Conflict-Sensitive Conservation

This book provides an empirically formulated foundation for conflict-sensitive conservation, a field in which the existing literature relies primarily on anecdotal evidence.

Seeking to better understand the impact of conflict on the implementation and outcomes of environmental projects, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Independent Evaluation Office and the Environmental Law Institute undertook an evaluation of GEF support to fragile and conflict-affected contexts. Following a qualitative and quantitative analysis of documents from more than 4,000 projects, the research team discovered a statistically significant negative correlation between a country's Fragile States Index score and the implementation quality of environmental projects in that country. In this book, the evaluation and research team explain these groundbreaking findings in detail, highlighting seven key case studies: Afghanistan, Albertine Rift, Balkans, Cambodia, Colombia, Lebanon, and Mali. Drawing upon additional research and interviews with GEF project implementation staff, the volume illustrates the pathways through which conflict and fragility frequently impact environmental projects. It also examines how practitioners and sponsoring institutions can plan and implement their projects to avoid or mitigate these issues and find opportunities to promote peacebuilding through their environmental interventions.

Examining data from 164 countries and territories, this innovative book will be of great interest to students and scholars of environmental management, conservation, international development, and the fast-growing field of environmental peacebuilding. It will also be a great resource for practitioners working in these important fields.

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Conflict-Sensitive Conservation

Lessons from the Global Environment Facility

Carl Bruch, Geeta Batra, and Anupam Anand

with Shehla Chowdhury and Sierra Killian

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

Abbreviation or Acronym	Meaning
ABNJ	area beyond national jurisdiction
ACATISEMA	Asociación de Cabildos y Autoridades Tradicionales Indígenas de la Selva de Matavén
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AfDB	African Development Bank
AFOLU	agriculture and forestry
BACRIM	criminal gangs
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CALM	Conservation Areas Landscape Management
CAU	United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBSP	Congo Basin Strategic Program
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CI	Conservation International
CIPAV	Center for Research on Sustainable Agricultural Production Systems
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CNA	Center for Naval Analyses Corporation
COAMA	Consolidation of the Colombian Amazon
COPs	Conferences of the Parties
CRFA	County Resilience and Fragility Assessment
CTCN	Climate Technology Centre and Network
DBSA	Development Bank of Southern Africa
DBSB	Danube/Black Sea and Mediterranean Basin
DfID	UK Department for International Development
DRB	Drina River Basin
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC DEVCO	European Commission's Directorate-General for

	International Cooperation and Development
ELI	Environmental Law Institute
ELN	National Liberation Army
EU	European Union
EXPAN	Expanding the Protected Area Network
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
FEDEGAN	cattle ranchers' association
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEF IEO	Global Environment Facility Independent Evaluation Office
GEF STAP	Global Environment Facility Scientific and Technology Advisory Panel
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IDEAM	Hidrología, Meterología y Estudios Ambientales (meteorological institute)
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IGCP	International Gorilla Conservation Program
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INS	Instituto National de Salud (National Institute of Health)
INVEMAR	Instituto de Investigaciones Marinas y Costeras
IP	indigenous peoples
IPCC	International Panel on Climate Change
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organization
IUCN	World Conservation Union
LDN	Land Degradation Neutrality
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MADR	Colombian National Ministry for Agriculture
MADS	Colombian National Ministry of the Environment
MAP	medicinal and aromatic plant
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreements
MOE	Ministry of Environment
MOOC	massive open online course
MRC	Mekong River Commission
MSB	migratory soaring bird
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NPR	National Public Radio
NRSP	Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

OECD DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Development Assistant Committee
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PCB	polychlorinated biphenyl
PMIS	Project Management Information System
POP	persistent organic pollutant
PRIO	Peace Research Institute Oslo
RET	renewable energy technologies
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIP	Strategic Investment Program
SPWA-CC	Strategic Programme for West Africa—Climate Change
S-RET	Scaling-up of Renewable Energy Technologies
STAP	Scientific and Technology Advisory Panel
TAMP	Transboundary Agro-Ecosystem Management Programme
TER	terminal evaluation review
TSBR	Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve
UAESPNN	Unidad Administrativa Especial del Sistema de Parques Nacionales Naturales (national natural parks system administration)
UN	United Nations
UN OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNCCD	United Nations Convention of Combat Desertification
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFTPA	United Nations Interagency Framework Team for Preventive Action
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VNP	Virachey National Park
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

Foreword

The timeliness of this book can hardly be overstated. It brings together two issues that I would call the defining challenges of our time. On one hand, there is climate change and the degradation of natural resources and the environment. On the other, there is fragility, conflict, and vulnerability. As you read the book, it becomes crystal clear how these are closely intertwined.

The international development scene has changed dramatically over the past few decades. A few short decades ago, there was general optimism regarding social and economic development that would eventually lift all countries and their citizens out of poverty. This optimism, at least in the West, was at its highest in the 1990s following the end of the Cold War, when some observers predicted a final victory for global capitalism. Poverty was being reduced at rapid rates and would be relegated to history during our lifetime. While some voices warned about the loss of biodiversity and concern over global warming was increasing, we had reason for optimism on that front too. The 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro was the largest gathering ever of heads of state and government, and it led to concrete agreements among countries to tackle the most pressing environmental problems jointly. Major multilateral environmental agreements—including the Convention on Biodiversity, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change—were agreed upon, and countries in the Global North committed to financing sustainable development in the Global South. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) was established in this spirit.

Fast forward to today, and the picture looks very different. Environmental degradation has assumed unforeseen proportions. Deforestation continues at stubbornly high rates, and more species and ecosystems are lost forever than ever before during human existence. Land degradation threatens vast swathes of land, putting people's livelihoods and food security at risk, exacerbated by runaway climate change. Climate change is no longer a theoretical prospect but is touching all our lives with prolonged droughts and heat waves, stronger and more frequent storms, and sea-level rise that is particularly dangerous for island nations and low-lying coastal areas, where settlements and economic activity have increasingly concentrated. Despite high-level political declarations and accords, such as the Paris Climate Agreement, concrete actions to counter climate change have been slow to materialize.

Poverty has been reduced proportionally, thanks largely to rapid and relatively equitable growth in China. A number of other countries have also risen to upper-middle income status, such as Brazil, Côte d'Ivoire, Mexico, South Africa, and Thailand (World Population Review, n.d.). Still, in all of them, poverty remains a major challenge, and the gap between the rich and the poor has widened. This same phenomenon can be seen equally in many rich countries, not least the United States. Globally, the United Nations estimates that there are today more than 1.2 billion people living in acute multidimensional poverty (United Nations Development Programme & Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, 2022), a number that increased significantly due to the pandemic and has been exacerbated by Russia's war in Ukraine.

Notably, there is a large group of countries where the quality of life has not improved over these decades. Many of these countries are facing conflict and fragility. The World Bank classifies such countries based on two criteria: (a) countries with high levels of institutional and social fragility and (b) countries affected by violent conflict (World Bank, n.d.). Today, 20 and 17 countries, respectively, fall into these categories. Needless to say, countries may move in and out of these situations based on their trajectories and specific events. These situations lead to human suffering that often has the worst effects on women and children. Conflict and fragility are also related to population displacements that may further worsen tensions.

There is a clear correlation between conflict and the environment, and it cuts both ways. Conflict is often a major cause of environmental destruction. Wars especially are highly destructive for both the human and the natural environments, but even lower level conflicts can be quite detrimental in environmental terms. However, the list of countries in fragile and conflict-affected situations reveals the unquestionable effects of climate change and environmental degradation. Many of the countries are experiencing droughts affecting food security and societal stability. A specific category of vulnerability pertains to small island developing states that face existential threats from climate-related hazards. There is a demonstrable effect that climate change and degradation of natural resources has on peace and stability. Although interstate wars have not been fought over environmental resources, intrastate conflict and tensions between different groups increase. Meta-analysis of studies has confirmed that, statistically, conflict risk increases with temperature and precipitation deviating from the average (Hsiang et al., 2013). Climatic hazards affect societies and people unevenly, hurting worst those who are the most vulnerable. Research shows how the most severe humanitarian crises take place in countries that are exposed both to violent conflict and climate-related shocks. Such countries may find it hard to escape the vicious cycle (Buhaug & von Uexkull, 2021).

This book homes in on these connections through concrete case studies and lessons from the field. The research for the book was conducted as part of a major evaluation of GEF-funded programs and projects. It was the first of its kind, taking a systematic look at how environmental interventions interact with and are affected by fragility and conflict. The need for the evaluation became evident,

as performance data for GEF-funded activities revealed differences in outcome achievement depending on region and country type. An early analysis showed that the facility has over the years funded thousands of interventions in fragile and/or conflict-affected situations.

The authors from the GEF Independent Evaluation Office and the Environmental Law Institute were also the evaluators who brought together a unique combination of knowledge, experience, and skills, covering expertise in climate change and the environment, international development, peacebuilding and conflict resolution, and quantitative and qualitative research and evaluation approaches. The result was a powerful and pathbreaking study that influenced policymaking in international environment and development finance. This book expands on the topic and brings the results of the research to bear on this increasingly important field more broadly.

The lessons outlined in this book are both concrete and profound. They identify specific pathways through which fragility and conflict affect sustainable development and interventions that focus on the environment. The book offers recommendations on how international development and environment agencies, be they public, private, or nongovernmental, can enhance their policies, programs, and projects to deal with fragile and conflict-affected situations. The authors have even identified cases where such situations may open up opportunities for cooperation. The bottom line, however, is that context matters, and anyone wanting to make a durable impact on the environment and people's lives must pay close attention to the situation on the ground. This includes the political, economic, social, cultural, and security situation and the state of the environment and natural resources. Any successful strategy or intervention must understand the drivers of environmental change and development on the ground.

This is the perspective of the book. It is both thoroughly informed by experiences in fragile and conflict-affected situations and strongly anchored in theoretical understanding. It builds upon evaluative evidence from the ground up and dives deep into real-life situations. It embodies knowledge and wisdom that is sorely needed in these times of uncertainty.

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Part I

GEF Programming in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations

1 Introduction

In recent years, rapid growth in practice and scholarship at the intersection of environment, conflict, and peace has given rise to the new field of environmental peacebuilding (Ide et al., 2021). Much of the work and research has focused on the environmental dimensions of conflict, peace, and peacebuilding. At the same time, interest has grown in the conflict, peace, and peacebuilding dimensions of environmental programming, often in the rubric of conflict-sensitive conservation (e.g., Hammill et al., 2009; Nadiruzzaman et al., 2022; Woomer, 2018).

To date, however, most of the literature on conflict-sensitive conservation has been qualitative, anecdotal, and prescriptive.

This book breaks new ground on conflict-sensitive conservation, presenting both quantitative and qualitative evidence from a recent independent evaluation of interventions[1] supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in fragile and conflict-affected states (GEF Independent Evaluation Office [IEO], 2020). This evidence—gathered through the analysis of thousands of GEF-supported projects—highlights the importance for conservation organizations and funders, considering the fragile and conflict-affected context in which they often operate and the risks to project success when they ignore that context.

As a leading funder globally of environmental programming, the GEF has supported more than 4,000 projects around the world, including in many conflict-affected and fragile situations. Moreover, given the longevity of GEF programming (more than 25 years) and the quality of data around GEF programming, the GEF provides an ideal opportunity to consider the effects of conflict and fragility on conservation outcomes and evaluate approaches to conflict-sensitive conservation.

The evaluation underpinning this book assessed GEF projects and programs in fragile and conflict-affected situations to determine whether and how GEF-funded interventions are conflict sensitive and the implications thereof.

This book introduces two new typologies drawn directly from the analysis of GEF-supported interventions. First, the book presents a typology of the ways by which fragility and conflict affect GEF-supported conservation projects. Analysis of the broader literature highlights, however, that this typology is relevant far beyond the GEF context. Second, the book presents a typology of conflict-sensitive approaches. Again, this typology grew organically out of the collection of

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approaches adopted by GEF-supported interventions, but it reflects approaches in the broader literature on conflict-sensitive conservation programming.

The book draws upon analyses at three levels of programming:

1. across the GEF portfolio;
2. across interventions since 2002 in seven situations affected by conflict and fragility (Afghanistan, the Albertine Rift, the Balkans, Cambodia, Colombia, Lebanon, and Mali); and
3. from projects in each of the seven situations.

Using a mixed-methods approach, the book considers four key questions:

1. Does a conflict or fragile context affect the outcomes of GEF-supported projects?
2. To what extent do GEF-supported projects take into consideration the conflict or fragile context in their design and implementation?
3. Does consideration of the conflict or fragile context (or the failure to consider it) affect project outcomes?
4. What conflict-sensitive measures could the GEF, agencies, and partners adopt to improve the performance and outcomes of GEF-supported interventions?

This chapter provides a quick review of the linkages between environment, conflict, and peace. It then considers how environmental interventions can interact with conflict and fragility and briefly surveys the rise and evolution of conflict-sensitive conservation initiatives. It considers the broader policy context in which conflict-sensitive conservation has evolved, with a focus on multilateral environmental agreements and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. The chapter briefly discusses developments in evaluating efforts at the intersection of environment, conflict, and peace and concludes with a road map to the book.

Regarding the terminology used in this book, policies, guidance, and analyses on conflict-sensitive programming variously address "conflict-affected," "fragile," and "violent" "situations" and "countries." Conflict-affected and fragile situations have many dimensions, with a diverse range of articulations related to conflict and fragility. The evaluation and this book follow well-established framings and definitions for the key terms, presented in Box 1.1.

Linkages Among Environment, Fragility, and Conflict

A large and growing body of academic and practitioner literature establishes the diverse connections between the environment and peace, conflict, and security (e.g., Ahmadnia et al., 2022; Conservation International [CI], 2017; Dresse et al., 2019; Hammill et al., 2009; Ide, 2020; Ide et al., 2021; Johnson et al., 2021; Krampe et al., 2021; Rüttinger et al., 2015; UNEP, 2009; UN OCHA, 2009). This literature addresses the relationship across the conflict life cycle, including the environmental causes of conflict, environmental impacts of armed conflict, financing and environmental drivers of conflict, environmental factors in the negotiation

Box 1.1 Definitions of Key Terms

For purposes of this analysis, we use the following definitions of the key terms unless otherwise indicated:

Conflict-affected refers to contexts that are experiencing or have experienced **armed conflict**, which is "a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in one calendar year" (UCDP, n.d.).

Major armed conflict is an armed conflict in which at least 1,000 battle deaths occurred overall (Harbom & Wallensteen, 2008).

Fragility is "the combination of exposure to risk and insufficient coping capacity of the state, system and/or communities to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks. Fragility can lead to negative outcomes including violence, the breakdown of institutions, displacement, humanitarian crises or other emergencies" (OECD, 2016).

Conflict sensitivity refers to "the capacity of an organization to: (i) understand the context in which it operates; (ii) understand the interaction between the organization's interventions and the context; and (iii) act upon these understandings to avoid negative impacts (do no harm) and maximize positive impacts" (United Nations Children's Fund, 2020).

State refers to a United Nations member state.

Situation refers to a location and may include a state, a subnational area, an area that includes portions of two or more states, or an area that includes multiple states.

and conclusion of peace agreements ending conflict, and environmental dimensions of post-conflict peacebuilding (see Figure 1.1). It also addresses the potential for the conflict context to affect the successful realization of environmental initiatives (Bruch et al., 2019). In any year from 1946 to 2008, at least 40 percent of all intrastate conflicts were linked to natural resources, and in some years, the share was as high as 65 percent (Rustad & Binningsbø, 2010). Conflicts that are linked to natural resources are more likely to relapse than other conflicts, and they do so twice as quickly; this is particularly true for conflicts related to the allocation of land and high-value natural resources, such as minerals, oil, and gas (Rustad & Binningsbø, 2010).

Conflict and fragility are widespread, and they have been worsening. With increased internal armed conflict and the proliferation of non-state armed groups, the world is experiencing its highest rate of violent conflicts in 30 years (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, 2018; World Bank Group, 2020). Morrow (2018) found that "about 20 percent of conflict-affected GEF recipient countries

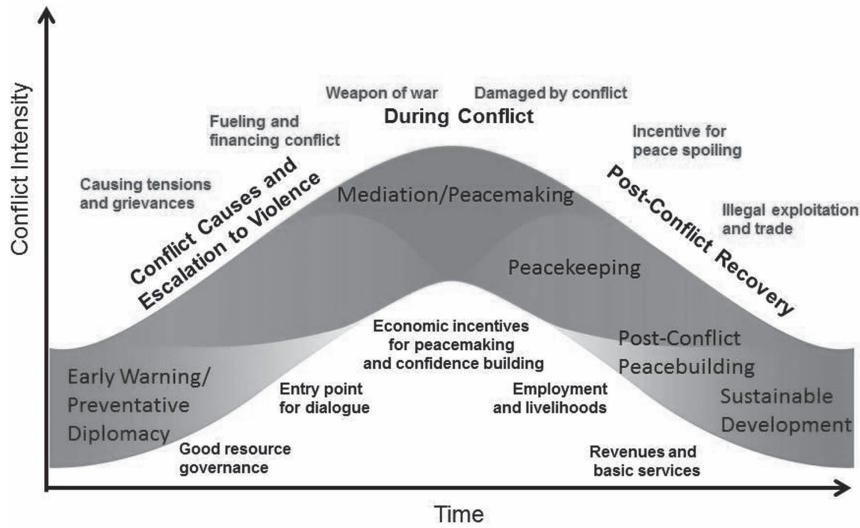

Figure 1.1 Environmental Risks and Opportunities Across the Conflict Life Cycle

experienced more than 20 years of conflict including Turkey, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Uganda and the Russian Federation." Fragility—like conflict—is often persistent and pernicious, with almost 30 states experiencing chronic fragility in the past decade (OECD, 2018). The World Bank has projected that "by 2030, more than half of the world's extreme poor will live in countries characterized by fragility, conflict, and violence" (World Bank Group, 2020, p. 2).

Competition for valuable or scarce natural resources can be a contributing cause of conflict. Competition for control over valuable natural resources and their benefits can lead to reduced economic, political, and social performance; this is known as the "resource curse" (e.g., Auty, 1993; Collier & Venables, 2011; Karl, 1997; Ross, 2004, 2015). Many have also argued that competition over scarce natural resources, such as land and water, can drive conflict (e.g., Elliott, 1991; Gleick, 1993; Homer-Dixon, 1994; Westing, 1986). Serious pollution and other burdens resulting from natural resource extraction and processing can also drive conflict. For example, in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, a combination of the lack of benefit sharing and severe water pollution from the Panguna gold and copper mine drove a secessionist movement that escalated to civil war (Regan, 2017).

Climate change is widely considered to be a conflict risk multiplier and conflict accelerator (e.g., Center for Naval Analyses Corporation [CNA] Military Advisory Board, 2007; CNA, 2014; CI, 2017; GEF Scientific and Technology Advisory Panel [STAP], 2018; National Research Council, 2013; Nordås & Gleditsch, 2007). Climate change degrades natural capital and livelihood assets, damages infrastructure, weakens food security, threatens lives, and can drive migration (Adger et al., 2015; Matthew et al., 2022; Rigaud et al., 2018; Rüttinger et al., 2015; UN OCHA, 2009). As such, climate change can increase fragility and aggravate tensions (Faller

et al., 2022; Rüttinger et al., 2015; UN OCHA, 2009). Moreover, increases in temperature have been shown to measurably increase both interpersonal conflict and intergroup conflict (Burke et al., 2015). The World Bank estimated that "under the pessimistic reference scenario, . . . the number of climate migrants could reach more than 143 million by 2050" (Rigaud et al., 2018, p. 110). There is also evidence that climate change may interact with and amplify the negative effects of conflict. Somalia, for example, has experienced a "double exposure" to both climate-induced environmental impacts and protracted conflict, which together have caused the displacement of over 2.6 million people within the country and further entrenched drivers of conflict (Krampe, 2019). Similarly, in Gaza, analyses have highlighted how predicted changes in climate risks can exacerbate the effects of conflict (Margolis, 2020; Mason et al., 2011).

Recognizing that poor environmental governance and fragility can underpin grievances, conflict prevention increasingly focuses on improving environmental governance and social resilience. Research has shown that the risk of conflict relapse in countries with good governance drops rapidly after conflict, while countries characterized by poor governance are substantially more vulnerable to conflict relapse (Hegre & Nygård, 2015). A World Bank background paper (Walter, 2010), noted:

> Of the 103 countries that experienced some form of civil war between 1945–2009 (from minor to major conflict), only 44 avoided a subsequent return to civil war. That means that 57 percent of all countries that suffered from one civil war during this time period experienced at least one conflict thereafter. This confirms what Collier and Sambanis (2002) have called the "conflict trap;" once a country experiences one civil war, it is significantly more likely to experience additional episodes of violence. (p. 1)

Efforts to prevent conflicts related to natural resources often emphasize transparency (e.g., the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative; Epremian et al., 2016; Sovacool et al., 2016), equity (e.g., benefit sharing; Binningsbø & Rustad, 2012), and other good governance principles. In resilience-based framings, environmental governance, sustainable livelihoods, institutional capacity, and strong community relationships all contribute to the social resilience that can prevent conflict (Rüttinger et al., 2015; UNEP, 2014).

Armed conflict causes environmental damage and degradation through three main pathways: targeting, coping strategies, and the breakdown of environmental governance. Targeting of the environment includes, for example, scorched-earth tactics (such as poisoning wells or leveling forests to remove cover); the use of particular weapons; and the release of chemicals and waste from the bombing of industrial sites and infrastructure, creating environmental hotspots (e.g., Austin & Bruch, 2000; Certini et al., 2013; Westing & Pfeiffer, 1972; Zierler, 2011). Examples include the devastating impacts of the use of Agent Orange on plant and animal life during the Vietnam War (Westing, 1971, 1976; Zierler, 2011) and the widely documented increase in animal poaching that occurs in times of war (Daskin & Pringle, 2018). During conflict, people often liquidate natural assets, flee to camps

or other settlements, and otherwise adopt new strategies to cope—all of which have environmental implications (e.g., UNEP, 2009). Conflicts also disrupt state institutions, policy coordination, and social relationships between resource users, undermining environmental governance and leading to a proliferation of illegal and criminal exploitation of natural resources and the loss of land tenure security (Bruch et al., 2016; UNEP, 2009).

Natural resources often provide financing necessary to sustain conflict; these resources are known as "conflict resources" (Humphreys, 2005; Ide et al., 2021). Since 1990, at least 35 major armed conflicts[2] have been financed in part through the extraction, trade, or illicit taxation of conflict resources ranging from diamonds and gold to timber and charcoal, to bananas and coca (Bruch et al., 2019).

Conflict resources and other natural resource dynamics can transform the conflict narrative. Rather than being a civilian object protected by international law, conflict resources become a military objective that might be attacked, seized, or destroyed to deprive the other side of financing (Bannon & Collier, 2003; Le Billon, 2013; Ross, 2004). Moreover, once conflict resources take root in a conflict economy, it can be difficult to control extraction of and trade in these resources, even after the conflict has ended.

Peace negotiations and the resulting peace agreements increasingly have incorporated provisions related to natural resources and the environment more broadly. Historically, less than one in six peace agreements addressed natural resources or the environment (Blundell & Harwell, 2016). From 1989 to 2004, this share rose to just over one half of peace agreements (Mason et al., 2016). Since 2005, all major peace agreements contain such provisions (and often multiple provisions). For four primary reasons, parties to a peace agreement choose to decide to include provisions related to natural resources and the environment (Dawes, 2016):

1. Grievances over natural resources were a contributing cause of conflict (as in Nepal, Sierra Leone, and Sudan).
2. Natural resource revenues helped finance conflict (as in Angola, Cambodia, and Liberia).
3. Natural resources were damaged by the conflict (as in Darfur and the Democratic Republic of the Congo).
4. The environment can be used collaboratively to build confidence and trust.

After conflict, the environment and natural resources underpin the four broad peacebuilding objectives. In a series of reports on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict, the UN Secretary-General has emphasized these four core areas: establishing security, delivering basic services, restoring the economy and livelihoods, and rebuilding governance and inclusive political processes (e.g., 2009, 2010, 2012, 2014). Each of these post-conflict peacebuilding objectives relies on natural resources and the environment, and sound environmental management can improve post-conflict peacebuilding, while ignoring the environment can undermine post-conflict peacebuilding efforts (e.g., Bruch et al., 2016; Jensen &

Lonergan, 2012; Lujala & Rustad, 2012; Unruh & Williams, 2013; Weinthal et al., 2014; Young & Goldman, 2015).

Environmental Interventions, Conflict, and Fragility

Environmental interventions can interact with conflict and fragility in three ways: (a) the intervention can be negatively affected by conflict and fragility; (b) the intervention can inadvertently worsen conflict and fragility; and (c) the intervention may help address the drivers, dynamics, and impacts of conflict and build peace. In other words, a project can both be affected by and affect the conflict situation. This book highlights the fact that the first two dynamics can occur when conflict- and fragility-related risks are not managed effectively and, by contrast, that applying a conflict-sensitive lens in project design and implementation can support the third dynamic.

Conflict and fragility can present challenges to projects through several pathways, for example, through security threats to staff, difficulty with hiring, and challenges to accessing resources and areas (Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, 2012; GEF STAP, 2018; Morrow, 2018).[3] Conflict may directly threaten those working on a project. This occurred during the implementation of a GEF project in Cambodia, Developing an Integrated Protected Area System for the Cardamom Mountains,[4] when poachers murdered two park rangers (GEF, 2007), injured a local villager, and pillaged a ranger substation in the Phnom Aural Wildlife Sanctuary project area, a former Khmer Rouge stronghold (FFI, 2005; GEF, 2007). Short of such tragic outcomes, interventions in conflict-affected areas may have difficulty hiring staff, as was the case a sustainable land management project in Afghanistan that eventually had to be cancelled because of issues with staff recruitments and other "challenging security conditions" (GEF, 2010).[5] As with humanitarian efforts, environmental programming can legitimize certain groups or leaders by partnering with them, shift local markets with an influx of resources, and effectively replace governance functions or structures (UNDP, 2016). Moreover, impacts of conflict on the environment can directly affect a project's implementation, and they can more broadly affect the environmental benefits that such projects may seek to achieve. (Table 1.1 lists the projects referenced in Chapter 1.)

Conflict can make it unsafe to try to access project sites. During the implementation of a forest biodiversity project in the Albertine Rift,[6] project staff were unable to collect data on project indicators because of the presence of armed groups in the area (GEF IEO, 2015). In such circumstances, some projects may also choose or be forced to move their project sites entirely, such as was the case for a project in Mali's Gourma region,[7] where military operations forced project relocation and project staff fled the site and took refuge in southern Mali or neighboring countries (World Bank, 2013). Institutional weakness during times of conflict may also affect project implementation, especially where the cooperation of the government is a necessary component of project activities. A project in the Inner Niger Delta in Mali[8] faced nearly 40 months of delays and economic inefficiencies because the

Table 1.1 GEF-Supported Projects Referenced in This Chapter

Project ID	*Project Name*	*Region*	*Dates*
1086	Developing an Integrated Protected Area System for the Cardamom Mountains	Cambodia	2001–2007
1152	Biodiversity Conservation and Participatory Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Inner Niger Delta and its Transition Areas, Mopti Region	Mali	2003–2013
1253	Gourma Biodiversity Conservation Project	Mali	2001–2013
3220	Capacity Building for Sustainable Land Management	Afghanistan	2007–2010
3772	CBSP Forest and Nature Conservation Project	Democratic Republic of the Congo	2008–2015

project team could not reach an agreement with the National Investment Agency for Local Communities when conflict broke out in Mali in 2012 (GEF IEO, 2014).

Environmental interventions can aggravate tensions or conflict. If unaware of ongoing tensions and conflict dynamics, an organization designing and implementing an intervention can inadvertently exacerbate existing grievances or perceptions of injustice. For example, a planned hydroelectric dam project in Santa Rita, Guatemala, funded through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's Clean Development Mechanism, would have threatened neighboring Mayan communities' access to water, food, and sacred sites. With the legacy of the Guatemalan Civil War, a project that threatened their existence, and the lack of free, prior, and informed consent, disputes over the project escalated to violence, resulting in seven deaths and the eventual cancellation of the project (Filzmoser & Brasier, 2017; Neslen, 2015).

Environmental projects may restrict access to land, forests, and other natural resources, generating grievances. This is frequently the case in wildlife-related projects, where recovering wildlife populations expand and infringe on neighboring communities (IUCN, 2016). In East Africa, tens of thousands of Maasai were evicted from their ancestral lands to create Serengeti National Park and other national parks (Mittal & Fraser, 2018). Estimates indicate that 70 percent of Africa's rural population "has been hurt by the conservation policies of colonial powers and independent governments" (Veit & Benson, 2004). Conservation efforts across Africa have marginalized many (Hsiao, 2018, 2020). Human-wildlife conflict continues: In the areas surrounding Kenya's Tsavo East National Park, for instance, ranchers lost an estimated $290 for every lion attack (Patterson et al., 2004).

Environmental and natural resource projects can also introduce new burdens or result in inequitable distribution of benefits and burdens (Hammill et al., 2009; Rights and Resources Initiative, 2015). Where people have little trust in authorities, the perception of these injustices may worsen tensions. Conservation projects can also inadvertently facilitate violence when park guards are militarized, particularly in

areas already affected by armed conflict or where protected areas are located on lands historically occupied by indigenous peoples (Duffy et al., 2019). In Cameroon, for example, park eco-guards, who were recruited, trained, paid, and outfitted in Lobéké National Park by a conservation nongovernmental organization, were reported in 2015 to be conducting violent nighttime raids in which they looted and beat villagers in neighboring Baka communities (see, e.g., Lang, 2017; Vidal, 2016, 2020).

Even where benefits and burdens are shared equitably, conservation projects can backfire. In the Mikeno sector of Virunga National Park in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), community members who were compensated for helping to build walls to prevent buffaloes from raiding crops became targets of armed groups who looted their homes for food and money (Crawford & Bernstein, 2008).

In the DRC, efforts to empower park rangers to address poaching backfired. When the rebel M23 militia forces started using the Virunga National Park (home to the eastern mountain gorilla) as a base, the local park rangers were outgunned and outmaneuvered. A conservation group sought to address this by providing them with military-grade automatic weapons and training them in both military techniques and anti-poaching strategies (Rice, 2006). The rangers received extra pay for the risks in confronting the rebels. After the training was completed and the rangers returned to their park, though, the government stopped providing this extra pay, according to interviews with subject matter experts. Some of these rangers were then recruited by the M23 and helped M23 take over park tourism, which in turn helped to fund their efforts in the ongoing conflict (Jones, 2012).

In addition to risks, a fragile or conflict-affected context can present opportunities. Environmental projects can use their intervention as an opportunity for peacebuilding. One example of this took place in the Emerald Triangle, a forested area that encompasses land along the borders of Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand. The biodiverse area has faced various threats, particularly from illegal wildlife trade and habitat fragmentation, challenges that require substantial transboundary cooperation to address. Such cooperation was historically difficult because of tension and conflict over contested state borders in that area. The International Tropical Timber Organization initiated a project in the area to improve biodiversity conservation in the transboundary region and strengthen cooperation between the three governments (Suisseya, 2012). Project documents noted improved conservation and collaboration outcomes (ITTO, 2010). While promoting cooperation between combatting groups, these types of conflict-sensitive interventions also have the potential to improve the outcomes and sustainability of the intervention itself.

Growing Attention to Conflict Sensitivity

Organizations around the world have begun to address the linkages between their interventions and the conflict dynamics in which they operate. These include a broad range of environment and development interventions. The efforts to address the linkages include adopting conflict-related policies and guidelines; instituting conflict analysis processes; integrating conflict-related measures into project

design and implementation; adapting monitoring, evaluation, and learning protocols; instituting conflict-related training and allocating staff time to implementing changes; and developing relevant resources and guidance related to conflict sensitivity.

Conflict sensitivity first emerged in humanitarian assistance as a way of helping actors achieve positive outcomes and understand the unintended consequences of aid (ITTO, 2010). In the 1994 Rwandan genocide, genocidaires exploited humanitarian relief to launch attacks, and development agencies aggravated tensions between social groups by recruiting primarily Tutsi local staff (ITTO, 2010). After this, international development agencies acknowledged that aid is not necessarily neutral, and they started developing, implementing, and revising approaches to be more conflict sensitive.

The growth of conflict sensitivity in the humanitarian and development sectors, coupled with the growing recognition of the linkages between environment, conflict, and peace, led to the development of conflict-sensitive environmental programming. The first major guide on the topic was the 2009 International Institute for Sustainable Development publication, *Conflict-Sensitive Conservation: Practitioners' Manual* (Hammill et al., 2009). The Wildlife Conservation Society, Conservation International (CI, 2017), and other environmental organizations have adopted toolkits, protocols, and guides for operating in fragile and conflict-affected settings. United Nations agencies adopted a series of guidelines on conflict-sensitive environmental programming (UNFTPA, 2012a; UNDG, 2013) and guidance on preventing and managing conflict related to natural resources (UNFTPA, 2012b, 2012c, 2012d, 2012e). The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) adopted a series of guidance notes (USAID, 2004, 2005, 2014, 2015), and the UK Department for International Development (DfID)[9] produced *Back to Basics: A Compilation of Best Practices in Design, Monitoring & Evaluation in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Environments* to highlight best practices throughout a development program's cycle (Corlazzoli & White, 2013).

Conflict analysis is the prevalent tool—and an important first step—for conflict-sensitive programming. It can be undertaken at the institutional, program, and project levels, and it explores the connections between a given institution's interventions and the conflict context in which it operates. Many institutions have developed their own conflict analysis processes and procedures to reflect their particular programming areas and modalities (e.g., CI, 2017; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations [FAO], 2019; UNICEF, 2016; USAID, 2012a, 2012b). The findings from the conflict analysis guide organizations in adapting their design and implementation to the particular context in which they operate.

International organizations and bilateral aid agencies have adopted a variety of measures to operationalize the policies and toolkits on conflict-sensitive programming. The FAO, Organization of American States, and others have trained staff and partners on conflict sensitivity tools and processes (e.g., CI, 2017; FAO, 2012; Soto, 2016). Others have appointed a focal point person for conflict sensitivity or created a task force to streamline relevant initiatives, such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Development Assistance Committee

(OECD DAC) Task Force on Conflict, Peace, and Development Co-Operation (OECD, 2000). Beyond operationalizing conflict sensitivity within their own programs, many organizations share lessons learned, as exemplified by the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme's *Lessons Learned: Conflict and Gender Sensitive Programming in Fragile and Conflict Affected Contexts* (NSRP, 2017), or develop broader guidance, as the International Institute for Sustainable Development and Conservation International have done (CI, 2017; Hammill et al., 2009).

Multilateral Environmental Agreements and Conflict

Within the environmental context, multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) provide substantial policy guidance. While the objectives of an MEA generally focus on conservation and sustainable development, some MEAs include provisions on armed conflict. Moreover, the respective Conferences of the Parties (COPs) have adopted conflict-related resolutions and implemented peace-related projects.

Some MEAs have specific provisions on armed conflict. Under the 1972 World Heritage Convention, natural heritage that is threatened by the outbreak or threat of an armed conflict can be included in the "list of World Heritage in Danger," a list of property for which major operations are necessary and for which assistance has been requested (UNESCO, 1972, art. 11(4)). The preamble of the Convention on Biological Diversity provides that "ultimately, the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity will strengthen friendly relations among States and contribute to peace for humankind" (1993, para. 22). Some MEAs specifically provide that they do not apply during armed conflict[10] or that their application may be suspended by State Parties.[11]

Regardless of whether an MEA has provisions explicitly addressing armed conflict, the COPs often have to address the effects of armed conflict, fragility, and violence on achieving the objectives of the convention. COPs have adopted a range of resolutions, plans, and other measures that recognize the risks and opportunities related to armed conflict. Examples include the Convention on Biological Diversity;[12] the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat;[13] the World Heritage Convention;[14] and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).[15] In addition, COP reports include comments by countries and others experiencing challenges of meeting MEA commitments because of conflict.[16]

Some MEA Secretariats have developed significant initiatives related to peace and conflict. For example, the Secretariat of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) has launched three major initiatives. In 2007, UNCCD and the African Union launched the Great Green Wall Initiative. By planting trees, restoring degraded land across the Sahel, sequestering carbon, and creating millions of green jobs, the initiative seeks to address resource-driven conflict and migration.[17] In 2016, UNCCD also helped launch, and serves as the secretariat for, the Initiative on Sustainability, Stability and Security, an intergovernmental effort to address the root causes of instability in Africa, focusing on migration and conflict-related

degradation of natural resources.[18] The 3S Initiative seeks to create 2 million green jobs for vulnerable groups through investment in restoration and sustainable land management, strengthening access to land and tenure rights in fragile areas, and preventing displacement by improving preparedness and early warning systems for drought and other natural disasters (UNCCD, 2018). And in 2020, UNCCD and the Korea Forest Service launched the Peace Forest Initiative to support post-conflict peacebuilding through cooperation and development of forest-related livelihoods (UNCCD, 2020).

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) launched the Peace and Biodiversity Dialogue Initiative in 2015.[19] This effort highlighted the value of peace parks both in conserving biodiversity and fostering conditions that help alleviate conflict. It sought to strengthen transboundary management systems and the establishment of regional networks, one of the objectives of CBD COP Decision VII/28 (Goal 1.3).[20] More broadly, this initiative supported efforts to prevent and resolve tensions, including those over access to natural resources, and promoted the resolution of armed conflict and post-conflict reconciliation. Among its many activities, the initiative prepared and delivered a massive open online course (MOOC) on "Peace Park Management and Development," in which more than 1,000 people enrolled.[21]

In addition to MEAs, key global environmental declarations have long emphasized the importance of peace to environmental protection and sustainable development and decried the destructive impacts of war. Paragraph 6 of the preamble to 1972 Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment emphasizes the "three basic goals of mankind—protection of the human environment, peace and worldwide economic development" and in Principle 26 calls for the "elimination and complete destruction of" nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction (UN, 1972). Principle 24 of the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development declares warfare to be "inherently destructive of sustainable development" (UN, 1992). The 2002 Johannesburg Declaration pledges, under Principle 19, to place particular focus on fighting conditions that pose severe threats to sustainable development, including armed conflict, terrorism, and foreign occupation, among others (UN, 2002). The 2012 Rio Declaration ("The Future We Want") reaffirmed "the importance of freedom, peace and security" and emphasized the need to devote specific attention to countries in situations of conflict (UN, 2012, paras. 8 and 32).

The Sustainable Development Goals, Conflict, and Peace

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development emphasizes the central role of peace to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): "There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development" (UN, 2015, preamble). SDG 16 seeks to "promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development." This is considered a cross-cutting goal, underpinning and reinforcing all the other SDGs (UNDESA, 2019).

To understand the nature and scope of the relationship between the SDGs and peace and conflict, the research team analyzed each target for the 17 SDGs—a

total of 169 targets. For each target, the team considered whether (a) environmental peacebuilding activities advance the specific target and (b) activities undertaken to achieve the target advance environmental peacebuilding. In the analysis, the team referred to the literature on and practice of environmental peacebuilding. A conservative view of environmental peacebuilding was adopted, focusing on violent conflicts. It was recognized that education and health care are important factors in peoples' ability to govern and manage natural resources and the environment in a way that supports peace, but this research focused on more direct links and recognized partial contributions. For instance, SDG 1 seeks to "end poverty in all its forms everywhere." Environmental peacebuilding might not tackle all the forms of poverty nor does it do so everywhere, but it does help to generate sustainable livelihoods and helps to end poverty in specific ways and specific places. The results are shown in Figure 1.2.

Each SDG is affected by environmental peacebuilding, and every SDG affects the outcomes of environmental peacebuilding. The strongest links (100 percent in both directions) are with Goal 6 (water and sanitation) and Goal 13 (climate change and its impacts). The weakest linkages are with Goal 3 (healthy lives and well-being), which still has a 22 percent relevance in both directions. Eight of the 17 SDGs have at least a 70 percent synergy with environmental peacebuilding.

The vast majority of linkages between SDGs and environmental peacebuilding are mutually reinforcing, but in two instances, SDG targets could negatively affect peace and stability, depending on how they are implemented. For example, target 12.c is "Rationalize inefficient fossil-fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption by removing market distortions." However, raising the price of gasoline needs to be done with sensitivity because doing so has prompted riots and instability in a range of countries, including Egypt (Middle East Eye, 2019), Iran (Fassihi, 2019), Mexico (Godoy, 2017), Venezuela (Helman, 2014), and Nigeria (Parker, 2012). Target 17.11 is "Significantly increase the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020" (UN, 2015). Although this is often important to peacebuilding, a political priority on rapid, large-scale extraction of natural resources can lead to land grabbing for commercial agriculture (Dell'Angelo et al., 2017; FAO, 2016; Ndi, 2017), conflicts with local communities over forests (e.g., Altman et al., 2012; Lamb et al., 2009), and conflicts with small-scale miners (e.g., Katz-Lavigne, 2019). These potential tensions between specific measures to advance sustainable development and overall peace highlight the importance of including peace in the conceptualization of sustainable development.

Monitoring and Evaluating Interventions at the Intersection of Environment, Conflict, and Peace

Monitoring and evaluating interventions at the intersection of environment, conflict, and peace are challenging for many reasons (McClain et al., 2022; Morales-Muñoz et al., 2021).

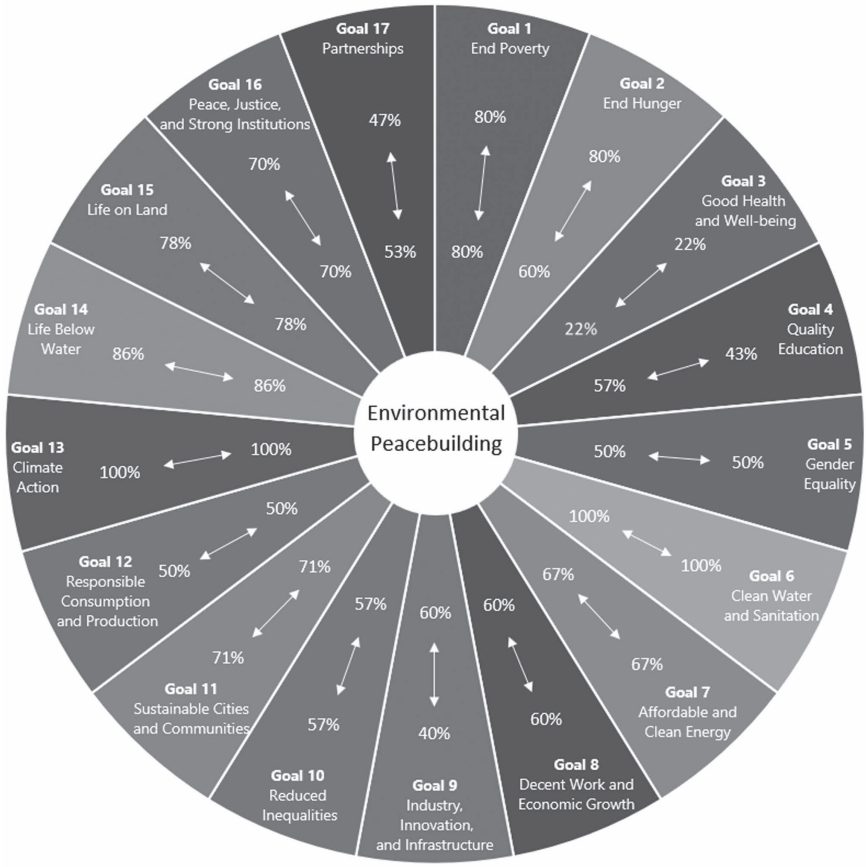

Figure 1.2 Linkages Between the Sustainable Development Goals and Environmental Peacebuilding

Source: GEF IEO, 2020

Note: This figure shows the percentage of the targets for a particular Sustainable Development Goal that affects environmental peacebuilding (inner ring of percentages) and the percentage of targets for that goal that are affected by environmental peacebuilding activities (outer ring of percentages).

Environmental peacebuilding is a new and evolving field. Consequently, the underlying theories of change are underdeveloped and often rely on specific experiences. They have rarely been tested in a range of contexts to know the circumstances under which the theories of change work and the circumstances under which they do not (McClain et al., 2022). Moreover, there are many theories of change and project developers often do not clearly state which theory of change they are using or they combine the theories of change.

Monitoring and evaluation are also complicated by the need to track three key dynamics: environmental change, changes in peace and conflict, and causal links between environmental changes and peace/conflict changes. Tracking

environmental change is fairly well understood. There are tools, albeit imperfect, for tracking changes in peace and conflict. It can be particularly challenging, though, to link changes in peace and conflict to the environmental changes observed.

In addition to these challenges that are particular to environmental peacebuilding interventions, other challenges are shared with monitoring and evaluating environmental, development, and humanitarian programs more generally. These include, for example, the long timelines necessary to observe the ultimate outcomes of an intervention and a multiplicity of actors, which can complicate attribution.

The evaluation underpinning this book emphasized the OECD DAC evaluation criteria, particularly relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. Toward that end, it considered whether the conflict-affected or fragile context had an impact on the project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. It did not test the theories of change.

Structure of the Book

The book is divided into three parts.

Part I broadly examines GEF programming in fragile and conflict-affected situations. This part has five chapters. Chapter 1 is an introductory chapter that discusses the linkages between environmental programming, conflict, and peace, as well as the emergence of conflict-sensitive programming. It also examines the broader context, considering how MEAs and the SDGs address conflict. Chapter 2 surveys GEF-supported interventions in fragile and conflict-affected situations. Chapter 3 highlights the effects of conflict and fragility on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of GEF projects, noting the key pathways by which conflict and fragility affect projects. Chapter 4 examines the various ways that GEF projects are seeking to be more conflict sensitive. Chapter 5 considers conflict-sensitive programming across the project life cycle and notes key cross-cutting issues.

Part II collects case studies of GEF programming in fragile and conflict-affected situations. This part includes four chapters covering seven specific geographies. Chapter 6 covers Africa and includes case studies from Mali and the Albertine Rift. Chapter 7 covers Asia and includes Afghanistan and Cambodia. Chapter 8 covers Latin America and includes Colombia. And Chapter 9 covers the Mediterranean with experiences from the Balkans and Lebanon.

Part III, the last chapter of the book, presents lessons and recommendations for improving conflict sensitivity in environmental projects.

Notes

1 For purposes of this book, "intervention" includes a range of efforts from individual projects to broader programs.
2 That is, conflicts with at least 1,000 battle deaths.
3 A fuller typology of the ways that conflict and fragility can affect conservation projects is found in Chapter 3.
4 Project 1086

5 Project 3220
6 Project 3772
7 Project 1253
8 Project 1152
9 DfID is now known as the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.
10 For example, Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, www.basel.int, art. 4(5)(a); 1973/78 International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), www.imo.org/en/about/Conventions/Pages/International-Convention-for-the-Prevention-of-Pollution-from-Ships-(MARPOL).aspx, art. 3(3).
11 For example, 1954 Convention for the Prevention of Pollution of the Sea by Oil (OILPOL), art. XIX(1).
12 www.cbd.int/convention/; Decision 14/8, annex IV, para. 5(g); Decision XI/2, para. 27; Decision XI/3, Strategic Goal D, Target 14; Decision X/35, para. 10(a); Decision X/42, para. 24; Decision VII/5, Priority 3.1; Decision VII/27, Action 2.3.3; Decision V/23, Activity 8 (c); Decision VII/2, Activity 8(c); Addis Ababa Principles; Whakatane Mechanism
13 www.ramsar.org/; Draft Resolution 18.19, para. 52; Resolution XII/6, para. 10; Resolution XI/12, ann. 1; Resolution X/19, paras. 33 and 231; Resolution X/3; Resolution VIII/31, para. 5; Resolution VIII/36, para. 12
14 https://whc.unesco.org/en/convention/; e.g., 42 COM 7 (Emergency Situations Resulting from Conflicts)
15 https://cites.org/eng; e.g., Conf. 17.4; Conf. 10.10
16 For example, Ramsar COP 9, paras. 48 (Nepal) and 67 (DRC); Ramsar COP 6, para. 71 (Angola); Basel COP 14 Bureau, para 5; Basel COP 8, VI, para. 44; COP 7, VIII, para. 180; Minamata COP 2, I.B, para. 16 and V.D., para. 75; Stockholm COP 8, V.C, para. 94 and D.
17 www.unccd.int/actions/great-green-wall-initiative
18 www.unccd.int/actions/sustainability-stability-security-3s-initiative
19 www.cbd.int/peace/about/objectives/
20 www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-07/cop-07-dec-28-en.pdf
21 www.learningfornature.org/en/courses/peace-park-development-and-management/

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2 GEF Support in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations

Overview of the Global Environment Facility

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is the world's largest funder of biodiversity protection, nature restoration, pollution reduction, and climate change response in developing countries. The GEF was established in 1991 as a financial mechanism to support implementation of the various emerging agreements and conventions, especially in developing countries, and as such, the GEF's formal mandate remains to operate in the following way:

> as a financing mechanism under the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Minamata Convention, and the Stockholm Convention, and [to support] countries with economies in transition in their implementation of the Montreal Protocol.
>
> (GEF, 2018a, p. 2)

According to the current GEF-7 Programming Directions (2018–2022), the GEF's mission is "to safeguard the global environment by supporting developing countries in meeting their commitments to multiple environmental conventions and by creating and enhancing partnerships at national, regional and global scales" (GEF, 2018a, p. 2). Although the GEF does not serve as a financial mechanism for the SDGs, its activities advance the SDGs and are linked to them through their synergies with the conventions (GEF, 2018a).

The GEF's work is organized along five main areas—biodiversity loss, chemicals and waste, climate change, international waters, and land degradation—and takes an integrated approach to support more sustainable food systems, forest management, and cities. The GEF partnership connects 184 member governments with civil society, indigenous peoples, and the private sector and works closely with other environmental financiers for efficiency and impact. Over the past three decades, the GEF has provided more than $22 billion in grants and blended finance and mobilized another $120 billion in cofinancing for more than 5,000 national and

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regional projects and 27,000 community-led initiatives through its Small Grants Programme.

The GEF Theory of Change

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the GEF developed a general framework for the GEF's theory of change based on the premise that GEF support is provided to activities that directly or indirectly contribute to the improvement of environmental status and/or address drivers of environmental degradation (GEF IEO, 2014). Based on past evaluative evidence, the framework classifies the contributions of GEF support into three main categories: knowledge and information, institutional capacity, and implementing strategies. These areas of GEF support interact, complement, and reinforce each other and collectively contribute to impact, usually at a low scale (i.e., only at sites within the project's direct influence), in the form of environmental stress reduction and improved environmental status. In many cases, the GEF contributes to putting in place conditions enabling progress toward impact. Impact may occur immediately as a result of project activities, but more often, the social or ecological system the project aims to influence may manifest change years or even decades after the project is completed, especially if large-scale impact is the aim.

The framework for the GEF theory of change (Figure 2.1) assesses how GEF activities affect the causality chain leading to global environmental benefits, links GEF activities to other activities and actors, and identifies constraints on further GEF contributions to progress toward global environmental benefits (GEF IEO, 2012b).

With respect to the theory of change, conflict and fragility are most often potential constraints. Conflict and fragility can interact with projects both through (a) their impacts on a project's implementation and (b) the effects that a project may have on the conflict or fragile context. While the GEF recognizes that many contextual factors are beyond its control, GEF programs are intentionally selected and designed to support fundamental changes and cause a large-scale and sustainable impact, subject to the quality of implementation/execution and supportive contextual conditions according to the theory of change (GEF IEO, 2017b). The *Evaluation of GEF Support in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations* (GEF IEO, 2020), on which this book is based, highlights the numerous ways that conflict and fragility can affect GEF projects and their outcomes, as well as the ways that GEF projects can affect the context in which they are operating—for better or for worse.

