

- UN (2020) [Handbook for United Nations Field Missions on Preventing and Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence](#)

Online Courses and Materials

- Conservation International. (2017) [Environmental Peacebuilding Training Manual](#).
- UNEP, UN Women, UNDP, DPPA, UN CC:Learn, adelphi (2022) Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on [Climate Change, Peace and Security: Understanding Climate-Related Security Risks through an Integrated Lens](#)
- SDGAcademyX (2023) [Environmental Security and Sustaining Peace](#)

ANNEX III: CHECK LIST

1.1. Considerations at the PIF, PFD, or PPG Proposal Stage

Category	Consideration	Priority	Yes	No
1. Tagging Projects and Programs in FCS	Have the projects and programs in FCS been tagged in the GEF Portal during the early design phase and continuously updated?	Red		
	Is there a valid justification provided for tagging FCS, with supporting documents attached?	Green		
2. Defining the Context	Has a fragile and conflict assessment been conducted to define the FCS context, including root causes, barriers, and opportunities?	Red		
	Does the project provide a thorough analysis of FCS-related risks and stakeholder identification?	Red		
	Are vulnerable groups, such as women, children, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, and SOGI minorities, identified and considered?	Red		
	Are the findings from the FCS assessment integrated into the Theory of Change, project design, and risk table in the Portal?	Red		
	Are any available fragile and conflict assessments uploaded into the Portal?	Green		
3. Developing Risk Management and Mitigation Strategies	Are these risk management strategies summarized in the key risk table (Political and Governance risk, Environmental and Social risk, and others) in the Portal?	Red		
	Is there a detailed risk management plan that will be finalized by the CEO Endorsement or Approval stage?	Red		
	Does the project incorporate risk management strategies such as capacity building, participatory approaches, dispute resolution mechanisms, and creating local employment?	Yellow		
	Are gender-based violence (GBV), access to natural resources, and secure land tenure rights included in the risk mitigation strategies?	Yellow		
3.1. Strengthening Resilience and Capacity Building	Does the project strengthen local and institutional capacity to understand and mitigate fragile and conflict-affected risks?	Yellow		
	Does the project leverage opportunities to collaborate with other projects or organizations to enhance resilience?	Yellow		
	Is there a flexible sub-grant component designed for local communities to improve sustainable livelihoods and governance?	Yellow		
3.2. Collaboration with Various Stakeholders	Does the project engage local CSOs and other stakeholders in the design and execution phases?	Yellow		
	Are multi-stakeholder consultations conducted throughout the project cycle?	Yellow		
	Does the project incorporate stakeholder engagement strategies for vulnerable groups in conflict-affected areas?	Yellow		
	Are mechanisms for knowledge sharing and collaboration with development partners included?	Yellow		
3.3. Catalyzing Private Sector Engagement	Does the project include components to engage local MSMEs, cooperatives, and other private sector entities to create local employment?	Yellow		
	Are socio-economic benefits delivered while achieving global environmental benefits (GEBs)?	Yellow		
4. Integrating Operational Flexibility Measures	Are flexibility measures integrated into the project design to adapt to evolving fragility and conflict dynamics?	Red		
	Does the project allocate budgetary flexibility to handle FCS-related risks?	Red		
	Are there provisions for frequent and conflict sensitive monitoring in response to FCS changes?	Red		
	Does the project use technical monitoring tools (e.g., geospatial data) for real-time evaluation in FCS settings?	Yellow		

Note: **Red** (Important), **Yellow** (Good to have), **Green** (depending on situation)

