The Evaluation of Global Environment Facility Projects in Türkiye

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ABSTRACT

This study conducted a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) projects implemented in Turkey. The main tool us[1]ed was the World Bank Map tool. By entering the GEF option in the Toolkit sub-tool of the World Bank Map tool, various interpretations were attempted by obtaining data on GEF projects implemented in Turkey. At the same time, the land cover type in the provinces where GEF projects are implemented was examined according to the land cover analysis type in the World Bank Map tool using Modis Combined. All reviews and analyses were based on data obtained from the relevant website between 1 and 10 June 2024. It defines which types of GEF projects are supported and financed according to the provinces in Turkey, and also attempts to determine the differentiation of land cover in the provinces where these projects are implemented. In Turkey, 17 GEF projects are actively implemented in 27 locations with a total funding of $46 million. The focal areas of these projects are climate change (7), land degradation (7), biodiversity (6), multifocal area (3), and chemicals and waste (7). Of course, it could be argued that it is not correct to base the differentiation by province only on GEF projects, but it is still considered that it can create a significant level of awareness among policymakers and all relevant stakeholders, especially farmers. Although it is expected that it will be difficult to detect the effects of these projects in the short term, it is predicted that the results will have important implications, especially for farmers and agricultural organizations, which are important stakeholders that are considered to be effective in land use. Future studies, using the new generation of impact evaluation methods, will be able to show the effects of the project in question more clearly.
Keywords: New generation impact evaluation, sustainability, land cover type, World Bank, data lab.

Türkiye’de Küresel Çevre Fonu Projelerinin Değerlendirilmesi

ÖZ

Bu çalışma, Türkiye'de uygulanan Küresel Çevre Fonu (GEF) projelerinin kapsamlı bir analizini ve değerlendirmesini yapmıştır. Kullanılan ana araç Dünya Bankası Harita aracıdır. Dünya Bankası Harita aracının Toolkit alt aracında GEF seçeneği girilerek Türkiye'de uygulanan GEF projelerine ilişkin veriler elde edilerek çeşitli yorumlar yapılmaya çalışılmıştır. Aynı zamanda Modis Combined kullanılarak Dünya Bankası Harita aracındaki arazi örtüsü analiz tipine göre GEF projelerinin uygulandığı illerdeki arazi örtüsü tipi incelenmiştir. Tüm inceleme ve analizler 1-10 Haziran 2024 tarihleri arasında ilgili web sitesinden elde edilen verilere dayanmaktadır. Türkiye'de illere göre hangi tür GEF projelerinin desteklendiği ve finanse edildiği tanımlanmakta, ayrıca bu projelerin uygulandığı illerdeki arazi örtüsü farklılaşması belirlenmeye çalışılmaktadır. Türkiye'de 27 lokasyonda toplam 46 milyon dolar fon ile 17 GEF projesi aktif olarak uygulanmaktadır. Bu projelerin odak alanları iklim değişikliği (7), arazi bozunumu (7), biyoçeşitlilik (6), çok odaklı alan (3) ve kimyasallar ve atıklardır (7). Elbette illere göre ayrımın sadece GEF projelerine dayandırılmasının doğru olmadığı tartışılabilir, ancak yine de politika yapıcılar ve başta çiftçiler olmak üzere ilgili tüm paydaşlar arasında önemli düzeyde farkındalık yaratabileceği düşünülmektedir. Bu projelerin etkilerini kısa vadede tespit etmenin zor olacağı beklenmekle birlikte, sonuçların özellikle arazi kullanımında etkili olduğu düşünülen önemli paydaşlar olan çiftçiler ve tarımsal örgütler için önemli çıkarımları olacağı öngörülmektedir. Gelecekte yapılacak çalışmalar, yeni nesil etki değerlendirme yöntemlerini kullanarak, söz konusu projenin etkilerini daha net bir şekilde ortaya koyabilecektir.
Anahtar kelimeler: Yeni nesil etki değerlendirme, sürdürülebilirlik, arazi örtü tipi, Dünya Bankası, veri laboratuvarı.