To achieve the desired transformational change and advance global environmental benefits, the GEF works through agencies and national partners, which have increasingly recognized the importance of conflict and fragility to environmental programming (GEF, 2019). As pointed out in Chapter 1, environmental programming and fragility and conflict are linked in many important ways, and the GEF agencies increasingly (but not uniformly) recognize these linkages and have adopted means for conflict-sensitive programming. The GEF STAP has also highlighted that given the prevalence of fragility and conflict in the GEF portfolio

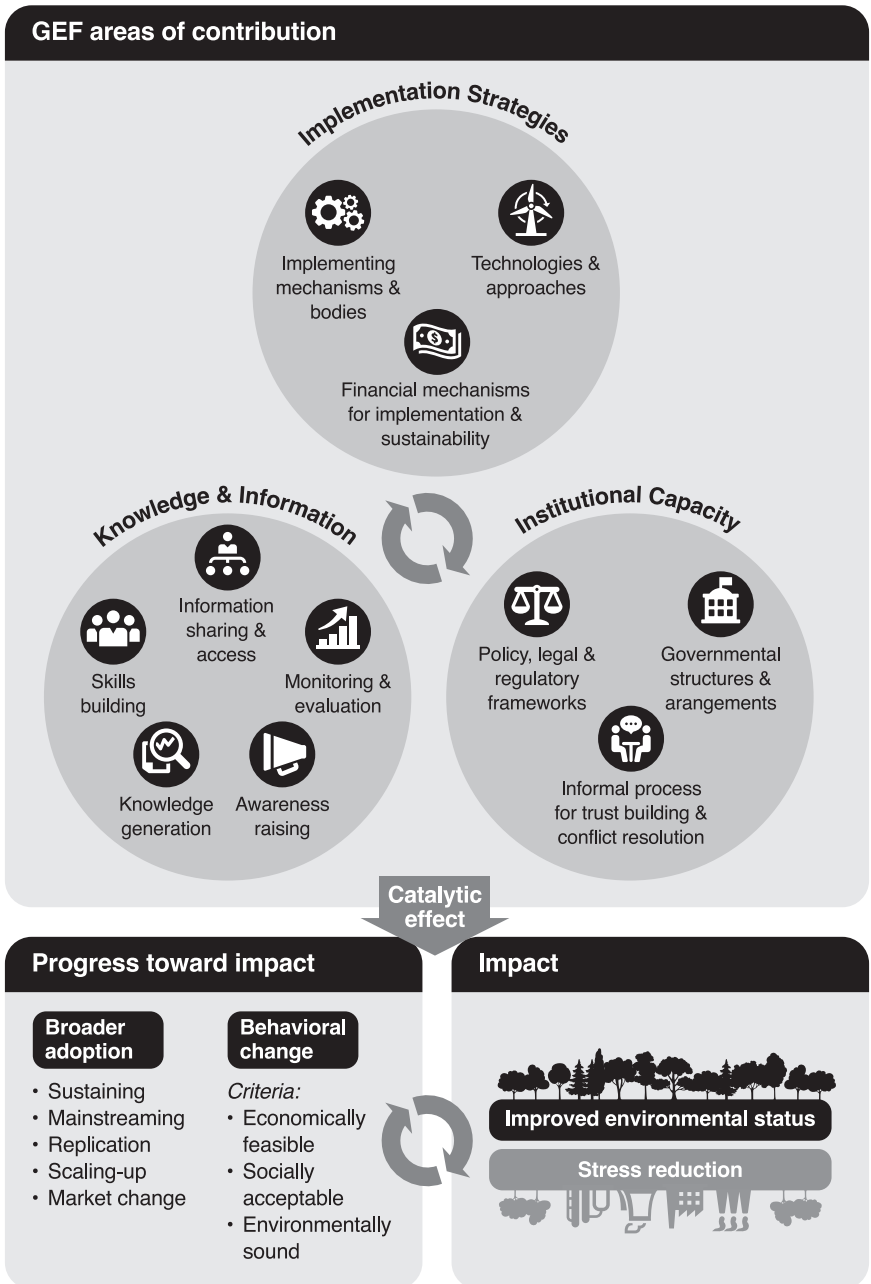


Figure 2.1 General Framework for the GEF Theory of Change

countries, conflict and fragility should be considered an essential contextual factor affecting the GEF's ability to achieve fundamental change or large-scale and sustainable impact (GEF STAP, 2018). In 2018, the GEF STAP report *Environmental Security: Dimensions and Priorities* urged that the GEF lend more attention to the issue of environmental security. The report noted that "conflict, irrespective of its source, affects the viability or sustainability of investments in environmental protection" (GEF STAP, 2018, p. 3), concluding that "addressing environmental security in an explicit, consistent and integrated manner is essential to delivering global environmental benefits, including the long-term sustainability of project investments" (GEF STAP, 2018, p. 4). In response to the 2020 evaluation, the GEF is working to develop policies, toolkits, and institutional mechanisms to help interventions be more conflict sensitive and thus achieve their desired impacts.

GEF Agency Policies, Safeguards, and Toolkits

The GEF executes its mandate through partnerships with designated agencies, which develop project proposals and implement projects in collaboration with governments, NGOs, and other stakeholders at the project site (GEF, 2017, 2019).[1] These partnerships are central to the GEF theory of change. While the agencies are accountable for fulfilling projects according to the GEF's principles and theory of change, they follow their own policies and safeguards and use their own tools (GEF, 2019, annex D).

At least seven GEF agencies have sought to learn from their experiences in fragile and conflict-affected situations, undertaking evaluations of their own programming and producing flagship reports (see Chapter 4, Box 4.1). One example is the International Fund for Agricultural Development's *Engagement in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States and Situations—Corporate-Level Evaluation* (IFAD, 2015). As a result of these evaluations, many agencies have recognized that working in fragile and conflict-affected settings requires additional considerations and sensitivity. Half (i.e., nine) of the GEF agencies have adopted policies, strategies, and toolkits guiding programming in fragile and conflict-affected situations. Box 2.1 lists some of the more prominent examples. The World Bank Group's *Operational Model* (2014) includes a policy on development cooperation and conflict that lays out the importance of managing conflict-related risks to its mission, its work in relation to conflict, and the principles of operation in such contexts. Some agencies have developed operational plans, including the Asian Development Bank's *Operational Plan for Enhancing ADB's Effectiveness in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations* (2013a). Others have released guides focusing on environmental issues, such as *Strengthening Capacity for Conflict-Sensitive Natural Resource Management*, developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and other agencies through the UN Development Group (UNDG, 2013). Some agencies have also released more specialized trainings, as exemplified by the FAO's Programme Clinic on Designing Conflict-Sensitive Interventions (FAO, 2002).

Box 2.1 Conflict-Sensitive Strategies, Policies, and Toolkits of GEF Agencies

A growing number of GEF agencies have adopted strategies, policies, toolkits, and other instruments informing the development of projects in situations affected by conflict and fragility. Following is an illustrative list:

African Development Bank

- Strategy for Enhanced Engagement in Fragile States (2002)

Asian Development Bank

- Working Differently in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations (2013)
- Operational Plan for Enhancing ADB's Effectiveness in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations (2013)
- A Peacebuilding Tool for a Conflict-Sensitive Approach to Development: A Pilot Initiative in Nepal (2012)

Conservation International

- Environmental Peacebuilding Training Manual (2017)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

- Guide to Context Analysis Informing FAO Decision-Making: Approaches to Working in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Contexts (2019)
- The Program Clinic: Designing Conflict-Sensitive Interventions—Approaches to Working in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Contexts (2019)
- Corporate Framework to Support Sustainable Peace in the Context of Agenda 2030 (2018)
- Collaborative Conflict Management for Enhanced National Forest Programmes (NFPS, 2012)
- Conflict Management over Natural Resources (2006)
- Community-Based Forest Resource Conflict Management: A Training Package, Vol. I, Vol. II (2002)

International Fund for Agricultural Development

- IFAD Guidelines for Disaster Early Recovery (2011)
- IFAD Policy on Crisis Prevention and Recovery (2006)

United Nations Development Programme

- The Peace Promise (2016)
- Natural Resource Management in Transition Settings (2013, through UNDG)

- Strengthening Capacity for Conflict-Sensitive Natural Resource Management (2012) (through UN Framework Team on Protective Action)
- Conducting a Conflict and Development Analysis (2017)

United Nations Environmental Programme

- Natural Resource Management in Transition Settings (2013, through UNDG)
- Strengthening Capacity for Conflict-Sensitive Natural Resource Management (2012) (through UN Framework Team on Protective Action)
- Integrating Environment in Post-Conflict Needs Assessment (2009)

World Bank Group

- World Bank Group Strategy for Fragility, Conflict, and Violence 2020–2050 (2020)
- A Practical Handbook for Environmental Regulations and Legislators Working in Situations Affected by Fragility, Conflict, and Extreme Violence (FCV) (2018)
- Strategic Environmental Assessment: Capacity Building in Conflict-Affected Countries (2005, with Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment)

Related but no longer available online is the International Union for Conservation of Nature's *Environment, Conflict, and Security*, published as part of its TECS Conflict Sensitive Adaptation Series in 2014.

Learning from programming in fragile and conflict-affected situations is discussed further in Chapter 4.

At least 11 GEF agencies have started to incorporate considerations of conflict and fragility into their safeguards and associated procedures,[2] in part because populations in fragile and conflict-affected situations are more vulnerable. The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB, 2020) *Environmental and Social Policy Framework* cautions:

> In conflict and post-conflict areas, the risks and impacts described in this ESPS may be greater. The risk that a project could exacerbate an already sensitive local situation, leading to an increase in the risk of personal or communal conflict, or stress scarce local resources, should be considered carefully, as it may lead to further conflict and increased threats to human security.
>
> (p. 61)

It also notes the particular risk of gender-based violence in situations of communal conflict (IDB, 2020). The African Development Bank (AfDB, 2015) safeguards require conflict to be considered in the development of country strategy papers and regional integration strategy papers. IFAD (2017) requires consideration of

the conflict context when preparing a Social, Environmental and Climate Assessment Procedures preparatory study for results-based country strategic opportunities programs.

GEF agency safeguards recognize that projects in fragile and conflict-affected situations can aggravate tensions and generate conflict. For example, UNDP's *Social and Environmental Screening Procedure* provides that environmental and social impacts that "may give rise to significant social conflict" are categorized as "extreme" (highest risk rating) during the screening process (UNDP, 2022, p. 17). UNDP's Social and Environmental Risk Screening Checklist asks, "Would the project potentially involve or lead to exacerbation of conflicts among and/or the risk of violence to project-affected communities and individuals?" (UNDP, 2022, p. 27). IFAD (2017) highlights a range of linkages between conflict and disease, climate change, and the environment and notes that projects can lead to conflicts, which may be "serious," such as over resource rights.

Safeguards of agencies also recognize that normal procedures and approaches may be difficult in contexts of fragility and conflict. For example, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) notes that "particular challenges" in times of conflict and crisis may mean, for example, that UNIDO's commitment to transparency may be mitigated and "sensitive information relative to the political/economic contexts may need to remain confidential" (UNIDO, 2017, p. 23). The Asian Development Bank (ADB) similarly recognizes that usual processes and documents may not be "feasible" in "fragile and conflict-affected environments" and provides for alternative means of meeting the relevant safeguards (ADB, 2009, 2013b, para. 51).

Agency safeguards pay particular attention to incorporating consideration of fragility and conflict into risk analyses and screening. For example, IDB (2020) and the World Bank Group (2017) include conflict as a factor in determining project risk classification, and AfDB (2013, 2015) includes conflict as a factor in determining social vulnerability. In risk analysis for due diligence, the World Bank Group (2017) requires consideration of "threats to human security through the escalation of personal, communal or interstate conflict, crime or violence" and "risks related to conflict or contestation over land and natural resources" (p. 4). In categorizing risk, "considerations relating to stability, conflict or security" are taken into account (World Bank Group, 2017, p. 6). Conflict is also a factor in the initial environmental and social screening under AfDB safeguards (AfDB, 2015). UNDP's *Social and Environmental Screening Procedure* provides that "changes in the Project context" such as armed conflict that alter the project's risk profile may necessitate amending completed screenings (UNDP, 2016). IDB requires consideration of "stability, conflict, or security" and "risks related to conflict or contestation over land and natural resources" during risk analysis (IDB, 2020, paras. 3.17 and 9). Other safeguards—and the screening procedures designed to ensure compliance with the safeguards—flag conflict-affected situations as high risk. For example, the Development Bank of Latin America includes conflict as a factor that automatically indicates high environmental and social impact potential (CAF, 2015), UNDP includes conflict in a list of critical (intensity level 5/5) social impacts (UNDP, 2016), and the World Wildlife Fund deems projects in fragile or conflict-affected situations to be "special consideration cases" (WWF, 2019, p. 17). Some GEF agencies specifically interrogate how conflict affects indigenous communities.

Agency safeguards encourage the use of conflict analysis. For example, the World Bank Group, UNDP, and the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) call for the use of social and conflict analysis, with IFAD calling for an in-depth conflict analysis (DBSA, 2018; IFAD, 2017; UNDP, 2016; World Bank Group, 2017). Such safeguards also indicate need for stakeholder consultation and engagement to manage risks related to conflict and fragility. For example, IFAD calls for consultation to manage conflict-related risks (IFAD, 2017). Consultation can affect conflict-related risks; it can also be affected by conflict (DBSA, 2018).

Some GEF agencies provide that the safeguards applying to involuntary resettlement do not apply to people displaced by conflict. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD, 2019) notes that Performance Requirement 5, which covers involuntary resettlement, does not apply to "the settlement of refugees, internally displaced persons, and victims of natural disasters, conflict, crime or violence" and that "In cases where there has been displacement as a result of conflict prior to Project-induced displacement, the involuntary resettlement process will be guided by the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights)" (p. 42). The World Bank Group (2017) has a similar provision in its safeguards. More broadly, AfDB (2015) considers local conflicts in relation to relocation. At the same time, agencies provide that their safeguards for indigenous peoples apply to those who have been forcibly displaced by conflict. Examples include the World Bank Group (2017), the EBRD (2019), IDB (2020), and the AfDB (2018).

The current GEF safeguards (2018b) have numerous provisions regarding grievance and conflict resolution, including paragraphs 5 and 6 in annex I.A and paragraphs 15, 17, and 18 in annex I. These are important provisions, but they focus on conflicts around a project, rather than the conflict context in which a project is designed and implemented. The mention of conflict context is in Minimum Standard 9, on Community Health, Safety, and Security. This safeguard would benefit from a holistic recognition of how conflicts might be linked to the environment and natural resources. It would require procedures for identifying, evaluating, or deciding how to manage the risks in a conflict or post-conflict context. The safeguard should provide standards regarding management of the conflict-related risks, include the risks associated with fragility, and provide safeguards relevant to fragility in situations that are not "conflict or post-conflict." The safeguard applies during the design stage, but conflict sensitivity must apply throughout the project life cycle because situations affected by conflict and fragility are dynamic and can change rapidly.

GEF Support and Conflict

In accordance with its mandate to support countries implementing their commitments under specific conventions, the GEF supports projects in five focal areas. Focal area strategies are established for each GEF replenishment period and incorporate guidance from conventions (GEF, 2018a), recommendations from the GEF's comprehensive evaluations, and the national priorities of recipient countries (GEF, 2015). In addition to the focal areas, impact programs contribute to the GEF's aim of supporting transformational change by addressing cross-cutting challenges and integrated solutions that do not correspond narrowly to one focal area (GEF, 2018a).

The 2018–2022 replenishment period, GEF-7, has three impact programs: food systems, land use, and restoration; sustainable cities; and sustainable forest management (GEF, 2018a). The focal areas and impact programs in which the GEF operates are exposed and sensitive to risks posed by conflict and fragility. Drawing on the focal area strategies as expressed in the GEF-7 Programming Strategy document (GEF, 2018a) and on experiences from the field, this section illustrates how programming in each focal area may interact with conflict dynamics. Appendix 2.1, at the end of this chapter, lists the projects referenced in Chapter 2.

Biodiversity

In the biodiversity focal area, projects are designed to "mainstream biodiversity across sectors as well as landscapes and seascapes; address direct drivers to protect habitats and species; and further develop biodiversity policy and institutional frameworks" (GEF, 2018a, p. 15). Biodiverse areas have high overlap with conflict. From 1950 to 2000, more than 80 percent of major armed conflicts (i.e., conflicts with at least 1,000 battle deaths) took place in biodiversity hotspots, and more than 90 percent of these conflicts took place in countries with biodiversity hotspots (Hanson et al., 2009). As shown in Figure 2.2, these biodiversity hotspots cover 2.3 percent

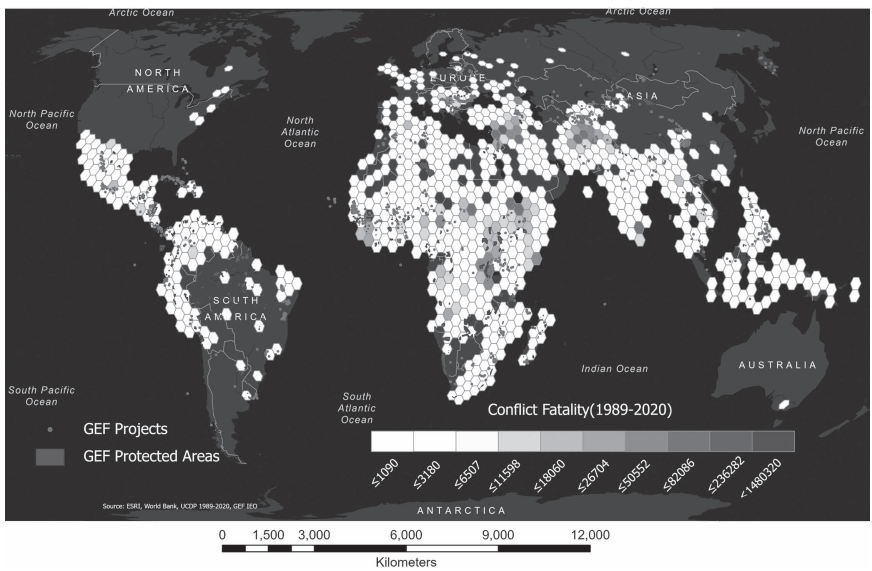


Figure 2.2 Conflict Hotspots and Location of GEF Projects and GEF-Supported Protected Areas, 1989–2020

Source: GEF IEO (2020), using conflict data (through October 2020) from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program, project locations from GEF IEO data, and protected area boundaries from the World Database on Protected Areas.

Note: The map shows 1,230 GEF-supported protected areas and 202 land degradation and multi-focal area projects that could be precisely located.

of the earth's surface, but they host half of the endemic species (Mittermeier et al., 2004). Although conflict can harm biodiversity, peace agreements are often followed by opening of biodiverse territory to in-migration by people seeking livelihoods and food security, as has been witnessed in Colombia following the 2016 peace agreement with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC; Armenteras et al., 2018; GEF IEO, 2019; Prem et al., 2020).

Of the 1,458 country-level biodiversity projects supported by the GEF through 2019, 567 (38.9 percent) were in countries affected by major armed conflict, and 1,202 (82.4 percent) were in fragile situations.[3] For example, several of the national child projects of the GEF-funded Global Wildlife Program (Phase 1 and Phase 2) are in conflict-affected and fragile situations identified on the World Bank Harmonized List, and some of these were delayed or otherwise affected by conflict, such as a project in Mali (World Bank Group, 2020a, p. 34).

Efforts to conserve biodiversity can exacerbate tensions with communities, especially when those communities are excluded from protected areas and when enforcement agents are militarized. For example, during a project in Cameroon that was not financed by the GEF, eco-guards who were recruited, trained, paid, and outfitted with weapons by the project were found to be conducting violent nighttime raids in the surrounding Baka communities (Baker & Warren, 2019; Lang, 2017). Tensions can also be exacerbated when biodiversity conservation activities take place on land that contains minerals or other natural resources people want to use. The results of such aggravations could be observed throughout the course of the GEF project on Developing an Integrated Protected Area System for the Cardamom Mountains in Cambodia.[4] The project took place in an area formerly controlled by the Khmer Rouge that was subject to existing conflicts over land appropriations, corruption, and illegal resource extraction. The project's evaluation found that it had not sufficiently addressed the limited institutional capacity, the rivalries over illegal logging, or the incorporation of conservation into the development agenda (GEF IEO, 2007). The subsequent rivalry and lack of coordination between governmental authorities, and gang activity, caused regular conflict at the site, leading to several project delays, activity cancellations, and the deaths of two park rangers.

Climate Change

GEF-supported climate change interventions aim to "promote innovation and technology transfer for sustainable energy breakthroughs; demonstrate mitigation options with systemic impacts; and foster enabling conditions for mainstreaming mitigation concerns into sustainable development strategies" (GEF, 2018a, p. 36). Of the 1,836 country-level climate change projects supported by the GEF through 2019, 810 (44.1 percent) were in countries affected by major armed conflict, and 1,574 (85.7 percent) were in fragile situations.[5] Many conflict-affected countries are particularly vulnerable to climate change: Of the ten countries with the most peacekeeping personnel, eight are classified as "most exposed" to climate change (Krampe, 2019). As the GEF evaluation details, GEF-funded interventions are often affected by the fragile and conflict contexts, and a

substantial number of GEF climate change interventions are in these settings—particularly in least developed countries.

Climate change interventions can also affect a fragile situation and exacerbate conflict. Both adaptation and mitigation measures can result in a sense of winners and losers (Dabelko et al., 2013). This may inadvertently lead to disputes over access to benefits (such as revenues) and burdens (such as forests that can no longer be harvested); it may also lead to land grabbing (Dabelko et al., 2013). There is also evidence that climate change may directly amplify the effects of conflict.

Land Degradation

The land degradation focal area strategy for GEF-7 has three main goals:

> aligning GEF support to promote UNCCD's Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) concept through an appropriate mix of investments; seeking effective integration within the Impact Programs for generation of multiple benefits; and harnessing private capital and expertise to finance investments in sustainable land management, in particular in cooperation with the LDN fund and other innovative financing mechanisms.
>
> (GEF, 2018a, p. 47)

The strategy acknowledges the "increasing evidence of the complex interactions between climate change, food and water insecurity, extreme events—such as prolonged and repeated droughts—and their link to fragility, armed conflict and migration" and seeks to "positively [reinforce] the linkages between human well-being and the health of ecosystems" (GEF, 2018a, p. 51). The strategy also directs investments toward the following:

> (i) decreasing fragility and risks through enhancing governance of natural resources, including tenure and access rights (including potential uneven rights across gender and ethnic groups) and/or decreasing resource pressures and enhancing natural resource based employment and livelihoods; (ii) restoring governance and degraded lands and water sources in post-natural disaster and/or conflict-prone or conflict-affected areas (with special attention to unemployed youth, women and other vulnerable or marginalized groups); and (iii) global early warning to identifying early signs where a combination of environmental risks are contributing to fragility and conflict vulnerability and sharing this knowledge to promote preventive or remedial actions as appropriate armed conflict and migration.
>
> (GEF, 2018a, p. 52)

As with other focal areas, land degradation and efforts to address it can affect and be affected by conflict and fragility (Barbut & Alexander, 2016; Solomon et al., 2018; van Schaik & Dinnessen, 2014). Of the 315 country-level land degradation projects supported by the GEF through 2019, 115 (36.5 percent) were in

countries affected by major armed conflict, and 260 (82.5 percent) were in fragile situations.[6]

GEF-funded interventions that advance alternative land-use schemes have faced challenges in areas where land use is disputed, affecting both project effectiveness and sustainability (GEF IEO, 2017a). Conflict between the Tuareg ethnic group and the government of Niger erupted while a GEF-funded project, Sustainable Co-Management of the Natural Resources of the Aïr-Ténéré Complex, was ongoing (Biao Koudenoukpo & Nignon, 2013).[7] Although land commissions had been put in place to improve governance and management of localized land-based tensions, no measures existed to manage larger scale armed conflict. As a result, project costs increased substantially, causing the project activities to be scaled back, weakening coordination between project stakeholders, and reducing profits for local cooperatives as a result of free food distribution. Ultimately, questions were raised about the sustainability of project outcomes in an area affected by weak institutions and conflict (Morrow, 2018).

International Waters

GEF-funded interventions in the international waters focal area have a unique mandate to "support transboundary cooperation in shared marine and freshwater ecosystems" (GEF, 2018a, p. 55), recognizing the centrality of multinational collaboration to achieving its objectives of "strengthening Blue Economy opportunities, . . . improving management in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ); and enhancing water security" (GEF, 2018a, p. 55). Even as international waters interventions seek to advance global environmental benefits, this emphasis on cooperation around mutual interests is unique among the GEF focal areas. Of the 84 country-level international waters projects supported by the GEF through 2019, 29 (34.5 percent) were in countries affected by major armed conflict, and 70 (83.3 percent) were in fragile situations.[8] The numbers of country-level projects are relatively low because most international waters projects are regional or global.

GEF programming in both freshwater and marine areas often brings together states that have fought with one another, and residual tensions often exist. Many international basins where the GEF supports projects—including those of the Jordan, Nile, and Sava Rivers—encompass countries affected by conflict or in tension with one another. The GEF also frequently supports efforts in large marine ecosystems that are affected by tensions and conflict, such as in the South China Sea, where evaluations have identified conflict as a challenge to effective project implementation (GEF IEO, 2012a).

The GEF-7 Programming Directions recognize that water scarcity is linked to "risk multipliers leading to destabilization, violence and migration as well as possible ground for radicalization spurring further conflict on national and regional levels" and prioritize investment in cooperation initiatives that seek to diminish water-related conflict (GEF, 2018a, p. 54). The GEF-7 strategy directly orients itself to supporting environmental security by enabling investments in fragile and

conflict-affected countries in transboundary basins so as to "support actions by which decreasing natural resource pressures and water stress can contribute to decreasing fragility . . . hence contributing to preventing larger regional conflict" (GEF, 2018a, p. 65).

Chemicals and Waste

The GEF-7 strategy for the chemicals and waste focal area is organized around four programs: the Industrial Chemicals Program, the Agriculture Chemicals Program, the Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States Program, and the Enabling Actions Program. The GEF-7 Replenishment was also the first new replenishment since the Minamata Convention entered into force, and as such, various programs emphasize its implementation. Several countries participating in the GEF-supported flagship planetGOLD program on artisanal and small-scale gold mining have identified conflict as an issue. Of the 157 country-level chemicals and waste projects supported by the GEF through 2019, 63 (40.1 percent) were in countries affected by major armed conflict, and 144 (91.7 percent) were in fragile situations.[9]

Chemicals and waste interventions can interact with fragile and conflict-affected situations by being affected by the situation, by affecting the situation, and by addressing impacts of the situation. As with other focal areas, GEF-supported projects in this focal area can be affected by fragility and conflict in many ways (see Chapter 3). When pollution from chemicals, waste, oil, mining, and other toxic substances is substantial, widespread, or severe—especially where the impacts are inequitably felt—it can catalyze social or violent conflict, such as in Côte D'Ivoire (New Humanitarian, 2006), the Niger Delta (Babatunde, 2020), and Bougainville, Papua New Guinea (Regan, 1998). At the same time, pollution and governance breakdowns associated with armed conflict have provided motivation for a number of GEF projects.[10]

Integrated Approach Pilots and GEF Impact Programs

Several GEF Integrated Approach Pilots recognize conflict and fragility as an issue. For instance, the Food Integrated Approach Pilot[11] focused on Sub-Saharan Africa has several child projects in countries with insecurity and conflict situations, such as northern Ethiopia. The Taking Deforestation out of Commodity Supply Chains Integrated Approach Pilot,[12] where post-conflict Liberia has a child project, recognizes different dimensions of conflict.

The three GEF impact programs—Food Systems, Land Use, and Restoration; Sustainable Cities; and Sustainable Forest Management—have linkages to conflict and fragility, as do geographic emphases on the Amazon, drylands, tropics, and the Congo Basin. Considering the substantial percentage of the GEF portfolio that is in fragile and conflict-affected situations, many of the impact program interventions are likely be in these types of situations; as such, they will interact with conflict drivers through the same mechanisms as do the focal areas.

The Food Systems, Land Use, and Restoration Impact Program aims to address the "underlying drivers of unsustainable food systems and land use change through supporting countries to take a more holistic and system-wide approach that is in line with their specific needs for generating Global Environmental Benefits" (GEF, 2018a, p. 80). Many fragile and conflict-affected countries struggle with unsustainable food systems and land use change.

The Sustainable Cities Impact Program seeks to promote integrated urban planning to address the manifold sustainability challenges that are confronted and created in urban areas. The GEF-7 strategy for this program acknowledges that conflict- and climate-induced displacement has accelerated urbanization, exacerbating the interlocked social and environmental issues that erupt in cities (GEF, 2018a). Cities present a variety of sustainability challenges; they also provide an opportunity for programs to adopt an integrated approach capable of addressing both social and environmental factors.

The Sustainable Forest Management Impact Program, particularly with the GEF's geographic foci in the Amazon, drylands, and the Congo Basin, illustrates the high overlap of biodiverse areas and conflict hotspots. The variety of roles that forests can take in armed conflict can complicate the design and implementation of forest-related interventions in conflict-affected situations. These roles include serving as a source of financing (Price et al., 2007), as cover for guerrilla groups (FAO, 2005; Price, 2003), as refuges and sources of fuel and food for displaced persons (FAO & UNHCR, 2018), and as targets of war (Jongerden et al., 2006; McNeely, 2003; Metreveli & Timothy, 2010; Westing, 1971). For example, rebel M23 forces in the DRC took control of gorilla tourism in the Virunga Mountains to finance their operations (Jones, 2012). The GEF-7 strategy for this impact program acknowledges conflict in its discussion of the Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes Program, noting that "violence, fragility, insecurity, and various related traffics severely [weaken] the rule of law, and [have] devastating effects on capacities to manage forests, protected areas, and protect wildlife" (GEF, 2018a, p. 122). The strategy also proposes establishing "landscape level mechanisms . . . for conflict resolution between different land users and across national boundaries" (GEF, 2018a, p. 123).

Methodology for Analyzing the Effects of Conflict and Fragility on GEF-Funded Interventions

The evaluation underpinning the evidence presented in this book assessed the impacts of conflict and fragility on the design and implementation of GEF-funded interventions on three scales: globally, at the country and regional levels, and at the project level. It also assessed the impacts of efforts to make GEF support conflict sensitive. The analysis draws upon both quantitative and qualitative methods.

At the global level, the evaluation examined the full GEF portfolio, looking at a variety of dimensions (see note on methodology at the end of this chapter). It considered the extent, nature, and results of GEF-funded interventions in countries affected by fragility and major armed conflict vis-à-vis other countries. This

analysis included projects that were dropped, cancelled, and withdrawn. The projects in the GEF's full portfolio were sorted by country to compare their evaluation scores, delay times, and cancellation rates in countries affected by major armed conflict compared with other countries. The evaluation also explored the GEF's engagement over time in countries listed on the Fragile States Index and the World Bank's Harmonized Index to look at fragility more broadly, beyond major armed conflict. The evaluation surveyed the approaches to conflict and to conflict sensitivity adopted by GEF agencies, secretariats of the MEAs that the GEF serves, and other peer institutions. Those organizations' safeguard policies, guidance documents for operating in conflict-affected settings, and peacebuilding initiatives were reviewed for conflict-sensitive approaches among GEF-associated institutions. Toolkits, guides, and gray literature from other organizations involved in international development and specifically environmental programming in situations affected by conflict and fragility were examined with particular attention to conflict-sensitive strategies. The quantitative results of the global analysis are presented later in this chapter, and the qualitative results inform Chapters 3–5.

The evaluation selected seven situations of focus using the criteria of regional diversity, presence of major armed conflict since 1989, geographic scope and temporal aspects of conflict, number of GEF projects and amount of GEF support, diversity of GEF projects, involvement in GEF-7 Impact Programs, and diversity of situation scales. Based on these criteria, the selected situations were Afghanistan, the Albertine Rift (including parts of Burundi, the DRC, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia), the Balkans (including Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia), Cambodia, Colombia, Lebanon, and Mali (see Figure 2.3). In each situation, the evaluation team reviewed the available project documents for all projects in the situation and then selected six to ten illustrative projects for further analysis.

At the most granular level of analysis, the evaluation reviewed individual projects in depth. For each of the illustrative projects selected for a particular situation, it examined project documents, analytic review of data, materials from GEF agencies, coverage by third parties, and interviews with key personnel. The process began with review of documents available from the GEF project database to assess background information or measures related to the project's conflict context. The review gave special attention to relevance, effectiveness, results, and sustainability. Next, online research provided supplemental information on the conflict context, project planning and design, project implementation, and project outcomes. Among the secondary sources considered were news reports, publications by members of the community affected by the project, and web pages published by the project's agency. The evaluation team also interviewed practitioners involved in project design, implementation, oversight, and evaluation. This review sought to understand the context for the project, ascertain how the project managed (or did not manage) the various risks associated with conflict and fragility, and determine how conflict and fragility affected the project. The regional case study chapters present overviews of the findings from this analysis.

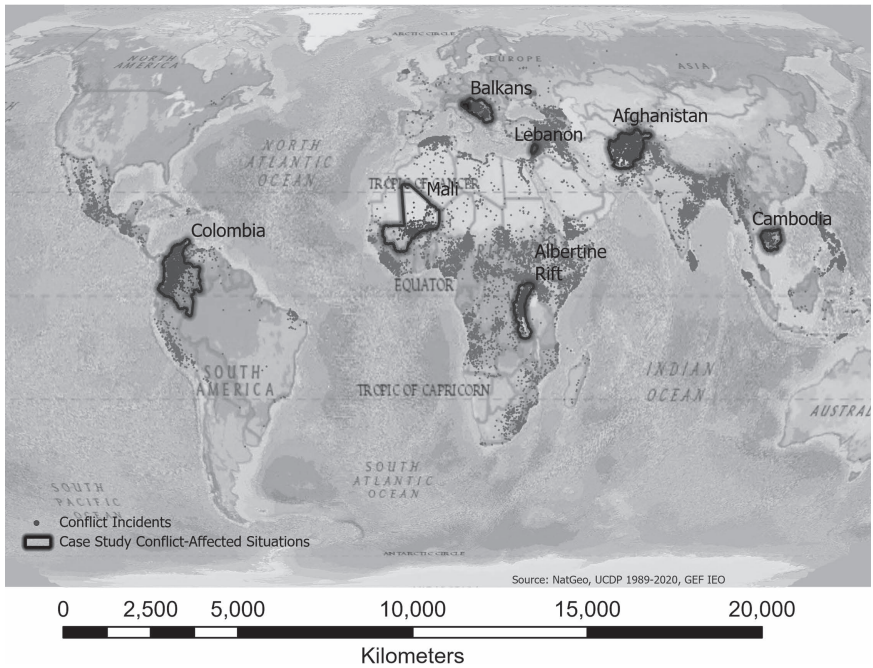


Figure 2.3 GEF Case Study Situations and Conflict, 1989–2020

Source: GEF IEO (2020), using conflict data from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (through October 2020).

Prevalence of Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations in the GEF Portfolio

The vast majority of GEF projects are located in fragile countries. The Fragile States Index[13] provides a comprehensive listing of fragile countries around the world and has used a consistent methodology since 2004 with values ranging from "alert" (i.e., very fragile), to "warning" (of concern), to "stable" (mostly stable), to "sustainable" (very stable). From 2006–2019, 149 of the 164 countries and territories receiving GEF funding have been listed annually on the Fragile States Index. Of these listings, 21 percent have been at "alert" status, 60 percent have been at "warning" status, 18 percent have been at "stable" status, and less than 1 percent have been at "sustainable" status (see Figure 2.4). Of the 164 countries and territories, 134 were categorized as either very fragile or of concern at some point, and 15 were "stable" or "sustainable" the entire period;[14] 15 were not listed on the index.[15] Across this time period, roughly the same number of countries were at "alert" status: 32 in 2006 and 31 in 2019. However, more countries were "stable" in 2019: 19 in 2006 and 30 in 2019. The number of "warning" countries has also grown, from 73 in 2006 to 89 in 2019.

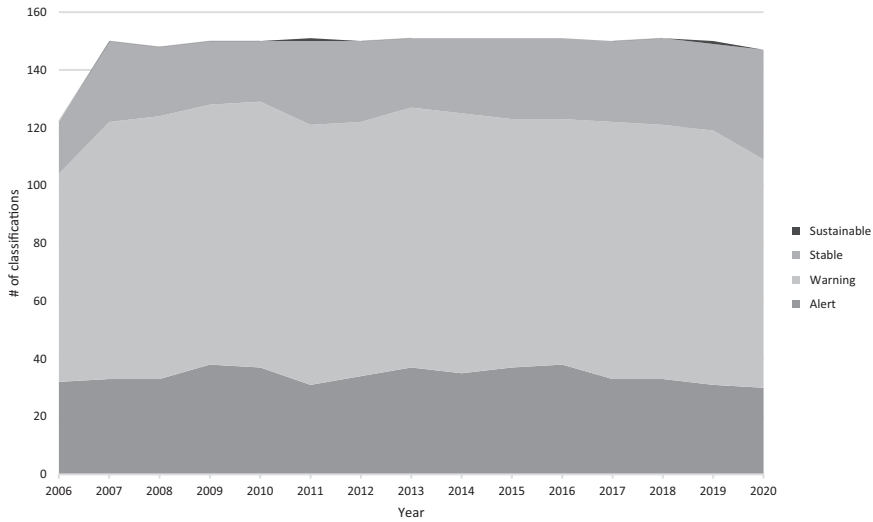


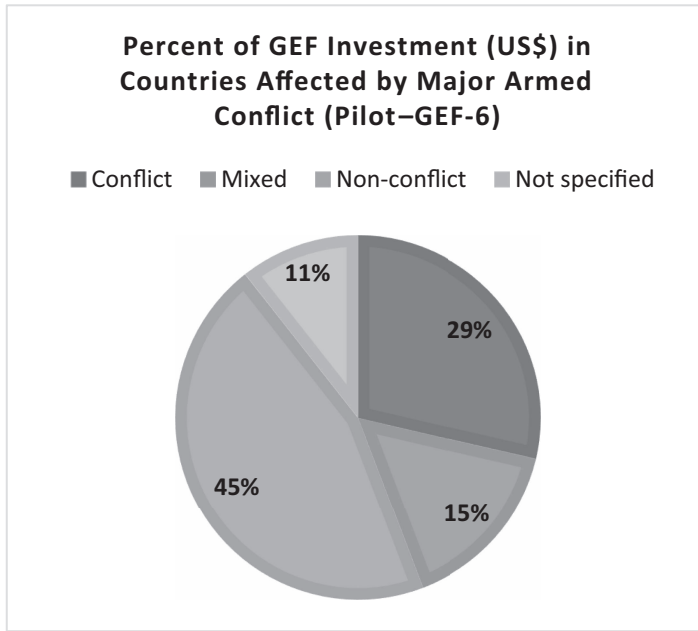
Figure 2.4 Fragility of Countries and Territories Receiving GEF Funding, 2006–2020

Sources: GEF IEO (2020), drawing upon data from The Fund for Peace (n.d.).

Note: Not all countries receiving GEF funding are included in the Fragile States Index.

Distilling trends from the World Bank's List of Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations is more difficult because of its more limited geographic scope and the repeated changes in methodology. Nevertheless, the evaluation noted a few general observations. First, fragility tends to be multiyear: if a country appears on the list, it tends to appear at least once again.[16] Fifteen countries and territories have been on the World Bank list every year from 2006 to 2019.[17] Most fragile states listed are located in Africa and Asia, with a consistent subset of nations in the South Pacific, such as the Marshall Islands and Papua New Guinea. This list includes countries in a special category that are considered politically fragile by their Country Policy Institutional Assessment score but do not have a sufficiently low gross national income to qualify fully for International Development Association aid.

Since its inception, a substantial portion of the GEF's global portfolio has been invested in situations affected by major armed conflict. As of July 2020, the GEF had invested over $4.0 billion, accounting for 29 percent of its global portfolio, in countries affected by major armed conflict, with an additional $2.2 billion, or 16 percent of the portfolio, invested in mixed contexts.[18] In all, 45 percent of GEF investments have been in projects implemented in at least one conflict-affected country (see Figure 2.5). The data available at time of publication for the 25 GEF-7 projects that had already received CEO endorsement indicate that 22 percent of the GEF-7 portfolio is invested in conflict-affected countries and 14 percent in mixed contexts, accounting for 36 percent of the



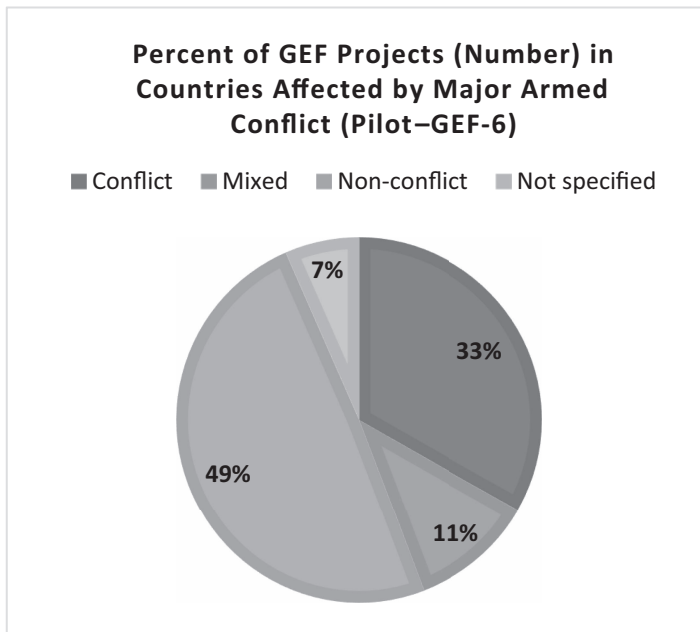


Figure 2.5 GEF Investments in Situations Affected by Major Armed Conflict (Pilot—GEF-6)

Source: GEF IEO (2020) based on Project Management Information System.

Note: "Conflict" refers to major armed conflict.

funding allocated in the GEF-7 replenishment. An additional 11 percent of the GEF-7 portfolio had been invested in situations not affected by major armed conflict and 25 percent in unspecified contexts. Several proposed projects for GEF-7 had not yet received CEO endorsement, including many in countries affected by major armed conflicts.

Of the 6,777 GEF-funded projects prior to GEF-7, 33 percent have been implemented in countries affected by major armed conflict, 11 percent in mixed contexts, and 49 percent in countries not affected by major armed conflict; 7 percent are not specified based on available country information.[19] This is captured in Figure 2.5. Based on project proposals, at least 49 percent of the projects in the GEF-7 portfolio would be implemented in at least one country affected by major armed conflict, a slight increase as compared to the proportion for the entire GEF portfolio. These findings are consistent with the GEF STAP's findings:

> half of GEF recipients (77 countries) experienced armed conflict since the GEF's inception in 1991, and over one-third of GEF recipients (61 countries) proposed and implemented GEF projects while armed conflict was ongoing somewhere in the country. Nearly one-third of all GEF funding has been invested in projects during years when recipient countries experienced conflict.
>
> (GEF STAP, 2018, p. 4)

Similarly, an unpublished report for the GEF on conflict sensitivity found that more than one-third of "GEF members (64 countries) proposed and implemented GEF projects while major armed conflict was ongoing" (Morrow, 2018, p. 7).[20]

The GEF's ability and willingness to fund projects in conflict-affected situations can be catalytic in generating additional funding. Interviews with key informants highlighted the fact that the GEF was often one of the few organizations willing to support projects in areas affected by conflict. In a number of instances, GEF funding has provided the initial funding necessary to pilot projects and lay the groundwork for additional larger investments by other institutions that expand and extend the impacts of the GEF funding. Box 2.2 provides an example.

This role is particularly important as the GEF aims to be catalytic in scaling up action to deliver global environmental benefits. Although this catalytic role can be difficult to measure, in the context of the GEF's role as a funding agency, it means:

> given the limited amount of money available for projects, the GEF hopes to design projects in such a way so as to attract additional resources, pursue strategies that have a greater result than the project itself, and/or accelerate a process of development or change.
>
> (National Center for Science and Technology Evaluation, 2009, p. 1)

Box 2.2 GEF Catalytic Funding in Conflict-Affected Situations—The Case of Sapo National Park in Liberia

GEF-supported programming in post-conflict Liberia illustrates the catalytic potential of GEF programming in situations affected by conflict and fragility. After the end of the Second Liberian Civil War in 2003, the World Bank was not programming in Liberia because of the insecurity related to the immediate aftermath of conflict (Independent Evaluation Group, World Bank, 2012).

Approved in 2004, the project Establishing the Basis for Biodiversity Conservation on Sapo National Park and in South-East Liberia[a] marked one of the earliest GEF-funded projects in postwar Liberia and the start of the World Bank's re-engagement in Liberia.

Sapo National Park is the country's only national park, the largest national park in the region, and a biodiversity hotspot within the Upper Guinea Forest. The project document noted that under the baseline scenario of business-as-usual management based on the contemporary situation in Sapo National Park, "conservation and forest & wildlife management would remain low national priorities" and that international nongovernmental organizations currently operating in the area would "collectively . . . reduce their aid" (GEF, 2004, p. 10). The project applicants noted that the GEF funding would "have an important leveraging effect, too, catalysing funding that otherwise would not have been forthcoming" (GEF, 2004, p. 49).

The project was deemed successful, and project documents noted that implementation took place during a period following a decade and half of civil instability in Liberia, with profound governance, environmental, institutional, and societal changes (World Bank Group, 2011). Since then, the GEF has supported various projects in Liberia, including Consolidation of Liberia's Protected Area Network and SPWA-BD: Biodiversity Conservation through Expanding the Protected Area Network in Liberia [EXPAN], both also implemented by the World Bank. The Forest Development Authority of Liberia executed the projects, both of which were built on earlier successful GEF investments in Sapo National Park and focused on biodiversity conservation, protected area management, community participation, and reducing rural dependence on forests and wildlife in Liberia.

Drawing on lessons from its earlier GEF projects in Liberia, the World Bank continued its engagement with forests and protected area interventions in Liberia, expanding the protected area systems and strengthening capacity to maintain them. Ultimately, the Government of Liberia received grant funding through the World Bank from the Government of Norway for the Liberia Forest Sector Project 2016–2023, which expanded substantially on the initial GEF projects. This project supports priority investments to strengthen the on-the-ground management of Sapo National Park, including

physical demarcation, provision of vehicles and equipment, and updating the Park's management plans (World Bank Group, 2016).

The remote sensing analysis results (Figures B.2.2.1 and B.2.2.2) indicate minimal forest loss, close to zero deforestation within the park boundary (flat line in chart), and could be explained by the prohibitions on all economic activities, including mining, within Liberia's national parks, per Liberian legislation.

The results indicate how efforts to protect Sapo National Park's resources during the first project have been sustained beyond the project duration and supported through subsequent interventions. This trend inside Sapo National Park contrasts with the dramatic increase in forest loss outside the park in postwar Liberia, mainly driven by illegal activities such as mining and logging (see International Monetary Fund, 2008; Small, 2012). The buffer zones do contain legal mining concessions. The two dips in the forest loss outside the park (around 2005 and 2010) coincide with the eviction of illegal gold miners and settlers in the park. Also explaining forest lost in the buffer zone are the lack of financial, technical, and human resources and of capacity and conducive legal environment in Liberia to effectively monitor artisanal and small-scale mining sites and other illegal activities (World Bank Group, 2020b).

[a] Project 1475

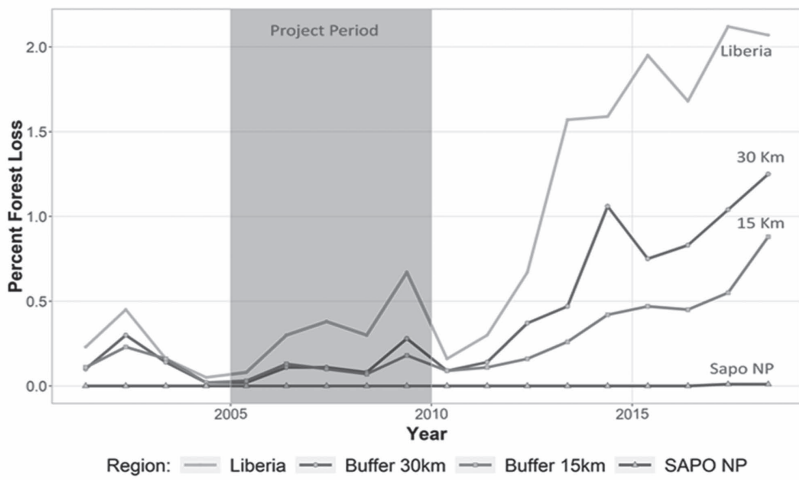


Figure B.2.2.1 Deforestation Trends in Sapo National Park, Adjacent 15 km and 30 km Buffers, and Liberia, 2001–2019

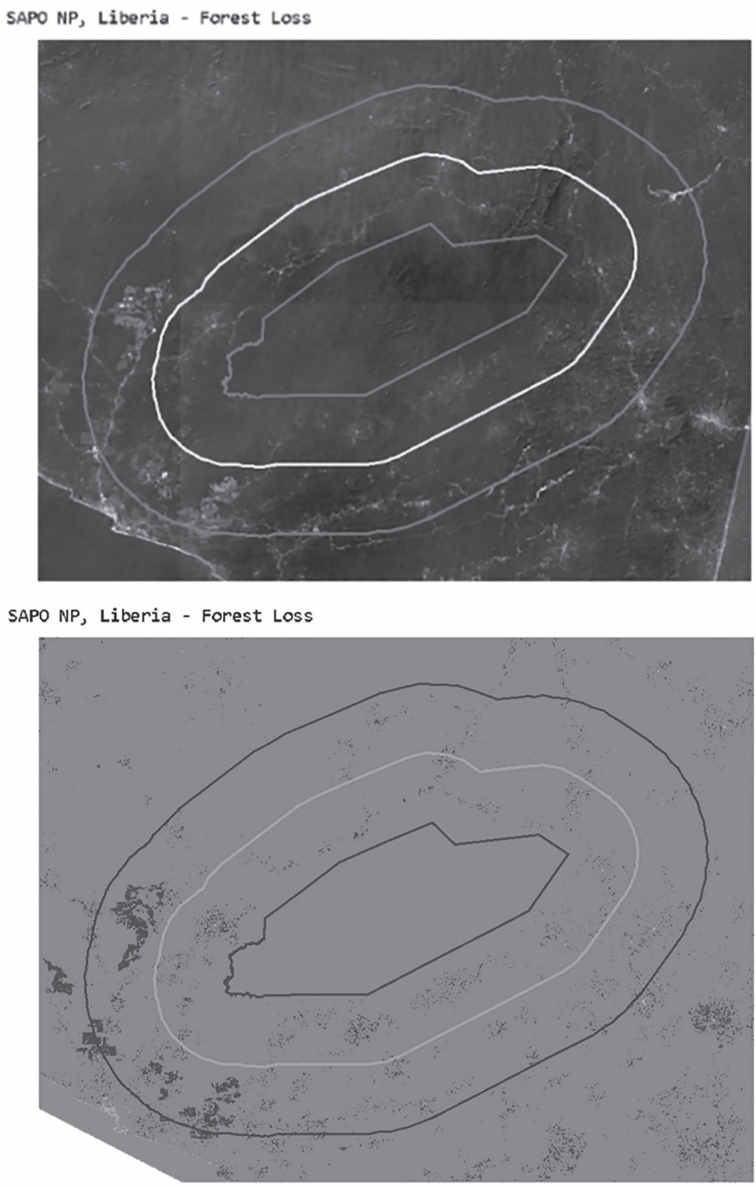


Figure B.2.2.2 Satellite Images of Sapo National Park and Adjacent Buffers, 2001 and 2019

Source: GEF IEO based on UMD GLAD Dataset.

