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

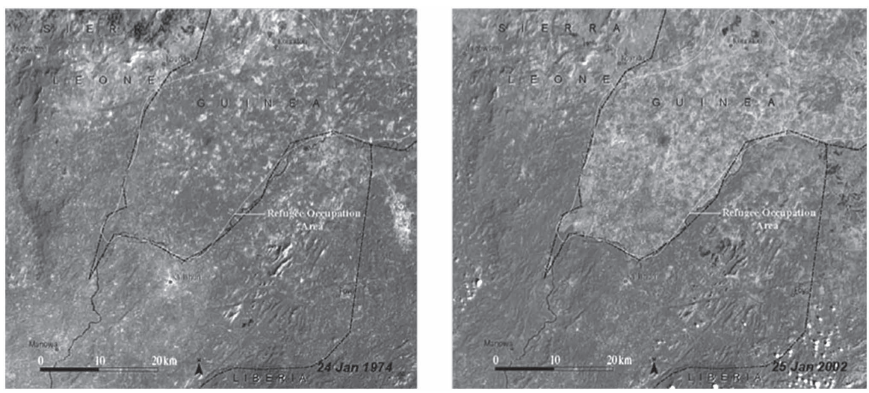

Figure 3.2 Deforestation in the Parrot's Beak Region of Guinea, 1974 and 2002

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