1.2. Considerations for CEO Endorsement or Approval Stage

Category	Consideration	Priority	Yes	No
1. Tagging Projects in FCS	Have the risks related to FCS been updated based on refined project design and further stakeholder consultations?	Red		
2. Defining the Context	Has the conflict and fragility context been thoroughly updated, including details on root causes, barriers, and opportunities?	Red		
	Are relevant sections of the CEO Endorsement or Approval templates (project background, baseline, incrementality) updated with the latest context information?	Red		
	Has the context analysis been enhanced with input from in-depth stakeholder consultations and additional assessments conducted during the PPG stage?	Red		
	Does the project now include specific information on FCS-related risks such as project sites, stakeholders, power dynamics, and identification of vulnerable populations?	Red		
	Have the key considerations from the PIF, PFD, or PPG proposal stage (section 1.1.2) been revisited?	Yellow		
	Does the project's Theory of Change reflect an updated conflict analysis and stakeholder engagement?	Yellow		
	Has a separate fragile and conflict assessment been uploaded in the Portal, if available?	Green		
	Has a fragile and conflict-relevant baseline been developed for monitoring and evaluation purposes?	Green		
3. Developing Risk Management and Mitigation Strategies	Have the risk management and mitigation strategies been updated based on the latest conflict and fragility assessment?	Red		
	Are the specific risk management plans, including timelines and budgets for mitigation strategies, clearly outlined?	Red		
	Does the project outline a clear approach for training, monitoring, partnering with local organizations, and dispute resolution mechanisms, especially for GBV, SEA, and SH?	Yellow		
	Has the project team received specific support and training for identifying and addressing fragile and conflict-affected situations?	Red		
3.1. Strengthening Resilience and Capacity Building	Does the project's design focus on strengthening resilience, governance, capacity building, and embedding peacebuilding to address FCS challenges?	Yellow		
	Is there a flexible sub-grant component to support local communities in improving governance and livelihoods based on their specific needs?	Yellow		
3.2. Collaboration with Various Stakeholders	Are there clear plans to engage various stakeholders, including local partners, throughout the project cycle?	Yellow		
	Has the project collaboratively identified outcome targets and developed change pathways within the Theory of Change?	Yellow		
	Are knowledge management and learning activities designed in collaboration with local partners to reflect FCS settings?	Yellow		
3.3. Catalyzing Private Sector Engagement	Does the project provide evidence of engagement with local MSMEs to create employment and socio-economic benefits?	Yellow		
	Will the private sector engagement contribute to delivering Global Environmental Benefits (GEBs)?	Yellow		
4. Integrating Operational Flexibility Measures	Has the project incorporated operational flexibility measures to adapt to evolving fragility and conflict situations?	Red		
	Are there provisions for addressing the financial management and disbursement capacities of local partners?	Yellow		
	Does the project include strategies to ensure flexibility and sustainability of outcomes?	Yellow		

Note: **Red** (Important), **Yellow** (Good to have), **Green** (depending on situation)

2.1. Considerations for Project Implementation Stage

Category	Consideration	Priority	Yes	No
1. Adaptive Management	Are risk assessments and mitigation measures regularly updated during implementation?	Yellow		
	Are flexible adjustments made to project indicators, timelines, budgets, and sites as needed?	Yellow		
2. Learning, Exchange, and Collaboration	Is the project leveraging GEF knowledge platforms (e.g., Impact Programs; Integrated Programs) for learning and technical assistance?	Yellow		
	Is there collaboration with other projects/programs in the same FCS areas?	Yellow		
	Are joint analyses or partnerships being used to address climate and conflict risks?	Green		
3. Monitoring and Evaluation	Are robust monitoring mechanisms (e.g., Third-Party Monitoring, real-time data tools) in place?	Yellow		
	Are evolving risks and mitigation measures being documented in Project Implementation Reports (PIRs)?	Red		
	Is the Mid-Term Review (MTR) being used to adjust project design based on FCS risks?	Red		

Note: **Red** (Important), **Yellow** (Good to have), **Green** (depending on situation)

3.1 Considerations for Project Closing Stage

Category	Consideration	Priority	Yes	No
1. Sustainability Planning	Has a plan been developed to ensure local structures can sustain the benefits of the project after the closure?	Yellow		
	Have strategies been set in place for the transition of responsibilities to local entities?	Yellow		
2. Terminal Evaluation (TE)	Does the TE report emphasize lessons learned from project design, implementation, and monitoring?	Red		
	Are the lessons from the project being used to inform future project designs in similar fragile and conflict contexts?	Green		
	Has the TE module in the GEF Portal included FCS-specific challenges, risks, and mitigation measures?	Red		
3. Handling future crises	Are there insights on how GEF projects in FCS contexts can contribute to handling future crises (e.g., COVID-19, natural disasters)?	Green		

Note: **Red** (Important), **Yellow** (Good to have), **Green** (depending on situation)