Note: Deforested areas are visible in darker color around the national park and adjacent 15 km and 30 km buffers.

The emphasis on the GEF's catalytic role has been increasingly vital as environmental challenges grow more dire and as the GEF focuses on "radical transformation" (GEF, 2020). The GEF-7 Programming Directions notes:

> The GEF needs to seize opportunities to make a bigger difference. Going forward, the GEF must strategically focus its investments in areas where it can help catalyze the necessary change in key systems, and leverage multi-stakeholder coalitions in alignment with countries' demand and commitment under the various multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) for which the GEF serves as financial mechanism.
>
> (GEF, 2018a, p. 2)

A greater portion of the GEF portfolio is now implemented in countries affected by major armed conflict than in earlier GEF replenishment periods. As shown in Figure 2.6, the percentage of the GEF portfolio in countries affected by major armed conflict remained relatively stable between the Pilot Phase and GEF-3, but starting in GEF-4, it jumped about 10 percentage points to encompass 44 percent of the portfolio.[21] This calculation aligns with findings by Morrow and Hudson (2017), which noted greater numbers of projects in

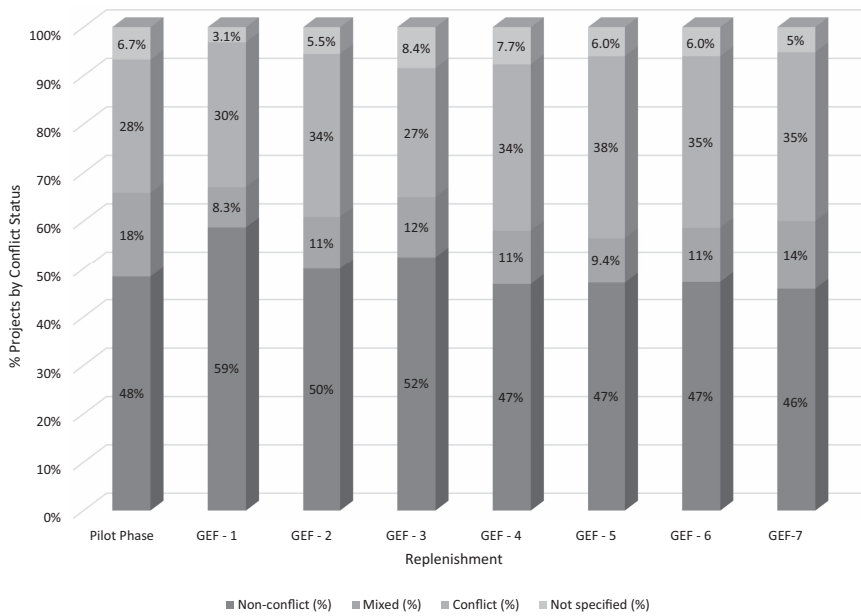


Figure 2.6 Projects by Conflict Status for Each GEF Replenishment

Source: GEF IEO (2020) based on Project Management Information System.

Note: "Conflict" refers to major armed conflict.

Table 2.1 GEF Projects Across Focal Areas, 1991–2019

Focal Area	*Non-Conflict (%)*	*Mixed (%)*	*Conflict (%)*	*Not Specified (%)*	*Total (%)*	*Total (Count)*
Biodiversity	29	23	27	21	27	1,762
Chemicals and Waste	3.3	3.4	3.0	0.9	3.0	196
Climate Change	34	17	38	24	33	2118
International Waters	3	24	2.1	18	5.8	378
Land Degradation	6.5	7.5	5.4	6.6	6.3	405
Multi-focal	16	17	17	21	17	1,086
Ozone Depleting Substances	0.66	0.56	0.42	0.70	0.6	37
POPs	7.6	8.7	7.4	7.3	7.6	495
All	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**6,477**

Source: GEF IEO (2020) based on data from the Project Management Information System.

Note: "Conflict" refers to major armed conflict. POP = persistent organic pollutant. These numbers include dropped and cancelled projects.

conflict-affected countries as well as larger financing envelopes (see also Morrow, n.d., 2018, 2020).

In most instances, the allocation of projects across GEF focal areas is comparable in situations affected by major armed conflict, mixed situations, and those not affected by major armed conflict (see Table 2.1). Among climate change projects, a slightly higher percentage have been in situations affected by major armed conflict (38 percent, compared to 34 percent in non-conflict situations).

International waters projects have frequently been in mixed contexts: 24 percent, compared to 2–3 percent for conflict and non-conflict countries and the GEF portfolio average of 5.8 percent. This is logical, given that international waters focal area projects by their nature engage multiple countries that border a body of water, and the mixed category exclusively contains multicountry projects. However, international waters is the only GEF focal area with an explicit orientation toward improving cooperation and communication between different actors and, therefore, is positioned to consider and address conflict-related issues in its projects.

Statistical Analysis of Project Results vis-à-vis Fragility

To explore the extent to which project ratings depended on the fragility classification ("alert," "warning," or "stable"), the team conducted several statistical tests analyzing the binary evaluation ratings in project terminal evaluation reviews (TERs; not all projects have these reports). To minimize the interference of confounding factors that can occur when comparing country-level with regional and global projects, and due to the fact that many regional and global projects did not list the countries in which they operated, tests were conducted only for country-level projects.

An increasing country fragility classification was associated with a negative and statistically significant impact on project outcomes, sustainability, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) design, M&E implementation, implementation quality, and execution quality (see Table 2.2). The team used a Pearson's chi-square test of independence to measure these impacts, which represent every TER criterion, except the terminal evaluation overall quality. Ordinary least squares (OLS) models with robust standard errors replicated this finding (see Table 2.3).

The most significant impacts were for projects in countries classified as "alert." Not surprisingly, the two-sample test of proportionality showed statistically significant impacts for "stable" countries vis-à-vis "alert" (see Table 2.2). Between "stable" and "warning," tests showed two statistically significant relationships (sustainability and M&E implementation). In contrast, for "warning" vis-à-vis "alert," all criteria except the terminal evaluation overall quality exhibited a statistically significant relationship. This indicates that as a country moves from "stable" to "warning," some impacts occur (particularly for sustainability and M&E implementation), but the transition from "warning" to "alert" raises many more challenges, and the challenges with sustainability and M&E implementation seen in "warning" situations become more widespread.

A country's fragility classification is associated with a statistically significant impact on the likelihood of projects being cancelled or dropped. Out of 4,136 country-level GEF projects,[22] 1,122 projects were cancelled or dropped (with an additional one being deferred and one being rejected). Of these 1,124 projects that experienced difficulty, 10.6 percent were in "stable" countries, 69.6 percent were in "warning" countries, and 19.8 percent were in "alert" countries. When comparing projects in "stable" and "warning" countries, both the independent two-test sample of proportions and the OLS model with robust standard errors showed that increasing fragility had a statistically significant impact on whether a project would be cancelled or dropped (see Table 2.4). A project had a 4.9 percent greater likelihood of being dropped or cancelled if it was in a "warning" country compared to being in a "stable" country. This was the only statistically significant difference: a Pearson's chi-square test of independence showed no statistically significant relationship between a country's fragility classification and whether the project would be cancelled or dropped when all three classifications were considered.

Statistical Analysis of Project Results vis-à-vis Conflict

The team conducted several statistical tests to explore the extent to which project ratings depended on whether the project was in a situation affected by major armed conflict. As noted previously, not all projects have received categorical ratings. To minimize the interference of confounding factors that can occur when comparing country-level with regional and global projects, the team conducted tests along four distinct aggregations: country-level projects only, regional projects only, regional and country-level projects, and all projects.

Table 2.2 Impacts of Fragility on Terminal Evaluation Review Binary Scores for Country-Level GEF Projects, 1991–2019

	Average Value for Fragility Classification						
TER Variable	*Stable Avg.*	*Warning Avg.*	*Alert Avg.*	*n (Sample Size)*	*Statistical Test Performed*	*Std Error*	*p Value*
Outcome	0.84	0.80	0.70	1162	Pearson chi sq	0.030	0.01*
Sustainability	0.73	0.62	0.46	1115	Pearson chi sq	0.029	0.00*
M&E Design	0.65	0.68	0.53	1114	Pearson chi sq	0.031	0.00*
M&E Implementation	0.75	0.66	0.54	1037	Pearson chi sq	0.031	0.00*
Implementation Quality	0.85	0.81	0.72	1011	Pearson chi sq	0.032	0.02*
Execution Quality	0.87	0.81	0.73	1021	Pearson chi sq	0.032	0.01*
Overall Quality	0.83	0.85	0.81	1042	Pearson chi sq	0.030	0.12
Outcome	0.84	–	0.70	331	2-sample test of proportions	0.044	0.00*
Sustainability	0.73	–	0.46	315	2-sample test of proportions	0.055	0.00*
M&E Design	0.65	–	0.53	316	2-sample test of proportions	0.054	0.04*
M&E Implementation	0.75	–	0.54	297	2-sample test of proportions	0.055	0.00*
Implementation Quality	0.85	–	0.72	283	2-sample test of proportions	0.047	0.01*
Execution Quality	0.87	–	0.73	288	2-sample test of proportions	0.046	0.00*
Overall Quality	0.83	–	0.81	331	2-sample test of proportions	0.041	0.71
Outcome	–	0.80	0.70	994	2-sample test of proportions	0.039	0.01*
Sustainability	–	0.62	0.46	957	2-sample test of proportions	0.043	0.00*
M&E Design	–	0.68	0.53	952	2-sample test of proportions	0.044	0.00*
M&E Implementation	–	0.66	0.54	888	2-sample test of proportions	0.045	0.01*
Implementation Quality	–	0.81	0.72	871	2-sample test of proportions	0.040	0.04*
Execution Quality	–	0.81	0.73	876	2-sample test of proportions	0.040	0.03*
Overall Quality	–	0.85	0.79	885	2-sample test of proportions	0.035	0.32
Outcome	0.84	0.80	–	999	2-sample test of proportions	0.032	0.17
Sustainability	0.73	0.62	–	958	2-sample test of proportions	0.039	0.00*
M&E Design	0.65	0.68	–	960	2-sample test of proportions	0.041	0.51
M&E Implementation	0.75	0.66	–	889	2-sample test of proportions	0.040	0.02*
Implementation Quality	0.85	0.81	–	868	2-sample test of proportions	0.034	0.18
Execution Quality	0.87	0.81	–	878	2-sample test of proportions	0.032	0.09
Overall Quality	0.83	0.85	–	899	2-sample test of proportions	0.033	0.58

Source: GEF IEO (2020) based on data from the Project Management Information System.

Note: * Statistically significant variables.

Table 2.3 Effect of Country Fragility on TER Binary Outcome Variables (Warning Baseline)

	Stable	Alert	Constant (Warning)	R^2	*n*
Outcomes	0.044	−0.096*	0.795***	0.01	1,162
	(0.032)	(0.039)	(0.014)		
Sustainability	0.113***	−0.163***	0.621***	0.02	1,115
	(0.039)	(0.043)	(0.017)		
M&E Design	−0.027	−0.143***	0.675***	0.01	1,114
	(0.041)	(0.044)	(0.017)		
M&E Implementation	0.094*	−0.118**	0.658***	0.01	1,037
	(0.040)	(0.045)	(0.017)		
Implementation Quality	0.045	−0.085*	0.805***	0.01	1,011
	(0.034)	(0.040)	(0.015)		
Execution Quality	0.055	−0.087*	0.814***	0.01	1,021
	(0.032)	(0.040)	(0.014)		
Overall Quality	−0.034	−0.064	0.856***	0.00	1,169
	(0.032)	(0.034)	(0.012)		

Source: GEF IEO (2020) based on data from the Project Management Information System.

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.005$ (two-sided). OLS models with robust standard errors.

Table 2.4 Effect of Country Fragility on Likelihood of Project Cancellation (Warning Baseline)

	Stable	*Alert*	*Constant (Warning)*	R^2	*N*
Cancelled, Dropped, Deferred, and Rejected	−0.048*	−0.020	0.282***	0.00	4,136
	(0.021)	(0.017)	(0.009)		

Source: GEF IEO (2020) based on data from the Project Management Information System.

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.005$ (two-sided). OLS models with robust standard errors.

Globally, the conflict status of a project's country had a statistically significant impact on the project's sustainability rating at all levels of aggregation ($p = 0.00$).[23] The presence of major armed conflict in a project country correlated with a lower score for sustainability, suggesting that projects taking place in conflict-affected sites are on average less sustainable than projects taking place in non-conflict contexts.

At all scales of implementation, the country's conflict status had a statistically significant impact on the duration of a project's delays ($p = 0.04$).[24] This measure was also almost statistically significant at the regional and country scale ($p = 0.07$). An example of fragility and tensions causing project delays occurred in the project Reducing Conflicting Water Uses in the Artibonite River Basin through Development and Adoption of a Multi-focal Area Strategic Action Programme.[25] This project began in August 2009 with a planned closing date of July 2013 but was not completed until December 2014. Tensions between the two project

countries—Haiti and the Dominican Republic—increased throughout the project's lifetime. The worsening relations, combined with other issues, undermined the project's ability to achieve its ultimate objective. Although the parties had signed a binational agreement to facilitate the integrated management of the watershed by both governments, meetings were cancelled at critical moments. With the worsening bilateral relations, the project team worked hard and arguably successfully to maintain communication between governments and ministries (Pallen, 2016, p. 25). During its latter stages, the project benefited from assistance from the government of Mexico that facilitated training and exchange of experiences on how to manage a binational water source.

The conflict context (particularly major armed conflict) had a statistically significant impact on the rate of dropped and cancelled GEF projects at all levels of aggregation except for the regional-only scale.[26] Use of a logistical regression model showed that projects in countries affected by major armed conflict had 1.26 times higher odds of being dropped or cancelled than projects in other countries.

To identify any regionally discernible impacts of major armed conflict on GEF projects, the team performed a set of statistical tests on country-level data for GEF projects in four regions: Africa, Asia, Europe and Central Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean.[27]

Although the details vary for each region, the regional data analysis revealed that major armed conflict can have a statistically significant effect (or almost statistically significant effect) on projects in five categories: sustainability, M&E design, M&E implementation, overall quality, and the likelihood that a project will be dropped or cancelled. For the Africa and Asia regions, the analysis showed a statistically significant difference in sustainability ratings between countries affected by major armed conflict and other countries. For the Latin America and the Caribbean region, results showed that ratings for M&E design and M&E implementation were statistically significantly different between conflict and non-conflict countries. And in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean regions, overall ratings and sustainability ratings were close to having statistically significantly difference between countries affected by major armed conflict and other countries. The Asia region exhibited a statistically significant difference in dropped or cancelled projects between countries affected by major armed conflict and other countries. The analysis showed no statistically significant difference in project delays.

In summary, statistical analyses of projects in the GEF portfolio showed impacts of fragile and conflict-affected situations on several dimensions of project performance and outcomes. Fragility had a statistically significant impact on all evaluation indicators. Although comparing "stable" and "warning" situations showed some statistically significant impacts, the impacts were even clearer and more widespread when comparing "warning" and "alert." Major armed conflict also had a statistically significant impact on the likelihood that a project would be cancelled or dropped. The team did not observe this relationship with fragility, although it did affect many aspects of project implementation and success, especially in states classified as "alert." Barring major armed conflict, projects appear to be able to continue navigating the challenging context, despite effects.

Further Details on Methodology

Using the GEF IEO Project Management Information System (PMIS), the research team examined the dataset of projects, which includes projects that do and do not appear in the GEF's public online database,[28] to gain a broad understanding of the GEF-supported interventions in countries of varying states of fragility. The project used the Fragile States Index produced by the Fund for Peace, which has used a consistent methodology since 2004. The Fragile States Index includes the vast majority of countries receiving GEF funding. (By contrast, the World Bank's List of Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations has a more limited geographic scope, and its analytic methodology has changed repeatedly.) The Fragile States Index has four broad categories of fragility: "alert" (very fragile), "warning" (of concern), "stable" (mostly stable), and "sustainable" (very stable). The research team analyzed 149 of the 164 countries identified as fragile according to these two sources and where the GEF has funded projects. The team then examined whether a statistically significant relationship existed between the country's fragility classification and its performance, including whether a GEF project was cancelled or dropped[29] and the binary scores for evaluation criteria in the TERs.

For the analysis of the effect of fragility on GEF projects, the team performed a preliminary review of the fragility classification over the period 2006–2019, assigning the country its most commonly occurring classification. Through June 2019, the database included 4,136 country-level projects in 149 countries classified as "significant," "stable," "warning," and "alert." Because no country had a "significant" classification that predominated over the time period of interest, the analysis used only the three remaining classifications: 12 percent (500 projects) were in "stable" situations, 67 percent (2,787 projects) were in "warning" situations, and 21 percent (849 projects) were in "alert" situations, indicating that the countries were very fragile. Of GEF projects in these countries, 1,176 had TERs: 164 (14 percent) in "alert" countries, 843 in "warning" countries (72 percent), and 169 in "stable" countries (14 percent).

To assess whether a GEF project was more likely to be cancelled or dropped based on classification of the country as "stable," "warning," or "alert," the team performed a cross-tabulation and a Pearson's chi-square test of independence. To assess the GEF project outcomes distribution across the countries in the three categories, the team used a Pearson's chi-square test of independence, a two-sample test of proportions, and ordinary least squares (OLS) models with robust standard errors. This compared "stable" countries to "warning" countries, "stable" to "alert," and "warning" to "alert."

Separately from the analysis of GEF projects in fragile situations, the research team examined the dataset of projects provided by the PMIS to gain a broad understanding of the GEF-supported interventions in countries affected by major armed conflict since 1989 relative to countries that have not been affected by major armed conflict during this period.[30] Countries affected by major armed conflict are defined as those experiencing at least 1,000 battle-related deaths.

Projects in the database were classified by four conflict categories. Projects for which the target country was affected by major armed conflict (or if the project took place in multiple countries, all countries were affected by major armed conflict) were tagged as "conflict." Those projects for which the target country was not affected by major armed conflict (or if multiple countries, none was affected by major armed conflict) were tagged as "non-conflict." Regional projects that included countries affected by major armed conflict and other countries were tagged as "mixed." Projects whose country information was not discernable from project documents were marked as "not specified" and excluded from the team's statistical analyses. This was often the case in projects that had been cancelled or discontinued early in the approval or implementation process and that, therefore, did not have published documentation in the GEF's online database.

To assess whether GEF project outcomes differed between countries classified as conflict and non-conflict, the team performed a two-sample test of proportions on TER binary scores and dropped or cancelled projects data and a two-sample *t* test and a Kruskal-Wallis Equality-of-Proportions test on project delays data.

Notes

1 www.thegef.org/partners/gef-agencies
2 These include the following: the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the Development Bank of Southern Africa, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Inter-American Development Bank, International Fund for Agricultural Development, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the West African Development Bank, the World Bank Group, and the Worldwide Fund for Nature.
3 263 were in "alert" situations, and 939 were in "warning" situations.
4 Project 1086
5 379 were in "alert" situations, and 1,195 were in "warning" situations.
6 69 were in "alert" situations, and 191 were in "warning" situations.
7 Project 2380
8 9 were in "alert" situations, and 61 were in "warning" situations.
9 29 were in "alert" situations, and 115 were in "warning" situations.
10 For example, Projects 3160 (DRC), 4108 (Lebanon), and 4124 (Jordan).
11 www.thegef.org/project/food-iap-fostering-sustainability-and-resilience-food-security-sub-saharan-africa-integrated
12 www.thegef.org/project/comm-iap-taking-deforestation-out-commodity-supply-chains-iap-program
13 https://fragilestatesindex.org/
14 These were Argentina, Barbados, Chile, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Malta, Mauritius, Oman, Panama, Poland, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, and Uruguay.
15 These were Cook Islands, Dominica, Kiribati, Kosovo, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.
16 Out of 63 countries that appear on the list across all years, only eight (Malawi, Mauritania, Dominican Republic, Nauru, Seychelles, Syria, and Trinidad and Tobago) appear only once.

17 These include Afghanistan, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, the DRC, Côte d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Kosovo, Liberia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Sudan, and Togo.
18 This reflects the amount committed at the CEO endorsement stage and does not account for additional costs that may have accrued during project implementation nor costs avoided because of project cancellations or changes after this stage.
19 These numbers are for projects through GEF-6 found in the GEF Project Management Information System Database (downloaded May 2019).
20 These statistics include projects supported by the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund.
21 These percentages include both "conflict" and "mixed" projects.
22 Through June 2019, the GEF funded 4,136 country-level projects in the 149 countries listed on the Fragile States Index.
23 Using a two-sample test of proportions for country level only and Pearson chi-squared for all other scales of aggregation.
24 Using a two-sample *t* test with equal variances for the country level only and the Kruskal-Wallis equality-of-populations rank test for all other scales of aggregation.
25 Project 2929
26 Using a two-sample test of proportions for country level only and Pearson chi-squared for all other scales of aggregation.
27 Countries in regions reflect the World Bank country groupings.
28 Although the GEF's public online database has a substantial amount of information and documents, the evaluation team found that some documentation was missing, and sometimes dates and other information on the public online database were out of date or missing.
29 1,003 projects were dropped, 115 were cancelled, one was classified as rejected, and one was deferred.
30 The year 1989 marked the end of the Cold War and saw a dramatic change in the dynamics between environment, conflict, and peace and how those dynamics were addressed (Bruch et al., 2019). It was also shortly before the establishment of the GEF in 1991.

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Appendix 2.1 GEF-Supported Projects Referenced in Chapter 2

Project ID	*Project Name*	*Region*	*Dates*
1086	Developing an Integrated Protected Area System for the Cardamom Mountains	Cambodia	2001–2007
1475	Establishing the Basis for Biodiversity Conservation on Sapo National Park and in South-East Liberia	Liberia	2005–2010
2380	Sustainable Co-Management of the Natural Resources of the Aïr-Ténéré Complex	Niger	2006–2012
2929	Reducing Conflicting Water Uses in the Artibonite River Basin through Development and Adoption of a Multi-focal Area Strategic Action Programme	Haiti and Dominican Republic	2008–2012
3160	Preparation of the POPs National Implementation Plan under the Stockholm Convention	Democratic Republic of the Congo	2007–2011
4108	PCB Management Project	Lebanon	2010–present
4124	Implementation of Phase I of a Comprehensive PCB Management System	Jordan	2010–2016

3 Findings

Analysis of GEF Support in Conflict-Affected Situations

With the findings from the analysis of interventions funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in fragile and conflict situations, this chapter discusses a typology of the key pathways by which conflict and fragility affect GEF projects. It also addresses the resulting impacts of conflict and fragility on GEF projects, particularly with respect to relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. Appendix 3.1, at the end of this chapter, lists the projects discussed in Chapter 3.

Key Pathways by Which Conflict and Fragility Affect GEF Projects

Conflict and fragility affect GEF projects by five key pathways: physical insecurity, social conflict, economic drivers, political fragility and weak governance, and coping strategies. These pathways are illustrated in Figure 3.1. This typology draws upon analysis of the numerous projects reviewed. This section explores each pathway in turn, with illustrative examples.

Physical Insecurity

Issues related to physical security were the most common challenges affecting project performance, implementation, and results. Physical insecurity tended to manifest itself in one of two ways: either the presence of land mines and unexploded ordnance or the potential targeting of staff and partners. These challenges have caused difficulties for GEF projects in hiring staff, consulting affected communities, undertaking project activities, and conducting the necessary activities to evaluate projects. In Syria, for example, the suspension notice for a project[1] indicated:

> [t]he deteriorating security situation in Syria is not conducive to project implementation. Travel to parts of the country is difficult and unsafe, and there are reports that buildings/sites that were intended to be energy efficiency demonstration projects under the GEF projects have been damaged or destroyed in the ongoing civil unrest.
>
> (UNDP, 2013a, p. 1)

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Key Pathways		Negative Impacts	Positive Impacts
PHYSICAL INSECURITY		• Impedes access to project sites • Physical Safety of Project Staff and Partners • Difficulties hiring staff	
SOCIAL CONFLICT AND MISTRUST		• Land tenure issues • Sensitivities hiring project staff	• Projects designed to increase cooperation among groups
ECONOMIC DRIVERS		• Illicit extraction and trade of natural resources • Competition over resources can drive conflicts and put staff and parties at risk • Currency depreciation	• Projects focused on livelihoods and sustainable natural resource management
POLITICAL FRAGILITY AND WEAK GOVERNANCE		• Institutional capacity and legitimacy • Financial capacity • Corruption and rule of law	• Projects designed to align with governmental priorities, including implementation of peace agreement
COPING STRATEGIES		• Conflict between internally displaced persons/refugees and local communities • Decreased carrying capacity • Vulnerability enhanced by climatic stressors	

Figure 3.1 Key Pathways by Which Conflict and Fragility Affect GEF Projects
Source: GEF IEO (2020)

Similarly, a project in Yemen was cancelled because of challenges with access and procedural issues.[2] The cancellation notice stated that "given the situation of civil unrest and the UN security phase in Yemen, we have been unable to send staff to the country to hold consultations and finalize the documentation for some time now"

(UNEP, 2017, p. 1). In Chad, the terminal evaluation for a project[3] reported that "towards the end of the project some project sites were difficult to reach because of the threat of Boko Haram in the area, and those political and security threats remain in the country now" (GEF IEO, 2016c, p. 69).

Difficulty accessing project areas is particularly common in situations of active and protracted conflict. For one project in Lebanon, implementing agency staff noted that unexploded ordnance from the 2006 Israel-Lebanon War was a security threat constraining access to the project site.[4] In Mali, staff members were forced to relocate when the project area was occupied by military groups in March 2012 (World Bank, 2013, p. 22).[5]

In many instances, physical insecurity can compel a project to stop work in particular locations. For example, a project on mainstreaming biodiversity management could not include sites from southern Lebanon because of the security risk posed by unexploded cluster bombs from the 2006 Israel-Lebanon War, which reduced the area of project implementation (GEF, 2007, p. 4).[6] Prior to implementation of a project in Colombia, one of the identified project areas was abandoned due to the rise of a "delicate public security situation" (GEF, 2012b, p. 9) that made it impossible for project staff to access the area.[7]

Land mines and unexploded ordnance can pose a serious threat in certain countries. Several GEF projects in Cambodia have been affected by the presence of land mines. One project reported that the 6–9 million remaining land mines hindered data collection, conservation activities, and the project's operations to tackle illegal logging (GEF, 1998, p. 5).[8] Similarly, another project noted that while the presence of land mines impeded access for conservationists, illegal hunters and loggers continued to operate in the area (GEF, 2001c, p. 8).[9]

Notwithstanding physical security challenges, GEF projects have found ways to continue operating. For example, a project in Burundi received satisfactory evaluation ratings for "quality of supervision" and "overall performance" despite "extremely challenging security environment that precluded easy and frequent site access" (GEF IEO, 2012a, p. 23).[10] Another project in Mali noted that if the security situation worsened, the project would relocate and adjust its strategy to focus on legal frameworks (GEF, 2018b, p. 15).[11]

Rising insecurity and conflict in project areas have affected GEF projects, highlighting the need to look beyond conflict to the broader fragility context when planning projects. For example, implementation of two projects in Mali was directly affected and halted by the rapidly escalating conflict context. Activities for one[12] were suspended following a coup d'état in March 2012 and the subsequent occupation of project areas by military groups, compelling project staff to flee for their safety. The project's evaluation observed that risks such as insecurity and the coup d'état "were not envisioned" in project documents (World Bank, 2013, p. 29) and that "even before the military coup, the project area was often vandalized by foreign military groups" (World Bank, 2013, p. 34), resulting in deep financial losses. The experience with a project designed to restore ecosystems throughout the elephant range in Mali[13] illustrates how physical insecurity can spread within a country. Implementation began in 2018 and is ongoing. However, an interview with project staff revealed that staff members have been unable to begin their work

in the Gourma region of Mali because of insecurity in the designated project area: The risk of poaching is very high, and poaching is directly attributable to the armed conflict, given that it was nonexistent in the region before. In short, the spread of armed conflict to the region led to poaching, which led to a worsening of physical insecurity, which escalated to such a point that the project had to cease working in the region.

Social Conflict and Mistrust

Social conflict and mistrust (whether between local stakeholders or toward the government) have affected the performance and outcome of numerous GEF projects. Social competition for resources can occur in settings where there is a scarcity of arable land, water, and other natural resources upon which people and communities depend for their livelihoods and food security (Theisen, 2008; Unruh & Williams, 2013; Young & Goldman, 2015). Moreover, influxes of refugees, internally displaced persons, and migrants can generate social conflict and tensions.

Social conflicts concerning land tenure are particularly common and can be problematic if not managed. A project in Colombia aimed to support indigenous communities in the Matavén Forest but had to be redesigned at implementation because indigenous communities stressed their preference for creating an indigenous *resguardo* or reserve, rather than a national park, so they could retain autonomy over the land (GEF IEO, 2006).[14] The redesign was necessitated as the conflict escalated, resulting in the death of a park staff member and several indigenous people (GEF IEO, 2006). In Mali and Burundi, GEF projects have also needed to navigate social conflicts between ethnic groups related to land tenure. In Burundi, conflict exacerbated capacity issues and risks for one project, especially with regard to land tenure, affecting implementation and sustainability (GEF IEO, 2012a).[15]

Social tensions can present administrative challenges unrelated to natural resources, such as in hiring staff. Some projects have faced problems, albeit to a lesser extent than tenure-related problems, related to the equal hiring of local staff for project implementation. In interviews, implementing agency staff reported that some regional projects in the Balkans were affected by mistrust among project participants. A former employee of the Sava River Commission noted that cooperation was extremely difficult to sustain, given the requirement to have the same number of employees from all participating countries; mistrust affected all cross-border environmental projects in the region after the war. This is not always the case, however. For example, interviews with implementing agency staff and NGO staff in Lebanon highlighted that, notwithstanding the social sensitivities associated with sectarianism in Lebanon, hiring and managing staff was usually possible without undue burden.

Understanding social conflicts can enhance the success of projects, if the projects are designed in a conflict-sensitive way to bring people together. For example, a project in Burundi[16] foresaw that "land tenure conflicts [were] likely to be a serious issue for the rural population" (GEF, 2004), exacerbated by the reintegration

of returnees after the war. However, the project's evaluation noted its success in reinforcing social cohesion through producers' organizations "whose members are draw[n] from all three ethnicities (Tutsi, Batwa and Hutu)" (GEF IEO, 2012a, p. 21). Similarly, a project in Mali considered intercommunal conflicts over land management—especially between traditional practices and government-led conservation—as potential barriers to the project's objective of intercommunal land management.[17] Consequently, the project pursued an approach of generating dialogue and project planning workshops, including conflict-resolution mechanisms and grievance redress, enabling local leaders to feel ownership of the project (GEF, 2001b).

Economic Drivers

The economic consequences of conflict can affect project implementation, both at the macro level (national and regional economies) and the micro level (livelihoods). Illicit extraction and trade in minerals, timber, and other natural resources can exacerbate and prolong conflict. At the same time, economic interest can provide an incentive to make and build peace (United Nations Department of Political Affairs & UNEP, 2015). Economic stresses associated with conflict and with post-conflict recovery can push a government to quickly generate revenues, leading to natural resource concessions with bad terms or concessions that are illegal. For example, a post-conflict review of 70 timber concessions in Liberia found that not a single concession complied with the law (Rochow, 2016). Unhealthy concessions can also reduce the domestic value added on exports (Hill & Menon, 2014; Sayne et al., 2017). Tensions can arise, as people's livelihoods are affected by conflict, climatic stressors, and migration influxes from neighboring fragile situations (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2016; USAID, 2015). Economic factors affect projects in some instances, and GEF projects often do include a component aiming to improve local livelihoods, such as projects with community-based management, such as the Gourma Biodiversity Conservation Project[18] and Community-based Natural Resource Management in Mali,[19] and sustainable production landscapes projects, such as Sustainable Low Carbon Development in Colombia's Orinoquia Region.[20]

The profitability of a natural resource combined with low state capacity to govern the resource legally can increase illicit extraction and trade. For example, the project in Mali's Gourma region that seeks to advance biodiversity conservation (particularly the Gourma elephant)[21] noted that the military conflict overwhelmed the "insufficient current environmental policy and IWT [illegal wildlife trade] legal framework, low capacity of the Government . . . and a lack of universally accepted structures and institutions" and thereby constituted "a limitation to the success of the project" (GEF, 2018b, p. 15).

Projects can help to manage economic risks by incorporating livelihoods components. One example is a project in the Colombian Amazon region.[22] A project staff member reported that, although the implementation location was fully under rebel control and impossible to access, strategies aimed at improving

livelihoods through differentiated production methods (honey, silvo-pastoral approaches, etc.) have so far been successful. The staff member also noted that the project seems to be strengthening social cohesion because many ex-combatants have secured jobs in the sectors of the project. A second example is a non-GEF project in Kenya funded by the Catholic Funds for Overseas Development that improved social cohesion between nomadic tribes (Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, 2012). This project operated on the assumption that together, improved livelihoods and mainstreaming practices for peacebuilding would address the drivers of conflict. The development of a shared market for livestock increased project participation and drew different communities closer together, leading the external evaluation to deem the project's sustainability as highly likely (Galgallo & Scott, 2010).

Political Fragility and Weak Governance

Political fragility, weak governance, and limited institutional capacity can affect project implementation and sustainability directly or by creating an environment in which other factors, both predictable and not, can affect projects. Where governments are weak and have limited capacity, they may not be able to effectively govern remote areas, which can lead to reduced legitimacy and increased mistrust. This was the case in projects in remote areas of Colombia and several projects in Afghanistan in regions with low institutional capacity. In such settings, social conflicts can escalate rapidly. Corruption and nontransparent governance may adversely impact the natural resources that the project seeks to protect, low administrative capacity may extend a project's end date, and low financial capacity and low capacity of the local executing partner may lead to delays in transferring funds (OECD, 2011).

The legacy of colonialism is a factor in some of the governance challenges. For example, conflicts related to land tenure and control over other natural resources can often be traced back to the colonial era (Boone, 2015; GEF, 2001a). National boundaries drawn during the colonial era can persist as territorial disputes that affect GEF projects. A regional project that sought to integrate management of the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem highlighted concerns related to territorial disputes persisting from colonialism (GEF, 2001a, p. 3).[23]

Political instability and weak governance can affect project sustainability. In Lebanon, for example, the instability in the country and region threatened the sustainability of outcomes of a project focused on Lebanese woodlands.[24] Specifically, changes in government at the national and local levels "jeopardize commitments made to the project's objectives" (GEF IEO, 2016b, p. 6). A project in Cambodia was particularly affected by the governance landscape.[25] Despite the project's ability to meet its objectives being deemed "a testament to what can be cheved [sic] through the NGO implementation modality" (GEF IEO, 2012c, p. 27), the project's evaluation stated that "current governance poses an overwhelming risk to the sustainability of the project" (GEF IEO, 2012c, p. 27), notably issues of illegal and poorly managed concessions.

However, where a project is a government priority, governments can redirect their scarce resources to engage. For example, a project that involved Angola, Namibia, and South Africa suggested that civil strife in Angola might result in a diminished project commitment from that country (GEF, 2001a).[26] In fact, interministerial involvement was present at every meeting of the Benguela Current Commission, given the "growing realization . . . that environmental sustainability is inextricably linked to food production, tourism, sanitation, population movement and thus, regional stability" (GEF, 2001a, p. 5).

Strategies to Cope with Conflict

During conflict, people often adopt short-term coping strategies to survive that compromise long-term sustainability and prosperity. Three common types of maladaptive coping strategies occur during conflict: *liquidation of assets, flight*, and *resource use by displaced persons*. In times of armed conflict, concerns about survival often mean that people liquidate their assets so they can buy food and other necessities or flee to safety, even if these actions compromise the ability to return. This liquidation of assets often results in the rapid and intense exploitation of natural resources, typically at the expense of the resource's ability to recover, and not always for its highest and best use. For example, livestock can become a risky livelihood asset to retain during conflict since it can be easily stolen or killed. During Burundi's civil war, many households in conflict-affected areas reported losing livestock to theft and looting (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre and Norwegian Refugee Council, 2006; Mercier et al., 2020). Accordingly, during conflict, many rural households sell livestock as a coping strategy. Instead of keeping livestock, rural households tend to resort to the cultivation of low-risk, low-return crops that can feed their families and are less likely to attract combatants (Justino, 2012; Rockmore, 2020; Saumik, 2015). In Afghanistan, people cut down pistachio orchards and woodlands to use the wood for cooking, heating, and shelter or to sell it to earn a basic income (UNEP, 2019).

Aggregate changes in natural resources driven by coping strategies can generate social tensions and instability that can affect projects. The evaluation of a project in Lebanon noted that the sociopolitical sustainability of the project had been compromised by the increasing pressures on land, natural resources, and infrastructure resulting from the Syrian refugee crisis, with the consequent destabilization of the project area and the region more broadly (GEF IEO, 2016b).[27] Concurrent with stresses on the resources, changes in the critical mass of stakeholders also affected ownership of the project results and undermined the project's sustainability.

Impacts from coping strategies are linked to local and regional security, refugee influx, and climatic stressors. Coping mechanisms are primarily attributed to refugees and internally displaced persons in displacement camps, or who migrated to urban areas due to violence and conflict. During the civil wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia, for example, hundreds of thousands of refugees fled to safety to a region of Guinea known as the Parrot's Beak (UNEP, 2005). Integrating into local villages, many refugee families cut down trees to make space for and build homes. They also

took up logging as a means of income. Forests were quickly depleted, as illustrated by the satellite images in Figure 3.2. Such events strain natural resources while contributing to the proliferation of informal economies and ethnic divisions—all factors that may exacerbate the impacts of conflict on project implementation (Justino, 2012). Coping strategies carried out on a large scale, such as illegal mining, hunting, logging, and land use, decrease the local carrying capacity affecting ecosystem services. Moreover, movements of refugees and displaced persons in an unstable region may increase compelling problems such as water scarcity, further intensifying grievances.

The struggle of managing response to large influxes of refugees can affect projects as governments reprioritize funding and resources. For example, in Jordan, the evaluation for a project to implement a comprehensive polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB) management system[28] noted that the intensity of the neighboring armed conflict and the resultant influx of more than 2 million refugees into Jordan posed a significant burden on the government, stating that "the sustainability of the project outcomes is partly affected by the situation as the government needs to prioritize funding" for supporting the refugees (GEF IEO, 2015, p. 6).

Climatic stressors and environmental security issues may increase movements of refugees and internally displaced persons, potentially heightening risk of conflict. A project in Mali saw increasing social conflict between ethnic groups, between farmers and herders, and between local people and migrants over the use of natural resources that have become increasingly scarce due to climatic stressors (GEF, 2018b, p. 64).[29] Conflicts arose over differences in natural resource management practices and values held by different ethnic groups. A project in the Albertine Rift considered refugee movements as a high risk to project implementation, given the increasing pressure on resources by returning refugees and internal ecological refugees due to climate variability.[30] The project results document noted that the refugee influx indeed "exacerbated the land use management

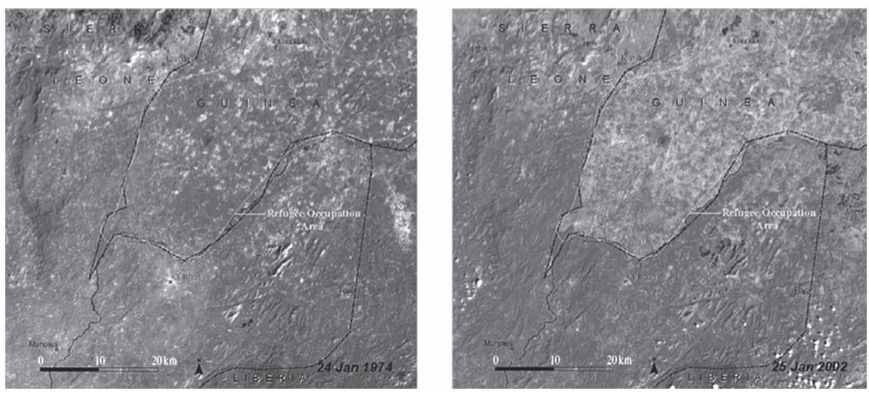

Figure 3.2 Deforestation in the Parrot's Beak Region of Guinea, 1974 and 2002

Source: UNEP, 2005, pp. 14–15

in the country [Tanzania]" (Bunning & Woodfine, 2017, p. 132), resulting in increased violent conflicts between farmers and livestock owners. In response, a successful strategy of participatory land-use plans and conflict management was adopted.

Impacts of Conflict and Fragility on GEF-Supported Interventions

Risks related to conflict and fragility, and the ways projects respond to those risks, affect project relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. The GEF Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) uses those four criteria as the cornerstones for evaluation (GEF IEO, 2019, p. 13).[31] They are interconnected, and the examples presented in this section illustrate particular impacts on one metric without suggesting that other metrics were not affected in the given project. The data for these analyses are both quantitative and qualitative, drawing on evaluation scores and interviews with project staff.

Conflict and fragility can affect the relevance of a project—for better and for worse. The GEF IEO defines the relevance of a project as "the extent to which the intervention design and intended results were consistent with local and national environmental priorities and policies and to the GEF's strategic priorities and objectives, and remained suited to the conditions of the context, over time" (GEF IEO, 2019, para. 25(a)). Armed conflict can shift the focus and priorities of a state and community away from environmental initiatives and those that require cooperation and toward efforts that directly affect conflict dynamics or provide relief. Fragility can have similar effects in skewing priorities. In the DRC, an enabling activity to support the country in meeting its obligations under the Stockholm Convention noted that armed conflict had degraded the capacity of public institutions, and "many ministries . . . lost their capacity for action on the ground and for national coordination" (GEF, 2006, p. 4). Accordingly, the need for the project to support both coordination and on-the-ground action was elevated.[32]

The shift in priorities associated with conflict can negatively affect the relevance of projects that are not designed to address livelihoods or are not able to adapt to changing priorities. Armed conflict disrupts livelihoods, food security, social cooperation, and the provision of basic services, which are often top priorities locally and nationally because of their centrality to quality of life. In Lebanon, a project document noted that because the violent conflict "took its toll on every resource in the country, . . . the vast majority of people have been too preoccupied with overcoming the struggles of day to day living to pay much attention to the environment" (GEF, 1995, p. 1).[33] A project can languish, or worse, when its goals are not perceived to be related to current priorities. Documents from another project in Lebanon noted:

> [c]ountries now struggling with political and security challenges (including civil war) cannot place much priority on MSBs [migratory soaring birds] which may be seen as "someone else's problem" and MSB conservation is

> sometimes seen as a barrier to development and not as an integral part of the process.
>
> (GEF, 2017, p. 22)

In that case, some perceived the project priorities as an impediment to achieving development objectives that are critical during conflict.[34]

Conflict often drives governments to reallocate financial, personnel, and other resources to conflict-related initiatives. This was the case for a project in Syria.[35] After conflict broke out, the project was cancelled to allow the implementing agency to shift to humanitarian relief and recovery because the original objectives of the project (related to energy efficiency in buildings) had become a lower priority for Syria and because of the implementation challenges associated with the deteriorating security situation (UNDP, 2013a). Changes in state priorities associated with conflict can affect both project relevance and project sustainability. In Sudan, for example, a project review noted:

> the secession of South Sudan, which has perturbed the project, has not ended conflict in the region. The ongoing conflict is expensive, drains government resources and undermines the ability of the state to prioritize and allocate resources to poverty reduction and climate change adaptation.
>
> (GEF IEO, 2016a, p. 6)[36]

Conflict can also enhance the relevance of projects, particularly those designed to be conflict sensitive that address livelihoods, food security, cooperation, and basic services. A review of the Agricultural Rehabilitation and Sustainable Land Management Project in Burundi[37] noted that "the prevalence of poverty and history of serious internal conflict in Burundi [means that] there is no other feasible development alternative to reducing poverty than agricultural and rural development" (GEF, 2004, p. 7) and that "the immediate priority of the government is the revival of the agriculture sector in order to ensure basic food security and the rehabilitation of the several thousands of displaced persons returning since the cessation of major conflict" (GEF, 2004, p. 88). This project was designed to directly address post-conflict priorities and was thus highly relevant in the conflict-affected context. Similarly, in Colombia, the project for sustainable low-carbon development in the Orinoquia region addressed sectors that were priorities for post-conflict peacebuilding and rebuilding.[38] Project documentation noted that "biodiversity conservation strategies and climate change mitigation efforts in the Orinoquia—in particular those related to agriculture and forestry (AFOLU)—would be aligned with peacebuilding priorities" because the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) had a strong presence in the region (GEF, 2019, p. 7).

One way that GEF projects enhance their relevance is by leveraging environmental objectives to support peace processes in post-conflict contexts. In the DRC, a project was designed to align with the Strategy Document for Growth and Poverty Reduction in South-Kivu, which prioritizes peace, and with FAO's earlier peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts through food and agricultural initiatives

(GEF, 2018a).[39] Similarly, in Colombia, the project Contributing to the Integrated Management of Biodiversity in the Pacific Region of Colombia to Build Peace[40] leverages biodiversity management as a tool for peacebuilding, thus increasing the project's relevance. The project "is consistent with the Peace Process in the framework of agreement Number 1 of La Habana that addresses the environmental zoning of the territory with the aim of identifying strategic areas for conservation and provision of ecosystem services" (GEF, 2016, p. 26).

The fluid nature of conflict and fragility can change the relevance of a project over time. This means that a project, although once relevant, can become less so. Such changes could happen with any project, but the volatility of fragile and conflict-affected situations makes it more likely than in more stable situations. This can present challenges because changing the objectives of a project to make it relevant in the new conditions requires approval from the governing GEF Council.

Conflict and fragility have an impact on the effectiveness of projects through various channels. Effectiveness is "the extent to which the intervention achieved, or expects to achieve, results (outputs, outcomes and impacts, including global environmental benefits) taking into account the key factors influencing the results" (GEF IEO, 2019, para. 25(b)). As stated earlier, tension and outbreaks of violence can cause restriction of access to project sites, difficulties with hiring, challenges between project partners, security risks for project staff and components, destruction of project facilities or resources, and many further complications, as described in Chapter 1. Each of these challenges can lead to project cancellation or otherwise hamper the achievement of project outcomes.

Statistical analyses of the GEF portfolio indicate that country-level projects in conflict-affected contexts were significantly more likely to be dropped or cancelled than projects in non-conflict contexts (see Chapter 2). Specifically, quantitative analyses found that GEF projects in countries affected by major armed conflict had a 26 percent greater chance of being dropped or cancelled than projects in countries not affected by major armed conflict. A review of cancellation notices identified various conflict-related factors as causes for project cancellation, including general insecurity issues, problems with sending staff to the country, barriers to cofinancing, damage to infrastructure, and institutional or political disarray. Project cancellation notices provide insights into the various ways conflict can hinder the ability to carry out a project.

Many conflict cancellation notices note the challenges posed by deterioration or lack of institutional capacity to carry out project activities. For example, in a project encompassing Iran and Afghanistan,[41] "the Government of Afghanistan expressed their inability to go through the project formulation process despite their keen interest" because of the "capacity limitations and overall constraints imposed by the political and security situation in the country" (UNDP, 2010, p. 1). In Sudan, the cancellation notice for a project noted that "the uncertainty in terms of institutional and administrative structure resulting from the referendum and the subsequent separation of the South constituted an additional risk element with respect to [required] national policy level interventions" (UNDP, 2011, p. 1).[42] In that case, the institutional ramifications of conflict caused difficulty ascertaining whether the

national government would be able to perform the policy interventions necessary for carrying out the project activities.

Conflict can present financing challenges that prevent execution of project activities. This problem was prevalent in two cancellation notices from Yemen. In one case, the notice explained:

> from January 2011, a number of attempts by the Agency to restart the project activities were unsuccessful due to the Arab Spring that commenced in February 2011, unrealized co-finance commitments by the partners, claims of compensation by the drilling contractor and disbandment of the executing team following the civil war.
>
> (UNEP, 2018, p. 1)[43]

The notice for another project mentioned:

> in view of the ongoing situation in Yemen with suspension of disbursements since July 28, 2011, the uncertainties around the likely priorities to emerge in the post-transition/re-engagement period, and the status of project preparation to date and likely future challenges in preparation, it is not feasible to envisage preparation and delivery of the project at this point in time.
>
> (World Bank, 2011, p. 1)[44]

Some cases offered multiple conflict-related reasons for cancellation. A project in Chad was cancelled with this explanation:

> [s]ufficient co-financing had not been committed by partners and security issues meant that baseline data could not be collected; as the Agency was engaging with partners to resolve this matter, a number of other issues arose. The Sahel food crisis struck Chad in 2009/10 and 2012—and was compounded by a deterioration in the law-and-order situation in some areas.
>
> (UNDP, 2013b, p. 1)[45]

Conflict and fragility also can reduce project efficiency. Efficiency is defined as "the extent to which the intervention achieved value for resources, by converting inputs (funds, personnel, expertise, equipment, etc.) to results in the timeliest and least costly way possible, compared to alternatives" (GEF IEO, 2019, para. 25(c)). Complications generated by conflict and fragility can require costly adjustments. For example, a project in Colombia had to be restructured to respond to conflict because "the location of the activities under Component B, were not implemented in Las Hermosas Massif, as originally planned, but in the Chingaza Páramo and the National Natural Park Los Nevados due to security concerns" (GEF IEO, 2012b, p. 5).[46] The restructuring, which happened in 2010, four years after the project was approved, cost an additional $3.5 million.

Analyses of the GEF's global portfolio indicated that conflict has a statistically significant impact on the duration of project delays. Examination of specific GEF

projects highlighted specific mechanisms by which conflict and fragility hinder project efficiency: They can increase costs and delays to accessing project sites, necessitate additional costly security measures, aggravate tensions and lack of trust between stakeholders, cause government institutions to refocus attention and resources to address the situation, and require additional time and costs for institution building and decision making.

When projects require cooperation between stakeholders, tensions between different entities can get in the way of project activities, affecting both efficiency and effectiveness. The Reducing Conflicting Water Uses in the Artibonite River Basin through Development and Adoption of a Multi-Focal Area Strategic Action Programme[47] illustrates this dynamic. Tensions between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, the two countries involved, delayed the project's completion by 17 months. Meetings were cancelled at critical moments, and the overall objectives of the project were never achieved. According to the project's evaluation, "the political and technical had to be separated and unfortunately this never happened and ended up being perhaps the hardest lesson that was learned by project stakeholders when the ultimate project objective would not be reached" (Pallen, 2016, p. 8).