*Sorumlu yazar

Introduction

Evaluation can be envisaged as an important part of the chain of efforts to be open to criticism and contributions to the findings obtained as a result of any activity or project, and to achieve better, taking into account the experiences that have been implemented. The evaluation process can be handled in a multidimensional framework. The Global Environment Facility (GEF), which constitutes an important public financing mechanism for the global environment, can focus on understanding why, how, and to what extent desired and undesired results are realized and their possible impacts on stakeholders within the scope of its evaluation policy (Global Environment Facility [GEF], 2019).

The GEF Assembly has 186 member countries and/or participants. As a family of multilateral funds, the GEF intensively seeks to fund work to combat biodiversity loss, climate change, and pollution, and to promote land and ocean health. This funding and guidance endeavors to help developing countries overcome complex challenges and integrate their efforts towards international environmental goals. The partnership is centered on integration and inclusion and involves 186 member governments as well as civil society organizations, indigenous people, women, and youths. Over the past three decades, the GEF has provided nearly $25 billion in funding, with a further $138 billion available for country-centred priority projects (GEF, 2024).

When GEF projects that are actively implemented around the world are examined, 2,046 projects are supported in 152 countries, 8,265 locations, with a financing of 8,951 million dollars. It is discovered that 682 of these projects are being implemented in Africa, 509 in Asia, 423 in Latin America and the Caribbean, 232 in Global, 185 in Europe and Central Asia, and 15 regionally. When the focal areas of these projects are examined, 892 of them are climate change, 754 are biodiversity, 495 are land degradation, 469 are multi-focal areas, 255 are chemicals and waste and 149 are international waters. On the other hand, when GEF projects that have been completed and closed around the world are evaluated, 3,193 projects have been completed in 164 countries, and 3,307 locations, with a financing of 10,698 million dollars. It was defined that 958 of these projects were completed in Africa, 775 in Asia, 666 in Latin America and the Caribbean, 522 in Europe and Central Asia, 258 globally, and 14 regionally. When the focal areas of these projects are examined, 1,153 of them are biodiversity, 1,099 are climate change, 442 are multifocal areas, 391 are chemicals and waste, 246 are land degradation, and 226 are international waters (GEF, 2024).

Evaluation is generally undertaken for a variety of reasons, including accountability, transparency of results achieved by a particular activity, and learning from previous applications. In terms of evaluation policy prediction (GEF, 2019), which is the most approved and traditional public financing system, among the objectives of the evaluation, understanding the mechanisms of stakeholders is the basic key concept.

GEF Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) develops systematic approaches to understand the ways and means that lead to transformational change, and to understand the lessons, experiences, and implications of GEF interventions. For this evaluation, IEO selected and classified completed GEF projects according to the criteria set out below. 1. Relevance, 2. Depth of change, 3. Scale of change, 4. Sustainability (Batra, Garcia, and Temnenko, 2022).

According to the evaluations of GEF projects, it is defined that the funds provided made a positive contribution to the scale-up process. It can be stated that the methods and findings learned through the evaluation of GEF projects generally enable the re-demanding and use of project funds. As a good example, a GEF project implemented in Romania enabled a transition in agricultural waste management from an expensive and concrete-based model to a cheaper and more homogeneous efficient plastic-based alternative model. Another example is in China, where a lower-cost termite control initiative implemented in integrated pest management has been promoted. With additional technical training and public awareness activities, the saved costs were spread to wider segments. On the other hand, there has been significant success in investigating which interventions should be adopted and scaled, based on several case studies and real events. For example, very significant gains have been achieved in the Rural

Electrification and Renewable Energy Development project in Bangladesh (Batra et al., 2022). Similarly, in China and Brazil, the transition of farmers supported within the scope of GEF to sustainable land management was accelerated, enabling biodiversity to be protected and farmers to earn higher income (Garcia, 2018).

