

## Global Environment Facility (GEF) - UPSC Notes

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is a multilateral financial mechanism that provides grants to developing countries for projects that benefit the global environment and promote sustainable livelihoods in local communities. This article shares details on the Global Environment Facility, its 6 focal areas, organisation structure and the financial assistance it grants to various International Conventions that work on safeguarding our environment.

Aspirants would find this article very helpful while preparing for the [IAS Exam](#).

### Global Environment Facility (GEF) - Introduction

Since its inception, this multilateral financial mechanism has advanced \$20.5 billion in grants and mobilized an additional \$112 billion in financing for more than 4,800 projects in 170 countries.

1. GEF was established during the [Rio Earth Summit](#) of 1992.
2. It is based in Washington, D.C., United States.
3. The GEF is jointly managed by the [United Nations Development Programme \(UNDP\)](#), the World Bank and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
4. 183 nations are united under GEF in partnership with civil society organizations (CSOs), international institutions, private sector, etc. with the purpose of addressing the environmental issues across the globe.
5. The financial mechanism was established to help tackle our planet's most pressing environmental problems. It provides funds to the developing countries and transition economies for projects related to climate change, biodiversity, the ozone layer, etc.

### Global Environment Facility - Focal Areas

As an independently operating financial organization, GEF addresses six designated focal areas which are listed below.

1. Biodiversity
2. Climate change
3. International waters
4. Ozone depletion
5. Land degradation
6. Persistent Organic Pollutants

### Global Environment Facility - Structure

The GEF has a unique governing structure organized around an Assembly, the Council, the Secretariat, 18 Agencies, a Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) and the Evaluation Office.

### Global Environment Facility - Financing Important Global Conventions working on Environment

GEF also serves as a financial mechanism for the following conventions:

1. [United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity \(UNCBD\)](#)
2. [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change \(UNFCCC\)](#)
3. [United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification \(UNCCD\)](#)
4. Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)

## 5. [Minamata Convention](#) on Mercury

Although the Global Environment Facility is not linked to the [Montreal Protocol](#) on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer formally, it supports its implementation in countries with the economies in transition.

### GEF Agencies

GEF Agencies generate project proposals and then manage these projects on the ground. There are 18 institutions that act as GEF agencies. The following table gives the names of these agencies.

<a href="#">Asian Development Bank</a>	African Development Bank	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
<a href="#">Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)</a>	Inter-American Development Bank	<a href="#">International Fund for Agricultural Development</a>
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	<a href="#">United Nations Environment Programme</a>	<a href="#">United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)</a>
<a href="#">World Bank Group</a>	Conservation International	Development Bank of Latin America
Development Bank of Southern Africa	Foreign Economic Cooperation Office (Chinese Government)	Brazilian Biodiversity Fund
<a href="#">International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)</a>	West African Development Bank	World Wildlife Fund (WWF-US)

### GEF and India

India is a major player in the GEF.

- It is both a donor and a recipient of funding from the GEF.
- The political focal point for GEF in India is the Finance Ministry while the operational focal point is the Environment Ministry.
- India, Bhutan, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh have together formed a Permanent Constituency in the Executive Council of the GEF.
- India receives funding from the GEF for work in three major areas namely, biodiversity, climate change and land degradation.

### Latest News on GEF - COVID-19 Pandemic

#### Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

To help address the present situation and reduce the probability of new environmental crises emerging in the foreseeable future, GEF has come up with a set of plans which are bifurcated into immediate, medium and long term plans. The response also includes efforts to support a green economic recovery consistent with sustainable and nature-based development.

The pressures on ecosystems are bringing wild animals and humans in dangerous proximity to each other. The response of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) encompasses measures to address the following:

1. Deforestation
2. Trading of wildlife
3. Urban Sprawl

The 3 different Plans of the Global Environment Facility are given below.

### **Immediate Actions**

1. Trading in Wildlife - There will be a focus on keeping a check and monitoring the consumption of wildlife products and bushmeat. GEF is collaborating with the World Bank and other partners in Africa and Asia to invest in innovative solutions.
2. Group of experts will work on analysing the risks that may arise from infectious diseases in the future. They will analyse the root causes of how it is connected with deforestation and crumbling of the ecosystem.
3. GEF will look into ways of sustaining the current programs and projects by identifying risks associated with it due to the current pandemic and make sure that gains made in the past and favourable outcomes expected in the future are not compromised.

### **Medium-Term Actions**

1. A blueprint would be developed for green recovery by exploring different ways of deploying upcoming and ongoing projects.
2. The blueprint will also club the opportunities and risks arising due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It will examine how the crisis will affect mining, cities, and food security.

### **Long-Term Actions**

1. It will explore ways to bring balance between natural systems and human systems and explore a lasting solution to the COVID-19 pandemic.