Shifts in institutions' priorities—to address conflict dynamics or as agencies have fewer resources to direct to projects—can also affect efficiency. These developments can generate substantial slowdowns in government action, resulting in inefficiencies if projects are unprepared for them. In Mali, a project on Biodiversity Conservation and Participatory Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Inner Niger Delta and its Transition Areas[48] faced numerous delays because of political conditions associated with state fragility, which then were exacerbated when civil war broke out in 2012 (GEF IEO, 2014, p. 10). The project experienced delays in the implementation of the agreement with the National Investment Agency for Local Communities, a delay in the transfer of funds by the National Department of Agriculture to its Regional Directorate in Mopti, and a delay in launching the investments. The delay in the implementation of the agreement and the political crisis undermined financing of the microprojects. As a result, in 2013, 22 contracts totaling CFAF110 million were cancelled, and the project was delayed by nearly 40 months (GEF IEO, 2013b, p. 23). Ultimately, the evaluation noted:

> the economic rate of return [of the project] is estimated at 39% . . . the insecurity generated by the socio-political crisis experienced in the region disrupted the achievement of the project investments in the Mopti region, and therefore had an impact on the efficiency.
>
> (GEF IEO, 2013b, p. 10)

One of the most common effects of conflict and fragility on projects is to undermine their sustainability. Sustainability is "the continuation/likely continuation of positive effects from the intervention after it has come to an end, and its potential for scale-up and/or replication; interventions need to be environmentally as well as institutionally, financially, politically, culturally and socially sustainable" (GEF IEO, 2019, para. 25(d)). Conflict and fragility can threaten sustainability

by harming institutional and physical structures necessary to continue project outcomes, by affecting relationships between project stakeholders, and by affecting the relevance of the continued project activities. Throughout the GEF portfolio, sustainability scores are the most clearly affected of the four GEF evaluation criteria by the presence of armed conflict. Statistical analyses, discussed in Chapter 2, showed a statistically significant difference in measures of sustainability in projects in countries affected by major armed conflict as compared to projects in other countries.

Fragility—and particularly sociopolitical instability—has affected the sustainability of many GEF projects. In these instances, leadership and political priorities pivot away from conservation objectives, undermining the continuous support necessary to a project's outcomes. The evaluation of a project in Mali observed that the low sustainability rating was related to the political situation of the country following the March 2012 military coup that created an environment of instability and uncertainty.[49] The project's accomplishments in key areas such as strengthening of regulatory aspects and increase in capacity building in key sector institutions and at the local community level are to some extent irreversible. The main risk is that the political crises deepen further, or reach a steady state, which would dilute the motivation of the civil service, compel leading staff to search for opportunities abroad, worsen governance in regulatory agencies, and bring the reform process that Mali embarked upon in the 1990s to an indefinite standstill (GEF IEO, 2013a). This project, which sought to increase household energy access in rural Mali, was highly dependent on government will and support for project outcomes and continued investment, which were jeopardized by the coup and change in administration.

Fragility at both the national and local levels can affect project sustainability. In Lebanon, spillover effects from the Syrian conflict undermined the sustainability of a project for safeguarding and restoring Lebanon's woodland resources.[50] The project evaluation noted, "There is instability within the country and region, and the Syrian refugee crisis is currently putting pressure on land and natural resources, as well as on infrastructure and social support systems" (GEF IEO, 2016b, p. 43). This instability posed a threat to sustainability of project outcomes because it led to changes in national and local government, jeopardizing commitments made to the project's objectives. In the case of a renewable energy project in Chad,[51] one of the seven project pilot sites was grazed by local shepherds who claimed rights to the lands (Gunning & Ngarmig-Nig, 2015). Thus, the conflict affected both national priorities and local dynamics, such that project outcomes were threatened institutionally in terms of political support and locally in terms of land competition.

Land disputes are a common sociopolitical risk for the sustainability of projects in fragile and conflict-affected situations. For a project in Guatemala, which aimed to protect biodiversity in the Sarstun-Motagua region:[52]

> socio-political sustainability is precarious because Guatemala just came out of a civil war, and it is going through many socio-economic changes,

> including land ownership conflicts, unresolved land uses issues and other uncertainties that are beyond the scope of the project.
>
> (GEF IEO, 2005b, p. 4)

Outbreaks of violence directly undermine the ability of organizations to continue project activities. This may directly affect sustainability if the project area becomes difficult to access. For example, an implementing agency staff member on a Colombia project reported that during implementation, the project site came under control of FARC rebels, and the project team was unable to enter the area because the security risks were too high.[53] The threat of violence and weakened governance also can drive outmigration and affect local livelihoods. In Colombia, the evaluation of a project on the Western Slopes of the Serrania del Baudo[54] noted that "the constant presence of armed guerrilla groups also undermine sociopolitical sustainability and this results in population displacements, rural migration, unemployment, productivity declines and contributes to an overall level of lawlessness and high crime" (GEF IEO, 2005c, p. 4). Although the project focused on the sustainable use of natural resources, criminal networks and activity drove unsustainable (and illegal) resource extraction.

Fragility and conflict can also undermine cooperation and collaboration necessary for sustainability beyond the life of the project. In that same project in Colombia, surrounding indigenous communities, which represent 4 percent of the population but occupy 65 percent of the land in the region, and some Afro-Colombian communities refused to participate in the project (GEF IEO, 2005c, p. 4). Projects, and project evaluations, are increasingly recognizing these challenges. For a project in Dinder National Park in Sudan, the evaluation noted that much work remained to be done with the communities in the area.[55] Although the project reduced violent clashes between park scouts and poachers, relations remained tense at the project's close. This park conflict is just one part of a much wider land-use problem in which pastoralists are squeezed out of areas neighboring the national park states by the unauthorized expansion in (mechanized) farming. Thus, pastoralists move to other areas of the park, and scouts shoot their cattle as it invades park areas. The evaluation made several recommendations to begin more cooperative work with the communities, but the results still remain to be seen; thus, sociopolitical sustainability was rated moderately unlikely (GEF IEO, 2005a, p. 3).

One of the best ways to enhance sustainability of projects in fragile and conflict-affected situations is to build capacity of civil society. Among the lessons from a project in Guatemala is that environmental, social, and political sustainability of projects cannot always be achieved in six to eight years and with an investment of $5–8 million in countries with low governability, high levels of poverty, and serious social conflicts as left after a civil war.[56] In such cases, strengthening civil society institutions, such as regional NGOs, can be the best strategy to achieve environmental results and increase the likelihood of their sustainability (GEF IEO, 2005b).

Another way to enhance the sustainability of projects operating in fragile and conflict-affected situations is to ensure monitoring efforts continue after project

closure. The long-term outcomes of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)'s 1998 Cordillera del Cóndor project provides lessons in this respect. The Cordillera del Cóndor project is well known for its success in helping to resolve a 150-year-old border conflict, sometimes violent, between Ecuador and Peru through the creation of a transboundary ecoregion (see Kakabadse et al., 2016; Westrik, 2015). However, after peace was achieved, the ecological benefits of Cordillera del Cóndor deteriorated, as extractive industries and drug gangs became active in the region. Without a proper plan for ongoing monitoring and enforcement, 20 years following the project's closure, few of its conservation goals have been met (Ali, 2019).

Notes

1 Project 3828
2 Project 4124
3 Project 3959
4 Project 3028
5 Project 1253
6 Project 3418
7 Project 2019
8 Project 621
9 Project 1086
10 Project 2357
11 Project 9661
12 Project 1253
13 Project 9661
14 Project 1020
15 Project 2357
16 Project 2357
17 Project 1253
18 Project 1253
19 Project 9661
20 Project 9578
21 Project 9661
22 Project 9663
23 Project 789
24 Project 3028
25 Project 1043
26 Project 789
27 Project 3028
28 Project 4124
29 Project 9661
30 Project 2139
31 The 2010 Monitoring and Evaluation Policy also included results/impacts as a fifth evaluation criterion; the 2019 Policy incorporated results/impacts into the evaluation of effectiveness.
32 Project 3160
33 Project 216
34 Project 9491
35 Project 3828
36 Project 3430

37 Project 2357
38 Project 9578
39 Project 9515
40 Project 9441
41 Project 2130
42 Project 3389
43 Project 3474
44 Project 4201
45 Project 4081
46 Project 2019
47 Project 2929
48 Project 1152
49 Project 1274
50 Project 3028
51 Project 3959
52 Project 197
53 Project 774
54 Project 625
55 Project 534
56 Project 197

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Appendix 3.1 GEF-Supported Projects Referenced in Chapter 3

Project ID	*Project Name*	*Region*	*Dates*
197	Integrated Biodiversity Protection in the Sarstun-Motagua Region	Guatemala	1995–2005
216	Strengthening of National Capacity and Grassroots In-Situ Conservation for Sustainable Biodiversity Protection	Lebanon	1995–2004
534	Conservation and Management of Habitats and Species, and Sustainable Community Use of Biodiversity in Dinder National Park	Sudan	1998–2004
621	Biodiversity and Protected Area Management Pilot Project for the Virachey National Park	Cambodia	1999–2007
625	Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in the Western Slope of the Serrania del Baudo	Colombia	1999–2002
774	Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in the Andes Region	Colombia	2000–2008
789	Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme (SAP) Toward Achievement of the Integrated Management of the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem (LME)	Angola, Namibia, South Africa	2002–2008
1020	Conservation and Sustainable Development of the Mataven Forest	Colombia	2001–2004

(*Continued*)

Appendix 3.1 (Continued)

Project ID	*Project Name*	*Region*	*Dates*
1043	Establishing Conservation Areas Landscape Management (CALM) in the Northern Plains	Cambodia	2004–2012
1086	Developing an Integrated Protected Area System for the Cardamom Mountains	Cambodia	2001–2007
1152	Biodiversity Conservation and Participatory Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Inner Niger Delta and its Transition Areas, Mopti Region	Mali	2003–2013
1253	Gourma Biodiversity Conservation Project	Mali	2001–2013
1274	Household Energy and Universal Rural Access Project	Mali	2002–2010
2019	Integrated National Adaptation Plan: High Mountain Ecosystems, Colombia's Caribbean Insular Areas and Human Health (INAP)	Colombia	2005–2012
2130	Restoration, Protection and Sustainable Use of the Sistan Basin	Afghanistan and I.R. Iran	2010–2010
2139	SIP: Transboundary Agro-Ecosystem Management Programme for the Kagera River Basin (Kagera TAMP)	Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda	2007–2017
2357	Agricultural Rehabilitation and Sustainable Land Management Project	Burundi	2004–2012
2929	Reducing Conflicting Water Uses in the Artibonite River Basin through Development and Adoption of a Multi-focal Area Strategic Action Programme	Haiti and Dominican Republic	2008–2012
3028	SFM Safeguarding and Restoring Lebanon's Woodland Resources	Lebanon	2007–2014
3160	Preparation of the POPs National Implementation Plan under the Stockholm Convention	DRC	2007–2011
3389	SIP: Sustainable Land Management for Sustainable Livelihoods in the Toker Area of East Sudan	Sudan	2008–2011
3418	Mainstreaming Biodiversity Management into Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Production Processes	Lebanon	2009–2013
3430	Implementing NAPA Priority Interventions to Build Resilience in the Agriculture and Water Sectors to the Adverse Impacts of Climate Change	Sudan	2007–2015
3474	Yemen Geothermal Development Project	Yemen	2008–2018
3828	LGGE Energy Efficiency Code in Buildings	Syria	2010–2013
3959	SPWA-CC: Promoting renewable energy based mini-grids for rural electrification and productive uses	Chad	2009–2015
4081	SPWA-BD: Strengthening the national protected area network in Chad	Chad	2010–2013
4124	Implementation of Phase I of a Comprehensive PCB Management System	Jordan	2010–2016

Project ID	*Project Name*	*Region*	*Dates*
4201	Leopards and Landscapes: Using a Flagship Species to Strengthen Conservation in the Republic of Yemen	Yemen	2011–present
5152	Delivering the Transition to Energy Efficient Lighting	Yemen	2013–2017
9441	Contributing to the Integrated Management of Biodiversity of the Pacific Region of Colombia to Build Peace	Colombia	2016–present
9491	Mainstreaming Conservation of Migratory Soaring Birds into Key Productive Sectors along the Rift Valley/Red Sea Flyway (Tranche II of GEFID 1028)	Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia,	2016–present
9515	The Restoration Initiative, DRC child project: Improved Management and Restoration of Agro-sylvo-pastoral Resources in the Pilot Province of South-Kivu	DRC	2016–present
9578	Sustainable Low Carbon Development in Colombia's Orinoquia Region	Colombia	2017–present
9661	Mali- Community-based Natural Resource Management that Resolves Conflict, Improves Livelihoods and Restores Ecosystems throughout the Elephant Range	Mali	2016–present
9663	Colombia: Connectivity and Biodiversity Conservation in the Colombian Amazon	Colombia	2015–present

4 Conflict-Sensitive Programming in the GEF

This chapter examines the various conflict-sensitive strategies implemented in Global Environment Facility (GEF) projects to address and manage risks across the different stages of the project cycle—from design through implementation and completion.

Conflict-sensitive strategies gleaned from the in-depth review of selected GEF-supported projects in the seven situations of focus can be arranged into a five-category typology (Figure 4.1). The categories are (a) acknowledgement, (b) avoidance, (c) mitigation, (d) peacebuilding, and (e) learning. Acknowledgement, the threshold consideration in the typology, demonstrates in project documents that the project is aware of the conflict context. From there, a project may take no further action (simply acknowledging the situation without trying to manage accompanying risks), or may respond to the conflict context through avoidance or one or more mitigation measures. In some cases, project activities actively embrace peacebuilding opportunities. Projects also draw on learning from other GEF-funded projects and initiatives from other organizations to improve future programming.

Conflict Acknowledgement

At the most basic level of conflict sensitivity, many projects acknowledge the presence of armed violence and insecurity in the project area. In several cases, early project documents such as Project Identification Forms acknowledged previous armed conflict and its environmental effects, but few described strategies for managing conflict-related risks. More frequently, especially in projects nearer in time to the armed conflict, acknowledgement of a situation's conflict context was accompanied by measures designed to avoid or mitigate conflict-related risks or even to capitalize on peacebuilding opportunities. (Appendix 4.1, at the end of this chapter, presents a list of all projects discussed in Chapter 4.)

Acknowledgement can appear in mentions of several conflict-related phenomena, including conflict itself, associated political instability and fragility, and the presence of refugees, displaced persons, combatants, and ex-combatants. One document for a project in the Albertine Rift, for instance, listed the DRC's "succession of conflicts," including the "war of the Democratic Force Alliance for the liberation of Congo in 1998 [and] war of the Congolese Rally for Democracy between 1998 and 2003" up to conflicts "still happening today," when establishing the project's

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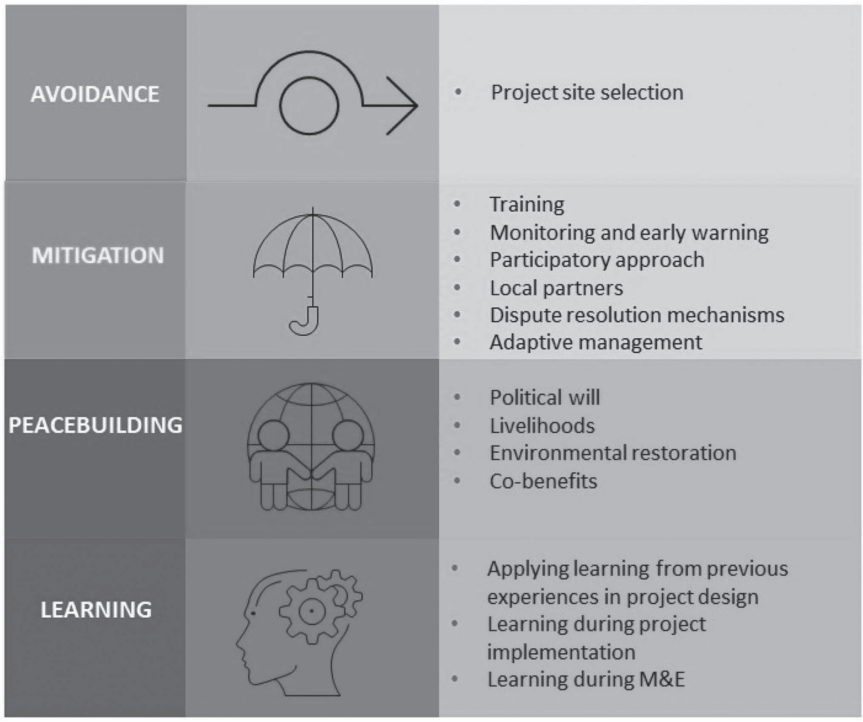

Figure 4.1 Typology of Conflict-Sensitive Strategies in GEF Projects
Source: Adapted from GEF IEO (2020).

context (GEF, 2018a, p. 13).[1] The project acknowledged the history of conflict but did not highlight specific risks that conflict posed to the project or propose measures to manage those risks.

Where project documents did propose measures to mitigate or otherwise manage conflict-related risks, they also tended to provide more specificity about the risks. For example, some project documents highlighted the location of combatants or ex-combatants in relation to the project site. A project in Cambodia described the project location by explaining that "from the early 1970s the region was a central base of the Khmer Rouge and as a consequence experienced long periods of conflict and civil war, which only ceased in 1998" (GEF, 2004c, p. 7).[2] Beyond the Khmer Rouge presence, project documents stated that the "military poses the most significant risk to the project" because of its involvement in illegal logging, large-scale hunting, and wildlife trade (GEF, 2004b, p. 9). A section on the implications of the 1998–99 Kosovo War in a document for a project in the Balkans (North Macedonia)[3] listed refugees among the "negative repercussions" of the war and identified "transboundary refugee movements" as a potential resulting issue between Albania and Kosovo (GEF, 1999a, p. 9).

At the design stage, some projects acknowledge the impact that conflict has had on the environment and natural resources. For example, projects may highlight instances of illegal resource use, such as logging, wildlife trade, and poaching, that take place during conflict; moreover, they may propose measures to manage those conflict-related risks (e.g., GEF, 2018b, p. 12).[4] Several projects noted the lasting impacts of land mines. A project in Cambodia[5] mentioned that "landmines, armaments and munitions are still widespread" (GEF, 2001c, p. 9) and expressed concern that "the same landmines are then being deployed in the forest to hunt wildlife" (GEF, 2001d, p. 15). Pollution from armed conflict has also motivated efforts to address locations suffering from acute pollution (sometimes referred to as "environmental hotspots"), including that from "the destruction of electrical and military equipment during regional conflicts, such as the Balkans and the Israel-Lebanon wars" (GEF, 2007a, p. 184). Uncontrolled development is another impact of conflict on the environment with implications for GEF projects. A project in Lebanon noted that "uncontrolled urban expansion occurred in particular during the civil war, when many people wished to settle away from the urban centres for security reasons" (GEF, 2008b, p. 10).[6] Projects have also noted the impacts of conflict on ecotourism (e.g., GEF, 2016b, p. 22), water infrastructure (e.g., GEF, 2005e, p. 16), and energy infrastructure (GEF, 2009b, p. 1).[7]

While acknowledging the impacts of conflict on the environment, some projects also have recognized that the effects of conflict—and peace processes—on environmental governance pose risks and obstacles to project success. Some peace agreements create institutional arrangements that can complicate governance. For example, a project in the Balkans noted that the institutional structure created by the Dayton Peace Agreement in Bosnia-Herzegovina, "while mitigating the potential for inter-ethnical tensions and conflict is rather complicated and a potential source of diseconomies" (GEF, 2005d, p. 21).[8] Insecurity associated with conflict can cause difficulty in physically accessing project sites, particularly protected areas. A project in Afghanistan mentioned that "some difficulties could arise in communications routes to/from the protected areas" of focus (GEF, 2003b, p. 8).[9] After conflict, the political push for economic development can take priority over environmental protection. In Lebanon, for example, a project identified the "need for quick reconstruction of the country in the post-war period" as one of the root causes of conversion of woodland (GEF, 2008a, p. 7).[10] Environmental data are often missing, making governance decisions difficult (e.g., GEF, 1998a, p. 3).

The remaining four approaches adopted by GEF projects to conflict-sensitive design and implementation—avoidance, mitigation, embracing the peacebuilding opportunities, and learning—all go beyond simple acknowledgement of risk and identify measures to manage the risk.

Managing Conflict Risks Through Avoidance

The simplest approach to managing conflict-related risks is avoidance. To mitigate the risks posed by a situation's conflict context, some project proponents have deliberately selected a geographic location for the project that is physically

removed from the regions affected by conflict. For example, documents for a project in Colombia noted that the "Quindio departments face some security problems because of armed insurrection, paramilitary forces and common delinquency" and subsequently ruled out the possibility of working there.[11] In light of the security risk factors, the "high mountain zones were therefore discarded, even if livestock systems in those higher altitudes" were better suited for the project objectives (GEF, 2002, p. 111). Project proponents in Afghanistan similarly decided to select areas "that have experienced calm and good governance" (GEF, 2010b, p. 18, 2012b, p. 13).[12]

Although avoidance can help to manage conflict-related risks, it has its limitations. Many conflict-affected regions are biodiversity hotspots (Hanson et al., 2009). Systematically avoiding those areas because of conflict—rather than taking other measures to manage the risk—may contribute to biodiversity loss and overall lower achievement of desired global environmental benefits, particularly those related to biodiversity and land degradation. Moreover, the geographic range of conflicts can change quickly, so relying solely on avoidance can be limiting from a long-term perspective.

Managing Conflict Risks Through Mitigation

Mitigation strategies directly address conflict-related risks in project design and implementation. Generally, mitigation strategies recognize that the conflict-affected or fragile context presents risks to the project and then seek to identify them early on and address them before they escalate and seriously affect the project. The reviewed GEF projects adopted six categories of approaches that mitigate conflict-related risks: training, monitoring, using a participatory approach, partnering with local organizations, instituting dispute resolution mechanisms, and using adaptive management.[13]

Recognizing that environmental staff may lack expertise in conflict management, some projects have sought to build capacity by training staff to understand and manage conflict-related risks to environmental projects. For example, in Mali, a project used training materials on natural resources conflict management that were produced by the GEF agency and the Department for International Development (GEF, 2005b, p. 16).[14]

Another approach to mitigating conflict-related risks is to develop mechanisms to monitor security conditions that could affect activities. Fragile and conflict-affected situations can be volatile, with the security situation changing both dramatically and rapidly. Monitoring enables project staff to detect emerging risks early, before they have escalated. Monitoring often begins with baseline assessments (e.g., GEF, 2003a, p. 53). While a project is underway, monitoring can continue to inform risk management and ensure rapid action to reduce the risk of negative impacts.

Participatory approaches that equitably engage all affected stakeholders have been used as a mitigation strategy, especially where tension exists between different actors. A project in Afghanistan, for example, aims to ensure "an inclusive, participatory approach involving all key stakeholders" to mitigate the risk of

intercommunity conflict (GEF, 2012c, p. 9).[15] Similarly, a project in the Albertine Rift (including Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, and the DRC) identified "a decentralized, participatory and adaptive management approach" and "extensive stakeholder consultations from local to basin-wide level" in the design stage to mitigate the risk of civil strife and insecurity (GEF, 2008c, p. 8).[16] With participatory approaches, a project also often strengthens the participation of traditionally underrepresented or otherwise marginalized groups, including "buffer zone and rural communities" and women—as in projects in in Colombia (GEF, 2005a, p. 4, 2017b, pp. 114–116).[17] A non-GEF project carried out in the Farchana refugee camp in Chad illustrates the importance of consulting with local communities ahead of project implementation. At least one outbreak of violence, leading the death of two refugees and multiple other injuries, may have begun when a GEF agency "asked the refugees to plant trees" (IRIN News, 2004). Across West Africa, tree planting is viewed as a demonstration of land ownership. When the Darfuri refugees were asked to plant trees, they interpreted the request to mean that they were being given the land surrounding the refugee camp and could not expect to return to Darfur. Had the project staff undertaken an earlier consultation with the Darfuri refugees or others from the community, they might have been able to "avoid this misinterpretation and its subsequent violence" (Rehrl, 2009).

Consideration of staffing, job creation, and procurement—all of which affect local livelihoods—across social divides can also mitigate conflict-related risks. Such consideration can help ensure that a project does not unintentionally entrench existing inequities. Careful selection of project staff can be important. A project in Afghanistan, for example, specified that "project staff employed will be from local Wakhan communities, wherever possible" to reduce the risk of potential resurgence of conflict (GEF, 2018c, p. 52).[18] Awareness of conflict dynamics can drive decisions concerning distribution of jobs created by project activities. A project in the Balkans (North Macedonia)[19] specified that the project would create "local construction jobs and a very few jobs when the units are operational, which will benefit both ethnic groups," namely, Macedonian and Albanian community members with lingering tensions from the Kosovo War (GEF, 1999a, p. 9).

Partnering with local groups and communities has been used to help mitigate conflict-related risks. Before entering a conflict-affected area, projects can work with in-country and local partners to lay the groundwork for coordinated implementation. In the Albertine Rift, a project set out to "obtain full cooperation of local and national government authorities for inter-sectoral processes" to mitigate security risks (GEF, 2009a, p. 54).[20] Other projects work with local partners to learn from their experiences so project activities can continue even if security conditions worsen. In one project, the World Bank worked with the Humboldt Institute because of its experience in Colombia's conflict-affected areas,[21] which allowed the project "to work in rural areas and avoid security problems" (GEF, 2001a, p. 38). A project in Afghanistan noted that on-the-ground activities would "be coordinated by local-level authorities so that project activities can be completed in relative independence during times of increased security concerns" (GEF, 2015b, p. 14).[22] Local partnerships can directly engage combatant groups that affect the

project (see, e.g., Pritchard, 2015). A project in the Albertine Rift, for example, explained that its "proposed integration of Simba communities into project activities is an important element of the project," given the group's presence and history of rebellion in the area surrounding the DRC's Maiko National Park (GEF, 2006a, p. 127).[23] In another example, a project proposed working with the Cambodian Armed Forces,[24] which had integrated ex-combatants from the Khmer Rouge and other combatant groups after hostilities ended (GEF, 2004b, pp. 9–10).

Projects have also established dispute resolution mechanisms to peacefully resolve disputes before they escalate to violence or conflict. These mechanisms can rely on or draw from traditional institutions and practices; projects in Mali[25] and Afghanistan,[26] for example, both specified that customary dispute resolution mechanisms would be used to mitigate conflict-related risks (GEF, 2003a, p. 53, 2012c, p. 9). Conflict resolution mechanisms can also support a project's participatory approach. Another project in Mali aimed to reduce the number of conflicts in the project area by half through a "conflict resolution mechanism including 30% women as members" (GEF, 2016d, p. 24).[27] Partners on the ground can also help resolve conflicts when they do arise. This same project looks to community-based organizations to "contribute to the conflicts resolution" and to municipalities to "contribute to the resolution of possible conflicts in the context of the implementation of the project" (GEF, 2016d, p. 24).

Last, some projects have integrated adaptive management approaches into their design. Adaptive management relies on monitoring, periodic evaluations, and—most importantly—an ability to adjust strategies to address new information and developments (e.g., GEF, 2015b, p. 14, 2017a, p. 33, 2017c, p. 88). Some projects have stated generally that the project will adapt to changing circumstances: A project in the Albertine Rift drew on the World Bank's experience in the DRC and noted the importance of keeping project design "simple and flexible" (GEF, 2006a, p. 16).[28] Project documents can also specify ways in which the project could adapt if security conditions worsen. A project in Colombia proposed a general adaptive approach that would allow modification of project activities.[29] Measures in this approach included a conflict resolution mechanism and "a flexible design that would allow the modification of some activities according to the security situation (e.g., meetings to be held outside of the region), without affecting project development objective" (GEF, 2000, p. 26). A project in Afghanistan indicated that it would monitor the security situation, and "if necessary, project activities will be shifted to more secure districts or management" (GEF, 2012c, p. 9).[30]

Occasionally, projects explicitly contemplate the resource requirements of adaptive actions. Although many projects have referred to adaptive management or adaptation strategies to manage risks of working in fragile or conflict-affected situations, they seldom indicated that they had estimated how much the adaptations might cost, let alone included a budget line. One uncommon example was a project in the Albertine Rift that highlighted the need to evaluate "what it will cost now and projected into the future under various scenarios good security to intermittent security" (GEF, 2005c, pp. 13–14).[31] Interviews with project staff indicated that the costs required to respond to a potential conflict flare-up can be listed as a separate

budget line without allocated funds in the design phase, making it easier to efficiently reallocate funds if the security situation deteriorates. Specific and detailed planning for adaptive actions and their costs allows projects to more efficiently change course when the security situation demands it.

Managing Conflict Risks by Embracing Peacebuilding Opportunities

Several projects have gone beyond merely trying to manage the risks of conflict to proactively embracing peacebuilding opportunities presented by the conflict or fragile context. The reviewed GEF-funded projects presented three particular types of peacebuilding opportunities: political will, cooperation, and confidence building; post-conflict recovery; and reintegration of ex-combatants.

Some projects have observed that the heightened political priority and political will focused on peacebuilding during conflict and post-conflict periods create opportunities for the project. A project in Cambodia noted that "post crisis conditions create a special set of circumstances which represent both a threat and a significant opportunity for the conservation of nature and natural resources" (UNDP, 2000, p. 3).[32] In particular, the post-conflict inflow of international funding allowed for a reexamination of Cambodia's protected area system and development of effective management plans for existing protected areas (UNDP, 2000). Some projects have framed their relevance in part as implementing the peace agreement. A project in Colombia, for example, emphasized the positive implications of the 2016 peace agreement by identifying the GEF's opportunity "to supporting [sic] the inclusion of environmental management criteria in these updated planning tools" (GEF, 2016a, p. 10).[33] Projects also identify specific ways that conflict and peace dynamics can contribute to the project. A project in Mali that focused on community-based elephant conservation[34] explained that the 2017 ceasefire agreement "could be a boon for elephant protection in Mali, as the security tensions should decrease, providing opportunity for this GEF project" (GEF, 2018b, p. 9).

Projects in the GEF international waters focal area have cited increased cooperation as a co-benefit. In the Balkans, for instance, a project explained that "interstate cooperation in the Drina River Basin has a potential to ease conflicting interests, and provide gains in the form of savings that can be achieved, or the costs of non-cooperation or dispute that can be averted" (GEF, 2016c, p. 68).[35] Cooperation can even be a motivating factor for countries to participate in projects. Both tranches of the Nile Transboundary Environmental Action Project[36] highlighted "an awareness at the highest political levels of the Nile countries of the possibilities of a 'cooperation and peace dividend' which the broader Nile Basin Initiative can leverage" (GEF, 2001b, p. 38). This awareness would aid in achieving "cooperation, economic exchange and eventually greater integration and interdependence" (UNDP, 2008, p. 23).

Some projects identify how they will rebuild livelihoods, infrastructure, capacity, and ecosystems as part of the broader post-conflict recovery process. A project in the Albertine Rift, for example, stated that one of its broad goals was to "help

restore productive capacity and livelihoods in a country that is just emerging from severe conflict by revitalizing and diversifying its agricultural production on a sustainable basis" (GEF, 2004a, p. 86).[37] A project implemented in "among the worst war devastated communities" in Bosnia-Herzegovina,[38] where substantial water infrastructure was destroyed, similarly explained that the project, "by transferring best available climate resilient flood risk management, will . . . contribute to further reconciliation in a war damaged area" (GEF, 2015a, pp. 25, 53). Other projects also adopt an approach of building back better with an eye toward future conflict prevention. In Colombia, a project stated:

> by implementing activities for controlling deforestation hot-spots, it is anticipated that the [integrated land-use planning] component will also contribute to improving State presence in areas affected by violence and illicit activities, thus reducing illegal land acquisition and land related conflicts.
>
> (GEF, 2019, p. 11)[39]

The project claimed that, on a broader level, the sustainable land use and management component "will contribute to reduce the historical disparity between urban and rural areas, one of the structural causes of the Colombian conflict" (GEF, 2019, p. 13). Also in Colombia, a project and the GEF Small Grants Programme funded community enterprises to process and commercialize non-timber forest products in the biodiverse Chocó Region, providing alternative livelihoods to mining (GEF, 2012a; GEF IEO, 2019, p. 34).[40]

Some GEF projects have also been designed to engage with processes to reintegrate ex-combatants and displaced persons. In the Albertine Rift, a project aligned with the Burundi government's Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy,[41] which supports "the reintegration of displaced persons and other victims of conflict into agricultural production" (GEF, 2004a, p. 6). Actors in armed conflict—including members of rebel groups—can also serve as partners in project implementation. A project in the Albertine Rift proposed to integrate "Simba communities into project activities" in Maiko National Park (GEF, 2006a, p. 127).[42] A project in Cambodia similarly highlighted that its education program would focus on "awareness and pride in key species conservation" among the "armed forces and at military bases" because the military was among the most involved in illegal natural resource use (GEF, 2004c, p. 8).[43] During implementation, project staff communicated frequently with the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces to assess the security situation during the Thai-Cambodian border dispute starting in 2008. Members of the military also escorted project personnel through the forests in the project's area of work in Cambodia's Northern Plains.

Other GEF projects explicitly note the role that natural resource management can play in conflict resolution. A project in the Albertine Rift, for instance, argued that reversing land degradation would "reduce conflicts over resources for instance between farmers and herders" (GEF, 2009a, p. 33).[44] Similarly, a project in Colombia noted that "environmental themes may contribute to the solution of the armed conflict" (GEF, 2006b, p. 2).[45] Although these projects did not describe in detail

how they might build peace, the acknowledgement of their potential role in the process in itself is notable. Another project in Colombia, in contrast, directly addressed how it would contribute to peacebuilding, namely by "improving interinstitutional coordination . . . and promoting platforms for dialogue and peace building that address the principal barriers that prevent the reduction of deforestation in the Colombian Amazon" (GEF, 2017b, p. 8).[46]

Managing Conflict Risks by Learning

Many GEF projects implemented in fragile and conflict-affected settings learn from both their own experiences and from other programming. Learning in the reviewed GEF-funded projects takes three forms:

1. Identification of ways in which conflict or fragility threatened project success.
2. Positive assessment of conflict-sensitive strategies used in project implementation that paid dividends in project success.
3. Recommendation of strategies that were not used during implementation but should be used in future programming.

Learning can come from within GEF-funded projects, from non-GEF projects implemented by agencies, and from non-GEF projects implemented by other institutions. For a summary of learning by GEF agencies on conflict-sensitive programming, see Box 4.1.

Project staff have been learning about the negative impacts of conflict on project implementation, particularly as a precipitating factor in project cancellation, difficulty in carrying out project activities, and limited on-site staff involvement because of risks to personnel. UNDP's Afghanistan office, for instance, requested cancellation of a project "in light of the challenging security conditions in the country in 2009" (GEF, 2010a, p. 1).[47] Short of cancellation, projects can also face delays because of conflict (see Chapter 3). The evaluation of a project in Mali explained that "with the exception of some emergency operations, IDA [International Development Association] suspended all operational activities in Mali" after the country's coup d'état in March 2012 (World Bank, 2013, p. 21).[48]

Even when a project as a whole has continued, discrete project activities may encounter difficulties because of conflict. For a project in the Albertine Rift, 12 of the 17 quarterly progress reports outlined the ramifications on project operations of changing security conditions in Burundi and the DRC.[49] Stated impacts ranged from reduced fishing activity "because of army fears that rebels are using fishing boats to transport raiding parties" (GEF, 1996a, p. 3) to insecurity continuing to "seriously limit activities in the Francophone region" of Lake Tanganyika (GEF, 1996b, p. 1) and field staff being unable to sample all of the project's river monitoring locations (GEF, 1999b). Reflecting on these challenges, the 1998 and 1999 project reviews indicated a high probability that the project's assumption that the lake's security situation would improve throughout implementation "may fail to hold or materialize" (GEF, 1998b, p. 4, 1999c, p. 4).

Box 4.1 Lessons Learned by GEF Agencies

With a growing body of experiences related to programming in conflict-affected and fragile situations, GEF agencies have increasingly examined lessons from these experiences to inform future programming. Some of these experiences reflect broad lessons learned; others focus on particular dimensions, such as gender or conflict prevention. Following is a sample of flagship reports and other publications distilling lessons.

African Development Bank

- From Fragility to Resilience: Mitigating Natural Resources and Fragile Situations in Africa (2016)

Asian Development Bank

- Mapping Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations in Asia and the Pacific (2016)
- Engagement in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situation: Pilot Fragility Assessment of an Informal Urban Settlement in Kiribati (2013)

Inter-American Development Bank

- Lessons from Four Decades of Infrastructure Project-Related Conflicts in Latin America and the Caribbean (2017)
- Conflict Management and Consensus Building for Integrated Coastal Management in Latin America and the Caribbean (2000)

International Fund for Agricultural Development

- Fostering Inclusive Rural Transformation in Fragile States and Situations (2017, with Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services)
- Fragile Situations (Rural Development Report) (2016)
- IFAD's Engagement in Fragile and Conflict-affected States and Situations: Corporate-Level Evaluation (2015)

International Union for the Conservation of Nature

- Conflict and Conservation (2021)

United Nations Development Programme

- Risk-Informed Development—From Crisis to Resilience (2019, with others)
- Local Ownership in Conflict Sensitivity Application—The Case of Nepal (2017, with others)

United Nations Environment Programme

- Gender, Climate, and Security: Sustaining Inclusive Peace on the Frontlines of Climate Change (2020, with others)

- Environmental Cooperation for Peacebuilding Programme—Final Report (2016)
- Women and Natural Resources: Unlocking the Peacebuilding Potential (2013, with others)
- The Role of Natural Resources in Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration: Addressing Risks and Seizing Opportunities (2013, with UNDP)
- Greening the Blue Helmets: Environment, Natural Resources, and United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (2012, with others)
- Protecting the Environment During Armed Conflict: An Analysis and Inventory of International Law (2009)
- From Conflict to Peacebuilding: The Role of Natural Resources and the Environment (2009)

World Bank Group

- Defueling Conflict: Environment and Natural Resource Management as a Pathway to Peace (2022)
- Fragility and Conflict: On the Front Lines of the Fight Against Poverty (2020b)
- Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict (2018, with United Nations)
- Strengthening Conflict Sensitive Approaches to Climate Change in MENA (2018)
- World Bank Group Engagement in Situations for Fragility, Conflict, and Violence: An Independent Evaluation (2016)
- Enhancing Sensitivity to Conflict Risks in World Bank-funded Activities: Lessons from the Kyrgyz Republic (2014)
- Renewable Natural Resource: Practical Lessons for Conflict-Sensitive Development (2009)
- Mainstreaming Gender in Conflict Analysis: Issues and Recommendations (2006)
- Toward a Conflict-Sensitive Poverty Reduction Strategy (2005)
- Natural Resources and Violent Conflict: Options and Actions (2003)

Learning has also highlighted the risks to project staff and affiliated partners. For example, during the implementation of a project in Cambodia, "several security-related incidents prompted the project to suspend activities and temporarily remove staff from Phnom Aural Wildlife Sanctuary" (GEF, 2007b, p. 11).[50] Two rangers in the wildlife sanctuary, in which a project operated, were murdered during the project, which led to transferring responsibilities to the Ministry of the Environment (GEF, 2007b, pp. 50–51).

Some projects have identified and noted successful strategies from other projects to inform their programming. One approach that has been highlighted is the use of a simple, flexible project design. Drawing on the World Bank's work since 2002 in post-conflict DRC, a project there recommended in its design stage that the project team "keep project design simple and flexible" (GEF, 2006a, p. 15).[51] The evaluation of a project in the Albertine Rift noted that the "project design was kept simple considering the country's post-conflict environment" and assessed that this was a justified mitigation measure given the conflict-related risks (GEF IEO, 2016, pp. 16–17).[52] For a biodiversity project in Colombia,[53] the GEF STAP review suggested that the project designers validate assumptions about the project's peacebuilding potential by making an effort to "learn lessons from post-conflict states and consult with expert organizations such as the UN Environment's Expert Group on Environment, Conflict and Peacebuilding" (GEF STAP, 2017, p. 2).

Projects also reflect on the importance, particularly at an interpersonal level, of building trust and a common cause between various actors involved in project implementation. This can start at the project design phase. A project in the Albertine Rift, for instance, looked to the example of the International Gorilla Conservation Program (IGCP), a joint initiative between Flora and Fauna International, World Wide Fund for Nature, and the African Wildlife Foundation.[54] The project remarked that collaboration between Uganda, Rwanda, and the DRC in the IGCP "primarily ha[d] worked because it was built at the field level first rather than being imposed from above" (GEF, 2005c, p. 7). The potential for person-to-person relationships to break through international tensions also appeared in the design of another Albertine Rift project,[55] which highlighted that the Nile Basin Initiative's past programming showed that "developing trust and personal relations among riparian delegations from countries that have often been in conflict for decades or more is a key ingredient to moving the process further" (GEF, 2001b, p. 48). A third project in the Albertine Rift[56] expanded further on the example of the IGCP, saying "it demonstrated that it is possible to achieve effective trans-border cooperation for conservation, even between warring parties, by getting them to rally round a common cause" (GEF, 2006a, p. 17).

GEF agencies and other organizations have learned that engagement with the local community can help projects succeed. A project in the Inner Niger Delta in Mali[57] indicated that it would draw on the successes of an International Union for the Conservation of Nature project in the same region, particularly in relying on "the traditional management systems at the sites and project areas, in order to involve all the local stakeholders in the processes of designing and implementing the activities" (GEF, 2003a, p. 48). In the Albertine Rift, staff learned from an earlier GEF-funded project in Lake Tanganyika that was "hampered by civil unrest" and addressed conflict-related risks in Burundi in part "by supporting close coordination among beneficiaries" (GEF, 2004a, p. 15).[58] Box 4.2 describes this learning. Projects have learned that local organizations, too, are valuable partners. In the Albertine Rift, a project drew from the World Bank's experience in post-conflict DRC, planning to "empower perennial institutions," such as government agencies, and "engage local NGOs in program implementation" (GEF, 2006a, p. 16).[59]

Box 4.2 Learning from the Lake Tanganyika Biodiversity Project

Running from 1991 to 2006, this project sought to demonstrate an effective regional approach to controlling pollution and preventing the loss of the biodiversity of Lake Tanganyika's international waters through collaboration between Burundi, the DRC, Tanzania, and Zambia.[a] Overall, this project received favorable evaluation scores and included significant references to conflict sensitivity in project design documents. The project also dealt with substantial and frequent insecurity in Burundi and the DRC during implementation.

A "Results and Experiences" document created in February 2001 dedicated a section to lessons learned by the project for the benefit of future programming in the region and other areas affected by civil war and insecurity (Jorgensen et al., 2010). It highlighted six key lessons.

The first lesson, "remain flexible and seek creative solutions," related to the project's decision to relocate project staff to the DRC because of a phase III UN security rating in Burundi, where the unit was intended to be based. Relocation was deemed less convenient, but the flexibility to relocate immediately paid off after a subsequent phase IV security rating in Burundi during project implementation. The document noted that Burundi's increased insecurity would potentially have been "devastating to the project." This arrangement also allowed the DRC to remain more engaged in the project.

The second lesson learned was to maintain a presence. The project found that when staff could not reside in project areas, a "considerable amount could be accomplished through emails, telephone calls and short-term visits to the country (as UNDP allowed) by regional staff or visits by national staff to other countries to meet with regional staff."

The third lesson was to foster regional collaboration, noting the project's ability to "hold regional meetings, formulate a Strategic Action Programme and draft a Legal Convention during a period of strained relationships among Tanganyika's four riparian nations." This was achieved through close collaboration between project partners on various technical aspects of the project, which "forced participants to see beyond the prevailing political climate and fostered regional collaboration."

The fourth lesson concerned the project's ability to remain neutral, specifically that it was "crucial that expatriate staff and national staff in managerial and coordinating roles be agreeable to collaborating with any and all stakeholders and, moreover, be seen to be impartial." This was relevant specifically because the "government and armed forces in charge of eastern [Democratic Republic of] Congo changed several times over the project's course," and "Burundi had four national coordinators during the life of the project."

The fifth lesson stressed the importance of not underestimating people's good will during difficult times. The project found that national partners were often "tired and frustrated with the deteriorating political-economic situation that was beyond their control" and "wanted to be a part of something bigger that they perceived to be a good cause." In the DRC, local staff were "confident, productive and took a new pride in their work" despite low or nonexistent wages in their roles. Overall, the lessons document emphasized that small incentives for local partners and the feeling of being part of a good cause can help stabilize communities during conflict.

The sixth lesson addressed the importance of being briefed on security and having contingency plans. The project found that acting based on the UN's security plans and taking part in "regular security briefing sessions and periodic personal security workshops" combined with good fortune to ensure that project staff were never in immediate danger during the project. Further, contingency plans and communication with local staff helped ensure evacuations went smoothly during periods of insecurity.

a Project 398

Several projects have learned the value of monitoring and apportioning resources to respond to security conditions. A project in Mali[60] referenced the strategies of the Mali Elephant Project, which stayed "informed of the detailed situation across the elephant range through its network of informants that include the 670 eco-guards" and "adapt[ed] their behaviour accordingly," as a possible measure to mitigate the risk of military conflict and jihadist insurgence (GEF, 2018b, p. 62). In more concrete terms, the evaluation of a project on the Nile Transboundary waters[61] stated that the project responded to insecurity and conflict with the "provision of necessary resources for security related equipment and escorts" (Nile Basin Initiative, 2009, p. 42).

Learning can also reflect on negative experiences and recommend alternative approaches for future programming. For example, reviewers and evaluators have at times identified steps that future projects in fragile and conflict-affected settings could take to improve their outcomes. This learning often focuses on adequately assessing risks and setting realistic project objectives. The evaluation for a project in Mali noted that the project design "was preconfigured at the program-level, and did not reflect any country-specific modifications or lessons learned from previous projects executed in Mali" (GEF IEO, 2013, p. 80).[62] As a consequence, "neither the PAD nor the Operations Manual included risks of delays due to . . . political instability" in Mali (GEF IEO, 2013, p. 81). The evaluation for a project in the Albertine Rift critiqued the project's objectives, mentioning that the "target set for net profits of 30% [for the project's rural producer beneficiaries] is unrealistically

high for these types of operations, particularly in a post conflict situation" (GEF IEO, 2012, p. 11).[63]

During the implementation of a project in the Balkans,[64] North Macedonia was experiencing "a period of turbulence . . . caused first by the wave of . . . refugees during the Kosovo War and second by severe civil unrest and tension between the Albanian and Macedonian ethnic groups in the country" (GEF IEO, 2004, p. 7). Despite the tension, however, the project "encouraged continuing communication and cooperation between the two ethnic communities," a co-benefit (GEF IEO, 2004, p. 6). The evaluation's "lessons learned" section was rated moderately unsatisfactory, in particular because the section "could have addressed how to overcome ethnic tensions to achieve project objectives in future projects, but failed to do so" (GEF IEO, 2014, p. 12).

The typology of conflict-sensitive approaches to programming advanced in the report on which this book is based—including acknowledgement, avoidance, mitigation, peacebuilding, and learning—draws upon GEF innovations and experiences. It was developed organically by the evaluation team, based on the findings from the in-depth analysis of designing GEF projects explored in the regional case study chapters. Many of the approaches may also be found in the peer-reviewed and gray literature on conflict-sensitive programming (e.g., Akinyoade, 2010; Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, 2012).

Notes

1 Project 9515
2 Project 1043
3 Project 32
4 Project 9661
5 Project 1086
6 Project 3028
7 Projects 9414, 2143, and 4133
8 Project 2143
9 Project 1907
10 Project 3028; see also Project 3772
11 Project 947
12 Projects 4227 and 5017
13 As noted earlier, of 62 projects reviewed as part of the seven situation profiles, 59 identified various risks, and 56 proposed initial measures to manage risk. Only 39 Project Identification Forms identified conflict as a risk—even though all 62 projects were situated in a country with an ongoing or past major armed conflict—and only 33 of the projects proposed measures to manage conflict-related risks. None of the 62 Project Identification Forms reviewed mentioned fragility. (These numbers do not include other Project Identification Forms that were reviewed but were not part of the seven situation profiles.)
14 Project 2193
15 Project 5202
16 Project 2139
17 Projects 2551 and 9663
18 Project 9531
19 Project 32
20 Project 2139

21 Project 774
22 Project 9090
23 Project 2100
24 Project 1043
25 Project 1152
26 Project 5202
27 Project 5746
28 Project 2100
29 Project 1020
30 Project 5202
31 Project 2888
32 Project 1086
33 Project 9441
34 Project 9661
35 Project 5723
36 Projects 1094 and 2584
37 Project 2357
38 Project 5604
39 Project 9578
40 Project 4916
41 Project 2357
42 Project 2100
43 Project 1043
44 Project 2139
45 Project 2551
46 Project 9663
47 Project 3220
48 Project 1253
49 Project 398
50 Project 1086
51 Project 2100
52 Project 4133
53 Project 9441
54 Project 2888
55 Project 1094
56 Project 2100
57 Project 1152
58 Project 2357
59 Project 2100
60 Project 9661
61 Project 2584
62 Project 1348
63 Project 2357
64 Project 32

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Appendix 4.1 GEF-Supported Projects Referenced in Chapter 4

Project ID	*Project Name*	*Region*	*Dates*
32	Mini-Hydropower Project	North Macedonia	1999–2004
398	Other Measures to Protect Biodiversity in Lake Tanganyika	Burundi, Tanzania, Zambia, DRC	1991–2000
774	Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in the Andes Region	Colombia	2000–2008
947	Integrated Silvo-Pastoral Approaches to Ecosystem Management	Nicaragua, Colombia, Costa Rica	2002–2008
1020	Conservation and Sustainable Development of the Mataven Forest	Colombia	2001–2004
1043	Establishing Conservation Areas Landscape Management (CALM) in the Northern Plains	Cambodia	2004–2012
1086	Developing an Integrated Protected Area System for the Cardamom Mountains	Cambodia	2001–2007
1094	Nile Transboundary Environmental Action Project, Tranche 1	Burundi, DRC, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan,	2003–2010
1152	Biodiversity Conservation and Participatory Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Inner Niger Delta and its Transition Areas, Mopti Region	Mali	2003–2013
1253	Gourma Biodiversity Conservation Project	Mali	2001–2013
1348	Africa Stockpiles Program, P1	Regional	2005–2019 (cancelled)
1475	Establishing the Basis for Biodiversity Conservation on Sapo National Park and in South-East Liberia	Liberia	2005–2010
1907	Natural Resources and Poverty Alleviation Project	Afghanistan	2003–2007

Project ID	*Project Name*	*Region*	*Dates*
2100	Support to the Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation (ICCN)'s Program for the Rehabilitation of the DRC's National Parks Network	DRC	2006–2018
2139	SIP: Transboundary Agro-Ecosystem Management Programme for the Kagera River Basin (Kagera TAMP)	Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda	2007–2017
2193	Enabling Sustainable Dryland Management Through Mobile Pastoral Custodianship	Argentina, Benin, Burkina Faso, Iran, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Tajikistan	2005–2013
2357	Agricultural Rehabilitation and Sustainable Land Management Project	Burundi	2004–2012
2380	Sustainable Co-Management of the Natural Resources of the Aïr-Ténéré Complex	Niger	2006–2012
2551	Colombian National Protected Areas Conservation Trust Fund	Colombia	2005–2015
2584	Nile Transboundary Environmental Action Project (NTEAP), Phase II	Burundi, DRC, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania,	2007–2009
2888	Transboundary Conservation of the Greater Virunga Landscape	DRC, Uganda	Dropped (2009)
2929	Reducing Conflicting Water Uses in the Artibonite River Basin through Development and Adoption of a Multi-focal Area Strategic Action Programme	Haiti and Dominican Republic	2008–2012
3028	SFM Safeguarding and Restoring Lebanon's Woodland Resources	Lebanon	2007–2014
3160	Preparation of the POPs National Implementation Plan under the Stockholm Convention	DRC	2007–2011
3220	Capacity Building for Sustainable Land Management	Afghanistan	2007–2010
3772	CBSP Forest and Nature Conservation Project	DRC	2008–2015
4108	PCB Management Project	Lebanon	2010–present

(*Continued*)

Appendix 4.1 (Continued)

Project ID	*Project Name*	*Region*	*Dates*
4124	Implementation of Phase I of a Comprehensive PCB Management System	Jordan	2010–2016
4133	SPWA-CC: Energy Efficiency Project	Burundi	2010–2015
4227	Building Adaptive Capacity and Resilience to Climate Change in Afghanistan.	Afghanistan	2010–2018
4916	Conservation of Biodiversity in Landscapes Impacted by Mining in the Choco Biogeographic Region	Colombia	2014–2019
5017	Developing Core Capacity for Decentralized MEA Implementation and Natural Resources Management in Afghanistan	Afghanistan	2012–present
5202	Strengthening the Resilience of Rural Livelihood Options for Afghan Communities in Panjshir, Balkh, Uruzgan and Herat Provinces to Manage Climate Change-induced Disaster Risks	Afghanistan	2013–present
5604	Technology Transfer for Climate Resilient Flood Management in Vrbas River Basin	Bosnia-Herzegovina	2014–present
5723	West Balkans Drina River Basin Management Project	Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia	2014–present
5746	Scaling up and Replicating Successful Sustainable Land Management (SLM) and Agroforestry Practices in the Koulikoro Region of Mali	Mali	2014–present
9090	Community-Based Forest Management for Biodiversity Conservation and Climate Change Mitigation in Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Dropped (2016)
9414	Preparation of the Republic of Moldova's Second Biennial Update Report to UNFCCC	Moldova	2016–present
9441	Contributing to the Integrated Management of Biodiversity of the Pacific Region of Colombia to Build Peace	Colombia	2016–present

Project ID	*Project Name*	*Region*	*Dates*
9515	The Restoration Initiative, DRC child project: Improved Management and Restoration of Agro-sylvo-pastoral Resources in the Pilot Province of South-Kivu	DRC	2016–present
9531	Conservation of Snow Leopards and their Critical Ecosystem in Afghanistan	Afghanistan	2018–present
9578	Sustainable Low Carbon Development in Colombia's Orinoquia Region	Colombia	2017–present
9661	Mali- Community-based Natural Resource Management that Resolves Conflict, Improves Livelihoods and Restores Ecosystems throughout the Elephant Range	Mali	2016–present
9663	Colombia: Connectivity and Biodiversity Conservation in the Colombian Amazon	Colombia	2015–present

5 Conflict-Sensitive Programming Across the Project Life Cycle

Design, Implementation, and Completion

This section highlights entry points for conflict-sensitive programming across the project life cycle. It draws upon experiences with projects supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the broader literature on conflict-sensitive programming. Its subsections address project design, implementation, closure, and evaluation and learning. Appendix 5.1, at the end of the chapter, presents the projects discussed in Chapter 5.