Negi and Sohn (2022) examined the sustainability levels of completed GEF projects and sustainability linkages. It is determined that the projects are generally sustainable, while the sustainability outlook worsens in some projects and improves in others. The catalytic processes that increase sustainability (maintenance, dissemination, multiplication, scale-up, and market change) have higher positive effects. It is clarified that factors such as financial and political support for traceability, monitoring, and capacities of the executing institution, participation of stakeholders, and project design have very important roles and duties in ensuring the sustainability of the project (Evaluation Cooperation Group [ECG, 2012]). The evaluation is calculated both retrospectively (considering accumulated net benefits) and prospectively (estimating the probability of accruing net benefits in the future).

Carugi and Viggh (2022) introduced strategic country cluster evaluations (SCCEs), which are a concrete example of how the GEF copes with the increasing complexity of GEF programming. It is emphasized that this complexity reflects their interconnectedness in terms of both synergy and exchange. The relationship between socioeconomic development priorities and environmental protection obligations, where GEF projects and programs are implemented was analyzed.

One of the most concrete results of the system is the increase in income obtained because of the increase in dairy production. In terms of program evaluation, the change in actual net farm income was examined and matched to minimum income for living (Fitzpatrick and Akgungor, 2019). The calculation of this income criterion for the program was based on Anker and Anker's (2014) work in Malawi where tea is grown. Since the program is in Malawi, adjustments have been made based on different costs such as food and shelter. All prices are adjusted to a 2015 base, for a linear analysis, like the poverty linkage (Fitzpatrick, 2022).

It is clarified that a detailed analysis of GEF projects implemented in Türkiye was carried out under the auspices of the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change (MEUCC, 2024), with the participation of all relevant stakeholders. The topics covered in the study, the topics focused on by the project stakeholders, and the main results and findings obtained have been tried to be summarized in the study. The project aims to improve the sustainability of land use management in agricultural and forest areas by adapting and disseminating low-carbon emission technologies within the framework of land degradation, climate change, protection of biological diversity, and efficient use of agricultural and forest areas. It is stated that this model is integrated into all project components by using various investments as a way of strengthening the knowledge base of local resource users and public extension officials. It is declared that the farmer field school model will provide a channel for the continuation of the learning service between public personnel and farmers. It is explained that this channel will also provide the necessary encouragement, information, and support for the creation of enabling environment strengthening.

In this study, a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of the GEF projects implemented in Türkiye was performed, by taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the GEF, which is included in the World Bank Maps tool, which provides comprehensive content. According to the literature review, it is discovered that there are a very limited number of studies conducted with this scope and method in Turkey, and it is envisaged that this study may guide future research.

Methodology

Methodologically, a model like the approach applied by Negi and Sohn (2022) is used. The study found that factors such as project-based funding, financial support for the monitoring and evaluation process, political support, follow-up and capacity of the implementing organization, stakeholder involvement,

and project design play a crucial role in determining the sustainability of the project and increasing its effectiveness. In this research, the World Bank Map tool was mainly used (World Bank Maps, 2024). By entering the GEF in the Toolkit sub-tool of The World Bank Map tool, detailed analysis and interpretations were attempted to be made by obtaining data on GEF projects implemented in Türkiye. At the same time, the land cover type in the provinces where GEF projects are being carried out was examined according to the land cover analysis type in the World Bank Map tool using Modis Combined. All reviews and analyses were performed based on data obtained from the relevant website between 1-10 July 2024. In essence, the study presents the financial support provided by the GEF in Turkey in the recent period by provinces on the one hand and compares the vegetation type in the provinces where GEF financial support was provided in the same period on the other. In effect, this study is a baseline study. By following the process of development and change in vegetation cover in subsequent studies, clearer conclusions can be drawn.

There is no need for an ethics committee decision in this study.

Findings

In the process to date in Türkiye, 21 projects have been carried out in 3 locations and 70 million dollars of financing has been provided. When the focal areas of these projects are examined, 9 of them are climate change, 6 are biodiversity, 4 are chemicals and waste, 2 are multi-focal areas, 1 is international waters, and 1 is land degradation.

In Türkiye, 17 GEF projects are actively being carried out in 27 locations (Figure 1), with a financing of 46 million dollars. When the focal areas of these projects are examined; it consists of climate change (7), land degradation (7), biodiversity (6), multifocal area (3), and chemicals and waste (7).