Project Design

Conflict-sensitive project design comprises four key steps: context analysis, consultation, the development of specific conflict-sensitive measures, and budgeting. These are discussed in turn, with particular reference to experience from GEF projects, supplemented by international good practice.

Context Analysis

Context analysis—including conflict analysis, environmental and social impact assessments, and stakeholder identification and analysis—is essential to informing project design. Generally, GEF projects already undertake stakeholder identification and analysis and environmental and social impact assessments; conflict analysis is less common. Several existing tools guide conflict analysis (UK Department for International Development, 2012);[1] these emphasize analyzing the profile (character), causes (structural, proximate, and trigger), actors (their interests, goals, positions, capacities, and relationships), and dynamics (current trends, possible scenarios, and opportunities for change) of a given conflict. The International Institute for Sustainable Development adds a further dimension, advising practitioners to consider what types of conflict may affect their work; examples include human/wildlife, park/people, institutional, protected area resource access, transboundary, intercommunity, political, and benefit distribution (Hammill et al., 2009). Once categories of risks are identified, project proponents can create priority criteria and rank their identified conflicts before brainstorming potential mitigation strategies.

Currently, the GEF asks proponents to account for possible risks through the use of risk tables in Project Identification Forms. These tables require project

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proponents to enumerate potential risks to achieving their proposed objectives and strategies for risk mitigation. However, the Project Identification Form does not require consideration of risks related to fragility or conflict. In a review of Project Identification Forms for 62 GEF projects in situations affected by major armed conflict, about two thirds of projects identified conflict as a risk, and about half of the projects proposed measures to manage conflict-related risks.

The GEF Secretariat gives additional attention to conflict-related risks when reviewing projects proposed for funding under the Least Developed Country Fund and Special Climate Change Fund. For projects in fragile and conflict-affected states, the GEF Secretariat reviews project proposals to these funds with an expectation of reference to conflict risk and associated mitigation strategies. Interviews with GEF Secretariat staff members indicated that when proposals to these funds lack these elements, the proponent is generally contacted and requested to address conflict-related risks. Such consideration during project review appears less common for other GEF funding streams. However, some GEF agencies have created their own tools to standardize conflict-risk assessment in project design. For example, according to agency staff, the World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and Conservation International have found that such tools and practices are necessary for properly managing risk in their portfolios, applying standardized methods across all projects, including those they have taken on with the GEF. For example, the African Development Bank (AfDB) has systematized the application of the "fragility lens" and a Country Resilience and Fragility Assessment (CRFA) tool to integrate considerations of fragility into Country Strategy Papers and Bank operations (AfDB, 2018).

Consultation

Agency staff designing GEF projects often consult with stakeholders. Consultation during project design broadens support for project implementation. It is also important because stakeholders often hold contextual information that cannot be obtained through desk research; hence, project design is usually more appropriate when stakeholders are consulted. For example, when implementing the project Mainstreaming Biodiversity Management into Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Production Processes in Lebanon,[2] project staff realized that the sites they had selected during design were actually not suited to their goals. They then had to undertake a thorough study to choose new sites. As part of this study, they involved local communities to inquire about their cultivation practices, an important element of the project's implementation. They also reached out to the Lebanese military for more information on the location of cluster bombs. This consultation with the military allowed the project team to actively avoid sites that would pose major security concerns to their staff.

Some projects implemented by UNDP have used a participatory process to develop a Map of Risks and Resources, according to interviews with agency staff. This involves a participatory approach with community members and laying out the significant risks and assets associated with the project site. UNDP Lebanon

adapted the Map of Risks and Resources tool, creating a local version known as Mechanism of Stability and Resilience. This version begins with the same participatory approach but further accounts for existing tensions in the community identified by the project staff and local NGOs. UNDP has leveraged its experience with this process to create reports encouraging other development agencies to take up similar practices (UNDP, 2003).

Development of Specific Conflict-Sensitive Measures

Based on the information from the context analysis—particularly the conflict analysis—GEF agencies have included a range of conflict-sensitive measures in project design. In some cases, this has meant modifying the project site or activities; in others, it has entailed the addition of specific measures such as scenario planning and contingency plans. This section discusses the broad range of conflict-sensitive measures.

GEF projects operating in fragile and conflict-affected countries have introduced five broad strategies to address risks related to conflict and fragility: the use of moderate objectives, flexible design, stakeholder engagement, dispute resolution, and engaging local customary norms and institutions.

In several instances, projects in fragile and conflict-affected settings have sought to establish realistic project objectives. In interviews, numerous key informants have emphasized the importance of this, especially in fragile and conflict-affected situations. These informants stressed that projects in such settings often needed to emphasize institution building, capacity building, and generally creating an enabling environment for interventions.

Some GEF projects have built in increased flexibility to address shifting dynamics associated with fragility and conflict. As such, creating space to be flexible is important to a project's survival. The project Support to the Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation's Program for the Rehabilitation of the DRC's National Parks Network,[3] implemented by the World Bank, provides a useful example of simple and flexible project design. The project was approved in 2007, just a few years following the end of the Second Congo War and one year after the adoption of the current constitution (Cooper, 2013; Council on Foreign Relations, 2020). Project planning documents stated explicitly that the "current post-conflict and reunification context of the [DRC] calls for simple and flexible project design" (GEF, 2006, p. 15). Keeping this in mind, the proponents chose to focus on limited activities in a few locations. They also included time in the projected schedule for annual coordination meetings to adapt their project activities to the evolving conflict context. Notably, the choice to pursue this model was influenced by the proponents' dedication to learning from past projects implemented in this context. The project's documentation explains the rationale for the project design and uses lessons learned from past projects instituted by the World Bank, UNDP, and the GEF to help develop an inclusive and flexible model (GEF, 2006). In another example, the Burundi Agricultural Rehabilitation and Support Project[4] utilized different mechanisms to build in increased flexibility at the design phase. The project underwent

a careful process to select its project sites and limited localities to ensure better manageability. One of the project components focused on the selection, funding, and implementation of a variety of "subprojects." The project design included an extensive list of criteria to use in evaluating the potential subprojects. One criterion was for subprojects to be classified as "lacking in conflict" or "stable" prior to approval, giving project staff the option to reject subprojects they deemed too risky (GEF IEO, 2012a, p. 8).

GEF projects often rely on increased stakeholder participation to address conflict-related impacts. Some projects sought to involve stakeholders throughout the design and implementation stages. For example, the Congo Basin Strategic Program's Forest and Nature Conservation Project,[5] which was implemented in the DRC shortly after the country's 2008 peace agreement with Rwanda, incorporated local partners heavily into its project design to accommodate the rapidly changing conditions in the country. Recognizing the likelihood of lasting instability, the project adopted a "a simple and flexible design, involving partnerships with local and international NGOs that have continued to work on the ground during the recent conflicts and have the capacity to suspend and restart operations quickly" (GEF, 2008, p. 6). The proponents leveraged the experience of local organizations to improve project resilience.

Similarly, documents for another project in the DRC, Improved Management and Restoration of Agro-sylvo-pastoral Resources in the Pilot Province of South-Kivu,[6] identified that civil insecurity outbreaks would pose a significant risk that "cannot be mitigated by the project" (GEF, 2018b, p. 3). Accordingly, project staff used participatory approaches to address conflict where they could. For example, a participatory approach to land management both advanced the project's environmental objectives and sought to decrease the prevalence of conflict resulting from land disputes. Project staff stated in interviews that they believed transferring greater ownership of the project to local entities would improve its conflict resilience and its ability to operate in insecure contexts.

The project Developing an Integrated Protected Area System for the Cardamom Mountains[7] anticipated that project activities might face risk from the previous "protracted period of political turmoil" in the Cardamom region of Cambodia (GEF, 2001, p. 20). Its documents also identified concerns that vested interests in illegal logging and wildlife trade might hinder stakeholder support for the project. As a result, the project design included "stakeholder participation at all levels" as a "cornerstone of project implementation" (GEF, 2001, p. 20). According to its evaluation, the project was ultimately able to use stakeholder participation to address these risks: It achieved significant community buy-in and was able to improve law enforcement regarding illegal logging and wildlife trade both through outreach to the Ministry of Environment's rangers and through community-level law enforcement efforts (GEF, 2007, p. iii). Also in Cambodia, a project sought to engage with stakeholders who posed potential risks to the project's success, including unavoidable interactions with the Cambodian military (GEF, 2004b, p. 30).[8] To help manage this, the project laid out programming to increase investment by the military in project outcomes, including holding "environmental education awareness-raising

for armed forces" and increasing military involvement in local law enforcement efforts (GEF, 2004b, p. 32). Interviews with the project staff revealed that these activities helped create greater loyalty to the project among the members of the military that they worked with, aiding in project activities.

GEF projects have sometimes used peaceful dispute resolution as a risk mitigation mechanism. Although projects generally preferred to avoid conflict, some were able to leverage their connections to various stakeholders to actively reduce conflict risks through project design. For example, in preparing the project Establishing Conservation Areas Landscape Management in the Northern Plains,[9] the project staff worked with the Cambodian government to broker agreements with communities living on the selected project sites. These agreements were created with appropriate measures for land management and prevented the outbreak of conflict or disputes within the wildlife sanctuaries (GEF, 2004b, p. 21). Likewise, the Tonle Sap conservation project[10] anticipated potential threats from conflict in the form of land and resource disputes. To mitigate this, the project design included plans to broker agreements between stakeholder groups (GEF, 2003, p. 28, 2004a, p. 18).

Conflict-sensitive design can draw upon customary approaches and institutions. Such approaches to managing natural resources often have locally appropriate and legitimate means for conflict prevention, management, and resolution (United Nations Department of Political Affairs [UNDPA] and UNEP, 2015; United Nations Interagency Framework Team for Preventive Action [UNFTPA], 2012a). Projects can thus readily tap into approaches that have been tested and validated. Box 5.1 presents a case study on designing a GEF project that incorporates the Islamic approach of the *hima* in Lebanon.

Budgeting

GEF project staff reported the need for budgeting for contingencies related to fragility and conflict-associated risks. Allowing project budgets to include a line for contingent costs is important to accommodate strategies to manage risks that may or may not materialize.

Several GEF agencies and intergovernmental organizations allow contingency budgeting. The World Bank, UNDP, and others allow for contingency budgeting in their central budgets. UNDP's regulation 13.10, for example, provides that "the Administrator may utilize the budgetary contingency provision of 3 percent of the approved gross appropriations for unforeseen requirements resulting from currency movements, inflation or decisions of the General Assembly" (UNDP, 2000, reg. 13.10). And the World Bank's budget for fiscal year 2020 included a "Corporate Contingency" of $10 million "to support unforeseen priorities and cost pressures" (World Bank, 2019, p. 58). UNDP also provides means for covering expenses when a contributor defaults or "in the face of unforeseen contingencies" by having the national or regional office cover the unexpected expenses (UNDP, 2000, reg. 5.08). However, while contingency costs are common in construction,

Box 5.1 Engaging Customary Approaches for Conservation and Conflict Management—*Hima* in Lebanon

Across the Arab world, the *hima* (or protected area) has been revived as a community-based system of conservation and natural resource management (Serhal, 2019). Rooted within Islamic law, the idea of the *hima* extends back to the time of the Prophet Muhammad, who is said to have established a *hima* in the lands surrounding present-day Medina to preserve the area's natural beauty (Verde, 2008). In doing so, the Prophet transformed the landscape into a community asset in which all members of the public had a stake and share. In the latter 20th century, this community-based form of natural resource management was largely overshadowed by westernized systems that emphasized centralized resource governance.

More recently, the *hima* has been revived to encourage sustainable resource use, conservation, and the development of friendly relations among all stakeholders. The *hima* is powerful in part because of the importance that Islam attaches to environmental preservation, which creates a common starting point for people across the Middle East (Abboud, 2018). Its decentralized nature is also significant: The *hima* is predicated on the idea that conflict can be reduced by managing resources at the community level, rather than at a more centralized level (EcoPeace Middle East, 2012). In the words of Assad Serhal, director-general of the Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon, "the ultimate goal in creating Himas is to bring peace to both humans and wildlife" (Serhal, 2019, p. 85).

The *hima* was introduced into the Lebanon component of the GEF projects Mainstreaming Conservation of Migratory Soaring Birds into Key Productive Sectors along the Rift Valley/Red Sea Flyway, tranches I and II (GEF, 2017c).[a] Recognizing the importance of involving local communities in natural resource management and the conflict resolution potential of the *hima*, the Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon established Hima Ebel el Saqi in 2004 in southern Lebanon (shown in Figure B.5.1.1) and, in the following year, established Hima Kfar Zabad in the central Bekaa region.

To date, more than 15 *himas* have been established under the two projects, according to project staff, covering a total of more than 3 percent of Lebanon's land territory. These community-managed protected areas have served two important purposes: providing migrating birds with a safe habitat and promoting cooperation between conservationists, hunters, and local people. By bringing together people with disparate priorities—and a shared religion—and aligning them in the pursuit of a common goal, the *hima* functions as an important conflict management tool.

For example, the *hima* provides an opportunity for community members to discuss how conservation and related policies should be implemented while simultaneously encouraging cooperation between groups that is rooted in a

Figure B.5.1.1 Hima Ebel el Saqi
Source: SPNL

common attachment to the land (EcoPeace Middle East, 2012). This function is particularly important in a country such as Lebanon, where sectoral conflict has contributed to decades of fragility and conflict. With these projects, the *hima* has enabled the engagement of people from disparate backgrounds to proceed seamlessly, even while instability has affected the country.

a Project 9491

military projects, and humanitarian operations, relatively few development organizations currently allow contingency costs as a budget line in a project.

Outside the GEF context, the growing interest in resilience—and funding for resilience—seems to be increasing interest in contingency reserves and contingent budgeting. Contingent budgeting is a standard practice for disaster risk reduction (ADB, 2019; FAO, 2016; International Monetary Fund, 2018, 2019; Phaup & Kirschner, 2010; World Health Organization, 2017). In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women (n.d.) provides the following:

> all projects may include a reserve for contingencies not exceeding 4% of the direct project activity costs to allow for adjustments necessary in the light of unforeseen requirements resulting from COVID-19, such as currency

> movements, inflation, special programming and emergency issues on the ground during times of sudden unforeseen crisis. It can be used only with the prior written authorization of the UN Trust Fund, upon duly justified request by the Organization.
>
> (para. 12)

The European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (EC DEVCO, 2014) allows the use of contingency reserves under certain circumstances:

> A reserve for contingencies and/or possible fluctuations in exchange rates not exceeding 5% of the direct eligible costs may be included in the budget for the Action, to allow for adjustments necessary in the light of unforeseeable changes of circumstances on the ground. It can be used only with the prior written authorisation of the Contracting Authority, upon duly justified request by the Coordinator.
>
> (p. 65)

EC DEVCO (2014) provides additional guidance regarding the conditions for including and using a contingency reserve.

Working in fragile and conflict-affected settings is more expensive, and project budgets should reflect these realities. Staff are more expensive, with hazard and fragility pay for locally appointed staff and priority placement premiums for international staff, additional compensation for eligible staff, and rest and recuperation benefits to enable staff to take breaks away from their duty station (e.g., World Bank, 2020). The costs for security and logistical arrangements are higher. Fragile and conflict-affected situations required more time for consultations to build confidence and agreement, necessitating additional labor and security costs. Budgets for conflict-affected and fragile situations need to be able to cover the additional costs of doing business in those settings.

Implementation

Considering the dynamic and fluid nature of fragile and conflict-affected situations, projects must go beyond conflict-sensitive design to implementation. Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke famously noted "No plan of operations extends with any certainty beyond the first contact with the main hostile force" (often paraphrased as "No plan survives contact with the enemy" [Barnett, 1963, p. 35]). Conservation programming in fragile and conflict-affected situations often struggles similarly in the transition from plan to implementation, requiring ongoing sensitivity, monitoring, and adjustment (e.g., FAO, 2019, p. 1; Haider, 2014, p. 9; Hammill et al., 2009; UNDPA & UNEP, 2015, p. 25; UNFTPA, 2012a). Conflict-sensitive implementation can help identify conflict-related risks early so they can be addressed before they escalate; it can also help projects adjust to changing dynamic conditions and prevent projects from exacerbating problems.

To account for the dynamic context, GEF projects in fragile and conflict-affected situations have employed three broad categories of conflict-sensitive implementation measures: ongoing sensitivity in programming, monitoring and early warning, and adjustment. In contrast with the proactive orientation of conflict-sensitive design and planning, conflict-sensitive implementation combines both proactive approaches (such as ongoing sensitivity in planning and monitoring) and reactive approaches (in particular the adjustment of projects). This section outlines these approaches, drawing upon both experiences with GEF projects and the broader literature.

Ongoing Conflict Sensitivity

In fragile or conflict-affected contexts, attention to details can make large differences to successful implementation. Extra care in day-to-day implementation can help avoid and mitigate conflict (International Alert, 2004).

Hiring of staff can generate tensions and undermine project legitimacy if not done in a conflict-sensitive way. In situations with social conflict along ethnic or other identity lines, projects that hire people from only one group can generate tensions (Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, 2012; Haider, 2014; Hammill et al., 2009). At the same time, integrating staff from these groups can be delicate, and care needs to be taken—as seen with the hiring of park rangers in Gorongosa National Park in post-conflict Mozambique (Pritchard, 2015). Another source of potential tension is hiring for the higher paid (and higher status) technical jobs, which often go to people who are perceived as outsiders, whether they are from the capital city and not the community or from another country (UNDPA & UNEP, 2015). For these reasons, many GEF projects hire local staff whenever possible and over time build up the capacity of local staff to manage and otherwise staff the higher value jobs.

In fragile and conflict-affected settings, procurement also needs to be undertaken in a conflict-sensitive manner. Procurement rules often seek to ensure that procurement is efficient (going to the lowest bidder) and has integrity (not supporting corruption); they generally do not consider whether the process is conflict sensitive (Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, 2012). If members of one group consistently win contracts to provide food, equipment, or services, procurement can reinforce social divisions and generate tensions. At the same time, efforts to bring in all the necessary materials can create a "compound" mentality, aggravating relations with the neighboring communities (UNDPA & UNEP, 2015). Procurement can be made more conflict-sensitive through local procurement, transparent criteria and selection process, inclusion of local community members, and providing feedback to those who did not win the procurement opportunity (Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, 2012).

Transparency and communication are central to conflict-sensitive implementation. GEF projects have used a wide range of transparency and communication tools, both to help stakeholders understand the project (its objectives, activities, benefits, and scope) and to enable projects to understand concerns before they escalate to risks that could threaten a project (see Chapter 3). The most effective

communication operates in both directions, from the project to the stakeholders and from the stakeholders to the project, in contrast to public relations and propaganda.

Participation is also central to conflict-sensitive implementation. As noted in Chapter 4, GEF projects have adopted a wide range of participatory approaches to build support and ownership, embed the project within local institutions and processes, and enhance long-term sustainability of the project outcomes.

Some GEF projects have managed unexpected conflict impacts by bringing in new partners. For example, a project focused on reducing conflicting uses in the Artibonite River watershed shared by the Dominican Republic and Haiti[11] faced significant difficulty because of political instability (Pallen, 2016). In five years, project staff saw five changes of environment ministers in Haiti and three in the Dominican Republic. For the duration of the project, external issues regarding the movement of refugees led to increasingly tense relations between the two countries. The project was further impeded by the lack of experience of both countries in approaching a binational process to create a water treaty. To address this experience gap and improve relations, the project called upon the government of Mexico to facilitate trainings on such processes for the Haitian and Dominican governments. Assistance from this new partner helped mitigate further conflict between the other parties (Pallen, 2016, pp. 7–8).

Security and the potential use of force are among the most challenging aspects of conflict-sensitive implementation. In some instances, security forces supporting conservation efforts have committed human rights violations, creating serious reputational risk both for the project and for the conservation organization. Efforts to hire ex-combatants as game guards in Mozambique (simultaneously supporting conservation and reintegration) raised serious questions about the risk of the ex-combatants reverting to past behaviors that had harmed local communities and fighting with one another (Pritchard, 2015). The project was able to manage most of the risks, but the park continues to have difficult relationships with the neighboring communities that want to use the resources in the park. Security must be considered: without security forces, competing demands for resources, armed criminal groups, and others can put project staff at physical risk. But efforts to address these security risks have generated serious new risks. For example, a project subject matter expert described providing rangers in the Albertine Rift with automatic weapons and paramilitary training, only to see a number of them join a rebel group when the project funding ended and the government did not adequately pay their salaries. Approaches to managing the risks related to security forces include defining clear security procedures; training in those security procedures; providing means for potentially affected people to easily and confidentially submit complaints of abuses; timely, independent investigation of complaints; and holding security forces accountable (see International Finance Corporation, 2017).

Monitoring and Early Warning

Monitoring is "the continuous or periodic, standardized process of collecting and analyzing data on specific indicators to provide decision-makers, managers, and

stakeholders with information on progress in the achievement of agreed objectives and the use of allocated resources" (GEF, 2019, p. 6). In the context of fragile and conflict-affected states, monitoring is important for three key reasons. First, as with other projects, monitoring helps to track whether project activities are proceeding as planned. Second, because the security and social context in fragile and conflict-affected situations can change dramatically in a short period of time, monitoring helps to ascertain if and when the security situation degrades. Finally, monitoring can help to identify any unexpected negative impacts of the project early on before it becomes a trigger for conflict. All three of these reasons may necessitate adjusting the project activities.

Some GEF projects in fragile and conflict-affected situations have adopted enhanced monitoring systems to track social and conflict dynamics. More robust conflict monitoring allows project implementers to track the changing dynamics of conflict and respond rapidly, before a situation escalates or before there are devastating impacts. Monitoring often relates to the broader security context, but it can also focus on tensions related to the project. The use of these monitoring systems can give project staff more time to prepare for upcoming crises as well as serve as a tool for contingency planning. For example, documents for a project in Burundi noted that "unstable political conditions" posed a significant security risk to the project (GEF, 2016c, p. 30).[12] Before commencing implementation, UNIDO planned to "carefully keep tracking the political conditions in the country" as part of its risk mitigation strategy (GEF, 2016c, p. 30).

Indicators for GEF projects in fragile and conflict-affected situations may appropriately focus more on procedural aspects than environmental outcomes. As noted in Chapter 4, GEF projects in fragile and conflict-affected situations have often had to focus more on basic institutional capacity building to create the necessary enabling conditions for the environmental benefits to be realized. Indicators for such projects accordingly focus more on procedural and institutional aspects and less on environmental outcomes.

Real-time monitoring can support enhanced monitoring in fragile and conflict-affected settings. In situations not affected by fragility or conflict, episodic monitoring may suffice to track progress on a quarterly or annual basis. To be able to respond better to rapidly evolving circumstances, GEF projects could consider adopting a form of real-time monitoring. Real-time monitoring constantly tracks developments, uses both qualitative and quantitative analyses, and draws heavily on local informants (Krummenacher & Schmeidl, 2001).

The experience of the ADB can provide guidance for real-time monitoring in fragile and conflict-affected settings. The ADB Peacebuilding Tool provides a matrix that asks project staff to consider the distribution of power, local acceptance, social capital, traditional institutions, participation of interest groups, intergroup relations, and impacts on differential access to resources (ADB, 2012). ADB recommends using this tool to inform monitoring updates during the implementation phase of a project. Project staff can regularly return to this matrix and assess changes in local conflict dynamics and (if necessary) create new monitoring criteria that address risks revealed by this updated matrix. This ongoing monitoring can

give project staff an opportunity to adjust earlier to evolving issues (ADB, 2012). In assessing pilot testing of the tool in Nepal, ADB noted various indicators that projects can use to monitor the relative security of an area or relative improvements in the conflict context (ADB, 2012).

GEF projects have used early warning systems in tandem with enhanced monitoring to enable project personnel to know about risks before they have escalated and when adjustment is possible. Early warning is "a process that (a) alerts decision makers to the potential outbreak, escalation and resurgence of violent conflict; and (b) promotes an understanding among decision makers of the nature and impacts of violent conflict" (Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development, 2009, p. 22). These early warning measures can enable staff to know about risks and adjust course in a timely manner—whether that is ensuring staff safety, addressing project-related tensions before they escalate, or otherwise adapting. Organizations such as the Forum on Early Warning and Early Response monitor a series of conflict indicators to help rapidly detect and respond to conflict flare-ups.[13] Some GEF projects operating in fragile and conflict-affected contexts likewise monitor conflict indicators directly or rely on the reports of other groups doing this work. For example, a project in Colombia noted that it will rely on the UN Department for Safety and Security's country risk assessments and will follow its advice regarding the security of project staff (GEF, 2016b, p. 25).[14]

Fragility and conflict can cause difficulty for project staff in accessing the necessary sites and people needed for monitoring. The security risks associated with conflict-affected contexts can sometimes make regular access to a project site difficult or impossible, agency staff have reported. Such irregularities can affect the quality of monitoring data and thus the potential for early warning. Hence, when planning monitoring criteria and practices for a project in these contexts, project proponents should be thoughtful of potential interruptions and suggest alternative criteria and methodologies as contingencies. In some cases, project staff reported using remote monitoring via WhatsApp and other modalities to overcome these impediments.

Some projects that did not account for conflict sensitivity in their monitoring systems faced difficulties during project closure. Although environmental projects often rely more heavily on quantitative and scientific indicators focused on outcomes in the physical environment, a fragile or conflict-affected context often requires the introduction of more socially oriented indicators. As such, traditional conservation indicators alone may be insufficient. For example, the project Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in the Andes Region[15] was executed by the Instituto Alexander von Humboldt, a biological research institution with more experience in natural sciences than in development work. The project produced substantial scientific data, but its development outputs, including livelihood improvements, were not as robust. The evaluation noted that the "project design had an ineffective M&E system, and it underestimated key financial and political risks to sustainability" (GEF IEO, 2008, p. 7). The ineffective monitoring system weakened the ability of project staff to market and communicate the project results,

leading to an inability to secure further funding to help supplement project closure activities (GEF IEO, 2008, p. 4).

A systematic approach is required for applying standardized tools, processes, and norms for conflict-sensitive monitoring in projects. Monitoring of GEF projects is conducted pursuant to its Policy on Monitoring (GEF, 2019). Although many GEF projects used similar methods of monitoring in fragile and conflict-affected situations, these methods need to be more systematic and allow project staff to feel comfortable changing monitoring criteria to reflect new knowledge, new dynamics, and unintended consequences. Fragile and conflict-affected situations seem to have a higher number of unintended consequences, and many of those are negative. This is due to the greater social cleavages and sensitivities associated with fragile and conflict-affected settings, where modest problems can escalate quickly and in unexpected ways.

Adjustment

One of the most important and difficult steps in conflict-sensitive programming is adjusting projects to reflect developments and learning. It is important both because fragility or conflict can change rapidly, posing new risks to the project, and because monitoring may highlight that a particular activity or approach is not as effective as previously thought. An operational tension may arise between committing to the approved project plan and having the flexibility to adjust to a new reality or to a better understanding of the reality in which the project is being implemented, when procedures to allow for the change in programming are cumbersome and require re-approvals.

GEF projects increasingly anticipate at least the possibility of adjustment. In Afghanistan, for example, project staff established two baseline requirements for activities to continue operating in a given area: continuing "local political support for the project" and "acceptable security in project sites" (UNEP, 2017, p. 34).[16] Throughout the duration of the project, staff monitored for both local support and security. By the review at the project's midpoint, project staff observed:

> security situation . . . has deteriorated significantly in recent months and it may be become difficult or even impossible for the project to engage in this part of Badakshan. In general, in the volatile Afghan context, there is always a certain risk that this can change in the future.
>
> (UNEP, 2017, p. 34)

The inclusion of this reflection indicates that project staff did carry out ongoing monitoring of conflict dynamics and did intend to adjust their activities if necessary.

Some projects have changed project sites, notably when local conflicts began to affect project activities. For example, in Colombia, a project had to relocate and restructure four years after implementation began, in reaction to a growing "situation of social unease" when a "public security situation made it impossible for any of the Project's key partners to work in the area of Las Hermosas" (GEF

IEO, 2012b, p. 9).[17] Consequently, the project had to move operations out of the site specified in the initial project design. The total cost of this disruption and subsequent restructuring was $3.5 million. Notwithstanding the additional costs, the project was able to conclude with satisfactory outcomes (GEF IEO, 2012b, p. 9).

GEF projects have also made adjustments by bringing in new partners and resources. For example, as described earlier, when political tensions between Haiti and the Dominican Republic stalled the Artibonite River Basin project,[18] project staff engaged experts from the Mexican government who were able to facilitate trainings necessary to negotiate and adopt a bilateral water treaty governing the river (Pallen, 2016, pp. 7–8).

The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the importance of adaptive approaches to GEF programming. Informants in particularly challenging situations stated that before the pandemic, they regularly navigated crises that prevented them from traveling, from meeting, and from undertaking other activities essential to GEF programming. The adaptive approaches they had adopted for programming generally enabled them to adapt to the emerging pandemic and thereby continue to advance their projects. The GEF STAP has noted that "reforming the GEF rules and procedures to allow for more adaptive programming in fragile and conflict-affected situations can make GEF programming more resilient in pandemics and other crises" (2018, p. ix).

Project Completion

Project completion practices are important to ensuring the sustainability of a project's benefits over the long term. Benefits that are not sustained beyond the life of the project yield few, if any, global environmental benefits. It matters little how many trees are planted to fight land degradation if the vast majority die (The New Humanitarian, 2008). Although a project may only last a few years, it can take a significantly longer period of time for a project's impacts to be consolidated. For example, the project Unlocking Biodiversity Benefits through Development Finance in Critical Catchments[19] was budgeted and approved for four years of operations; however, the improvements and impacts on South Africa's biodiversity the project envisioned would likely take ten years or more (GEF IEO, 2019). Closure is particularly important in fragile and conflict-affected situations, where attention often focuses on institution building, capacity building, and otherwise creating an enabling environment; gains realized during the project must be sustained for the global environmental benefits of the project to be sustained (Hammill et al., 2009).

Conflict-related impacts often delay project closure. A variety of factors connected to conflict dynamics can lead to delays throughout the life of a project, ultimately leading to delayed closure. Conflict can cause difficulty for project staff in accessing project sites or make sites inaccessible for periods of time. Building trust also is often more difficult in conflict-affected communities.

Projects need to plan for and create the conditions for a smooth transition. This includes ensuring that local structures are in place to sustain the benefits of the project after the project funding ends and project staff leave. Project staff should

consider early on when project activities can be transitioned to local organizations or institutions and work with these partners to create the necessary capacity for the transition. Planning should start at the design stage, with measures undertaken throughout the project (FAO, 2006; UNDP, n.d.).

Building relationships with local institutions early in the project can ease transitions. By identifying local institutions that can carry on project operations early, project staff have a greater opportunity to orient aspects of the project activities to suit the transition to the future partner (FAO, 2006). Likewise, local institutions have more opportunity to become familiar with the activities they will assume responsibility for. This additional time can help to improve the fit between the project and the local community, strengthen the local investment in project success, and improve sustainability. Along with building relationships, a project may also need to build the local capacity for problem solving related to project activities. Project staff can collaborate with local stakeholders to create an action plan that includes post-closure activities to prepare for a smooth transition (FAO, 2006).

Communicating the transition strategy to all stakeholders early on can help to manage expectations. Ensuring that all stakeholders are aware of the plan and their potential role in it can help to create a smoother transition (FAO, 2006). As with early relationship building, communicating and coordinating early in the project can yield additional benefits. A longer timeline for communication creates opportunities for stakeholders to provide feedback and for plans to be adjusted accordingly.

Evaluation and Learning

Evaluation of projects in fragile and conflict-affected in environments can be particularly challenging (Menkhaus, 2004; Nanthikesan & Uitto, 2012; Pearson d'Estrée, 2019b; Woodrow & Jean, 2019). Understanding conflict dynamics requires a complex systems view (Patton, 2010, 2020; Pearson d'Estrée, 2019a): An evaluation must consider multiple actors, interests, and interactions. Attributing the effects of a project can be challenging, leading to a shift of emphasis on contribution rather than attribution (Patton, 2020; Pearson d'Estrée, 2019b). Moreover, projects in fragile and conflict-affected settings lack counterfactuals (i.e., a comparable situation without fragility or conflict), complicating causality to a particular actor or intervention. Time also complicates evaluations: Fragile and conflict-affected situations change frequently and rapidly, and the effects of a project may not manifest themselves or be consolidated until years after a project has closed. For example, in the context of land degradation, the GEF IEO has observed that "a lag time of 4.5–5.5 years was an important inflection point at which impacts were observed to be larger in magnitude" (2018, p. ix).

Tailoring evaluation to conflict-affected and fragile contexts is important (Nanthikesan & Uitto, 2012; Woomer, 2018). In recognition of the complexity and dynamism of programming in fragile and conflict-affected situations, evaluators have shifted to using an adaptive management framework for framing evaluation (Woodrow & Jean, 2019). Further, evaluations have increasingly focused on

theories of change, rather than on quantitative metrics (Patton, 2020). Evaluators and program staff working in these fluid settings have noted that evaluators may miss important considerations if they adhere rigidly to a theory of change constructed in the project design phase, years prior to current conditions. Considering the complexity and dynamic nature of situations affected by fragility and conflict, rigid theories of change may not be appropriate in such situations. Accordingly, some evaluators have developed an open theory of change that considers the project's broader context over time (Uitto, 2019).

Real-time evaluation can help agencies to better adapt projects to fragile and conflict-affected contexts. Real-time evaluation is "a timely, rapid and interactive peer review of a fast evolving . . . operation . . . undertaken at an early phase" (United Nations High Commission for Refugees [UNHCR], 2002, p. 1). Real-time evaluations provide project staff with quick and immediate feedback that allows them to reconsider how well their project design works in an evolving situation, often one affected by conflict or other disasters. Providing real-time evaluations can create an early opportunity for project staff to make key adjustments. In 2000, UNHCR adopted real-time evaluation for use in conflict zones, following experiences in Kosovo. UNHCR considers real-time evaluations a key tool to "provide suggestions for improvement . . . while they can still make a difference" (2002, p. 4). UNHCR has since used the process successfully in interventions in Afghanistan, Angola, Iran, and Pakistan.

Projects can have unintended consequences and evaluation needs to capture them. In interviews, project staff commented on both unexpected co-benefits and negative impacts. They also noted that evaluations did not always adequately capture the unintended consequences, especially when they were negative. Agency staff also commented more broadly on the challenges of adapting indicators to programming in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. They noted, for example, that programming in these contexts tended to emphasize institution building and required a more qualitative approach to evaluation.

A growing number of GEF agencies have been learning from experiences in designing, implementing, and evaluating environmental projects in fragile and conflict-affected situations. They have taken stock of experiences and published reports and guidance drawing upon their experiences, often supplemented by best practices (see Chapter 4, Box 4.1). Some, such as the World Bank and Conservation International, have established centers to provide training and technical assistance on conflict-sensitive programming.[20]

Cross-Cutting Issues

Indigenous Peoples

Consideration of indigenous peoples is important in GEF projects, and in fragile and conflict-affected situations, this consideration becomes even more significant. The seven fragile and conflict-affected situations examined in detail and presented in the case study chapters, as well as other GEF projects considered, present many

instances in which a GEF project affected or was affected by indigenous groups. The GEF has long engaged with indigenous groups, funding projects implementing three MEAs that directly affect them.[21] The GEF updated its Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards in 2018 to reflect best practice standards regarding indigenous peoples (GEF, 2018d). GEF Minimum Standard 5 provides a set of procedural and substantive protections ranging from free, prior, and informed consent to respect for rights to land and other resources, to traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. These protections are particularly important in fragile and conflict-affected situations, where weakened government capacity can leave indigenous peoples at greater risk.

GEF project designs have benefited from consultation and consideration of perspectives of indigenous communities. At "the request of indigenous leaders," a project in Colombia shifted its original intention after indigenous communities voiced their preference (GEF IEO, 2006, p. 6).[22] Initially, the project had intended to create a new national park, but after consultation, this became a community-managed reserve. Based on the experience of the National Parks Association's creation of Tuparro National Park, local communities in Matavén Forest rejected the option of creating a national park because the previous case "generated conflict with the region's indigenous people over the degree of co-management to be allowed and resulted in the death of various indigenous people as well as of the park's administrator" (GEF IEO, 2006, p. 14). The project was particularly noteworthy for choosing to support a government initiative to create protected areas under indigenous management instead of a national park that would not involve local inhabitants (GEF IEO, 2006, p. 7).

GEF projects have considered particular vulnerabilities and perspectives of indigenous groups when developing a project's conflict prevention methods. One project, to protect Mali's elephants in key sites and enhance the livelihoods of local communities living along elephant migration routes by reducing human-elephant conflict,[23] recognized that the project area had a diverse range of natural resource uses by different ethnicities and communities (GEF, 2018c, p. 10). To ensure their inclusion in the community's natural resource plans, a project planned to create an Indigenous People Plan to guide the project's conflict prevention methods.

Learning from indigenous communities about current resource use and community objectives for land management has been critical in laying foundations for working with the community on resource management issues. In the DRC, a project identified land-use conflicts between indigenous communities and park authorities as one of the primary barriers to the project's achievement (GEF, 2017d, p. 7).[24] Much of the tension arose from the origin of the park, when indigenous communities were removed from their ancestral lands; a related source of ongoing tension is indigenous communities' continued use of the park for hunting and fishing, pursuant to tradition but in violation of statutory law. In developing simple management plans, the project aimed to understand current economic activities, livelihoods, and aspirations among local communities, including indigenous groups. To build a representation system that was rooted locally and could be consolidated on a larger geographical scale, the project involved a local NGO that was

well connected to the communities and traditional authorities at all stages of the project design (GEF, 2017d, p. 7).

Gender

Gender dimensions to environmental management have shown higher negative impacts on women and girls, an issue that can be exacerbated by conflict or fragile settings. The GEF's Gender and Equality Policy was updated in 2017 to promote gender sensitivity and gender mainstreaming in programming through guiding principles, including program elements that do not exacerbate gender inequalities, inclusive engagement with both men and women in relation to their roles associated with the environment, and the implementation of gender-responsive approaches at all project phases (GEF, 2017a). The GEF has identified three gender gaps that are of most significance to GEF programming: access to natural resources, decision making, and access to benefits (GEF, 2018a).

Access to and management of natural resources is often unequal when viewed in terms of gender differences, and it is one of the GEF's vital concerns in alleviating gender inequality. As part of its Gender Mainstreaming Plan, a biodiversity project in Colombia[25] incorporated efforts to identify the roles of men and women in relation to production and the gendered limits to credit or other incentives (GEF, 2017b, p. 30). Not only do women have inequitable access to management, but gender equality has been linked to positive economic growth and development. Gender mainstreaming, then, became part of a Burundi hydropower project to support a sustainable energy initiative (GEF, 2015, p. 13).[26] In the project on Improving Women and Children's Resilience and Capacity to Adapt to Climate Change in the Democratic Republic of Congo,[27] international institutions were engaged to support women's access to natural resources and their management (GEF, 2013).

The decision-making space for natural resource management has historically excluded women, opening an opportunity for GEF projects to promote gender equality. In some communities, women are essential to natural resource sectors targeted by projects but are historically absent from decision making on resource management. The Burundi hydropower project, although considered to have limited gender dimensions, ensured that all decision-making processes would be built with a gender consideration as well as engagement with stakeholders at the implementation level concerning gender inequality and women's empowerment (GEF, 2015, p. 27). The Colombia biodiversity project's Gender Mainstreaming Plan tackled this gap by identifying female participation in decision making and by designing ways to engage women in multi-stakeholder discussions (GEF, 2017b, p. 114). In Serbia, a project set out to alleviate gender disparities by encouraging more gender-balanced participation (GEF, 2016e, p. 83).[28]

Another way the GEF projects alleviate gender inequality is to make women a large percentage of beneficiaries of project outputs. For example, an adaptation project in the DRC set a goal of ensuring 40 percent of project investments would be for women (GEF, 2014b, p. 14),[29] and the capacity-building project in

Serbia monitored the gender balance of beneficiaries of project implementation (GEF, 2016e, p. 23).

Human Rights

The GEF's Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards de facto addresses and protects a number of human rights. These include rights of indigenous peoples (including free, prior, and informed consent), gender-related rights, labor rights, cultural rights, procedural rights related to stakeholder engagement, and prevention and mitigation of involuntary resettlement (GEF, 2018d, 2019). If a violation of the protections in the Environmental and Social Safeguards occurs, a person may submit a complaint to "a local or country-level dispute resolution system, a GEF partner agency or the GEF Resolution Commissioner."[30]

GEF projects in fragile and conflict-affected situations have intersected with human rights considerations at various phases of project design and implementation. The in-depth analyses of the seven conflict-affected situations underpinning the evaluation on which this book is based (see Chapters 6–9) present projects with both positive and negative impacts on human rights. For example, the project in Serbia to build capacity to implement MEAs[31] included consideration of respect for human rights as part of its social and environmental risk screening (GEF, 2016e, p. 79). Discussed in the indigenous peoples section, the biodiversity project in Colombia[32] is a notable example of a project adjusting to address human rights considerations, particularly indigenous rights to autonomy and governance over their historic lands (GEF, 2017b).

Private Sector

The GEF's Private Sector Engagement Strategy recognizes the importance of the private sector to leverage funding and transform both markets and economic systems—all of which are necessary to scale up global environmental benefits and ensure that those benefits are sustained (GEF, 2020). Moreover, the GEF's Policy on Non-Grant Instruments provides guidance for the use of non-grant instruments to strengthen partnership with both the private and public sectors (GEF, 2014a). The private sector is a key stakeholder in many of the transformations that the GEF seeks to achieve because it is central to trade that drives environmental degradation.

GEF projects have sought to engage the private sector yet have experienced challenges in doing so. For example, a project in Cambodia sought to improve livelihoods by increasing smallholders' access to and uptake of renewable energy technologies.[33] Despite noting that the Cambodian government was "actively pursuing private-public contracts to keep consistent streams of capital flowing in" (GEF, 2016d, p. 28), interviews with key informants described a reluctance by the government to provide "a playground where private sector can test approaches." This presented difficulty in pilot-testing approaches that could then be scaled up. Further, fragile and conflict-affected situations can undermine efforts of GEF projects to engage the private sector. For example, the energy efficiency project in

Burundi[34] included infrastructure services for private sector development as one of its themes for building local capacity to provide energy efficiency advice to public institutions and private sector companies (GEF, 2016a, p. 2). However, the project after completion was rated unfavorably overall, largely because of the legacy of the past conflict.

Conclusion

This chapter stressed the importance of conflict-sensitive programming across the project life cycle—from the design stage through implementation, completion, and evaluation—drawing on the experiences with projects supported by the GEF and the broader literature on conflict-sensitive programming. It also highlighted the importance of addressing cross-cutting themes, including indigenous peoples, gender, and the private sector. Learning from indigenous communities about current resource use and community objectives for land management is critical in laying foundations for working with the community on resource management issues. Access to and management of natural resources is often unequal when viewed in terms of gender differences and is of vital concern in alleviating gender inequality. GEF projects ensure these important cross-cutting issues are addressed through its safeguard and gender policies.

Notes

1 For a comparison of 15 conflict analysis toolkits, see International Alert, 2004, pp. 12–15, Table 3.
2 Project 3418
3 Project 2100
4 Project 2357
5 Project 3772
6 Project 9515
7 Project 1086
8 Project 1043
9 Project 1043
10 Project 1183
11 Project 2929
12 Project 9056
13 Forum on Early Warning and Response, www.fewer-international.org/veroeffentlichungen/.
14 Project 9441
15 Project 774
16 Project 4227
17 Project 2019
18 Project 2929
19 Project 9073
20 For example, World Bank Fragility, Conflict, and Violence (FCV) Group.
21 www.thegef.org/newsroom/blog/partnering-peoples
22 Project 1020
23 Project 9661
24 Project 9802
25 Project 9663

26 Project 9056
27 Project 5226
28 Project 9114
29 Project 5226
30 www.thegef.org/projects-operations/conflict-resolution-commissioner
31 Project 9114
32 Project 9663
33 Project 9103
34 Project 4133

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Appendix 5.1 GEF-Supported Projects Referenced in Chapter 5

Project ID	*Name*	*Region*	*Dates*
774	Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in the Andes Region	Colombia	2000–2008
1020	Conservation and Sustainable Development of the Mataven Forest	Colombia	2001–2004
1043	Establishing Conservation Areas Landscape Management (CALM) in the Northern Plains	Cambodia	2004–2012
1086	Developing an Integrated Protected Area System for the Cardamom Mountains	Cambodia	2001–2007
1183	Tonle Sap Conservation Project	Cambodia	2004–2011
2019	Integrated National Adaptation Plan: High Mountain Ecosystems, Colombia's Caribbean Insular Areas and Human Health (INAP)	Colombia	2005–2012
2100	Support to the Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation (ICCN)'s Program for the Rehabilitation of the DRC's National Parks Network	DRC	2006–2018
2357	Agricultural Rehabilitation and Sustainable Land Management Project	Burundi	2004–2012
2929	Reducing Conflicting Water Uses in the Artibonite River Basin through Development and Adoption of a Multi-focal Area Strategic Action Programme	Haiti and Dominican Republic	2008–2012
3418	Mainstreaming Biodiversity Management into Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Production Processes	Lebanon	2009–2013
3772	CBSP Forest and Nature Conservation Project	DRC	2008–2015
4133	SPWA-CC: Energy Efficiency Project	Burundi	2010–2015
4227	Building Adaptive Capacity and Resilience to Climate Change in Afghanistan	Afghanistan	2010–2018
5226	Improving Women and Children's Resilience and Capacity to Adapt to Climate Change in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	DRC	2014–present
9056	Promotion of Small Hydro Power (SHP) for Productive Use and Energy Services	Burundi	2015–present
9073	Unlocking Biodiversity Benefits through Development Finance in Critical Catchments	South Africa	2017–present

(*Continued*)

Appendix 5.1 (Continued)

Project ID	*Name*	*Region*	*Dates*
9103	Building Adaptive Capacity through the Scaling-up of Renewable Energy Technologies in Rural Cambodia (S-RET)	Cambodia	2015–present
9114	Capacity Development for Improved Implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)	Serbia	2016–present
9441	Contributing to the Integrated Management of Biodiversity of the Pacific Region of Colombia to Build Peace	Colombia	2016–present
9491	Mainstreaming Conservation of Migratory Soaring Birds into Key Productive Sectors along the Rift Valley/Red Sea Flyway (Tranche II of GEFID 1028)	Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Jordan, Lebanon, Sudan	2016–present
9515	The Restoration Initiative, DRC child project: Improved Management and Restoration of Agro-sylvo-pastoral Resources in the Pilot Province of South-Kivu	DRC	2016–present
9661	Mali- Community-based Natural Resource Management that Resolves Conflict, Improves Livelihoods and Restores Ecosystems throughout the Elephant Range	Mali	2016–present
9663	Colombia: Connectivity and Biodiversity Conservation in the Colombian Amazon	Colombia	2015–present
9802	Promoting the Effective Management of Salonga National Park through Creation of Community Forests and Improving the Well-being of Local Communities	DRC	2020–present

Part II
Situation Case Studies

6 Africa

Mali and the Albertine Rift

This chapter summarizes in-depth analyses of projects in fragile and conflict-affected contexts funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in Mali and the Albertine Rift, a 920-mile area that includes portions of six African nations (Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia), to explore the impact of conflict and fragility on environmental projects in Africa.

Since its founding in 1991, the GEF has launched 101 projects in Mali and 274 projects in the Albertine Rift. Considering the environment and conflict linkages and the risks posed by armed conflict, these portfolio-level reviews of projects sought to evaluate the extent to which GEF projects have taken into account conflict risks and how conflict sensitivity in project design and implementation affects project outcomes.

This analysis found a range of conflict sensitivity in GEF-funded projects in Mali and the Albertine Rift. The projects in Mali reviewed in depth suffered in their evaluations because of conflict-related risks, and most did not actively manage conflict-related risks. In the Albertine Rift, in contrast, most projects did manage conflict-related risks, but even with that management, project evaluation scores were mixed.

Regional Background

Since gaining its independence in 1960, Mali has experienced decades of instability. The Tuareg, a seminomadic ethnic minority, and Arab groups in the sparsely populated north have led four separatist rebellions since 1963 to secure autonomy for the region they named Azawad (Pezard & Shurkin, 2015). Mali's current conflict began in 2012 when a coalition of rebel groups rapidly achieved a military coup and gained control of most of northern Mali. Shortly after declaring independence, in June 2012, the coalition splintered and several jihadist groups began claiming territory (Arieff, 2022). In 2013, when jihadist groups began to move south, French forces with support from Chad and the United States began a counterinsurgency campaign in Mali.

In 2015, the Malian government and two rival coalitions of armed groups in the north signed a peace accord (Arieff, 2022). It aimed to increase local autonomy and

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representation of northerners, integrate rebel fighters into the state security forces, and encourage development, justice, and reconciliation (Arieff, 2022). However, the agreement failed to demobilize armed groups, and the French campaign continues amidst fears that Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) could create a stronghold in the Sahel region (Center for Preventive Action, 2022).

In August 2020, military officers in Mali staged a coup following months of antigovernment protests and widespread dissatisfaction (Maclean, 2020). The military carried out another coup in May 2021 (Center for Preventive Action, 2022). The continuing instability is expected to harm international efforts to combat militant groups in Mali and have a destabilizing effect on the Sahel region (Gramer & Hadavas, 2020; Center for Preventive Action, 2022).

The Albertine Rift is a 920-mile stretch of land on the western side of the East African Rift, running from the northern tip of Lake Albert to the southern tip of Lake Tanganyika (Heisler, 2012). The Albertine Rift features a range of habitats from wetlands to montane forests and contains several protected zones. It is also characterized by "exceptional endemism," as it is home to a large portion of the continent's bird and mammal species, including dozens of rare and endangered species (Heisler, 2012; WWF, 2020).

Also known for its complex political, ethnic, and economic dynamics, the Albertine Rift straddles six countries with a shared history of interlinked conflicts and violence: Burundi, Rwanda, the DRC, Uganda, Zambia, and Tanzania. Figures 6.1 and 6.2 illustrate the scope of this region. Over the last several decades, the region has been affected by chronic armed conflict in four of the six countries, characterized by ethnic politics and political instability, genocidal violence, resource competition, and mass refugee movements. The region's conflicts have tended to spill across national boundaries, especially along the shared borders of the eastern DRC and western Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi (Hammill & Brown, 2006). In Burundi and neighboring Rwanda, civil wars between the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups took place between 1990 and 2005, resulting in more than 300,000 deaths (BBC, 2018c; Cunningham, 2011). In the Rwandan genocide in 1994, approximately 800,000 largely Tutsi Rwandans were killed and 2 million Hutu refugees fled to the DRC, fearing reprisals (BBC, 2018b). In the DRC, the First and Second Congo Wars have resulted in between 3 and 5 million deaths since 1998 (McGreal, 2008). Uganda has led a continuous fight against the Lord's Resistance Army rebel group since 1987 (BBC, 2018a). Zambia and Tanzania have largely escaped major conflict in recent years but have been affected by the aftermath of regional wars, including refugee influxes into both countries.

Using the methodology described in Chapter 2, ten GEF-funded projects in Mali and 12 in the Albertine Rift were selected for in-depth analyses using project documents and interviews with agency staff and stakeholders. Each team assessed the relationship between a project's management of conflict risk and project outcomes, using the four evaluation criteria: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability.

In selecting projects, the Mali evaluation team sought diversity in conflict categories, project results, and project focal areas. The results illuminated the

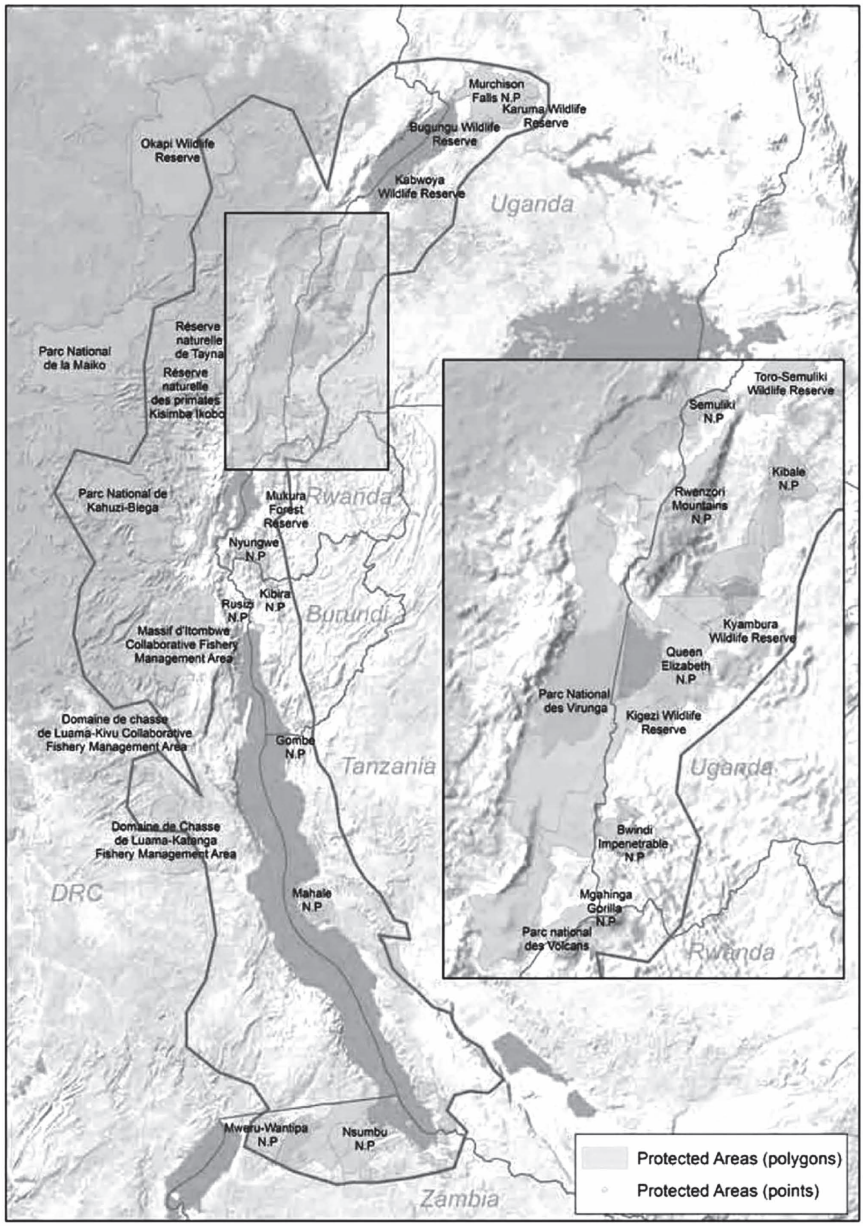

Figure 6.1 Albertine Rift Regional Boundaries and Major Protected Areas

Source: Carr et al., 2013

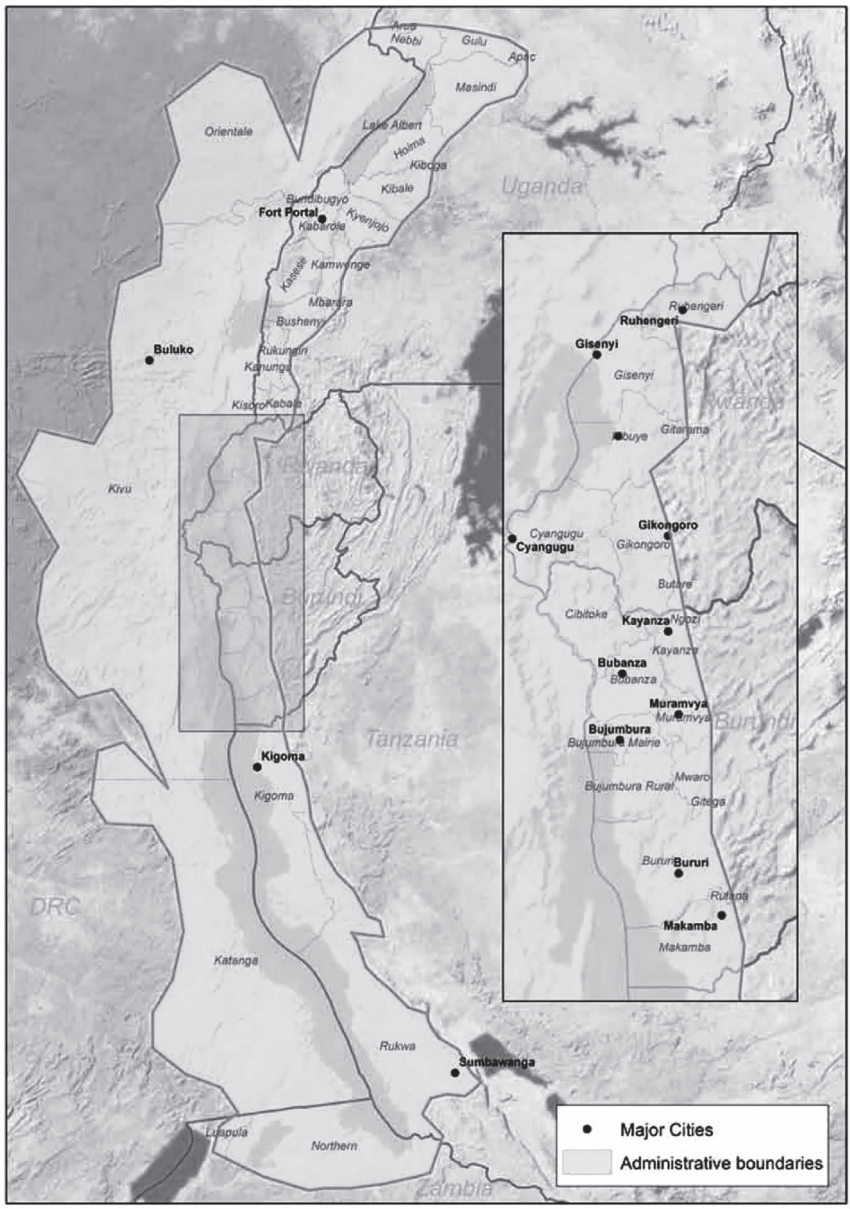

Figure 6.2 Albertine Rift Administrative Boundaries and Major Cities

Source: Carr et al., 2013

relationship between a project's management of conflict risk and project outcomes. The ten GEF-funded projects performed well in relevance and effectiveness but poorly in efficiency and sustainability, with the conflict in Mali negatively affecting project results in all four GEF criteria. Further, non-conflict challenges, like a lack of financial support from the government, poor management of project funds, and low state or local capacity, also negatively affected project outcomes. Given that these non-conflict challenges are common in fragile states, future evaluations of GEF projects in Mali might account for impacts of state fragility on project outcomes.

Of the selected Albertine Rift projects, 11 of the 12 exhibited substantial conflict sensitivity through their acknowledgement of past and current conflict and inclusion of measures to mitigate conflict-related risk. Four of these projects had overall positive results based on their evaluation scores, three had poor results, and four did not have documentation necessary for scoring. One additional project that was designated as not conflict sensitive received an overall poor score. The inability to score evaluation documents for several of the selected projects made generalizing the effect of conflict sensitivity on project outcomes difficult.

Environmental Background: Mali

Although the environment and natural resources are not usually considered a direct cause of conflict in Mali, the impact of climate change on food insecurity and livelihoods in northern Mali has exacerbated insecurity and instability in the country. Northern Mali has been identified as a vulnerability hotspot, exhibiting high climatic stress, high sensitivity to climatic changes, and low adaptive capacity (De Sherbinin et al., 2014). Since 1998, Mali's average annual rainfall has decreased by 30 percent, with prolonged and more frequent droughts raising levels of food insecurity in the country (Stewart, 2014). The north has experienced the most severe food insecurity; in 2015, around 270,000 people in the north faced starvation, and as of 2019, it continues to be the most food-insecure region in the country (FAO, 2019). Chronic food insecurity that was largely left unaddressed by the Malian government created an environment where Islamist armed groups could recruit Tuareg separatists and other groups in the north by providing food (d'Errico et al., 2017).

Drought has also caused increased desertification in Mali (Niang et al., 2014). The impacts of desertification have been felt acutely in the north, where predominantly nomadic pastoral communities, like the Tuareg, have had their animal herds greatly reduced due to lack of water and vegetation. With the Sahara Desert expanding southward 48 kilometers per year, herders from other regions and countries, like Algeria and Niger, are moving onto territory the Tuareg use for grazing, exacerbating desertification and soil degradation. Ecological stressors like these contributed to the previous Tuareg rebellion in the 1990s. In the 1970s and 1980s, prolonged famine in the north led to mass starvation and loss of livelihood among the Tuareg (Lecocq & Belalimat, 2012). The impacts of the famine, coupled with limited support from the government, drove Tuareg nationalist sentiment and

support for the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) because the Tuareg believed their survival depended on political independence (Lecocq & Belalimat, 2012). In response to the 1990s rebellion, the government launched a series of development programs to provide economic security in the north. These failed to meet their objectives because funds were "employed in direct relief aid or programmes with high visibility in the local 'traditional economy' (cemented wells and the like)" and not in sustainable development initiatives, leaving pastoral economies vulnerable to environmental shocks (Lecocq & Belalimat, 2012, para. 14). Without substantial investment in sustainable development initiatives in the region, the rapid ecological degradation and influx of migrant pastoralists threaten to place additional stress on the Tuareg. This may exacerbate the current armed conflict by strengthening support for the nationalist movement and creating intercommunal conflicts over scarce resources. Although sustainable development initiatives may not be sufficient to solve the current armed conflict or prevent future conflicts, they could alleviate conflict by building regional resilience in the north and providing tangible economic benefits.

In central Mali, the dominant agricultural region in the country, drought and the expansion of desertification southward has also increased vulnerability. Soil degradation and increased variability in rainfall have jeopardized livelihoods and caused conflicts over land between pastoralists and farmers (Hegazi et al., 2021).

GEF Involvement in Mali

Since 1992, the GEF has launched 101[1] projects in Mali, of which 41[2] were active as of 2020. Projects have predominantly focused on addressing climate change, land degradation, and biodiversity, and focused to a lesser extent on persistent organic pollutants (POPs), chemical waste, and international waters. Many of the projects did not specify a geographic region of focus, but those that did predominantly took place in south and southwestern Mali near Koulikoro, Kayes, Segou, Bamako, and Sikasso. Only a handful of projects took place in the northern region of Mali and were predominantly located in Gourma, a biodiversity hotspot.

From the initial analysis using the methodology described in Chapter 2, three categories of projects emerged:

1. projects that did not substantially address conflict risks and received poor evaluation scores (Category 1);
2. projects that addressed conflict risks but not to project outcomes (Category 2); and
3. projects that assessed both conflict risks and how they could impact project outcomes (Category 3).

Of the GEF-funded projects in Mali, 50 percent were classified as Category 1 projects, with the other 50 percent split between Category 2 and 3. The evaluation

team also found that multi-focal projects and those under the GEF focal areas of international waters and land degradation were more likely to be in Category 2 or 3. Climate change, biodiversity, POPs, and chemicals and waste projects were more likely to be in Category 1, as illustrated in Figure 6.3. Table 6.1 lists the Mali projects selected for in-depth analysis.

Table 6.1 Mali Projects Analyzed in Depth, with Key Findings

GEF Project ID	*Title*	*Focal Area*	*Dates*	*Category*
1152	Biodiversity Conservation and Participatory Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Inner Niger Delta and its Transition Areas, Mopti Region	Biodiversity	2004–2014	Category 3
• The project left unaddressed the risks posed by armed conflict, focusing primarily in its design on managing social conflicts that could impede community-driven sustainable natural resource management. • The project performed well in all four core evaluation criteria; however, for efficiency and sustainability (sociopolitical), evaluators cautioned that armed conflict could negatively impact the project. • Evaluators identified armed conflict as a factor affecting the attainment of project outcomes due to delays in the last two years of the project.				
2193	Enabling Sustainable Dryland Management through Mobile Pastoral Custodianship	Land degradation	2005–2013	Category 3
• The project left unaddressed the risks posed by armed conflict in Mali and the other participating countries, mentioning it briefly as a cross-cutting issue brought up in project workshops. • The project performed well in all four core evaluation criteria, and conflict was not discussed as having impacted project outcomes in the participating countries.				
9661	Community-based Natural Resource Management that Resolves Conflict, Improves Livelihoods, and Restores Ecosystems throughout the Elephant Range	Biodiversity, land degradation	2018–present	Category 3
• The project addressed in detail the substantial risk that armed conflict posed to project operations and the achievement of project outcomes. • To manage risks posed by armed conflict, the project designed contingency plans for project operations and objectives should the security situation worsen and developed partnerships with organizations in the project area experienced with operating in conflict zones. • An interview with an agency staff member revealed that the project has not started due to the occupation of the project area by a militant group.				

(*Continued*)

Table 6.1 (Continued)

GEF Project ID	*Title*	*Focal Area*	*Dates*	*Category*
1253	Gourma Biodiversity Conservation Project	Biodiversity	2004–2013	Category 2
• The project did not address armed conflict as a risk, focusing primarily on the risks posed by intercommunal/traditional conflicts over natural resources. • The project performed poorly in relevance and sustainability (financial and sociopolitical) due to the outbreak of armed conflict in the project area and Mali as a whole.				
3699	SPWA-CC: Promotion of the Use of Agrofuels from the Production and Use of Jatropha Oil in Mali	Climate change	2011–2018	Category 2
• The project did not address the risks armed conflict posed to the attainment of project objectives, focusing primarily on risks posed by intercommunal land tenure conflicts. • An evaluation of the project in terms of the four core evaluation criteria is not available.				
5746	Scaling-up and Replicating Successful Sustainable Land Management (SLM) and Agroforestry Practices in the Koulikoro Region of Mali	Biodiversity, climate change, land degradation	2016–present	Category 2
• The project only addressed in passing a budgetary risk to the project caused by armed conflict and did not note any plans to address the risk. • The project focused primarily on local resource use conflicts in its design.				
5535	Improving IWRM, Knowledge-based Management and Governance of the Niger Basin and the Iullemeden-Taoudeni/Tanezrouft Aquifer system (NB-ITTAS)	International waters	2018–present	Category 2
• The project only addressed the risk of armed conflict in passing, noting that the security situation in the Bani Basin project site in Mali could impede project implementation, and did not address risks of armed conflict in riparian states. • The project primarily focused on addressing risks to the project from local water conflicts. • In passing, the project acknowledged the potential for it to exacerbate local water conflicts but did not integrate measures to mitigate such an impact in its design.				
2469	Supporting Capacity Building for the Elaboration of National Reports and Country Profiles by African Parties to the UNCCD	Land degradation	2004–2007	Category 1
• In passing, the project identified the political situation in Mali as one of four major factors influencing risk to the project but did not include measures to manage impacts of armed conflict in its design. • The project performed well in relevance and sustainability but performed poorly in effectiveness and efficiency. • The project's TER did not discuss whether armed conflict impacted project outcomes.				

GEF Project ID	*Title*	*Focal Area*	*Dates*	*Category*
1348	Africa Stockpiles Program, P1	POPs	2005–2017	Category 1
• The project did not address risks posed by armed conflict in Mali or the other participating countries. • The project's TE noted the project's lack of country-specific planning in Mali and its exclusion of an assessment of instability as a risk to the project in Mali. • The project performed well in relevance but performed poorly in effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability, with the TER noting for sociopolitical sustainability that the armed conflict in Mali posed serious risks to the outcomes of the project in Mali.				
4569	Improve the Health and Environment of Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining (ASGM) Communities by Reducing Mercury Emissions and Promoting Sound Chemical Management	POPs	2011–2018	Category 1
• The project did not address risks posed by armed conflict in Mali and other participating countries. • The project's TE did not provide a detailed assessment of whether conflict impacted project outcomes in participating countries but noted in passing that due to the armed conflict in Mali the project was not carried out there.				

Note: Project Categories: 1. Projects did not substantially address conflict dynamics and received unfavorable terminal evaluation scores. 2. Projects addressed conflict dynamics only in passing and did not significantly evaluate risks social and/or violent conflict could pose to project outcomes. Projects also did not address mitigation measures that could be taken to lessen the impact of the project on conflict. 3. Projects addressed conflict dynamics by evaluating risks that they posed to the success of project outcomes and discussed mitigation measures that could be taken to reduce the impact of the project on latent social conflicts.

Environmental Background: Albertine Rift

The environmental dimensions of conflict in the Albertine Rift region are complex, influenced by a host of factors from biodiversity conservation to natural resource dependence. This biodiversity hotspot encompasses a wide range of habitats, including wetlands, alpine grasslands, and montane forests (Heisler, 2012). The region is home to more than half of the African continent's bird species and 40 percent of its mammal species (MacArthur Foundation, 2012). The region's important ecosystem overlaps with densely populated centers whose societies depend on natural resources (Kameri-Mbote, 2006; Plumptre et al., 2016). Thus, many of the region's conflicts have been connected to environmental factors: competing claims for scarce resources fuel disputes, mining operations financed armed groups, and encroachment linked to conflict-related displacement stresses fragile ecosystems (Kameri-Mbote, 2006).

The region's history of political instability and armed conflicts has posed significant challenges for conservation. The mass displacement of people fleeing

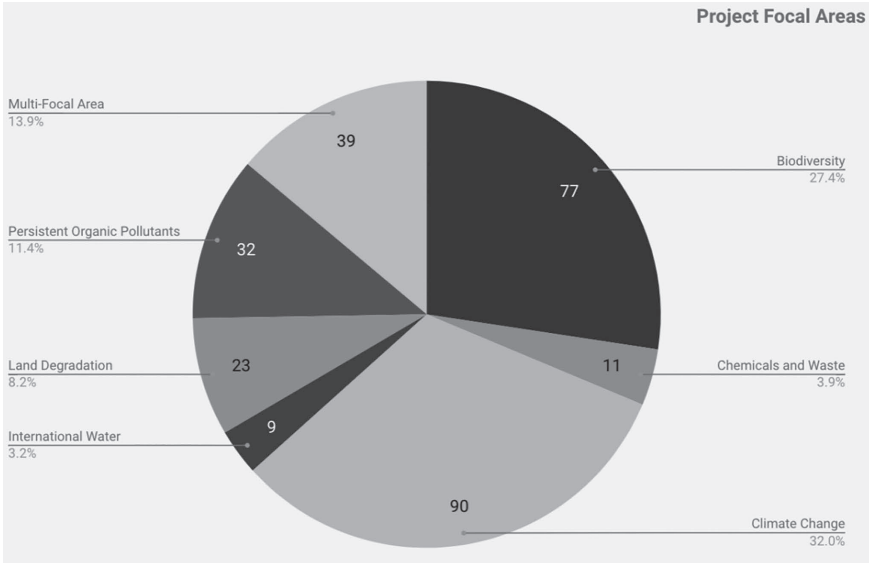

Figure 6.3 Focal Areas of Projects in Mali, by Conflict-Sensitive Category

violence has led to further encroachment into protected areas and has heightened tensions with adjacent communities over resources. In the DRC, for example, conflict broke out in 1996 in Virunga National Park, as resources like fish and wildlife were strained following the influx of internally displaced people (Asin, 2010). The spread of armed conflict into protected areas has also increased resource exploitation in the region. In places like Itombwe Natural Reserve and Luama Katanga Reserve, the presence of armed groups has resulted in artisanal mining operations to fund weapons and munitions (Plumptre et al., 2016). Across the region, multiple groups have engaged in poaching and illegal fishing that diminish biodiversity and threaten large mammal populations in several protected areas (Kujirakwinja et al., 2010; Plumptre et al., 2016). Virunga National Park in the eastern DRC has been particularly susceptible to these illegal activities, especially in the 1990s, when rival rebel groups managed different regions of the park. Conservation work to prevent overexploitation has itself stalled for conflict-related reasons, such as when the Congolese Army's efforts to remove rebel groups interrupted a project between the Wildlife Conservation Society and USAID in Kahuzi-Biega National Park (Plumptre, 2010).

At the same time, because livelihoods and economic development in Albertine Rift communities tend to hinge on access to natural resources, conservation initiatives have frequently sparked or amplified tensions. Interventions that limit access to natural resources, exclude communities from management decisions, or unequally distribute benefits tend to generate conflict between stakeholders (Plumptre, 2010).

Conflicts flared up regarding the establishment of Kahuzi-Biega National Park when some inhabitants were compensated while others were displaced without resettlement measures (Plumptre, 2010). A similar situation occurred when the DRC's Ministry of the Environment announced via government gazette a natural reserve to protect the Itombwe Massif, a biodiversity epicenter with long-acknowledged biological importance (Plumptre, 2010). However, people who lived in the massif pushed back because the reserve had no clear boundaries and had been created without consulting adjacent communities. A series of consultations with local communities to establish clear boundaries eventually resolved this friction (Plumptre et al., 2016).

GEF Involvement in the Albertine Rift

The GEF has been involved in 274 environmental projects in the Albertine Rift since 1991, more than half of which focused on biodiversity or climate change (Figure 6.4 presents the distribution of project focal areas in this region). The variety of stakeholders and agencies in Albertine Rift projects presents challenges and opportunities for conservation and environmental management in ecosystems. GEF projects in the region have focused on important natural resources that are shared between countries, including Lakes Tanganyika, Kivu, and Edward; the basins of the Nile River and Lake Victoria; and protected areas including Virunga National Park.

Following analysis of all 274 projects using the methods described in Chapter 2, the evaluation team selected 12 projects for in-depth review, listed in Table 6.2.

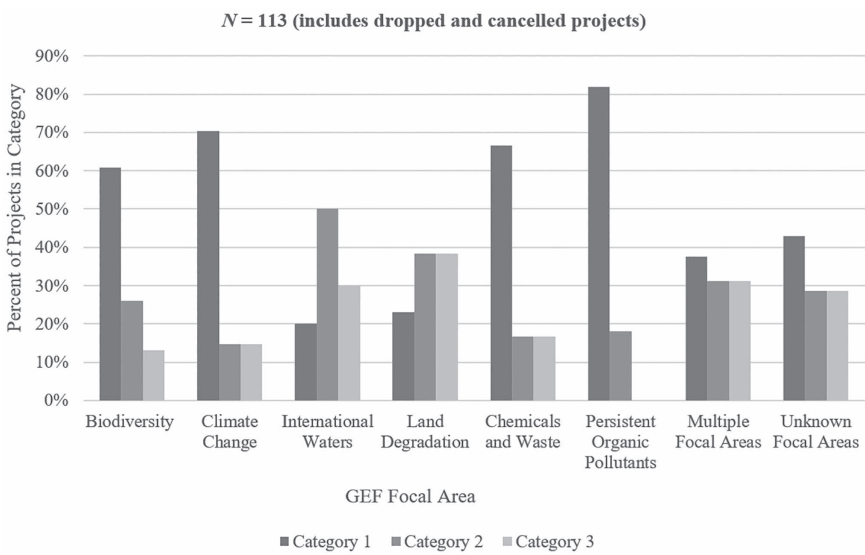

Figure 6.4 Focal Areas of Projects in the Albertine Rift

Table 6.2 Albertine Rift Projects Analyzed in Depth

ID	*Project Title*	*Focal Area*	*Project Dates*	*Category*
398	Pollution Control and Other Measures to Protect Biodiversity in Lake Tanganyika	International waters	1991–2006	1
1094	Nile Transboundary Environmental Action Project, Tranche 1	International waters	2003–2011	3
2100	Support to the Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation (ICCN)'s Program for the Rehabilitation of the DRC's National Parks Network Note: Terminal evaluation information for Project 2100 obtained from the World Banks' Implementation Completion and Results Report	Biodiversity	2009–2018	4
2139	SIP: Transboundary Agro-Ecosystem Management Programme for the Kagera River Basin (Kagera TAMP)	Land degradation	2007–2019	1
2357	Agricultural Rehabilitation and Sustainable Land Management Project	Land degradation	2004–2007	1
2584	Nile Transboundary Environmental Action Project (NTEAP), Phase II	International waters	2008–2015	1
2888	Transboundary Conservation of the Greater Virunga Landscape	Biodiversity	2008; closing date unknown	4
3772	CBSP Forest and Nature Conservation Project	Biodiversity	2009–2016	3
4133	SPWA-CC: Energy Efficiency Project	Climate change	2012–2016	2
4990	Community Disaster Risk Management in Burundi	Climate change	2014–present	4
9056	Promotion of Small Hydro Power (SHP) for Productive Use and Energy Services	Climate change	2017–present	4
9515	The Restoration Initiative, DRC child project: Improved Management and Restoration of Agro-sylvo-pastoral Resources in the Pilot Province of South-Kivu	Biodiversity, climate change, land degradation	2018–present	4

Note: Project categories: 1. Projects that did substantially address conflict dynamics and received favorable terminal evaluation scores; 2. projects that did not substantially address conflict and received unfavorable evaluation information; 3. projects that did substantially address conflict but received unfavorable evaluation scores; and 4. projects that substantially addressed conflict but did not have terminal evaluation information.

Results

The in-depth analyses of projects in Mali and the Albertine Rift provide a qualitative assessment of the ways in which GEF-supported projects in Africa addressed conflict risks in their design and whether these risks affected project outcomes.

Examination of the interaction between conflict and the selected projects used the four GEF core evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. The analyses also assessed impacts of non-conflict-related factors on project outcomes.

Relevance

A project's relevance refers to the extent to which its design and intended outcomes align with "local and national environmental priorities and policies and to the GEF's strategic priorities and objectives, and remained suited to the conditions of the context, over time" (GEF IEO, 2019, p. 17).

Most of the selected projects in Mali performed well in terms of relevance, with only one project's relevance being negatively impacted by conflict. Across the ten projects reviewed in depth, the armed conflict was not a common factor affecting a project's relevance. For the Gourma Biodiversity Conservation Project, although the project design aligned with national and local environmental priorities, the project's outcomes were not suited to the conflict context. The project had intended to reverse biodiversity degradation in the Gourma region in five years, a timeline noted as being too ambitious given the political risk and insecurity in the project area (World Bank, 2013). The nine other projects reviewed in Mali performed well in relevance, with projects' design and outcomes aligning with local, national, and GEF environmental and strategic priorities.

The selected Albertine Rift projects were relevant to their local and national contexts. All were rated as at least substantial for relevance, and for several, evaluations found that projects' intersection with conflict dynamics was connected to project relevance. Documents for the Agricultural Rehabilitation and Sustainable Land Management Project cited the persistence of "post-conflict reconstruction" after the project was implemented as evidence that the project was "highly relevant to the situation in Burundi at the time and remained so through the life of the project" (GEF IEO, 2012, p. 14). Evaluation also found that the project's community-driven development strategy was appropriate for "restoring agricultural productivity in communities that were recovering from a post conflict situation" (GEF IEO, 2012, p. 14). The SPWA-CC: Energy Efficiency Project received an overall relevance rating of high, indicating that the project "achieved significant progress . . . in spite of the country's security problems as a result of the political crisis" (GEF IEO, 2016, p. 12). A project supporting the Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation's program to rehabilitate the DRC's National Parks Network also received a high rating for project relevance; its project development objective aligned with the country assistance strategy, including "the rehabilitation of protected areas" and "improved governance and institutional strengthening" (World Bank, 2019, pp. 14–15). Documents also noted that the project was implemented in areas at risk of conflict because the target parks were chosen primarily for their biodiversity values, and selecting lower risk zones "would have done a disservice to this important aim" (World Bank, 2019, p. 29). Meanwhile, the CBSP Forest and Nature Conservation Project received a relevance rating of substantial but only a rating of modest for relevance of project design, indicating that "risks were underestimated

and mitigation measures were weak" (GEF IEO, 2015, p. 13). Some of the risk mitigation measures discussed as weak or not implemented had to do with insecurity and land conflict. The remaining projects with available evaluation information received high ratings for relevance but did not make specific references to conflict.

Effectiveness

The effectiveness of a project refers to the extent to which the project "achieved, or expects to achieve, results (outputs, outcomes and impacts, including global environmental benefits) taking into account the key factors influencing the results" (GEF IEO, 2019, p. 13).

Of the ten Mali projects, only one did not perform well in effectiveness due to the conflict: Community-Based Natural Resource Management that Resolves Conflict, Improves Livelihoods, and Restores Ecosystems throughout the Elephant Range. An interview with a project staff member revealed that although the project was approved for implementation by the GEF in 2018, it has been unable to begin its work protecting elephants in the Gourma region of Mali due to insecurity in the project area, a direct result of the armed conflict. Jihadist militants occupied the project area, using forests there for cover from the French Air Force. The staff member noted that the occupation of the project area complicated implementation of the project in two ways. First, the occupation poses serious physical risks to project personnel, staff of partner organizations, and local communities participating in the project. Second, it complicates operational arrangements in that project staff might have to coordinate activities with the jihadist militants because the forests they use for cover overlap with intended elephant reserves. Given these complexities, the staff member indicated that the project's ability to achieve its intended outcomes safely and effectively may be severely limited.

For the other nine projects reviewed in Mali, project documents did not indicate that conflict affected project effectiveness. Eight of the projects performed well in effectiveness, achieving their expected results. The Africa Stockpiles Program, phase 1, did not receive positive scores for effectiveness due to difficulty in achieving its major objective and building adequate capacity for long-term prevention measures. The project aimed to start a cleanup of stockpiles of obsolete pesticides in African countries, including POPs, and to introduce sustainable measures to prevent creation of new stockpiles. For reasons not necessarily related to the conflict, the project eliminated only 3,164 tons of the 8,949 tons of publicly held POPs. It also did not prevent accumulation of future POPs nor did the second phase of the program ever begin (GEF IEO, 2013).

For several of the studied Albertine Rift projects, effectiveness was entwined with the conflict context, either because conflict posed an obstacle to the completion of project objectives or, in one case, because reaching the project's conflict-related objectives contributed to overall positive results. Almost all of the projects with evaluation scores earned effectiveness ratings of moderately satisfactory or higher. The Agricultural Rehabilitation and Sustainable Land Management Project achieved its development and global environmental objectives, with an overall outcome rated moderately satisfactory. In discussing its positive results, this

project specifically referenced conflict, indicating that the project was in line with Burundi and the World Bank's post-conflict priorities and achieved conflict-related objectives, including benefitting persons displaced by conflict. A project to protect biodiversity in Lake Tanganyika was rated satisfactory for effectiveness, having completed most project components with the exception of several that were delayed or made impossible by insecurity in Burundi and the DRC. The project SIP: Transboundary Agro-Ecosystem Management Programme for the Kagera River Basin (Kagera TAMP) received a satisfactory effectiveness rating, with indication that the project was most successful on a technical level and less so on institutional and political levels. The project on the DRC's National Parks Network implemented by the World Bank received a moderate rating for the achievement of project development objectives. These included conflict-related objectives of financing a process "to ameliorate the conflicts in the area and seek redress for the hardships experienced by the indigenous peoples (IPs) following the creation of the park" (World Bank, 2019, p. 16). Where that project's objectives were not met or only partially met, documents cited conflict as an obstacle, including with regard to the stabilization of indicator species, which the evaluation document noted would require "additional efforts to improve security" and "was in hindsight clearly beyond the scope of this project" (World Bank, 2019, pp. 17–18). The SPWA-CC: Energy Efficiency Project was rated as moderately unsatisfactory overall and for its achievement of global environmental benefits. It failed to meet several objectives related to reducing emissions and saving energy due in part to insecurity, and the crisis also prevented implementation of objectives related to national policies and guidelines.

Efficiency

The efficiency of a project refers to the extent to which the project "achieved value for resources, by converting inputs (funds, personnel, expertise, equipment, etc.) to results in the timeliest and least costly way possible, compared to the alternatives" (GEF IEO, 2019, p. 13)

The projects reviewed in Mali largely did not perform well in terms of efficiency. Although the armed conflict was not a common challenge across all of the projects, it did affect the efficiency of the project Biodiversity Conservation and Participatory Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Inner Niger Delta and its Transition Areas, Mopti Region. In that project, the armed conflict in northern Mali caused delays in project activities for the first two years of implementation, leading to issues in attaining some of the desired project outcomes (GEF IEO, 2014, p. 7).

For the other nine Mali projects reviewed, project documents did not indicate that poor performance in project efficiency was related to conflict. A common challenge for projects was converting funds into results in an efficient and least costly manner. In the Africa Stockpiles program, the allocation of funds did not achieve intended project outcomes due to mismanagement caused by the difficulty in tracking allocated funds and reporting expenditures of regional programs using the World Bank's budgeting system. Although 75 percent of GEF funding was disbursed, only 37 percent of the targeted public inventories of POPs were disposed of by the close of the project, and POPs waste was not disposed of in two of the six

countries the project targeted (GEF IEO, 2013, p. 5). Although the project Supporting Capacity Building for the Elaboration of National Reports and Country Profiles by African Parties to the UNCCD did achieve intended outcomes, complicated funding arrangements resulted in higher costs in time and resources to achieve them (GEF, 2006, p. 3).

Among the Albertine Rift projects, seven of the eight completed projects received moderately or substantially satisfactory ratings for efficiency. The eighth project's efficiency received an unsatisfactory rating. Only two projects mentioned conflict in discussion of their efficiency. The project to protect biodiversity in Lake Tanganyika earned an efficiency rating of moderately satisfactory, with documents indicating that civil unrest contributed to "delays in project implementation," but that delays did not increase the project's budget (Manikowski & Gundling, 2014, p. 6). The project on rehabilitation of the DRC's National Parks Network received an implementation efficiency rating of modest, attributed in part to the "difficult environment" in which it operated, citing lack of security, conflict in the National Parks, and "breakouts of violence by armed groups" (World Bank, 2019, pp. 20–21). This context affected efficiency because it required increased spending on patrolling, reduced tourism at parks, and contributed to the "prolonged delay in establishing of the Okapi Fund," which impacted revenues and led to missed opportunities for funding (World Bank, 2019, pp. 20–21). The Agricultural Rehabilitation and Sustainable Land Management Project received an efficiency rating of substantial but made no reference to conflict's effect on efficiency. Similarly, the CBSP Forest and Nature Conservation Project was rated moderately satisfactory for efficiency, without specific reference to conflict. The SPWA-CC: Energy Efficiency Project and the Nile Transboundary Environmental Action Project, with efficiency ratings of high and satisfactory, respectively, also did not cite connection with conflict. For the Kagera TAMP project, the efficiency rating was poor, but conflict did not explicitly play a role in the negative rating.

Sustainability

The sustainability of a project refers to the continuation or likely continuation of "positive effects from the intervention after it has come to an end, and its potential for scale-up and/or replication; interventions need to be environmentally as well as institutionally, financially, politically, culturally and socially sustainable" (GEF IEO, 2019, p. 13).

The Mali projects studied in depth did not perform well in sociopolitical sustainability. For three of the projects reviewed, the common challenge was the ongoing armed conflict in Mali. An example is the Gourma Biodiversity Conservation Project. In 2012, while the project was ongoing, a coup d'état occurred, and the project area was subsequently occupied by armed groups. Due to the safety and security issues in the project area, staff, associates, and community members fled the region to southern cities in Mali and to neighboring countries. A project document noted that the security situation in the project area and the loss of personnel would ultimately affect the project's long-term implementation (World Bank, 2013, pp. 29–30).

The projects in Mali also performed poorly in terms of their financial sustainability, with conflict explicitly impacting financial sustainability in one instance. Although not common among the projects reviewed, the armed conflict in Mali did impact the financial sustainability of the Gourma Biodiversity Conservation Project: Following the coup d'état, the CFA franc was devalued, which left some of the project's objectives incomplete after the project closed (World Bank, 2013, p. 53). More commonly, project documents indicated that non-conflict barriers had negative impacts on projects' financial sustainability. For three of the projects reviewed, a common challenge to financial sustainability was securing funding from the government to continue the project after GEF involvement ended. For example, the continuation of the Africa Stockpiles Program was assessed to be unlikely because the project failed to secure funding from Mali's government to continue to safeguard and dispose of POPs after the project closed (GEF IEO, 2013, p. 6).

In terms of institutional sustainability, the projects reviewed in Mali generally performed well. The project on biodiversity in the Inner Niger Delta and its transition areas exemplifies projects' performance in this facet of sustainability. The project successfully built ownership of project activities among project beneficiaries by mobilizing stakeholder involvement in designing, implementing, and managing micro projects. The project also successfully strengthened intercommunal organizations, which were indicated as being important for continued institutional sustainability (GEF IEO, 2014, p. 6).

The Mali projects also performed well in environmental sustainability, although assessments of why they did well were limited in the project documents. The Africa Stockpiles Program is an example: Its environmental sustainability was noted as likely, but project documents indicated that this determination was made based on the project identifying no environmental risks (GEF IEO, 2013, p. 6).

Among Albertine Rift projects, document analysis did not break out sustainability by category. The projects analyzed generally received the poorest ratings for the project sustainability criterion and frequently cited conflict as an explanation. The Agricultural Rehabilitation and Sustainable Land Management Project, which received a positive score for project sustainability, also indicated a moderate risk to project outcomes in its documentation. One component of this risk was "resumption of conflict," something over which the project professed to have "little control" (GEF IEO, 2012, p. 22). Evaluation of the CBSP Forest and Nature Conservation Project indicated that conditions at project close represented a high risk to project outcomes but did not reference conflict in relation to this risk; the project received a negative score for sustainability. The SPWA-CC: Energy Efficiency Project also received a negative score for sustainability and indicated a substantial risk to project outcomes, attributed in part to "a political crisis" that would "hamper REGIDESO's [Agency for Production and Distribution of Water and Electricity (Régie de Production et de Distribution d'Eau et d'Electricité)] efforts to sustain the implementation of energy efficiency measures due to security reasons" (GEF IEO, 2016, p. 18). The Kagera TAMP project received a positive overall sustainability rating and made no reference to conflict in its justification. In contrast, the Lake Tanganyika project received a negative rating for sustainability, with documents indicating that sustainability of

project outcomes was moderately unlikely due to factors of "socio-political instability" and "political and military instability" (Manikowski & Gundling, 2014, p. 7).

Non-Conflict Challenges

The analysis of the Mali projects noted that challenges unrelated to conflict also had negative impacts on projects' performance in the four evaluation criteria. Common non-conflict challenges affecting project success were difficulties in securing funding from the government, building local or national capacities to continue project activities, and managing project funding. These can be related to state fragility because initiatives in fragile states often face such funding, capacity-building, and management challenges. The project documents reviewed did not discuss project outcomes in terms of state fragility, making it difficult to draw conclusions about its effect on project design and implementation. Interviews focused on the impact of the conflict on programming and did not explore the role of fragility as such.

The pandemic struck during the course of the evaluation, and therefore, the case study also considered the effects of COVID-19 on GEF projects in situations affected by conflict and fragility. COVID-19 emerged as a non-conflict challenge that affected programming and conservation in Mali in several ways. Terrorist groups and other non-state actors took advantage of the pandemic to destabilize governments in Mali and other Sahelian countries that would delay and extend the process of rebuilding livelihoods and peace (UN News, 2020a). Reports indicated how the pandemic fueled intercommunal violence (UN News, 2020b) and a sharp decline in economic growth (World Bank, 2021). Donors responded, albeit with a temporary pause after the 2020 military coup, with a particular focus on building food security and support for early warning, health facilities, and sanitation and hygiene (e.g., USAID, 2020; World Bank, 2020, 2021) The pandemic devastated the tourism sector and led to an increase in poaching and consequent loss of biodiversity (BBC News, 2020; World Bank, 2021).

Conclusions

Conflict-related risks and impacts may require project-specific adjustments and institutional actions to assist projects with planning for and managing conflict. The conflict-related risks and impacts experienced by the projects reviewed were unique to each project, suggesting that conflict management may need to be tailored to the specific conflict contexts in which projects operate. Despite the unique contexts and constraints on projects, interviews with agency staff on the projects reviewed in Mali and the Albertine Rift highlight measures that could better support projects in planning for and managing conflict.

First, developing GEF guidance would aid project leaders in mitigating conflict-related threats to the safety of personnel and communities, according to project staff in both locations. Staff on Mali projects discussed issues faced by projects operating in areas with an active conflict and/or terrorist activity. They noted a lack of guidance from the GEF on where to draw the line on engagement and a lack of clarity regarding how to assess whether projects in active conflict areas faced

risks too great to be managed. Such guidance on engagement would be helpful for projects in the beginning stages to determine feasibility from a security standpoint and avoid project cancellations due to conflict. Staff also explained that projects operating under these conditions are not only concerned with how conflict risks will impact their ability to meet project objectives but also with threats to the safety of project staff and project participants in the community. Staff noted that the GEF largely addresses these threats on a case-by-case basis and emphasized the need for the GEF to provide well-developed guidance.

Staff working on projects in the Albertine Rift expressed a desire for a more formalized incorporation of conflict risk assessment into GEF project design, involving an analysis of conflict dynamics in the project area and requiring mitigation strategies. Similarly, an evaluation consultant on one project expressed desire for GEF projects to have more robust coping mechanisms built in for conflict-related interventions. Another staff member suggested that one way to prepare for conflict-related project risks would be to build in additional costs to better account for insecurity, citing security details for project designers as an example. Mali project staff highlighted the helpful role conflict advisors could play in project planning. Staff noted that projects operating in areas with active conflicts often may underestimate budgetary requirements for the project to operate in a conflict situation and plan for overly ambitious project outcomes given conflict risks, shortcomings that conflict advisors could help address.

Interviews with staff on Mali projects indicated that streamlining institutional requirements for projects would better support the use of adaptive management strategies to manage conflict risks and adjust project operations in areas with active conflict. Project staff emphasized the need for the GEF to have more flexible requirements for its approval of projects that must make operational adjustments and more modest expectations for outcomes when projects change due to conflict situations. This process of requiring grantor approval for changes to projects is typical in environmental project funding, meaning that these findings have broader relevance beyond the GEF context.

Albertine Rift project staff suggested that projects in conflict-affected areas would have greater success if they could go beyond working only with the central government and also seek buy-in and collaboration with provincial and local partners; this would help avoid exacerbating tensions between groups in the project area. An individual involved in the execution of the DRC National Parks project indicated that their largest difficulties with GEF-funded interventions stemmed from the weakness of the national government partner in the DRC.

Overall, building the GEF's institutional capacity to support projects in preparing for and managing conflict-related risks may reduce the likelihood that conflict negatively impacts the attainment of project objectives. Based on the analysis of project outcomes, the conflicts in both African locations negatively impacted project performance on the four GEF core evaluation criteria. The impacts of conflict on project outcomes may be even more pronounced when indirect effects of conflict, like state fragility, are assessed in relation to challenges projects face. The connection between project outcomes and conflict situations was reflected in interviews with agency staff. Although ongoing conflicts like those in Mali and the Albertine Rift are exogenous to GEF-funded projects,

building the GEF's institutional capacity to support projects in integrating conflict-sensitive measures into their design is an important action to improve the likelihood that projects can manage conflict-related risks and achieve their intended outcomes.

Notes

1 This tally excludes dropped or cancelled projects.
2 This tally is based on the GEF project database. It includes only those projects that have no terminal evaluations and do not have a closing date indicated on their profile in the GEF project database.

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7 Asia

Afghanistan and Cambodia

Since its founding in 1992, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) has launched 29 projects in Afghanistan and 81 projects in Cambodia. Considering the environment and conflict linkages and the risks posed by armed conflict, the GEF undertook portfolio-level project reviews to evaluate the extent to which they have taken into account conflict risks and how conflict sensitivity in project design and implementation affects project outcomes. This chapter summarizes the analyses from these reviews.

As in other regions, successful projects often integrated some degree of conflict sensitivity. In Afghanistan, all projects reviewed included some reference to conflict, given the instability of the country's political situation, and the analysis paid close attention to the degree of conflict sensitivity in each project to account for this political volatility.

The analysis of the GEF-supported Afghanistan projects was completed before August 2021, when the U.S. military withdrew the last of its troops from the country, nearly 20 years after first arriving. As such, the discussion of the GEF's Afghanistan projects does not account for recent changes to Afghanistan's context or conflict dynamics. Despite this, and given the country's prolonged history of conflict, assessing the impact of conflict sensitivity in the design of GEF-funded projects in Afghanistan has value for future project planning in locations affected by conflict. The fact that the operating context in Afghanistan has changed so rapidly exemplifies the value of practitioners preparing to operate in similarly sensitive environments.

Regional Background

Conflict in Afghanistan is a longstanding and highly complex situation, crossing multiple armed conflicts, each with its own set of distinct characteristics. Despite its complexity, the severity of the conflicts in Afghanistan is clear. In 2020, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs called Afghanistan "the scene of the deadliest conflict on earth" (2019, p. 4). The human cost of conflict in Afghanistan has been devastating, and it is often referred to collectively as one of the deadliest conflict settings in the world. In 2018 alone, according to a

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report from the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and UNHCR (2018), 3,804 were killed, and 7,189 were injured in conflict-related violence. The conflict in Afghanistan is often seen as a result of the U.S. intervention following the events of September 11, 2001, but the conflict also has roots stretching back at least to the Soviet invasion of 1979. A collection of liberation forces then launched an insurgent campaign with devastating humanitarian consequences; by the mid-1980s, estimates of civilian deaths in Afghanistan had reached 1 million, with millions more injured, internally displaced, or made refugees (Girardet, 1987). These fighters then coalesced to form a fundamentalist political organization known as the Taliban. Before 2021, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the U.N.-recognized government, had difficulty maintaining control over its territory, a weak security apparatus deepening the impacts of the protracted conflict. Negotiations for peace between the Taliban and the U.S. government began in 2019, ending with U.S. and international troop pullout in 2021 and the Taliban takeover of the government. This change in the political regime in Afghanistan halted most international projects, including those of the GEF and its agencies. This analysis focuses on the period before the 2021 takeover by the Taliban.

Violence in Afghanistan continued. As recently as 2020, terrorist bombings were a common occurrence. In 2021, as the U.S. military finalized its withdrawal, the Taliban regained control of the country, ousting the previous regime. In the wake of this change, Afghanistan still faces heightened risks of violent conflict, including from terrorist attacks (Global Conflict Tracker, 2022).

As in Afghanistan, Cambodia's modern history has been profoundly shaped by civil and interstate conflict. From 1967 through 1997, Cambodia experienced civil war and genocide, a return to civil war, and then low-level insurgency. Although Cambodia is several decades removed from large-scale armed conflict, the legacy of conflict has deeply affected its natural environment and environmental management. Environmental degradation and increasing pressures on natural resources in Cambodia are linked to the effects of war, which left behind 500,000 tons of ordnance and contributed to high poverty rates and high dependence on agriculture, forest, and marine resources. Several GEF project documents flagged an increase in small-scale natural resource conflicts throughout the country that threaten project success. Non-conflict factors that have exacerbated these stressors include weak environmental regulation and enforcement, lack of political will and capacity to reform natural resource management, climate change, and migration patterns.

Environmental Background: Afghanistan

The plural nature of conflict in Afghanistan has resulted in highly varied environmental impacts. Some of the armed conflict in the territory has caused devastating environmental damage, such as the Soviet "scorched earth" tactics that deliberately targeted the environment. Soviet armies destroyed 3,000 ancient irrigation canals,

ruining an estimated 106,000 acres of fruit orchards (Girardet, 1987). Eighty percent of Afghanis were dependent upon the agricultural sector for their livelihoods at that time—a distribution that remains largely unchanged today—making the impacts of this strategy disastrous for both livelihoods and the environment (Formoli, 1995; National Public Radio [NPR], 2021b). As the conflict became protracted, more pernicious environmental consequences arose. Land mines, in particular, have wrought serious human and environmental costs on Afghanistan. They were first used by Soviet forces in the early 1980s and later by the Taliban. According to the *Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor* (1999), Afghanistan is one of the most heavily mined nations, and buried munitions currently kill an estimated 10 to 12 people every day. These land mines also leach chemicals into the land, making it unsuitable for agriculture even after the mines themselves are removed. Experts estimate counts of buried land mines in Afghanistan number in the hundreds of thousands.