These projects were examined in detail, considering focal areas. First, projects being carried out within the framework of climate change were examined (Table 1). To help the Turkish economy within the framework of sustainable soil management, climate-friendly agriculture, and green growth, the highest supported project funds have been provided for sustainable biomass production. These items were followed by projects to produce energy-efficient engines in small and medium-sized enterprises and the establishment of low-cost buildings made of wood.

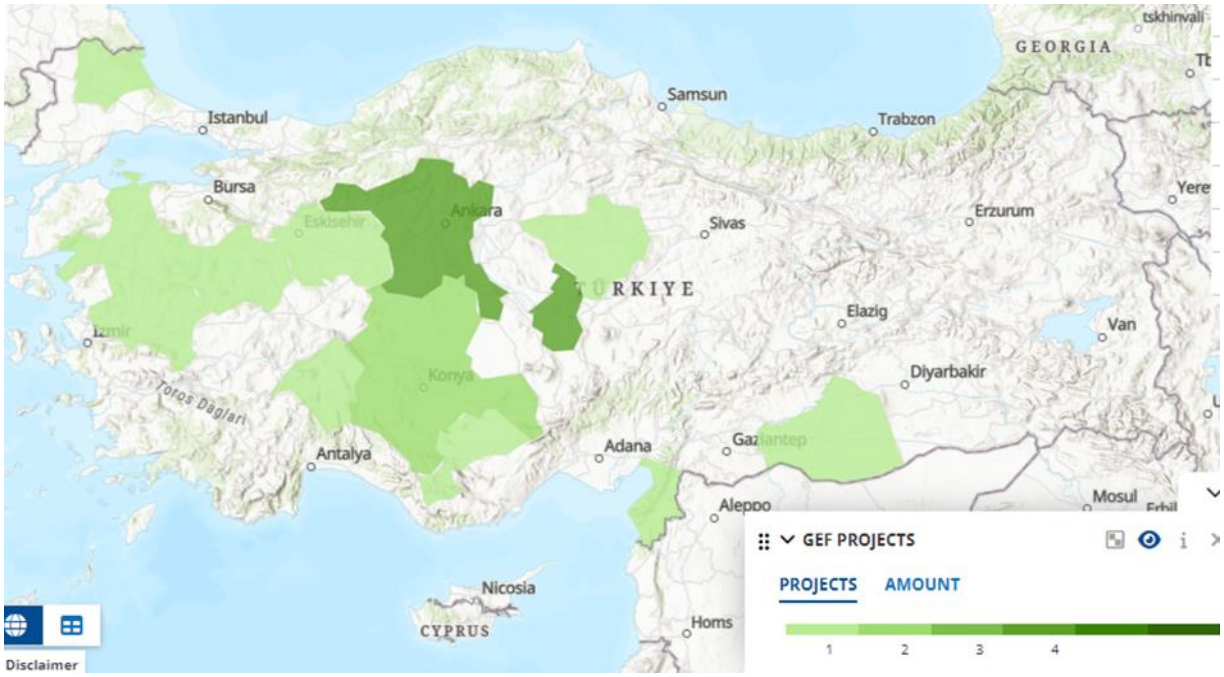


Figure *1*. Distribution of GEF Projects Carried Out in Türkiye by Location

Table 1: *Projects Being Carried Out Within the Scope of Climate Change*

Projects	Finance ($M)	Period
Innovative clean technology enterprise development-Institutionalisation and expansion of the Global Innovation Programme for SMEs in Türkiye	1.78	2021-2026
Promoting energy-efficient motors in small and medium-sized enterprises	3.75	2016-2024
Promoting low-cost energy-efficient wooden buildings in Türkiye	3.80	2023 – N/A[1]
Support for the proportion of Türkiye's seventh national communication (7th NC) and third biennial report (3rd BR) to UNFCCC	0.85	2017-2022
Sustainable energy financing mechanism for solar PV in forest villages in Turkey	3.78	2015-2023
Sustainable land management and climate-friendly agriculture	5.75	2014-2023
Sustainable use of biomass to assist the development of Turkey's economy towards green growth	4.42	2018-2024

Not available.