Decades of war have heavily affected prominent modes of interaction with natural resources. The Soviet invasion caused severe damage to the nation's forests and subsequent efforts to flush out insurgent forces (National Environmental Protection Agency of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 2008). According to the UNEP (2003), coniferous forest cover in eastern Afghan provinces of Nangarhar, Kunar, and Nuristan, the most heavily forested region of the country, dropped by 50 percent between 1978 and 2002, suggesting a strong connection between conflict and forest cover as extended periods of combat required villagers to cut trees for fuel. The illegal timber trade financed conflict and further contributed to the decline of green space, particularly around Kabul (Pikulicka-Wilczewska, 2019). Exploitation of resources by various warring groups has established deep relationships between violent conflict and Afghan natural resources. The Taliban has funded its operation through trade in opium and other natural resources such as timber, talc, and other illegally mined, high-value resources (Felbab-Brown, 2021; Global Witness, 2018; NPR, 2021a; Reese, 2009).

GEF Involvement in Afghanistan

The GEF has supported 29 total projects in Afghanistan, addressing issues ranging from education to conservation and renewable energy. Of these projects, 16 have been exclusive to Afghanistan, while 13 have been part of broader regional or global initiatives. The GEF's most highly funded focal areas in Afghanistan have been biodiversity, land degradation, and climate change. Given Afghanistan's broad shortcomings in governance capacity and overall national fragility, the GEF has focused much of its work there on addressing climate resilience at both the local and national levels. Projects have involved a wide range of stakeholders, including both government and nongovernment actors.

The evaluation team reviewed the total portfolio of projects in Afghanistan to assess conflict sensitivity. Based on projects' outcomes and attention to conflict, the team selected seven projects for in-depth review (see Table 7.1), two of which

Table 7.1 GEF-Funded Projects in Afghanistan Selected for In-Depth Analysis

ID	*Project Title*	*Focal Area(s)*	*Dates*	*Category*
1907	Natural Resources and Poverty Alleviation Project	Biodiversity	2003–2007	1
2130	Restoration, Protection and Sustainable Use of the Sistan Basin	International waters	2008–2010	2
3220	Capacity Building for Sustainable Land Management in Afghanistan	Land degradation	2007–2010	3
4227	Building Adaptive Capacity and Resilience to Climate Change in Afghanistan	Climate change	2010–2018	1
5017	Developing Core Capacity for Decentralized MEA Implementation and Natural Resources Management in Afghanistan	n/a	2014–present	1
5202	Strengthening the Resilience of Rural Livelihood Options for Afghan Communities in Panjshir, Balkh, Uruzgan and Herat Provinces to Manage Climate Change-induced Disaster Risks	Climate change	2014–present	1
9531	Conservation of Snow Leopards and their Critical Ecosystem in Afghanistan	Biodiversity, climate change	2018–present	1

Note: Categories: 1. Addressed conflict dynamics by evaluating risks to the success of project outcomes and discussed mitigation measures to reduce project impact on latent social conflicts; 2. Addressed conflict dynamics only in passing (e.g., providing background context) and did not significantly evaluate risks social and/or violent conflict could pose to project outcomes; did not address mitigation measures to lessen project impact on conflict; 3. Did not substantially address conflict dynamics or risk and received unfavorable terminal evaluation scores.

included project evaluation scores. The projects were selected to provide representation in three categories:

1. projects that addressed conflict dynamics by evaluating risks they posed to the success of project outcomes and discussed mitigation measures that could be taken to reduce the impact of projects on latent social conflicts;
2. projects that addressed conflict dynamics but did so only in passing (via background context) and did not significantly evaluate risks social and/or violent conflict could pose to project outcomes and projects that did not address mitigation measures that could be taken to lessen the impact of the project on surrounding conflict; and

3. projects that did not substantially address conflict dynamics or risk and received unfavorable terminal evaluation scores.

Environmental Background: Cambodia

Cambodia's prolonged history of conflict affects its natural environment today, posing challenges to natural resource management and presenting risks of conflict. A major source of environmental degradation is ordnance left by the U.S. military, which targeted airstrikes to damage agricultural productivity and installed land mines around gemstone deposits (Kohama et al., 2020). GEF documents from projects in Cambodia, including the project Developing an Integrated Protected Area System for the Cardamom Mountains, note that the damage to agricultural lands from wartime ordnance now drives deforestation in Cambodia because "much of the farmland has been mined, forcing the settlers to encroach on virgin forest" (GEF, 2001d, p. 8). The 6–9 million remaining land mines planted during the conflict obstruct biodiversity conservation by hindering data collection, conservation activities, and operations to prevent illegal logging and hunting (GEF, 1998).

Conflict also contributed to environmental degradation by incentivizing both the Khmer Rouge and its opponents to fund their operations using resources such as timber and gemstones (Global Witness, 1995a). A 1995 Global Witness report on Cambodia observed, "The conflict and corruption are funded by the profits of environmental exploitation; the environmental degradation exacerbates and is a direct cause of poverty and famine" (Global Witness, 1995b). Deforestation for timber trading contributed to severe flooding and drought, resulting in "increasingly severe failures of the rice harvest, creating widespread food shortages in Cambodia" (Global Witness, 1995a). The siltation and loss of topsoil resulting from gem mining also contributed to widespread food insecurity and poverty (Global Witness, 1995a). The post-conflict prevalence of poverty is a major environmental threat in Cambodia, noted in the documentation for all of the conservation projects. GEF documents from the Tonle Sap Conservation Project indicate that poverty drives resource overuse because people have "no option but to clear forests for agricultural land and exploit natural resources" (GEF, 2004a, p. 47). The population strain on natural resources is significant because nearly 80 percent of Cambodians live in rural areas, and 65 percent rely on agriculture, fisheries, and forestry for their livelihoods (USAID, 2022).

Several GEF projects in Cambodia also identified positive environmental outcomes from war. Armed groups frequently militarized land and blocked access to use forests to shelter and organize. This helped conserve biodiversity in some regions and deterred land conversion for agricultural use. Documents from the Tonle Sap project link high biodiversity conservation in some regions to the civil war and other political instability that "precluded large-scale industrial and agricultural development" until the 1990s (GEF, 1998, p. 1).

However, these trends reversed rapidly post conflict because widespread poverty and poor land management led to short-term overexploitation of natural resources. According to documents from the project Establishing Conservation Areas Landscape Management (CALM) in the Northern Plains, "25 years of conflict has disrupted traditional forms of land management and encouraged a prevailing attitude of insecurity, promoting a short-term approach to resource extraction based upon competition with other individuals or groups" (GEF, 2004b, p. 55). The project documents identified the military in particular as a threat to biodiversity, noting that "since [it is] armed, its capacity for corruption and illegal activities is considerably greater" (GEF, 2004b, p. 55). Military-led or -aided natural resource exploitation is common, particularly for timber, charcoal, and rubber (Weingart & Kirk, 2012; Humphrey, 2020). Civilian, military, and private sector pressures on natural resources have destroyed nearly 2.2 million hectares of tree cover from 2001 to 2018, and the annual rate of loss is increasing by almost 300 percent (Global Forest Watch, 2019).

Increasing pressures on natural resources have made ownership disputes over land and natural resources prevalent. Critical water resources, such as the Mekong River and the South China Sea, have been the subject of domestic conflicts around overfishing and fishing titles and international tensions caused by upstream hydropower development. The problem is exacerbated by a lack of clear regulation of natural resources and inconsistent enforcement. Part of the confusion over land ownership stems from the Khmer Rouge regime's destruction of all property records in the 1970s (Weingart & Kirk, 2012). Ambiguous land policies, overlapping titles, and weak implementation of laws have increased land disputes between citizens and land concessionaires. In 2014, more than 10,000 Cambodian families were involved in land disputes (Asia Foundation, 2017). Complaints about land grabbing and other land rights violations are frequent (Asia Foundation, 2017; Weingart & Kirk, 2012).

GEF Involvement in Cambodia

The 81 projects funded by the GEF in Cambodia have often dealt with social conflicts over natural resource use and conflicts of interest between project goals and the goals of national government officials, local staff, and the population. Evaluating the conflict sensitivity of GEF projects in Cambodia entails looking at the link between environment and conflict, the risks posed by the history of conflict, and the increasing competition for natural resources. This can help determine how conflict sensitivity in project design and implementation affected project outcomes.

From the portfolio of GEF-funded projects in Cambodia and using the methodology described in Chapter 2, seven projects were identified for in-depth analysis (see Table 7.2). The projects were evaluated based on their conflict sensitivity and success and selection aimed to optimize diversity in conflict categories, project results, and project focal areas.

Table 7.2 GEF-Funded Cambodia Projects Studied in Depth

Project ID	*Title*	*Focal Area(s)*	*Dates*	*Conflict Risk Acknowledged*	*Category*
615	Mekong River Basin Water Utilization Project	International waters	1999–2009	No	4
621	Biodiversity and Protected Area Management Pilot Project for the Virachey National Park	Biodiversity	1999–2008	Yes	2
885	Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand	International waters	2001–2014	Yes	1
1043	Establishing Conservation Areas Landscape Management (CALM) in the Northern Plains	Biodiversity	2004–2014	Yes	1
1086	Developing an Integrated Protected Area System for the Cardamom Mountains	Biodiversity	2002–2008	Yes	1
1183	Tonle Sap Conservation Project	Biodiversity	2004–2012	Yes	1
9103	Building Adaptive Capacity through the Scaling-up of Renewable Energy Technologies in Rural Cambodia (S-RET)	Climate change	2015–present	Yes	n/a (project in progress)

Note: Categories: 1. Addressed conflict dynamics by evaluating risks to the success of project outcomes and received favorable evaluations. 2. Addressed conflict dynamics by evaluating risks to the success of project outcomes but received unfavorable evaluations. 3. Did not substantially address conflict dynamics or risk and received favorable terminal evaluation scores. 4. Did not substantially address conflict dynamics or risk and received unfavorable terminal evaluation scores.

The selected projects all took place after December 1999 and focused primarily on biodiversity conservation, transboundary water management, and renewable energy technologies. Broad themes across these projects include biodiversity conservation through local capacity-building and alternative livelihood programs to promote national policies and institutional practices that support conservation and to strengthen international coordination on sustainable water use.

Projects aligned into four categories:

1. projects that addressed conflict dynamics by evaluating risks they posed to the success of project outcomes and received favorable evaluations;
2. projects that addressed conflict dynamics by evaluating risks they posed to the success of project outcomes but received unfavorable evaluations;
3. projects that did not substantially address conflict dynamics or risk and received favorable terminal evaluation scores; and
4. projects that did not substantially address conflict dynamics or risk and received unfavorable terminal evaluation scores.

No conflict-insensitive project received high evaluation scores, meaning no projects fall into Category 3 nor did the conflict-sensitive project that addressed conflict risks only minimally. All favorably evaluated projects were conflict sensitive and addressed conflict substantively.

Findings

This in-depth analysis of GEF-supported interventions in Afghanistan and Cambodia sought to provide a qualitative assessment of the ways GEF activity in Asia was suited to implementation in a conflict-affected setting. In-depth analysis of each Cambodia project was conducted using project documents, supplemented by interviews with agency staff. With these results, the relationship between a project's management of conflict risk and the GEF evaluation criteria effectiveness (project outcomes) and sustainability (GEF IEO, 2019) was also assessed. However, with final evaluations available for only two of the selected Afghanistan projects, that analysis instead focused purely on project design and the extent to which a project addressed risk, discussed potential mitigation strategies, and assessed how project success is dependent on conflict preparedness. A blended analysis was conducted of the results of both the project document word counts and in-depth assessments to assess whether GEF-supported projects were designed in a conflict-sensitive manner. In the GEF Afghanistan portfolio, conflict is always mentioned in project documents, at least in passing, if not more substantively discussed. In a context where ongoing violent conflict is central to the operating context for international organizations, passing mentions do not necessarily qualify a project as conflict sensitive. The blended analysis also made clear that the count of conflict-related terms was not ultimately predictive of a project's conflict sensitivity.

Six of the seven Cambodia projects acknowledged, to varying degrees, the country's history of conflict. The amount of attention paid to conflict may have been influenced by the nature and purpose of the particular project. For example, Building Adaptive Capacity through the Scaling-up of Renewable Energy Technologies in Rural Cambodia (S-RET) is regionally focused and began later than the others, so is further removed from past conflict. In contrast, conflict was directly

relevant in Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand, which was in effect from 2002–2014 and concerned the disputed international waters of the South China Sea.

Of the seven GEF-funded projects in Cambodia reviewed in depth, most received favorable scores for effectiveness and unfavorable scores for sustainability. Projects generally acknowledged and managed small-scale natural resource conflicts and conflicting interests at the local level with moderate success during the projects, but these resurfaced once projects ended, absent continuous government support and institutionalization. The projects' evaluations, therefore, primarily attributed negative project outcomes to non-conflict factors, such as lack of institutional and financial support from the government and minimal state or local capacity. These factors are linked significantly to Cambodia's history of conflict and the long-term damage of war. Addressing these legacies of conflict may help future projects managing conflicting interests of key stakeholders and project goals.

Concerning the studied projects in Afghanistan, a few key patterns emerged. Risk was the most common framing for a substantive discussion about violent conflict, and all projects offered such a discussion to varying degrees of comprehensiveness. For the less conflict-sensitive projects (Category 2/Category 3), these analyses were almost completely limited to conflict as a security consideration. For example, the project on capacity building for sustainable land management recognized that decades of conflict have altered a traditionally agrarian way of life in many Afghan communities, caused major environmental degradation, and diminished natural resource management practices. However, project documents did not make clear the degree to which these conflicts were escalating and whether the security situation in target geographies was ever directly threatened by resource-motivated armed conflict (GEF, 2007b). Another project, Restoration, Protection and Sustainable Use of the Sistan Basin, did not link identified threats explicitly to conflict, indicating that ongoing violent conflict in Afghanistan was not intimately tied to the immediate need for the project nor to its anticipated outcomes. Despite inaccurately characterizing Afghanistan as a "post-conflict" country, the project documents did clearly lay out the risks involved in project implementation, generally related to the remote location, with mitigation measures more typically attributed to addressing conflict, such as firm adherence to security guidelines and recruiting regional staff (GEF, 2008).

In contrast, the Afghanistan Category 1 projects encapsulated a wider range of discussions of conflict as risk. All projects in this category proposed possible mitigation strategies, although not all those proposed actions were comprehensive, and took conflict into account only for its physical danger and implementation inconvenience (e.g., conflict avoidance through target site selection). Alongside discussions of risk, all of these projects at least noted Afghanistan's fragile sociopolitical operating environment and history of armed conflict. Some projects identified this legacy of violent unrest as a key factor in the environmental damage that the project sought to address, while others provided a much more cursory overview. The project Building Adaptive Capacity and Resilience to Climate Change

in Afghanistan noted, "poverty, years of conflict and inadequate policies at local, regional and national levels have resulted in unsustainable natural resource use and severe environmental degradation" (GEF, 2010, p. 5). The project to support snow leopards and their habitat in Afghanistan recognized that "ongoing conflict, increasing human populations, internal human displacement and climate change are putting pressure on biodiversity and natural resources" in the region (GEF, 2018, p. 1). Documents for the project Developing Core Capacity for Decentralized MEA Implementation and Natural Resources Management in Afghanistan identified physical destruction of the landscape and decreased international investment under the Taliban as the causes of "little progress in developing or maintaining the physical capital of the country" (GEF, 2014, p. 7).

Conflict-sensitive design was integral to the success of the studied GEF projects in Cambodia. The project that received a low conflict-sensitivity score, the Mekong River Basin Water Utilization Project, received low evaluation scores, as did the Biodiversity and Protected Area Management Pilot Project for the Virachey National Park, which only addressed conflict risks minimally. All favorably evaluated projects addressed conflict substantively in their project documents.

In the project addressing environmental degradation in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand, the design acknowledged that the region's high political tension had "unresolved territorial disputes that potentially could disrupt the smooth operation of this project" but intended to focus on areas of mutual interest and avoid topics that were "not dependent on resolution of the unresolved issues" (GEF, 2001b, p. 10). The project Establishing Conservation Areas Landscape Management (CALM) in the Northern Plains linked biodiversity threats to the country's history of conflict, as did the project to develop an integrated protected area system for the Cardamom Mountains. The CALM project sought to address conflict by starting with "issues where there is considerable agreement between authorities and villages" to build trust and then moving to more contentious issues (GEF, 2004b, p. 7). Similarly, design of the Tonle Sap Conservation Project reflected high awareness of conflicts that threatened biodiversity, particularly "between subsistence (family-scale fishers) and large-scale users (fishing lots)" and between local authorities and villagers (GEF, 2003b, p. 39). The ongoing project that focuses on renewable energy technologies links climate adaptation to preventing future resource conflicts. With "increasing degradation and loss of forests," communities' livelihoods will be threatened, creating "potential for increased competition for forest resources, and the possibility of conflict between different forest users" (GEF, 2016, p. 74).

Several of the analyzed Afghanistan projects stood out for their nuanced discussions of conflict, the most robust of which were those that considered not only how conflict may affect project implementation, but the inverse as well: how project implementation may influence local conflict dynamics. The Natural Resources and Poverty Alleviation Project addressed how the project could potentially create conflict between social groups. Such a consideration enables an agency to pre-mitigate factors that may compromise its ability to effectively fulfill obligations related to the principle of "do no harm." This project's design provided clear approaches to mitigate any reluctance to accept conservation efforts among community groups by

keeping local and regional authorities informed and using direct consultations and workshops to continuously ensure community buy-in and directly address issues as they arose (GEF, 2003a). In a project to strengthen the resilience of rural livelihood options to manage disaster risks induced by climate change, the project design recognized that international interventions encouraging livelihood changes, even to promote community resilience and sustainability, can inflame tensions related to cultural variety surrounding traditional livelihoods. Also, the mitigation mechanism this project proposed was one of the most conflict sensitive presented in any of the GEF Afghanistan projects: "work[ing] closely with customary dispute resolution mechanisms to resolve any conflicts" and "ensur[ing] an inclusive, participatory approach involving all key stakeholders and an equitable distribution of benefits" (GEF, 2012c, p. 9).

The emphasis on local engagement was also a hallmark of the more successful projects in Cambodia. These projects tended to have positive outcomes with conflict management locally but to a lesser degree with the national government. For example, the design of the project in the Cardamom Mountains paid significant attention to the involvement and participation of stakeholders at all levels, many with conflicting interests, and engaged local communities in the protection, management, and sustainable use of natural resources. It supported existing local efforts on conflict resolution in protected areas (GEF, 2001c, pp. 20–21). However, its biggest challenges were the divergent interests of government officials at all levels, manifesting in both explicit violations of conservation goals and rules and in a lack of coordination (GEF, 2007a). The Tonle Sap conservation project achieved significant success in "boundary demarcation, management plans, trained staff, monitoring systems, livelihoods development, education curriculum and teacher training, and community awareness" (GEF, 2011, p. iv). Despite this, the project's sustainability was rated unsatisfactory because the independent continuation of its monitoring and management practices was "highly dependent on international NGO and donor funding" and largely discontinued after the project ended (GEF, 2011, p. 8). Although the CALM project was successful in developing land management plans, incentivizing biodiversity conservation, and building the capacity of government officials, its sustainability was rated unlikely because of continuing conflicts of interest with the military, which continued to be among the greatest threats to the project's success (GEF, 2004b, p. 9, 2012b, p. vi).

The Afghanistan projects' innovative mitigation strategies for conflict risks ranged from working in close coordination with or directly through local actors, using local conflict resolution mechanisms to mitigate potential conflict related to the program, and community-driven design and implementation processes, among others. Although such discussion in project documents was often relatively brief, it was present and displays the institutional analysis of potential alternatives to security-centered conflict-mitigation strategies. The project to conserve snow leopards and their critical ecosystem emphasized the importance of security alignment with local security forces (GEF, 2018, p. 9531), hiring local people who have conflict experience as often as possible, and acquiring proper security resources such as armored vehicles. The project Building Adaptive Capacity and

Resilience to Climate Change in Afghanistan was unique among projects in the country for its risk mitigation chart that presented conflict both as a logistical-security consideration and a conflict-sensitivity consideration. Conflict-sensitive mitigation tools, such as the "development of a common capacity-building and conflict-management approach to work with local stakeholders," aimed to address potential negative impacts of water scarcity (GEF, 2010, p. 18). The project's approach to mitigating potential conflict showed that the GEF is prepared to use its mandate of environmental protection as an opportunity to encourage collaborative and mutually beneficial approaches to conflict at the community level. The risk matrix offers community-based solutions to the difficulties posed by cultural barriers to accepting resiliency techniques presented by the GEF, a possible flash point for conflict.

The studied projects in Cambodia generally acknowledged small-scale natural resource conflicts and conflicting interests at the local level and managed them with moderate success. Project design elements that proved helpful in mitigating local conflicts were introducing incentive schemes, training local officials and residents, and providing the technology to support sustainability goals. The CALM project included incentive schemes to reward biodiversity conservation, linking payments "directly to the conservation outcomes," rather than to activities indirectly thought to benefit conservation (GEF, 2012b, p. 33). A project staff member expressed support for continuing these incentive programs, such as ecotourism for revenue, economic disincentives for rule-breaking, and the Ibis Rice Program, which compensated farmers for not turning critical wetlands into rice fields (GEF, 2012b). The Cardamom Mountains project stressed "a participatory process to establish village conservation stewardship agreements and village development plans" using microfinancing, and created financial incentives "for monitoring and detecting wildlife and forest crime" (GEF, 2001d, pp. 16–18). Incentives were also important in the Tonle Sap conservation project, through "equipping, training, and providing salaries and operating funds" for patrols and other staff to align with conservation goals (GEF, 2011, p. 8). The project addressing the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand developed regional data-management systems and created national and regional working groups on relevant legislation (GEF, 2001a, 2001b). In contrast, the Biodiversity and Protected Area Management Pilot Project for the Virachey National Park was minimally conflict sensitive and met with mixed success, although its risk management strategies included workshops to develop consensus and commitment; local staff training, equipment, and financial support; public awareness campaigns; and working through existing village development organizations (GEF, 1999).

Despite success at local levels, the Cambodia projects often failed to secure local successes in the longer term because of a lack of financial sustainability and political will. The Cardamom Mountains project's implementation and sustainability were negatively affected by a "weak political commitment toward protected areas because they are not perceived as productive and profitable investments by the government" (GEF, 2007a, p. 47). In the unsuccessful Mekong River Basin water utilization project, evaluators noted that the project was "based on the unrealistic

premise that a fully scientific approach could replace case-by-case negotiations" (GEF, 2012a, p. x).

Conclusions

Evaluations of Cambodia projects primarily attributed negative outcomes to non-conflict factors, such as a lack of political will and financial support and insufficient state or local capacity, which often included rivalry and lack of coordination among ministries. Projects also often overestimated government commitment and readiness to adopt new and innovative approaches and neglected how the history of interstate conflict in Cambodia could shape interpersonal and interorganizational interactions.

A high-stakes area for future conflict-sensitive project design will be finding ways around these high-level conflicts of interest, perhaps using strategies such as more participatory processes and incentive-based approaches that worked at the local level, along with greater sensitivity to the history of foreign intervention. Managing these conflicts will improve both the effectiveness and sustainability of projects and, ultimately, the lives of the people and the environment of Cambodia.

For GEF-supported projects in Afghanistan, conflict sensitivity is characterized by the consistency of top-line content, paired with notable variability in the depth of discussion. Although available data for the Afghanistan situation limited the ability to draw conclusive arguments as to the correlative or causal relationship between conflict-sensitive project design and project success, the analysis clarified several top-line findings.

First, GEF projects in Afghanistan are not conflict insensitive. The magnitude and consistency of their sensitivity, however, require close examination, with the GEF Afghanistan portfolio displaying a broad range of conflict sensitivity across projects. Although the uniqueness of each project in a variety of essential qualities (goal, objectives, expected outcomes, operating environment, etc.) accounts for some variation in the importance placed on conflict dynamics in a project narrative, it does not itself explain the high degree of variability across GEF Afghanistan projects. Afghanistan is heavily affected by violent conflict, and while variability is to be expected, severely divergent approaches to conflict sensitivity, as found among these projects, indicate a need for a unified approach. Last, this analysis demonstrated the need to go beyond risk analysis. Even simply reframing discussions in a context outside of risk would allow the GEF to consider the potential for project activities to substantively and productively engage with the realities of conflict in conflict-affected countries.

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8 Latin America

Colombia

To examine the impact of conflict and fragility on environmental projects supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in Latin America, the GEF Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) undertook an in-depth analysis of projects in Colombia.

The Colombian conflict has resulted in 220,000 deaths and 7 million internally displaced people—the highest number in the world—since the mid-20th century (Miroff, 2016). With roots in a decade of political turmoil known as *La Violencia* (1948–1958), the conflict involves several militant groups on both sides of the political spectrum. The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) formed in 1964 and peaked in the late 1990s with close to 20,000 largely rural fighters motivated by a communist ideology against landholding elites. Adopting guerrilla warfare, FARC launched kidnappings, bombings, and other attacks on a quarter of the country's terrain. (Miroff, 2016). The National Liberation Army (ELN) has 3,000 fighters in remote areas of the northwest—students, Catholic radicals, and left-wing intellectuals with Marxist views like those of FARC against privatizing land resources (Colombia Reports, 2019). Other groups include the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), organized by right-wing elites in the 1980s and disbanded in 2006, and the splintered but pervasive BACRIM (criminal gangs), which contribute to the prolongment of the Colombian conflict (Steffens, 2018). Following the 2016 peace agreement between FARC and the Colombian government under President Juan Manuel Santos, FARC began to demobilize (Colombia Reports, 2019). However, Colombia remains plagued by conflict in the wake of the group's disbandment, including skirmishes among BACRIM gangs and between the government and existing organizations, notably ELN, that continue to carry out illegal drug and mining operations.

Environmental Background

The environmental scope of conflict in Colombia harmed primarily rural regions. The country is the second most biodiverse in the world, supporting ecosystems ranging from Amazonian rainforests to savannas and mountain highlands, and is home to 10 percent of the world's species (McDermott, 2015). The complicated dynamics and conflicting priorities of militant groups during periods of violence have damaged the country's natural biodiversity. Since the 1990s, FARC financed

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much of its military operations by producing up to 70 percent of Colombia's coca, mostly for illegal drug trafficking (McDermott, 2015). The departments of Nariño, Norte de Santander, Putumayo, and Antioquia have supplied up to 90 percent of the world's cocaine (McDermott, 2015). In 2014, the U.S. government estimated that 112 thousand hectares had been converted to coca production in Colombia (McDermott, 2015). The U.S. State Department funded aerial fumigation campaigns in conjunction with the Colombian government to reduce illegal coca fields, but under former President Santos (2010–2018), the government halted the program in 2015, citing environmental and human health risks (Neuman, 2015). In addition to the narcotics trade, illegal mining of gold, emeralds, and coltan has reduced forest cover and compromised the quality of environmental resources, including water (Columbia University, 2018). Land mines have killed or injured more than 11,000 people throughout the country, second only to Afghanistan (Miroff, 2016). Following the 2016 peace agreement, scientists highlighted the need to improve environmental monitoring, institute science-based policy making, and implement strategies to protect natural resources, biodiversity, and climate-sensitive ecosystems (Columbia University, 2018).

The return to peace in Colombia brought its own environmental risks and challenges in long-neglected rural areas. In the year after the peace agreement, the government reported a 44 percent increase in the country's rate of deforestation (Reardon, 2018). In 2018, the Instituto de Hidrología, Meterología y Estudios Ambientales (IDEAM) recorded deforestation of 489,269 acres. Although lower than in 2017, that figure is still alarmingly high (Volckhausen, 2019). According to Global Forest Watch, a forest-monitoring platform, Colombia lost primary forests in 2018 at a rate 60 percent higher than in 2016 (Volckhausen, 2019). Most deforestation is in the Amazon basin, with the highest proportion (40 percent) in the department of Caquetá (Steffens, 2018). Today, in the absence of adequate funding and staffing in Colombia's environmental regulatory agencies, cattle ranchers have expanded into forested regions (Steffens, 2018). During the conflict, FARC published "cohabitation manuals" that set rough environmental guidelines, including limits on hunting and fishing and the amount of forest rural farmers could clear each year. FARC guerrilla activities, which drove mass human migration to cities during the conflict, may have unintentionally preserved 51,000 plants and animals (Columbia University, 2018). However, dissident FARC members may still be receiving extortion payments to purchase land for agriculture in the Amazon. These activities combined with coca cultivation, illegal mining, timber harvesting, illegal road construction, and forest burning continue to degrade native forests (Volckhausen, 2019). Although the country's biodiversity remains at risk, other peacetime studies have shown reasons for hope. For example, new species have been discovered in the forested areas of Medellín (Reardon, 2018).

GEF Involvement in Colombia

The GEF has funded 110 projects in Colombia to date, addressing issues from biodiversity loss to climate change. Many projects are regional, involving neighboring states in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 20 projects were global.

In Colombia, multicountry projects have focused on the challenges of conservation and opportunities for environmental management in diverse ecosystems, such as the Amazon rainforests, coastal and river ecosystems, the Andes Mountains, and urban environments. They have covered a range of sectors and stakeholders, from cattle ranching and coffee production to national strategies for climate change mitigation and toxic chemicals management, as well as international governance mechanisms to manage aquatic and other critical ecosystems. Some 40 percent of country-specific and regional projects (55) have addressed biodiversity issues, such as conservation of forests and crops. Another 29 projects addressed climate change, including initiatives on urban transportation and industrial energy efficiency. Of the GEF projects in Colombia, 89 full-size and 33 medium-size projects involved multilateral stakeholders and national government participation. To date, 46 projects have been completed or closed; 45 are still being implemented.

Using the methodology described in Chapter 2, ten projects in Colombia were selected for deep-dive analysis based on quantitative results from word searches for conflict-related terms and evaluation scores. The projects were then screened for relevance to the Colombian armed conflict and for GEF focal area representation. Table 8.1 lists the projects selected and the categories into which they fit. Few of the projects fell into the second or third categories; most substantially addressed conflict and received favorable evaluation scores.

Table 8.1 Colombia Projects Analyzed in Depth

ID	*Project Title*	*Focal Area*	*Project Dates*	*Category*
773	Caribbean archipelago biosphere reserve: regional marine protected area system	Biodiversity	2000–2005	1
774	Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the Andes region	Biodiversity	2001–2007	3
794	Catalyzing conservation action in Latin America: Identifying priority sites and best management	Biodiversity	2000–2003	2
947	Integrated silvo-pastoral approaches to ecosystem management	Land degradation	2002–2008	1
1020	Conservation and sustainable development of the Matavén Forest	Biodiversity	1999–2005	1
2019	Integrated National Adaptation Plan: high mountain ecosystems, Colombia's Caribbean insular areas and human health	Climate change	2006–2011	1

(*Continued*)

Table 8.1 (Continued)

ID	*Project Title*	*Focal Area*	*Project Dates*	*Category*
2551 and 3886	Colombian National Protected Areas Conservation Trust Fund and Additional financing for sustainability of Macizo Regional Protected Area System	Biodiversity	2006–2015 2011–2014	1
9441	Contributing to the integrated management of biodiversity of the Pacific region of Colombia to build peace	Biodiversity, land degradation	2019–present	4
9578	Sustainable low-carbon development in Colombia's Orinoquia Region	Biodiversity	2019–present	4
9663	Connectivity and biodiversity conservation in the Colombian Amazon	Biodiversity, climate change, land degradation	2017–present	4

Note: Categories: 1. substantial conflict sensitivity and favorable evaluation scores; 2. limited conflict sensitivity and unfavorable evaluation scores; 3. substantial conflict sensitivity and unfavorable evaluation scores; and 4. ongoing projects that began after the 2016 peace accords, noting the peace agreement directly, and seek to align their objectives with government and UN peacebuilding policies.

Results

GEF projects selected for this in-depth review addressed diverse ecosystems and regions, from Colombia's Andes Mountains to the Amazon region to marine protected areas. Most focused on improving environmental outcomes for rural and indigenous populations, rather than urban areas. These projects primarily occurred from 2000–2010. Some were completed recently and three are ongoing. Analysis of the projects used the GEF evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and likelihood of sustainability.

Most evaluated projects received favorable overall ratings, meaning they directly and indirectly benefited local and global environments and human populations. Most benefits accrued to highly biodiverse regions of Colombia, especially for mostly rural populations. One such project supported the creation of one of the largest marine protected areas in the Caribbean archipelago, reducing conflicts between stakeholders such as indigenous and artisanal fishermen competing for marine resources with industrial and tourism sectors (GEF IEO, 2008a). This highly participatory project is an example of successful accomplishment of project objectives bringing about environmental, economic, and social benefits for involved populations. The project considered indirect pressures associated with the national conflict.

Of the few projects that received an unfavorable evaluation, Catalyzing Conservation Action in Latin America: Identifying Priority Sites and Best Management (GEF IEO, 2006a) failed to achieve a clear impact on national policy making, even though it generated biodiversity information across Latin America (GEF IEO, 2006b). Limited awareness of local contexts, such as conflict dynamics in Colombia's Chocó region, compounded by a lack of funding and of coordination between national agencies may have contributed to the results.

Relevance

A project's relevance refers to "the extent to which the intervention design and intended results were consistent with local and national environmental priorities and policies and to the GEF's strategic priorities and objectives, and remained suited to the conditions of the context, over time" (GEF IEO, 2019, p. 13).

Most GEF projects in Colombia, including those selected for in-depth review, received favorable scores for relevance to national and international policy frameworks. A project on conservation in Colombia's eastern Matavén Forest was rated highly satisfactory for relevance, with a focus on creation of an indigenous protected area in the central Matavén Forest that aligned with Colombia's National Biodiversity Policy, Strategy, and Action Plan under the Convention on Biological Diversity (GEF IEO, 2006b). The government also actively supported indigenous natural parks following international congresses. The project's implementing NGO, Fundación Etnollano, had long worked to integrate indigenous livelihoods and environmental conservation, and this project was part of that effort. The project not only aligned with national policies but also with governmental and nongovernmental groups' actions to protect the environment. Sensitivity to future risks of encroaching activities, particularly from ongoing conflict, motivated project design (GEF, 2000). The project documents specifically acknowledged that the project team expected "sporadic and temporary deteriorations" (GEF, 2000, p. 25) due to social conflict in the region and created a conflict resolution mechanism to limit stoppages.

One of the interviewed project staff said that friction between the national park authorities and indigenous people is common because "indigenous people believe that with the establishment of the national park, the community loses governance of the land." In evaluating the project, another participant affirmed that while the project "was not so successful in livelihoods, it hugely expanded the size of the Amazon frontier," enhancing biodiversity conservation in accordance with Colombia's National Biodiversity Policy. Other GEF projects aligned similarly with Colombian government policies on biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and sustainable development.

Effectiveness

The effectiveness of a project is the extent to which it has achieved its given objectives or the likelihood that they will be achieved (GEF IEO, 2019).

The projects reviewed are representative of the larger Colombia portfolio in that they are mainly aligned with GEF objectives to enhance biodiversity conservation in the country and Latin America more broadly. Selected projects also addressed issues of land degradation and climate change. Most of the projects that received effectiveness ratings had positive environmental effects, with only two lagging on short- and long-term effectiveness. A positive example is the project on silvo-pastoral agricultural systems in rural communities of Colombia, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica that had positive environmental and social outcomes. Project staff said that they did not consider conflict sensitivity in the project's design, instead relying on consultations with local NGOs familiar with the territory and the situation. This project was effectively scaled up to a national-level program, achieving local benefits, such as sustainable production and resource quality, and global environmental benefits, including biodiversity conservation and carbon sequestration (GEF, 2002).

In contrast, effectiveness was compromised in a project focused on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the Andes region, owing mostly to a lack of leadership. The Alexander von Humboldt Institute, which, as a scientific institution, had limited leverage with government bodies, failed to engage key decision makers and failed to secure follow-on funding (GEF, 2001; GEF IEO, 2008b). Project staff reported that the project design did not fully consider the situation on the ground and the staff could not approach certain areas because of the strong presence of guerrilla forces. At the time, the Humboldt Institute was more concerned with biodiversity than livelihoods, yielding weaker results for the development component of the project.

Efficiency

The efficiency of a project refers to the extent to which the project "achieved value for resources, by converting inputs (funds, personnel, expertise, equipment, etc.) to results in the timeliest and least costly way possible, compared to the alternatives" (GEF IEO, 2019, p. 13).

Several projects in Colombia showed mixed results for efficiency in use of GEF funding. A pair of projects dealt explicitly with creating a national endowment fund to support conservation projects and were rated highly satisfactory (GEF IEO, 2015a, 2015b). Their success relied on Patrimonio Natural Colombia's sound financial management by its experienced and adequate staff. Assessments calculated high benefit-to-cost ratios for implementation of the projects overall. In contrast, the project on catalyzing conservation action, which received generally unfavorable evaluation scores, was rated moderately unsatisfactory for efficiency. GEF funding of the project took longer than expected, and delays cascaded due to participants' lack of coordination, which lowered administrative performance. The project also allocated insufficient funding for travel, technical expenses, and the dissemination strategy, affecting overall results (GEF Independent Evaluation Office, 2006a). In general, projects that were successful in effectiveness, impact, and sustainability were more likely to be rated higher in efficiency.

Sustainability

The sustainability of a project refers to "continuation/likely continuation of positive effects from the intervention after it has come to an end, and its potential for scale-up and/or replication" (GEF IEO, 2019, p. 13). Sustainability is evaluated along four dimensions: financial, sociopolitical, institutional, and environmental.

Projects rated successful in other evaluation criteria generally fared well in sustainability. One project began as a pilot, introducing silvo-pastoral agricultural approaches in certain areas, and was scaled up to a national-level program in the National Development Plan of Colombia (GEF, 2002). Other projects supported the creation of institutions and protected areas that led to increased resilience of local ecosystems and populations, supporting greater efforts in conservation. One of these, Conservation and Sustainable Development of the Matavén Forest, created the indigenous association ACATISEMA, which continues to guarantee local participation in decision making, safeguarding natural resources and local livelihoods against encroachment by conflict activities such as drugs production (GEF Independent Evaluation Office, 2006b). Although the pair of projects focused on the Macizo Regional Protected Area System received satisfactory ratings for financial sustainability, the evaluation noted that since the "peace process has still not been completed in Colombia . . . political issues therefore remain a concern" (GEF IEO, 2015b, p. 6). By contrast, the project on catalyzing conservation action performed unsatisfactorily for sociopolitical and institutional sustainability because it was not endorsed by national entities, local NGOs, and regional agencies and did not sufficiently disseminate information it produced to be used in policy design (GEF Independent Evaluation Office, 2006a). The project comprising pilot activities in climate change adaptation across several sectors and regions in Colombia had high cost-benefit analyses but did not create the financial resources to sustain activities after project closure, affecting its sustainability (GEF IEO, 2012).

Two completed projects stand out as sustainable catalysts for peace. The evaluation of the Caribbean Archipelago Biosphere Reserve project noted that the creation of a marine protected area and the development of a cooperative to manage sea resources between artisanal and industrial fishing reduced conflict in the years following project end (GEF IEO, 2008a). Another project established a prime example of a community-led conservation area and is now being replicated by other countries and indigenous organizations that have visited project sites after closure, increasing overall confidence in indigenous land governance (GEF Independent Evaluation Office, 2006b). A current project applies biodiversity conservation approaches to peacebuilding in a region prone to environmentally unsustainable interventions. As its project information form stated, it seeks to be a catalyst for long-term sustainability in mainstreaming biodiversity in peacebuilding (GEF, 2016).

Favorable evaluation ratings in the GEF Colombia portfolio reflected more effective, efficient, impactful, and sustainable results. The selected projects mostly included substantial mentions of conflict in design, implementation, and evaluation. These results could have correlated with favorable project ratings. Nevertheless, the correlation between these favorable evaluations and high conflict sensitivity, typical of projects selected for this deep-dive profile, is not conclusive.

Conflict Sensitivity

In terms of strategies for conflict sensitivity, most projects selected for this in-depth analysis acknowledged instances of conflict, either nationwide or in implementation areas. For example, one project, approved in 2006, described Colombia as a country under strong social conflict yet identified the opportunity to combine environmental and social goals through biodiversity conservation and sustainable use projects (GEF, 2006a). Overall, most projects identified the conflict dynamics as an eventual risk to project implementation. For example, two projects, one in the Andes and one in Matavén Forest, identified the conflict as a "significant" risk to project implementation (GEF, 2000, 2001). A third project was more specific, noting the risk that conflict would affect disease transmission rates in the health sector (GEF, 2006b). Most of the projects acknowledged conflict not only in project appraisal documents but also in socioeconomic and risk assessments prior to implementation. Three projects designed in and after 2016 directly acknowledged the peace agreement, seeking to complement government policies to strengthen peace (GEF, 2017, 2018, 2019).

A few projects not only acknowledged but also sought to mitigate conflict risks. Two strategies were avoiding implementing projects in areas of conflict (following the "do no harm" principle) and seeking to resolve conflict using such strategies as participatory design. The project Integrated National Adaptation Plan: High Mountain Ecosystems, Colombia's Caribbean Insular Areas and Human Health (2019) initially selected a site in Las Hermosas because it was assessed as being safe. Later, to avoid a delicate public security situation, the project identified two alternative sites for its climate adaptation plans, a shift during project implementation. In another project, certain areas such as high mountain zones were rejected before project implementation for posing security risks, and foothill areas were selected because they had "reasonable conditions of security" (GEF, 2002, p. 111). Most projects sought to involve local and indigenous stakeholders directly using participatory design. The project on the Colombian National Protected Areas Conservation Trust Fund involved inclusive work with buffer zone and rural communities "designed to be successful" in the midst of the conflict (GEF, 2005, p. 4), while the current project on connectivity and biodiversity conservation seeks to enhance consultations with relevant stakeholders, such as indigenous communities, to achieve a "shared view of the territory" and improve institutional capacity in the Colombian Amazon (GEF, 2017, p. 12). The current project on sustainable low-carbon development takes a similar approach in the Orinoquia region (GEF, 2019). Project design for two ongoing projects paid attention to UN Department of Safety and Security guidelines to protect project staff from conflict-related risks (GEF, 2017, 2018).

GEF projects designed or implemented after the 2016 peace agreement between the Colombian government and FARC are more conflict sensitive. The three studied projects designed after the 2016 agreement and still being implemented as of 2022 include peacebuilding to various degrees. One is the only GEF-funded project in Colombia to mention peacebuilding in its title; it notes not only Colombia's

progress through the peace agreement but also the opportunities and challenges for Pacific regional development as a precursor to achieve peace (GEF, 2018). The project seeks to apply conservation practices in the post-agreement, peacebuilding context of Colombia, noting that "providing alternatives for returning populations will promote peace" (GEF, 2016, p. 18).

The current project that seeks to mainstream peacebuilding through environmental conservation in the Amazon region is yielding positive results. Project staff said the Colombian government requested the project as the peace agreement was being negotiated to have an operational project in the Amazon. Working in such FARC-controlled areas was unthinkable before the peace agreement. The project is working on low-carbon development to improve livelihoods, employing local communities and reintegrating ex-combatants. Although it is too early to conclude whether livelihoods have improved, the project aligns with the government's peacebuilding policies and seems to be strengthening the social fabric of a region that had been at the heart of the conflict.

The third current project, on sustainable low-carbon development, is also being implemented in a region that had been a hub of conflict. It is designed explicitly to complement government peacebuilding policies, such as improving state presence in the region through sustainable development (GEF, 2019). A precursor project that closed in 2015 said of the country context, "The project may provide some support to the peace process by supporting pilot initiatives on the sustainable use of biodiversity" (GEF, 2006a, p. 25). It acknowledged that the local executing agency, Unidad Administrativa Especial del Sistema de Parques Nacionales Naturales, a special administrative unit of the national natural parks system, "continues to work in the midst of the conflict" and is "convinced that environmental themes may contribute to the solution of the armed conflict in Colombia" (GEF, 2006a, p. 25).

The project Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Sustainable Cattle Ranching, although not analyzed in depth, is another "excellent example of a contribution to the post-conflict healing and development process" in areas where armed forces had regained control (GEF, 2009, p. 59). This aligns with Colombia's priorities for "Total Peace" policy.

Since the peace agreement, project planners and staff have had to avoid fewer sites. The three active projects described earlier are in areas previously avoided because of security concerns. One is in the Pacific region of Colombia with ELN presence. Another includes vast areas of the Amazon region, where project staff had reported in the past that implementing a project was impossible, let alone attempting to improve institutional capacity. Political willingness from both the government and FARC to address socioenvironmental issues of biodiversity and livelihoods enabled project implementation. Thanks to the project, environmental authorities are slowly moving into these areas, building confidence, promoting community work, and establishing dialogue. For the third, the FARC-EP was present throughout the Orinoquia Department, controlling the territory and its resources (GEF, 2019). This project, aligning with Colombia's National Development Plan, seeks to use low-carbon development through strategies that are part of the peace consolidation process (GEF, 2019).

The GEF-funded Colombia projects selected for this in-depth review cannot account for the full diversity of aims and results of all projects in the country's portfolio. Of 110 projects, most lacked evaluations necessary to provide ratings for analysis. However, the selected projects generally represent the 27 that did receive ratings that correlated with substantial mentions of conflict terms. Based on the small sample size, conflict sensitivity cannot be said to have led to more favorable outcomes on environmental and other indices. Nor can it be concluded that favorable outcomes depend on sensitivity to Colombian and other conflicts. However, more successful projects did seem to exhibit more comprehensive assessments of the national context, including risks of conflict. They also showed substantive and deliberate engagement of various stakeholders, using, for example, participatory design, and demonstrated strong ambitions to integrate environmental and other social, humanitarian, health, or conflict-related goals.

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9 The Mediterranean Region

Lebanon and the Balkans

This chapter highlights the effects of conflict and fragility on programming in the Mediterranean region funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), with a focus on Lebanon and the Balkan nations. Since its founding in 1992, the GEF has launched 49 projects in Lebanon and 195 projects in the Balkans. Considering the environment and conflict linkages and the risks posed by armed conflict, portfolio-level reviews of projects in these two situations sought to evaluate the extent to which projects have taken into account conflict risks and how conflict sensitivity in project design and implementation affects project outcomes.

The research indicated that active social and violent conflict affected the reviewed GEF-funded projects in Lebanon in different ways and generally had the greatest impact on projects' sustainability criterion rating. In contrast, the violent conflict in the Balkans was further temporally removed from the programming, which allowed the reviewed GEF-funded projects to serve as avenues for increased cooperation and communication among previously hostile groups.

Regional Background

Lebanon has experienced intermittent violent conflict and widespread social unrest since gaining independence from French rule in 1943. From 1975 to 2000, Lebanon experienced a devastating civil war that erupted as a result of mounting demographic and political changes and external pressures from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The civil war resulted in approximately 120,000 deaths and displaced almost 1 million people. It also contributed to widespread environmental degradation, especially in the country's south. This environmental devastation was further amplified during the 2006 Israel-Lebanon War; up to 1 million unexploded cluster bombs in the south continue to pose a threat to the environment and to people whose livelihoods are linked to the land (Beehner, 2006). A long history of sectarian conflict has hindered the development of good environmental governance in Lebanon, although environmental protection has become a priority issue, with dozens of environmental NGOs having emerged to combat the environmental damage caused by violent conflict.

Throughout the 1990s, western Balkan nations witnessed war and massacres following the breakup of Yugoslavia. The region suffered devastating social, political,

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economic, and environmental harm. Many people fled or were displaced, adding to environmental stress. Although conflict in the region has ceased, former Yugoslav nations are still recovering from the past conflicts. Partly because of the destruction of environmental infrastructure during the war, the 2000s brought devastating climate change-related effects, particularly in the form of flooding and drought. Environmental projects are a unique opportunity for formerly warring parties to cooperate on a mutually beneficial endeavor.

Using the methodology described in Chapter 2, nine projects were selected in Lebanon and eight in the Balkans for in-depth analyses using project documents and interviews with agency staff and stakeholders. The evaluation assessed the relationship between a project's management of conflict risk and project outcomes, using the four evaluation criteria: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability.

The reviewed Lebanon projects generally performed well in relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness and received less favorable sustainability ratings. In particular, the evaluation found the impacts of conflict risks and sociopolitical instability on several projects' sociopolitical and financial sustainability. Key findings from the conflict-sensitivity analysis included:

1. conflict affected GEF Lebanon projects in different ways, suggesting that conflict dynamics and GEF projects operate in context-specific environments;
2. the type of conflict affecting projects varied between violent conflict and social unrest; and
3. adaptive management strategies, such as flexibility in choosing project sites, enabled projects to be more successful in achieving their outcomes.

Many of the GEF projects in the Balkans received favorable scores for relevance and effectiveness. Efficiency ratings were also generally favorable, but results were mixed on sustainability. Documentation and interviews for the selected GEF projects in the Balkans indicated that they addressed previous conflict in three ways:

1. providing an opportunity to cooperate;
2. addressing the economic impact of the wars; and
3. addressing regional and domestic communication problems.

Environmental Background: Lebanon

Although the environment and natural resources were not direct contributors to conflict in Lebanon, both the civil war from 1975 to 1990 and the 2006 Israel-Lebanon War contributed to environmental degradation and economic instability. During the 15 years of Lebanon's civil war, the country experienced large-scale environmental devastation. In response, the Ministry of Environment was created in 1993, and the Lebanese Environmental Forum, a national NGO coordination committee, was formed (Kingston, 2001). Despite a renewed interest in environmental protection, environmental degradation accelerated in the postwar reconstruction period,

catalyzed by industrial pollution, unregulated urban expansion, and the unchecked building of road networks connecting previously untouched areas (Maqdisi, 2012). High levels of urbanization and environmental degradation also damaged Lebanon's water resources through groundwater contamination and unregulated waste discharge into rivers and streams (Maqdisi, 2012). Despite these issues, environmental protection was not a main priority for the Lebanese government in the postwar period; as a result, environmental protection became a priority issue outside of the government, with NGOs emerging to rebuild the environment after the war (Kingston, 2001).

The 2006 Israel-Lebanon War also severely affected the environment, with the environmental consequences of this conflict still felt today. Land mines and unexploded ordnance continue to pose a risk to both the environment and people in affected areas. It is estimated that up to 1 million unexploded cluster bombs remain (Conca & Wallace, 2009), hampering restoration efforts and inhibiting livelihoods that are dependent on the environment. The presence of unexploded ordnance has also disrupted local natural resource management and displaced people into fragile ecosystems (Conca & Wallace, 2009). This posed a security risk to several GEF projects in southern Lebanon and prevented project staff from accessing target sites. The Israeli bombing of the Jiyeh Power Station during the 2006 conflict also contributed to environmental degradation by causing a large oil spill in the Mediterranean Sea (Conca & Wallace, 2009).

GEF Involvement in Lebanon

Since 1992, the GEF has launched 49 approved projects in Lebanon, spanning six GEF focal areas: biodiversity, chemicals and waste, climate change, international waters, land degradation, and persistent organic pollutants (see Figure 9.1). Several projects had multiple focal areas, such as international waters and biodiversity. From this portfolio, nine projects were selected for in-depth analysis (see Table 9.1), aiming to optimize diversity in conflict categories, project results, and project focal areas. These projects were selected based on how well they fit into three categories: projects that did not substantially address conflict dynamics and received unfavorable evaluation ratings, projects that addressed conflict dynamics

Table 9.1 Lebanon Projects Analyzed in Depth

GEF Project ID	*Project Title*	*Focal Area*	*Project Dates*	*Category*
216	Strengthening of National Capacity and Grassroots In-Situ Conservation for Sustainable Biodiversity Protection	Biodiversity	1995–2004	1
400	Conservation and Sustainable Use of Dryland Agro-Biodiversity of the Fertile Crescent	Biodiversity	1998–2005	1

(*Continued*)

Table 9.1 (Continued)

GEF Project ID	*Project Title*	*Focal Area*	*Project Dates*	*Category*
410	Conservation of Wetland and Coastal Ecosystems in the Mediterranean Region	Biodiversity	1999–2006	1
1707	Integrated Management of Cedar Forests in Lebanon in Cooperation with other Mediterranean Countries	Biodiversity	2003–2007	2
2600	Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Large Marine Ecosystem-Regional Component: Implementation of Agreed Actions for the Protection of the Environmental Resources of the Mediterranean Sea and Its Coastal Areas	Persistent organic pollutants; international waters	2008–2016	2
3028	SFM Safeguarding and Restoring Lebanon's Woodland Resources	Land degradation	2008–2014	3
3418	Mainstreaming Biodiversity Management into Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Production Processes	Biodiversity	2008–2013	3
9491	Mainstreaming Conservation of Migratory Soaring Birds into Key Productive Sectors along the Rift Valley/Red Sea Flyway (Tranche II of GEFID 1028)	Biodiversity	2017–present	3
9607	Mediterranean Sea Programme (MedProgramme): Enhancing Environmental Security	International waters, biodiversity, chemicals and waste	2016–present	2

Note: Categories: 1. Projects did not substantially address conflict dynamics and received unfavorable terminal evaluation scores. 2. Projects addressed conflict dynamics but did so only in passing and did not significantly evaluate risks social and/or violent conflict could pose to project outcomes. Projects also did not address mitigation measures that could be taken to lessen the impact of the project on conflict. 3. Projects addressed conflict dynamics by evaluating risks that they posed to the success of project outcomes and discussed mitigation measures that could be taken to reduce the impact of the project on latent social conflicts.

only in passing, and projects that substantially addressed conflict dynamics and received mostly favorable evaluation ratings, where applicable.[1]

Environmental Background: The Balkans

The conflicts in the Balkan region—known as the Wars in the Balkans, Wars in the Former Yugoslavia, or the Yugoslav Wars—lasted from 1991 until 2001. The former Yugoslavia was created after World War II as a federation of six

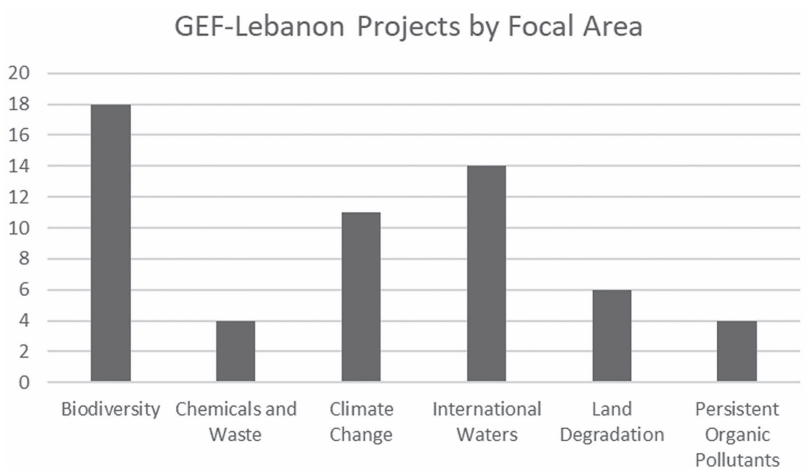

Figure 9.1 GEF Lebanon Projects by Focal Area

republics: Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Macedonia (Voice of America, 2017). The ethnic groups who lived there included Serbs, Croats, Bosnians, Albanians, and Slovenes, and the conflicts stemmed from increasing ethnic tensions, growing nationalist sentiments, and calls for autonomy (BBC News, 2016). After Croatia and Slovenia declared independence in 1991, the Serb-dominated Yugoslav Army worked with Serbs in Croatia to expel Croats (ABC News, 2011). Shortly after, Bosnia's Muslims and Croats advocated for autonomy, but Bosnian Serbs pushed back, driving Bosnian Muslims and Croats from their homes in an ethnic cleansing that continued despite United Nations interventions. The war ended after NATO bombed the Bosnian Serbs in 1995 (BBC News, 2018).

Human rights abuses and war crimes were common, including civilian attacks, systematic rape, and incarceration in concentration camps. An estimated 140,000 people died, and 4 million people were displaced (International Center for Transitional Justice, 2011).

Environmental issues were not a driver of the Balkan conflicts, but the environmental repercussions of the conflicts' violence and unrest are widespread. Media coverage of post-conflict pollution, particularly from the bombings, prompted international environmentalists to advocate for an environmental assessment. A 2001 Committee on the Environment report noted direct and indirect damage caused by weapons, destruction of infrastructure, contamination from toxic substances, and population displacement (Council of Europe, 2001). Bombings destroyed facilities such as oil refineries and industrial sites. The toxic substances released into the ground contributed not only to soil pollution but also to water and air pollution (Lasaridi & Valvis, 2011). Warplanes aggravated air and rainfall contamination from toxic fuel additives (Edeko, 2011). In targeted sites, UNEP found evidence of widespread surface contamination from depleted uranium. Although

UNEP determined the radiological and toxicological risks to be low, the program acknowledged that areas with heavy amounts of depleted uranium faced the possibility of uranium infiltration into groundwater at levels exceeding accepted health standards (UNEP, 2002).

A UNEP-led assessment found damage to vegetation from the bombings but concluded that long-term effects for biodiversity in the Balkans would be minimal (UN, 1999). The assessment reported on the unexploded weapons in national parks and protected areas and their effect on the region's ability to manage these areas and reap their economic benefits. More than 250 hectares of forest were entirely burned and thousands of hectares of land were rendered unfit for agriculture by destruction or pollution. Population displacement also led to environmental degradation as refugees fled to Albania and Macedonia, neither of which had the resources to sustain a population influx. Refugee camps caused environmental damage through inadequate sewage, tree cutting, trash dumps, and wastewater infiltration in groundwater aquifers (Edeko, 2011). Bombing of electric facilities had a significant impact on the environment because the resulting power shortages meant utilities could not provide fresh water or run sewage and wastewater treatment systems (Council of Europe, 2001).

GEF Involvement in the Balkans

The GEF has supported 195 projects in the Balkans, seven of which were global. Most single-country projects have been in Bosnia and Herzegovina (29), Macedonia (27), and Serbia (28). Almost a quarter of the GEF projects in the Balkans (45) have been regional. Of these, more than half focused on regional waters. Climate change has been the overriding focus for GEF projects in the Balkans, with 65 projects, a third of all interventions, having climate change as their focal area. Figure 9.2 presents the focal areas of projects in the Balkans.

From this project portfolio, eight Balkans projects were selected for deeper analysis to get an overarching view of conflict sensitivity over time and across focal areas (see Table 9.2). Although the projects represent a diversity of focal areas, locations, and scope, they are not representative of the variety of projects in the Balkans. All eight projects were analyzed for conflict sensitivity and project stakeholders and implementers were interviewed about conflict sensitivity and their experiences in managing conflict in the projects. The interviews with Bosnian, Serbian, Montenegrin, and Macedonian officials indicated that the former Yugoslav nations are oriented to the future, hoping to put the conflict behind them. GEF-supported programming provides opportunities to realize that vision by funding projects in which formerly warring states work together.

Results

The two in-depth analyses of projects in Lebanon and the Balkans provide qualitative illustrations of the ways in which GEF-supported projects in the Mediterranean region addressed conflict risks in their design and whether these risks affected project outcomes. Examination of the interaction between conflict and the selected

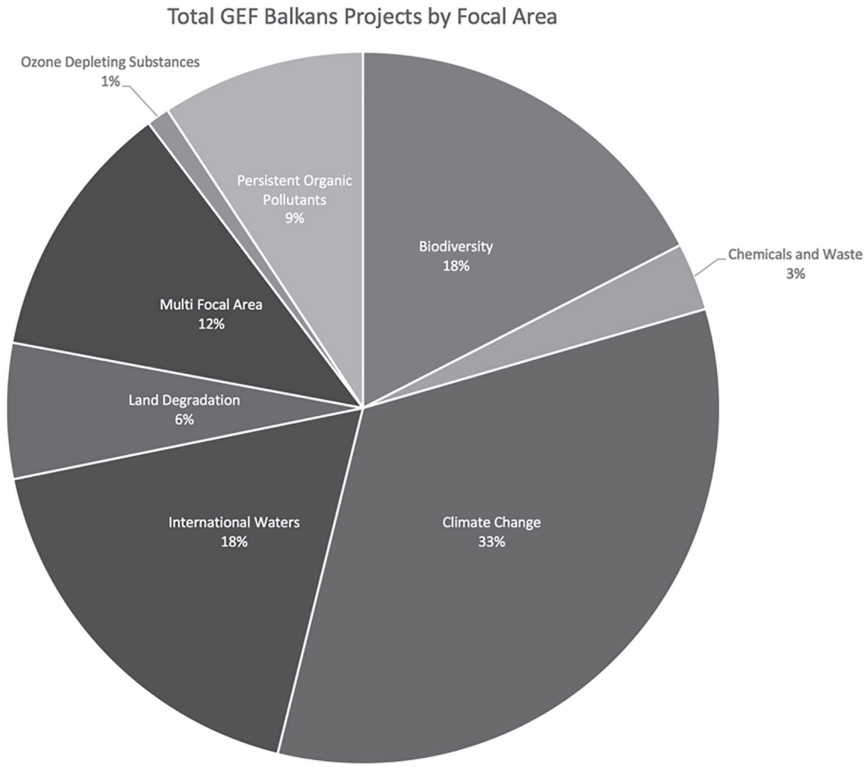

Figure 9.2 GEF Balkans Projects by Focal Area

projects used the four evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. The analysis also assessed the impacts of non-conflict-related factors on project outcomes. Table 9.3 presents examples of how, in Lebanon projects, conflict and instability interacted with the different elements of the GEF evaluation criteria.

Relevance

A project's relevance refers to "the extent to which the objective and outcomes of a project are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies" (OECD DAC, 2002). The GEF evaluates relevance based on how well the project aligns with local and national environmental challenges and policies and with the GEF's global priorities.

All of the completed Lebanon projects received favorable ratings for relevance. For the most part, relevance was evaluated without reference to the broader conflict context and was scored on how well the project addressed Lebanon's environmental priorities and barriers to achieving environmental goals. A project on

Table 9.2 Balkans Projects Analyzed in Depth

GEF Project ID	*Project Name*	*Dates*
5604	Technology Transfer for Climate Resilient Flood Management in the Vrbas River Basin	2014–present
32	Mini-Hydropower Project	1999–2006
2143	DBSB Water Quality Protection Project, under World Bank–GEF Strategic Partnership for Nutrient Reduction in the Danube River and Black Sea	2005–2017
2372	Forest and Mountain Protected Areas Project	2008–2014
5723	West Balkans Drina River Basin Management Project	2014–present
9114	Capacity Development for Improved Implementation of Multinational Environmental Agreements (MEAs)	2016–present
9670	Enhancing Regional Climate Change Adaptation in the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Areas	2016–present
9607	Mediterranean Sea Programme (MedProgramme): Enhancing Environmental Security (2016–present)	2016–present
Other Balkans projects mentioned in this chapter		
3688	Strengthening the Sustainability of the Protected Areas System of the Republic of Montenegro	2008–2017
3947	Catalyzing Financial Sustainability of the PA System (Montenegro)	2009–2016
3946	Ensuring Financial Sustainability of the Protected Area System	2009–2016
495	Kopacki Rit Wetlands Management Project	1998–2004
4187	Capacity Building for Environmental Policy Institutions	2010–2016
3759	Support to Sustainable Transportation System in the City of Belgrade	2009–2015

safeguarding and restoring Lebanon's woodland resources received a rating of highly relevant because it "addressed issues of inappropriate land uses, specifically deforestation and forest degradation" that were identified as pressing environmental challenges (GEF IEO, 2016c, p. 7). Several of the projects noted in general terms that the Lebanese Civil War had negative impacts on the environment (e.g., GEF, 1995, 2008), but their evaluations did not make clear whether these environmental impacts influenced their relevance ratings. A project on mainstreaming biodiversity management into medicinal and aromatic plants production processes received a favorable relevance rating because it aligned with the GEF mission and national priorities and "remains pertinent in the light of the current levels of threat" (Rijal, 2014, p. 28). However, the evaluation did not specify whether the mentioned threats included threats posed by conflict risks. In general, all of the projects selected for analysis were found to be relevant to the GEF's global priorities and Lebanon's national goals; however, the documents did not mention conflict as a factor that either added to or detracted from a project's relevance.

Many of the GEF projects in the Balkans received favorable ratings for relevance to policy frameworks and governments already in place. Project documents

Table 9.3 Examples of how Conflict Interacted with Evaluation Criteria in Lebanon Projects

Criteria	*Project ID*	*Example*
Relevance	3418	The TE and project identification form acknowledge that the 2006 conflict had a detrimental impact on the Lebanese economy and livelihoods, therefore making a project that focused on contributing to both of these a national priority (p. 37, p. 3). "The socio-economic impact of the war has given increased urgency" to a government reform agenda that emphasized reducing unemployment, improving livelihoods, and restoring the environment (TE, p. 36).
	9491	The volatile security situation in some target countries will likely direct attention away from conservation issues, thus extending the time frame for engagement (Revised PD, p. 14).
Effectiveness	2600	The project's implementation was hampered by "many challenges at the national level, including limited human/institutional capacity, political conflicts, and civil war" (TE, p. 16).
	3418	The presence of cluster bombs in many areas in southern Lebanon meant these sites were inaccessible and could not be included in the project (interview).
Efficiency	2600	Work in the transboundary Lebanese-Syrian Orontes River basin was suspended in 2012 to due the outbreak of war (TE, p. 32).
	9491	Recent political/economic turmoil has led to the delay of some aspects of project implementation (interview with Assad Serhal).
Sustainability	3028	The TE noted that "the social and political situation in Lebanon is somewhat fraught internally and through the broader unstable situation in the region," suggesting that the achievement made by the project were likely to be negatively affected by unstable governance and the risk of conflict. This jeopardizes commitments made to the project's objectives (TE, p. 43).

Note: PD = project document; TE = terminal evaluation.

also revealed deliberate inclusion of policymakers and stakeholders and a determination to work within established frameworks. For example, the Mini-Hydropower Project began as a Macedonian idea and worked in the interests of both the GEF and the Macedonian government. The project aligned with Macedonia's political interests in the country's National Environmental Action Plan, which identified air pollution as the country's most significant environmental threat. The development of small hydropower plants was part of Macedonia's investment plans, so the project also aligned with the government's financial interests (GEF IEO, 2014b). Another project, focused on forest and mountain protected areas, incorporated three components to conserve natural ecosystems in Bosnia and Herzegovina (GEF IEO, 2014c): improving existing protected areas, establishing new ones, and

working at local and state levels to promote sustainable practices. A final example of project relevance is a project in Serbia that aimed to promote multinational environmental agreements (MEAs) by incorporating environmental provisions into existing programs (GEF, 2016b). For both projects, incorporating relevant policies and local interests encouraged stakeholders and policymakers to take ownership, having the co-benefit of increasing the likelihood of the last core evaluation criterion, sustainability.

Effectiveness

The effectiveness of a project is the extent to which it has achieved its given objectives or the likelihood that they will be achieved (GEF IEO, 2019).

Of the six Lebanon projects with documents evaluating project effectiveness, five received favorable ratings in this category, with one project's effectiveness rated as moderately unsatisfactory. The documents made little to no mention of how or whether the broader conflict context in Lebanon could have affected the project's outcomes. This was true even if other parts of the evaluation made explicit references to conflict. For example, although the evaluation of Integrated Management of Cedar Forests in Lebanon in Cooperation with Other Mediterranean Countries noted that activities were interrupted by the outbreak of conflict between Israel and Lebanon in July 2006 (Asmar, 2008, p. 12), it did not mention whether or how this outbreak affected the project's ability to achieve its expected outputs. Instead, assessment of the project's effectiveness centered around "the extent to which the project has directly or indirectly assisted policy- and decision-makers to apply information supplied by biodiversity indicators in their national planning and decision-making" (Asmar, 2008, p. 47). During a project focused on the Mediterranean large marine ecosystem, activities in Libya, Syria, and Tunisia had to be relocated or cancelled because of security concerns emerging from the Arab Spring (GEF IEO, 2016a). Nevertheless, the project received a rating of highly satisfactory for effectiveness and made no mention of how the broader conflict context might have negatively affected the project's outcomes, in Lebanon or elsewhere.

Some Lebanon project evaluations identified conflict as affecting some of the evaluation criteria but not the project's effectiveness. For example, Lebanon's unstable sociopolitical context was stated to have negative impacts on one project's sustainability; however, the project's effectiveness received a favorable rating because the project largely achieved its objective of "developing a strategy for safeguarding and restoring Lebanon's woodland resources" (GEF IEO, 2016c, p. 3). The potential implications of the unstable sociopolitical situation mentioned elsewhere were not acknowledged with respect to effectiveness.

Two Lebanon projects that received favorable effectiveness ratings were noted as being directly affected by the consequences of violent conflict. Both sets of project documents (GEF, 2007, 2009) stated that the presence of unexploded cluster bombs hindered accessibility to target sites in southern Lebanon, corroborated in 2020 interviews with project staff members. Specific threats mentioned in one of the project's design documents (GEF, 2009) included the presence of unexploded

ordnance from the 2006 conflict, while identified threats to the outcomes of the other project included unexploded cluster bombs, the removal of which was estimated to take 12 months (GEF, 2007). Interviews with project staff confirmed that unexploded ordnance in southern Lebanon did indeed pose an obstacle to the implementation (and, therefore, effectiveness) of both projects but added that the bombs did not end up affecting project outcomes. Data from the interviews suggested that a combination of adaptive management and the selection of alternative project sites overcame these potential barriers.

Although the majority of GEF-funded Balkans projects focused on climate change, the eight selected for in-depth study represent diverse foci. Common among their objectives was an emphasis on local involvement and cooperation, and scores for effectiveness, when available, were generally favorable. For example, the Danube/Black Sea and Mediterranean Basin (DBSB) Water Quality Protection Project aimed to reduce pollution in waterways by working with local utilities and creating a joint Bosnian and Croatian commission. It also sought to promote transboundary cooperation in repairing damaged wastewater infrastructure after the conflict. This project was especially effective in encouraging cooperation between states and in promoting a joint Croatian and Bosnian working group that yielded positive results, according to the project's indicators and targets (GEF, 2018). A project focused on sustainable transportation in the city of Belgrade was the only Balkans project that received an unsatisfactory rating for effectiveness. The project set unobtainable goals for greenhouse gas emissions reduction; however, it worked successfully with the local government and policymakers to complete some project objectives by promoting the city's sustainable transport systems (GEF IEO, 2015).

Efficiency

The efficiency of a project refers to the extent to which the project "achieved value for resources, by converting inputs (funds, personnel, expertise, equipment, etc.) to results in the timeliest and least costly way possible, compared to the alternatives" (GEF IEO, 2019, p. 13).

Only five of the nine studied Lebanon projects were evaluated for efficiency, with four of these receiving favorable scores. For the most part, efficiency was not related to conflict. However, interruption by the outbreak of conflict decreased the cost-effectiveness of the project focused on cedar forests because training and capacity-building activities had to be extended (GEF IEO, 2010). Across all of the Lebanon projects, efficiency evaluations emphasized cost-effectiveness. The project Conservation of Wetland and Coastal Ecosystems in the Mediterranean Region, which received the lowest efficiency score, was rated as moderately unsatisfactory because "the availability of data in an accessible and useful format, and the systematic storage of available data by the project teams and UNDP COs, leaves a lot to be desired" (GEF IEO, 2010, p. 3).

Among the Balkans projects evaluated for efficiency, ratings were generally favorable; most received rating of moderately satisfactory with a few rated moderately unsatisfactory. The problem was not projects' inability to adhere to budgets

but rather their lack of organization. For example, the mini-hydropower project, while well under budget, was completed two years later than scheduled, and project documents provided no explanation for this delay (GEF IEO, 2014b). The Kopacki Rit Wetlands Management Project, which also received generally favorable ratings, made slow progress, especially in the beginning (GEF IEO, 2014a). Two other projects received moderately unsatisfactory ratings for efficiency due to organizational issues. One, on capacity building for environmental policy institutions, faced implementation delays and, while not exceeding its budget, spent funds on activities deemed unnecessary for project completion (GEF IEO, 2017). The Belgrade project on sustainable transportation ran into problems finding a project director and, therefore, in creating a successful project design. As a result, the project objectives and outcomes required reevaluation (GEF IEO, 2015).

Sustainability

The sustainability of a project refers to the continuation or likely continuation of "positive effects from the intervention after it has come to an end, and its potential for scale-up and/or replication" (GEF IEO, 2019, p. 13). Sustainability is evaluated along four dimensions: financial, sociopolitical, institutional, and environmental.

All of the studied GEF Lebanon projects with sustainability scores received favorable ratings for environmental sustainability, while the ratings of other dimensions of sustainability were more mixed. When evaluating a project's financial sustainability, evaluators determine the level of financial risks that may jeopardize whether a project can have continued impact once it ends. Negative financial sustainability ratings of two projects in Lebanon were directly linked to the unstable political situation in the country and tied to the government's ability to continue providing necessary funding. In the cedar forests project, the ability of activities designed to increase sustainable tourism and provide a source of funding to support the continued fulfillment of project objectives was "jeopardized by the instability in the country and in the region" (Asmar, 2008, p. 17). Likewise, the financial sustainability of the woodland resources project was rated as moderately unlikely because in "the current political situation in Lebanon, support for the techniques and methods promoted by the projects are not supported universally within the central government" (GEF IEO, 2016c, p. 5). However, because of the likelihood of funding from multilateral agencies such as USAID, the project's financial sustainability rating was later revised to moderately likely (GEF IEO, 2016c).

The evaluation of a project's sociopolitical sustainability assesses how favorable the target country's sociopolitical climate is relative to the broader sustainability of a project's outcomes, including the likelihood that all stakeholders will continue to show an interest in the project's initiatives after completion. All but one of the Lebanon projects that were evaluated for sustainability received favorable ratings in the sociopolitical dimension. With the exception of Conservation and Sustainable Use of Dryland Agro-Biodiversity of the Fertile Crescent, all of the evaluated projects acknowledged that Lebanon had experienced periods of instability

prior to project implementation. The projects differed in terms of the basis for the evaluations of sociopolitical sustainability. For example, documents for the cedar forests project noted "no risks of any social or political changes that could jeopardize the sustenance of the project" (Asmar, 2008, p. 18) because of strong stakeholder commitments to continuing the project's benefits. Similarly, sociopolitical sustainability in the wetland and coastal ecosystems project was linked to a "change in attitudes and to modified approaches to resource management in coastal and wetland areas" (GEF, 2007, p. 3), while the project on medicinal and aromatic plants production linked sociopolitical sustainability to the "empowerment of local communities" (Rijal, 2014, p. 38). Other projects, however, linked the instability in Lebanon and the region directly with risks to sociopolitical sustainability. For instance, the sociopolitical sustainability of the woodland resources project was rated unfavorably because instability posed a "threat to sustainability of project outcomes, as it leads to changes in government at both the national and local level, jeopardizing commitments made to the project's objective" (GEF IEO, 2016c, p. 6). As it relates to GEF-funded projects, sociopolitical sustainability is associated with a broad array of factors, of which the broader conflict context is only one part.

The selected Lebanon projects generally performed well in terms of institutional and environmental sustainability. The institutional dimension of sustainability measures how well projects developed the institutional capacity necessary to sustain the project. Environmental sustainability refers to a project's contributions to sustaining environmental benefits. Conflict was not mentioned in any of the project institutional and environmental sustainability evaluations. Rather, institutional sustainability was linked to the degree of capacity building and development of institutional frameworks to support the accomplishment of project objectives (see GEF IEO, 2016a, 2016c). Environmental sustainability was linked to the level of risk that the project's activities posed to the environment, with most of the projects posing little to no risk (Rijal, 2014).

The analysis of the Balkans projects did not break out sustainability along the four categories. Of projects receiving sustainability scores, five scored favorably, but three that focused on strengthening protected area systems in the region did not. Sustainability was deemed financially unlikely for a Montenegro project because local institutions had not designated funds for its continuation (GEF IEO, 2016b). For the other two projects, sustainability was considered unlikely because of sociopolitical factors. For a Serbian project, both the lack of local ownership and the institutional and political upheaval at the time worked against the project's long-term sustainability (GEF IEO, 2016c). Another project in Montenegro did not attain institutional ownership; its focus on biodiversity was not a government priority at that time. The project failed to garner significant continued support from stakeholders because they had no external assistance (Kasparek & Katnić, 2015). In contrast, the Forest and Mountain Protected Areas Project also focused on biodiversity and protected areas, yet its sustainability was rated highly, likely because the Bosnia and Herzegovina government had a strong commitment to the project and expressed interest in continuing project activities. Local stakeholders and

donors were also committed to supporting that project's biodiversity conservation efforts (GEF, 2006). The DBSB Water Quality Protection Project also exhibited likely sustainability, promoting the joint Bosnian-Croatian working group that continued to collaborate with institutions in Serbia and Montenegro even after project completion (GEF, 2018).

As with other GEF projects, project success and sustainability among the Balkans projects correlated with an understanding of the conflict and the involvement of local institutions and stakeholders. Each of the projects selected for review thoroughly considered the political context and often the conflict context in preliminary and concluding project documents. Those executed on a regional or global scale had less conflict sensitivity specific to the Balkans. The ongoing project Enhancing Regional Climate Change Adaptation in the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Areas was the only project to include fewer than 20 conflict-related terms in its documents. Documents for the Mediterranean Sea Programme: Enhancing Environmental Security included several conflict-related words, but most focused on other countries involved in the ongoing program (GEF, 2016a). In an earlier iteration from 2008 to 2015, the MedPartnership project that also supported the Mediterranean Sea Programme Action Plan (MAP) itself faced conflict- and institution-related obstacles to implementation, and the need for conflict mitigation was noted in its draft evaluation report (UNEP, 2016). However, the Balkans projects showed a thorough understanding of their locations, including sensitivity to conflict and associated risks.

Conclusions

Projects in Lebanon

In terms of the four evaluation criteria, the studied Lebanon projects generally performed well in relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency and received more mixed results in their sustainability ratings. Conflict was only mentioned as affecting project outcomes a few times across all four evaluation criteria. Most often, conflict was mentioned as negatively affecting a project's financial sustainability and its effectiveness. When conflict was mentioned in the evaluations, it was usually linked to only one evaluation criterion. This suggests that the conflict context interacts differently with each criterion. For example, the outbreak of conflict during the woodland resources project negatively affected its effectiveness because of the presence of cluster bombs that disrupted project implementation; however, the project was still successful in building institutional capacity and a strong sense of ownership within the country (GEF IEO, 2016c), indicating that conflict does not affect a project in an all-or-nothing way.

The selected projects were affected by different types of conflict. Lebanon has seen periods of violent conflict (such as the 2006 Israel-Lebanon War), but it has not witnessed widespread violent conflict since the end of its civil war in 1990. Long-term political instability characterized by social unrest and sectarian conflict has dominated the Lebanese landscape. Therefore, it is important to distinguish

between the types of conflict that affected projects and how resilient the projects were to this type of conflict.

The two main types of conflict that affected GEF projects in Lebanon were violent conflict and social conflict. Operating during 2006, the cedar forests project was the only one of the nine studied in depth to have been directly affected by violent conflict, halting project activities between July and September 2006. Analysis of documents and interviews with project staff members revealed that two other projects were affected by the consequences of violent conflict; for both, unexploded bombs posed a security threat that was overcome through a combination of pre-implementation risk assessment and adaptive management strategies that emphasized flexibility in the choice of project sites. Social conflict was also mentioned as impacting projects, with the societal pressures caused by the Syrian refugee crisis noted as a risk to the sustainability of the woodland resources project. More recently, large-scale protests in Lebanon were noted as hindering some project activities in Mainstreaming Conservation of Migratory Soaring Birds into Key Productive Sectors along the Rift Valley/Red Sea Flyway, with a BirdLife International staff member reporting in 2020 that road closures forced on-the-ground activities to shift direction. The same interviewee also noted that recent economic hardships caused a change in Lebanese bank policies that made project partners unable to access their accounts, endangering the project until emergency funding was secured. All interviewees recognized the risks posed by the sectarianism that is prevalent in Lebanon, and all stated that projects were able to mitigate these risks by avoiding contentious issues such as land ownership and by carefully selecting project sites to maximize sectoral representation.

The in-depth analysis of selected GEF projects in Lebanon demonstrated the variable risk that conflict (in its different forms) posed to the projects. Some project evaluations did not mention conflict or its associated risks; others directly linked conflict with negative implications on project effectiveness and sustainability. From this analysis, several key findings emerge. First, conflict affected GEF projects in different ways, suggesting that conflict dynamics and GEF projects operate in context-specific environments and that the interactions between the two need to be evaluated on an individual basis. Different projects identified different risks, even when they were implemented in similar time periods. Second, the type of conflict affecting GEF projects in Lebanon varied, with violent conflict and nonviolent forms of conflict such as social unrest having markedly different impacts. Projects were found to be more resilient to risks stemming from nonviolent conflict than from violent conflict. Third, adaptive management strategies such as flexibility in site selection and careful consideration of Lebanon's sectoral context enabled projects to be more successful in achieving their outcomes.

Projects in the Balkans

The selected projects in Balkan countries represent a diversity of focal areas and locations, with both regional and country-specific projects significantly affected by the 1990s wars.

Enhanced Cooperation

One key theme that emerged from the in-depth review is that GEF-funded projects in the Balkans furthered cooperation among Balkan countries.

The project Technology Transfer for Climate Resilient Flood Management in the Vrbas River Basin required cooperation and communication between the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska. The war in the 1990s destroyed the Vrbas River Basin's flood prevention infrastructure, and this project was an opportunity for the previously warring sides to cooperate and enhance technology for a climate-resilient flood prevention system.

Cooperation was also a focus of the DBSB Water Quality Protection Project, which fostered "transboundary cooperation and building trust between states (Croatia, Montenegro, and Serbia), helping to unlock a complex and long-lasting marine resource and/or freshwater-use conflicts," according to the project's implementation completion and results report (World Bank, 2018, p. 16).

The goals of the West Balkans Drina River Basin Management Project are "to enhance multi-state cooperation to balance conflicting water uses in transboundary Drina waters while mainstreaming climate adaptation measures [and] develop a shared vision and technical cooperation framework" (GEF, 2014, p. 8). Country officials interviewed in 2019 said that they do not perceive past conflict to be a risk to this project's success. One Serb official expressed belief that the project has "improved regional relations and cooperation."

Economic Problems Caused by Previous Conflict

Many Balkan nations are still recovering from the economic impact of the 1990s wars, which has had repercussions for GEF-supported projects. Once conflict ceased, countries focused on development, sidelining environmental investment. A World Bank official said in a 2019 interview that the conflict had such a severe economic impact that the level of cooperation on environmental projects has depended on which country would receive the most funding.

One project document noted that in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the war caused $2 billion in damages to the forest sector (World Bank, 2008). Postwar economic policies promoted rapid development by exploiting natural resources, according to the project appraisal document, and many seminatural landscapes were abandoned. The implementation completion and results report for the Drina River basin management project noted that "the economy of many communities in the [Drina basin] tends to be depressed due to difficult transportation links, comparatively long distances to markets, and the perilous state of many of the old, local industries and infrastructure" (World Bank, 2021, p. 1).

Addressing Communications Problems

When the newly emerged post-conflict states were reorganized, Bosnia and Herzegovina was divided into the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska, and Brcko District. Each has its own ministries and forms of government,

making project implementation difficult because all parties must be consulted. Projects create opportunities for environmental ministries and institutions to work together, such as in the Technology Transfer for Climate Resilient Flood Management in the Vrbas River Basin project. A Bosnian representative for the Agency for the Sava River said in a 2019 interview, "When we all have the same problem, we unite. We are all colleagues." GEF projects can help fill communications gaps between ministries in Bosnia and Herzegovina and regionally.

In a 2019 interview on conflict sensitivity related to the Drina River basin, a representative from the Serbian Republic Directorate for Water noted that "conflict was not considered a risk, but lack of information was." Information sharing between nations can be a problem. A lack of trust among formerly warring groups impedes information sharing and project success in the region. However, since the end of the wars, the Balkan nations have made significant progress in building trust through organizations, such as the Sava River Commission, and other environmental projects that require cooperation and communication across jurisdictional boundaries.

Other Outcomes

Many Balkans projects addressed regional issues caused by past conflict or yielded benefits to ameliorate regional difficulties. Projects have increased cooperation, communications, and economic growth, with many improving all three. Projects encouraged cooperation on several levels, such as between the Federation of Bosnia and the Republika Srpska in improving resilient flood-prevention technology in Bosnia and Herzegovina; promoting transboundary cooperation for improving water quality; addressing conflicting water use and enhancing climate mitigation strategies; and building ethnic group cooperation in meeting Macedonia's electric needs.

Projects providing economic benefits included the Forest and Mountain Protected Areas Project, which worked to conserve biodiversity and natural resources in Bosnia and Herzegovina after the conflict's expensive environmental damage; the Drina River Basin project, in which resolution of water-use conflicts would improve transportation and infrastructure and consequently reap economic benefits; and the project to build mini-hydropower plants that generate income for the towns involved.

Improved communications go hand in hand with cooperation. Of the studied Balkans projects, one encouraged communication between the Federation of Bosnia and the Republika Srpska around a shared goal of climate resilient flood management. Another required communication and trust building from several states and promoted information sharing among them. And a third strengthened a joint Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatian working group, which collaborated with institutions in Serbia and Montenegro.

The role of the World Bank as one of the agencies on many GEF Balkans projects increased the project documents' attention to the previous conflict, due to the World Bank's use of risk analysis for all projects, according to a 2020 interview with a representative of the organization. The risk analysis addresses conflict, fragility,

political risk, and weak governance among the risks in their Balkans projects. The World Bank risk assessment does not have a tool to analyze conflict specifically.

Stakeholders concurred that the COVID-19 pandemic created difficulties for ongoing projects because of the challenges of transferring to online platforms and achieving regional cooperation. Some projects are difficult to continue, such as the development of a hydraulic model due to border closures, according to a 2020 interview with a Montenegrin advisor to the Directorate for Water Management.

This case analysis found that conflict sensitivity and context comprehension correlate with success in the Balkans projects. When projects take conflict into account, they can mitigate risks, affect cooperation with local governments and institutions, and increase opportunities to overcome conflict-caused obstacles in the region, such as lack of cooperation, economic difficulties, and poor communication.

Note

1 Two selected projects in the latter two categories were not complete and, therefore, did not have terminal evaluation scores.

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Part III

Lessons and Recommendations

10 Conclusions and Way Forward

This book has highlighted three key lessons related to conservation programming in fragile and conflict-affected settings.

First, substantial investments of international funding, national funding, and in-kind resources in environmental programming are present in fragile and conflict-affected situations. Biodiversity hotspots are overwhelmingly located in fragile and conflict-affected situations. Efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change, combat desertification and land degradation, and strengthen governance of international waters are similarly located in fragile and conflict-affected situations. Accordingly, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) has funded thousands of interventions in areas experiencing armed conflict or fragility; more than one third of its global portfolio is invested in countries affected by major armed conflict and 88.3 percent of the GEF's country-level projects are or were in fragile situations, categorized as either "alert" (very fragile) or "warning" (of concern). The prevalence of conflict and fragility in environmental programming suggests that conflict and fragility should be considered essential contextual factors affecting the ability of environmental organizations to achieve large-scale, sustainable impacts and initiate fundamental change.

Second, fragility and conflict affect project outcomes. The empirical analysis highlights the statistically significant impact of major armed conflict on the likelihood that a project will be cancelled and dropped; this relationship is also seen for fragility. Moreover, at all scales of implementation, a country's conflict status had a statistically significant impact on the duration of a project's delays. Based on the analysis conducted, a country's fragility classification is associated with a negative and statistically significant impact on project outcomes, sustainability, M&E design, M&E implementation, implementation quality, and execution quality.

Third, in order for conservation organizations to meet their objectives in fragile and conflict-affected situations, they need to adopt conflict-sensitive approaches. This is not to say that they need to change their mandate and become peacebuilding organizations. From a very narrow perspective, though, conservation success requires understanding the context in which the intervention occurs and managing the contextual risks—including those associated with fragility and conflict—to reduce the chances that fragility- and conflict-related risks will undermine the

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long-term sustainability and success of the project, let alone generate new grievances and conflicts.

Conflict-sensitive programming presents a suite of tools for conservation organizations to understand, plan for, and adapt to risks related to fragility and conflict. This chapter highlights five conflict-sensitive approaches:

1. context analysis to identify conflict- and fragility-related risks to a proposed intervention and develop measures to mitigate those risks;
2. guidance for conflict-sensitive programming;
3. platforms for learning, exchange, and technical assistance;
4. expansion of environmental and social safeguards to address key conflict-sensitive considerations; and
5. policies and procedures.

These approaches emphasize risk management throughout the project life cycle. They provide institutional means that help funders, project developers, project implementers, and partners to identify potential risks that conflict and fragility pose to achieving the project objectives. Much emphasis is placed on conflict and context analysis (see Chapter 5) and on the design phase, but situations affected by conflict and fragility are dynamic and can change rapidly. Ongoing monitoring and adjustment are necessary. Similarly, projects and project staff continue to learn from the approaches they have innovated. Accordingly, mainstreaming conflict sensitivity throughout the project life cycle is critical.

Context Analysis and Developing Measures to Manage Risks

The first step in most conflict-sensitive programming approaches is to analyze the context of fragility and conflict to understand the risks and develop measures to manage those risks.

In light of the many ways that conflict and fragility affect environmental projects, the findings highlight the need for consideration of conflict-related risks in project screening and a consistent approach to identifying potential conflict- and fragility-related risks. One approach would be to ensure that any risk management analysis conducted at project design and inception more consistently and systematically identifies potential risks and proposes mitigation measures.

Broadly, as part of the project review process for interventions designed in such situations, a combination of standardized and open-ended questions could be used to determine if the context is affected by conflict or fragility. For example, it could ask whether the project will be in a country that is affected by armed conflict within a particular period (for example, in the past ten years). This question could ask the project proponent to consult the Armed Conflict Dataset from the Uppsala Conflict Data Programme and the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO),[1] the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data project database,[2] or XSub's datasets[3] in answering the question. The screening tool could also ask whether the project will be in a situation affected by fragility or conflict. Again, this question could ask the project

proponent to consult established indices, such as the World Bank's List of Harmonized Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations[4] and the Fund for Peace's Fragile States Index[5]—recognizing that the latter provides a substantially more comprehensive list of countries. While referencing standardized databases, the screening tool could also ask an open-ended question that encourages the project proponent to consider the possibility of localized risks related to conflict or fragility that may not be reflected in the national-level indexes of conflict and fragility. If the answers to all these questions are "no," then this portion of the analysis ceases.

If a project is in an area affected by conflict or fragility, the review process could identify conflict- and fragility-related risks along five dimensions: physical security, social conflict, economic drivers, political fragility and weak governance, and coping strategies. These five dimensions represented the key pathways by which conflict and fragility affect GEF projects, based on the analysis (see Chapter 3). However, that said, this is not necessarily an exhaustive list of conflict- and fragility-related risks, and project proponents should be able to identify other potential risks.

Guidance for Conflict-Sensitive Programming

Many environmental organizations—including ten GEF agencies—have developed guidance on conflict-sensitive programming. These include the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Conservation International (CI), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and the World Bank Group (see Chapter 2, Box 2.1). These guidelines, strategies, and toolkits—and experiences applying them—provide a rich body of approaches upon which to draw.

The conflict-sensitive guidelines and other documents developed by these ten organizations reiterate three important facts:

1. several multilateral and bilateral agencies have found guidance on conflict-sensitive programming to be valuable;
2. conflict-sensitive programming is both possible and desirable; and
3. guidance on conflict-sensitive programming, including addressing strategies, guidelines, and toolkits, are still important and necessary, notwithstanding the innovations and learning on conflict-sensitive programming.

Guidance on programming in situations affected by conflict and fragility shares some key elements, including understanding the local context (conflict analysis); collaboration; and stakeholder identification, analysis, and engagement. Existing guidance documents emphasize the importance of actions across the project life cycle. Guidance often provides an introductory section that defines key terms (such as conflict, peace, fragility, and resilience) and explains why conflict-sensitive programming is important (e.g., ADB, 2013b; CI, 2017).

Most guidance documents on conflict-sensitive programming include context analysis or conflict analysis as a foundational step in project development. This analysis seeks to understand the social, cultural, political, economic, and other dimensions of the local conflict, including the role of natural resources (e.g., FAO, 2006, 2019a, 2019b; UNDG, 2013). The approaches for analyzing the context, and the conflict in particular, vary from having a more generalized awareness of the severity of the conflict (e.g., AfDB, 2008) to providing specific conflict analysis tools (e.g., FAO, 2019b; UNEP, 2012).

In addition to context and conflict analysis, guidance, training guides, and other documents highlight a range of complementary tools that can help project teams understand the context for the intervention. These complementary tools include, for example, Post-Conflict Impact Assessments (e.g., FAO, 2019a), Post-Conflict Needs Assessments (e.g., UNDG, 2013), and Strategic Environmental Assessments (e.g., World Bank Group, 2005).

Conflict-sensitive guidelines often draw upon other guiding principles in framing measures to manage conflict-related risks (e.g., AfDB, 2008; ADB, 2013b; FAO, 2006, 2012). For example, many GEF agencies incorporate or refer to the OECD DAC Principles of Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations (OECD DAC, 2007) as guidance for managing conflict (e.g., AfDB, 2008; ADB, 2012). The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (OHCHR, 2011) were also used in various conflict-sensitive guidance tools (e.g., UNDG, 2013).

One of the most common guiding principles of conflict-sensitive guidance documents is an emphasis on inclusion and collaborative approaches throughout the life of the project. Several guidance documents recommend partnerships—national and international, private and public—to establish sustainable programming (e.g., FAO, 2012). Stakeholder engagement processes are included in most of the toolkits, manuals, and guidance documents (e.g., ADB, 2013a, 2013b; CI, 2017; FAO, 2019a). Provisions on stakeholder engagement processes tend to include recommendations on communication techniques (e.g., CI, 2017; FAO, 2012), determining the need for and defining the role of facilitators (e.g., FAO, 2012), and tips for navigating negotiations (e.g., FAO, 2006).

Monitoring and evaluation in conflict areas are difficult due to many ethical and practical challenges. Fragile and conflict-affected situations present accessibility issues due to the remoteness of sites, physical safety and security concerns, and rapidly changing situations that are unpredictable. Some of the practical challenges include data collection in unsafe environments, identifying and accessing affected groups, and dealing with shifting power dynamics. Evaluations in these contexts are resource intensive, costly, and physically and emotionally demanding, and traditional evaluation approaches may not be adequate. In response, some organizations have developed indicators and/or guidance and complexity frameworks for monitoring and evaluation in fragile and conflict-affected contexts to ensure evaluations are useful and valid. These measures seek to improve the ability of monitoring to better track changes in conflict dynamics, project outcomes, and interactions between the two. Some organizations undertaking projects in

fragile and conflict-affected contexts have worked to revise their indicators and theories of change as situations evolve through frameworks, such as CARE's Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Framework for Social Analysis and Action (CARE, 2020). Another noteworthy development is the use of innovative methods and techniques such as geospatial analysis (satellites and drones), remote surveys through phones or tablets, voice or online forms, social media analysis, location tracking, and virtual communications in conflict zones. Various development organizations have started incorporating these techniques within their M&E frameworks for timely response, and adaptive management such as World Bank's Geo-Enabling Initiative for Monitoring and Supervision (World Bank, 2019) and the European Space Agency dedicated earth observation support fragility, conflict, and security.[6]

Platforms for Learning, Exchange, and Technical Assistance

These platforms are designed to effectively foster learning and exchange, build capacity, and provide specialized assistance. Because conflict sensitivity is a cross-cutting issue, lessons learned can be exchanged on existing knowledge platforms supported through the various practice groups in the multilateral development banks and agencies.

Exchanges of approaches, experiences, and learning can enable project coordinators to quickly and effectively improve their projects and project performance. Project exchange within and across organizations can facilitate peer support and learning for teams that are implementing similar projects or facing similar challenges, allowing for network building and collaboration. These platforms also provide valuable services in surveying experiences to distill learning and exchange regarding best practices. Armed with this learning, the platforms then build capacity and provide technical assistance to new and ongoing projects. These platforms have proven particularly effective in addressing a discrete set of issues, such as international water management (e.g., the International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network), illegal trade in wildlife (e.g., the Global Wildlife Program), and climate change (e.g., the Climate Technology Centre and Network [CTCN]).

For example, a GEF-funded initiative managed by the World Bank, the Global Wildlife Program,[7] seeks to end illegal wildlife trade and protect endangered species (ELI, 2017). With 37 child projects across 32 countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, this program includes a component that seeks to enhance knowledge management across the projects. This includes organizing knowledge exchange events in which program participants can learn from experts and from peers. It also established a system to share documents with good practices and lessons from other projects. The goals of knowledge sharing are to accelerate learning, enhance collaboration between governments (especially in surveillance), strengthen partnerships between international organizations, and implement a monitoring and evaluation framework to track the progress of multiple projects within the program.

A variant is to have a platform for learning, exchange, and technical assistance that extends beyond a particular portfolio. The CTCN is an example of this approach. Created in 2012 by the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, it is administered by a coalition led by UNEP[8] and receives part of its funding from the GEF. Though not GEF-specific, the CTCN operates similarly to platforms focusing on GEF projects. It focuses on technical assistance for climate programming by providing funding for technical projects, a platform for information exchange, network-building for related project teams, and workshops for capacity building.

Beyond the usual learning, exchange, capacity building, and technical assistance activities, the platform also could pay particular attention to learning from failure. To stimulate learning from failures, a growing number of organizations and networks are holding "fail fairs" or "fail fests" to learn from projects that failed. Fail fests attempt to build a culture of sharing failures so as to maximize learning and generate new ideas for improvement (Trucano, 2011). Fail fairs can be internal or external. Internal fail fairs hold events solely for one organization's failed projects, engaging participants within that organization, rather than the public. By contrast, external fail fairs are open to the public to present or watch. According to NGO staff and other sources (Fail Forward, n.d.; Trucano, 2011), organizers of a fail fair should keep in mind a few important points:

1. Focus on celebrating taking risks—and learning from experience.
2. In addition to recruiting participants to speak about their risks, also recruit senior employees within the organization to speak. This can signal high-level support.
3. Establish a code of conduct for participants to create a safe space (especially important if donors are in the room). This code of conduct can be brief, but it is important to establish the rules of engagement.
4. Be cautious about sharing the presentations online. It is important to have candid discussions, and broad dissemination can restrict candor.

Environmental and Social Safeguards

Many organizations, including the GEF agencies, have adopted environmental and social safeguards that provide high-level policy protections. For example, GEF Environmental and Social Safeguards apply to all GEF-funded projects so as to "avoid, minimize and mitigate any potentially adverse environmental and social impacts" (GEF, 2018, p. 4). The GEF Environmental and Social Safeguards provide a set of nine standards for policies, procedures, systems, and capabilities that all GEF agencies must demonstrate are in place (GEF, 2018).

Additional safeguards tailored to address conflict and fragile situations could help to ensure that projects both cause no harm (e.g., by exacerbating tensions or generating conflict) and continue to meet the needs of local communities in the midst of situations affected by conflict and fragility. Moreover, enshrining

conflict-sensitive measures in the Environmental and Social Safeguards could help to reduce the impacts of conflict and fragility on projects.

Safeguards could, for example, ensure that project documents include an analysis of conflict- and fragility-related threats to natural resources upon which communities depend, the political economy of natural resource economies related to the project, competition for or conflict over natural resources, and of marginalized communities' access (or lack thereof) to natural resources in and near the project area. Moreover, conflict sensitivity procedures, standards, and practices should extend throughout the project life cycle—not just during project design.

Policies and Procedures

Institutional policies and procedures can both enable and impede conflict-sensitive measures. In particular, (a) the rules and procedures need to enable projects to make necessary programmatic adjustments if conflict flares up; (b) the rules governing financing of projects should enable project staff to make the necessary adjustments to reflect sudden developments on the ground; and (c) funders of environmental programming may consider greater flexibility in accounting for project costs to reflect the greater time and resource demands associated with developing and implementing projects in fragile and conflict-affected settings.

One of the greatest challenges for projects in such situations is being able to adjust the project as the dynamic context may require. This is both a technical question (How to adjust the project?) and an administrative question (Is it possible to adjust without additional permission from the funding body?). The administrative question can be particularly challenging and should allow for nimble adjustments in institutions. For example, funders might reconsider what constitutes a change in project objectives that would warrant additional approvals. Consider, for example, a project to improve biodiversity management in a country, particularly by training park rangers in a specific park with mountain gorillas. If rebels moved into the park and made on-the-ground work too dangerous, would efforts to train the rangers remotely be a change of objectives? What about policy work to empower the rangers? Would it be possible to move the project to another park with chimpanzees? Or a park with many endemic species but no primates? Useful guidance for practitioners would address what would constitute a change in project objectives, would be sufficiently broad to enable projects in fragile and conflict-affected situations to adjust as necessary, and would allow them to do so in a nimble manner.

Funders also could consider amending the rules governing financing of projects to enable project staff to make the necessary adjustments to reflect sudden developments on the ground. The four key ways to do this are (a) allowing for contingency costs, (b) allowing for new budget lines, (c) allowing a greater percentage of funds that a project may transfer from one budget line to another without seeking approval, and (d) accounting for the additional costs of working in fragile and conflict-affected situations. Funders could allow for contingent costs, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected settings. A number of intergovernmental organizations allow contingency budgeting, including in the central budgets of the World

Bank and UNDP. More broadly, the growing interest in resilience—and funding for resilience—seems to be increasing interest in contingency reserves and contingent budgeting (see Chapter 5).

Reforming funding rules and procedures to allow for more nimble and adaptive programming in fragile and conflict-affected situations can make environmental programming more resilient in pandemics and other crises. Many of the challenges are similar: lack of security, difficulties in conducting consultations and securing evidence, changing political priorities, weakened capacity, and growing distrust of institutions. The ability to adjust project and programming scope and move money between components is essential to effective responses to COVID-19 and other pandemics. Indeed, numerous key informants working in fragile and conflict-affected countries noted that while the country had fewer resources for coping with the pandemic, the ability and frame of mind to navigate compounding crises that had been developed working in the fragile and conflict-affected settings may have improved the ability of projects to navigate the newest crisis.

Notes

1 https://www.prio.org/data/4
2 https://acleddata.com/
3 https://cross-sub.org/
4 https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/brief/harmonized-list-of-fragile-situations
5 https://fragilestatesindex.org/
6 https://www.eo4sd-fragility.net/
7 https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/global-wildlife-program/overview
8 https://www.ctc-n.org/

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Index

Note: Numbers in **bold** indicate a table. Numbers in *italics* indicate a figure.