The types of support given regarding land degradation are also crucial (Table 2). At this stage, the most finance was provided to the sustainable land management and climate-friendly agriculture project, which is also under the title of climate change, followed by the land degradation and biodiversity conservation project provided to the Kazdaglari region. Studies implemented under the subheading of biodiversity are also examined below (Table 3). In this section, it is defined that the project fund sources examined in the previous section come first. It is clarified that the 3 supported projects regarding multi-focal areas have also been analyzed under the headings examined above (Table 4).

Table 2: *Projects Supported Within the Scope of Land Degradation*

Projects	Finance ($M)	Period
Contributing to land degradation neutrality (LDN) target setting by demonstrating the LDN approach in the Upper Sakarya Basin for scaling up at the national level	2.39	2019-2024
Enhancement of agro-ecological management system through promoting ecosystem-oriented food production	0.70	2022-N/A[1]
Integrated natural resource management in very humid climatic regions of the Eastern Black Sea Region in Türkiye	1.25	2023-N/A
Strengthening the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable management of forest landscapes in Türkiye's Kazdaglari Region	4.66	2022-N/A
Sustainable and integrated water resource management in Gediz River Basin in Türkiye	1.14	2022-N/A
Sustainable land management and climate-friendly agriculture	5.75	2014-2023
Türkiye Irrigation Modernization Project	2.00	2018-2026

Not available.

Table 3: *Studies Implemented Within the Framework of Biodiversity*

Projects	Finance ($M)	Period
Addressing invasive alien species threats at key marine biodiversity areas	3.34	2017-2025
BS support for the implementation of the national biosafety framework	0.54	2011-2017
Conservation and sustainable management of Türkiye's steppe ecosystem	2.33	2016-2022
Strengthening the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable management of forest landscapes in Türkiye's Kazdaglari Region	4.66	2022-N/A[1]
Sustainable and integrated water resource management in Gediz River Basin in Türkiye	1.14	2022-N/A[1]
Sustainable land management and climate-friendly agriculture	5.75	2014-2023

Not available.

Table 4: *Projects Implemented Under the Multi-Focal Area*

Projects	**Finance ($M)**	**Period**
Strengthening the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable management of forest landscapes in Türkiye's Kazdaglari Region	4.66	2022-N/A[1]
Sustainable and integrated water resource management in Gediz River Basin in Türkiye	1.14	2022-N/A[1]
Sustainable land management and climate-friendly agriculture	5.75	2014-2023

Not available.

Only one project is implemented within the scope of chemicals and waste in Türkiye (Table 5).

Table 5: *Projects Under the Chemicals and Waste*

Projects	**Finance ($M)**	**Period**
Enhancing environmental performance in the expanded and extruded polystyrene foam industries in Türkiye	3.19	2021-2025

When the start and end dates of some of the projects discussed under different headings above are examined, it is observed that they have been completed. On the other hand, since these projects are included under ongoing projects under the main source from which the data used in the conduct of the study is obtained, no changes have been made to the continuation status of the projects.

Similar results were obtained by Negi and Sohn (2022). It is envisaged that numerous factors may affect sustainability, including the availability of financial support for monitoring and follow-up, political support and facilitation for the project, follow-up and capacity capabilities of the implementing partner, stakeholder involvement, and deficiencies in project design. It is considered that it is very important for development projects such as GEF-supported to pay attention to the mentioned factors and possibly other local factors to increase the possibility of sustainability, especially land cover type and vegetation.

When the distribution of GEF projects implemented in Türkiye by province is examined, it is explored that Ankara and Nevşehir are at the top in terms of the number of projects and the funding provided (Table 6).

Table 6: *GEF Projects Implemented in Türkiye by the Regions*

Regions	**Finance ($M)**	**The number of projects**
Ankara	11.8	4
Nevşehir	11.7	4
Konya	7.8	2
Karaman	5.8	1
Kırklareli	3.3	1
Balıkesir	3.3	1
Hatay	3.3	1
Eskişehir	2.4	1
Şanlıurfa	2.3	1
Yozgat	2.0	1
Manisa	2.0	1
Isparta	2.0	1

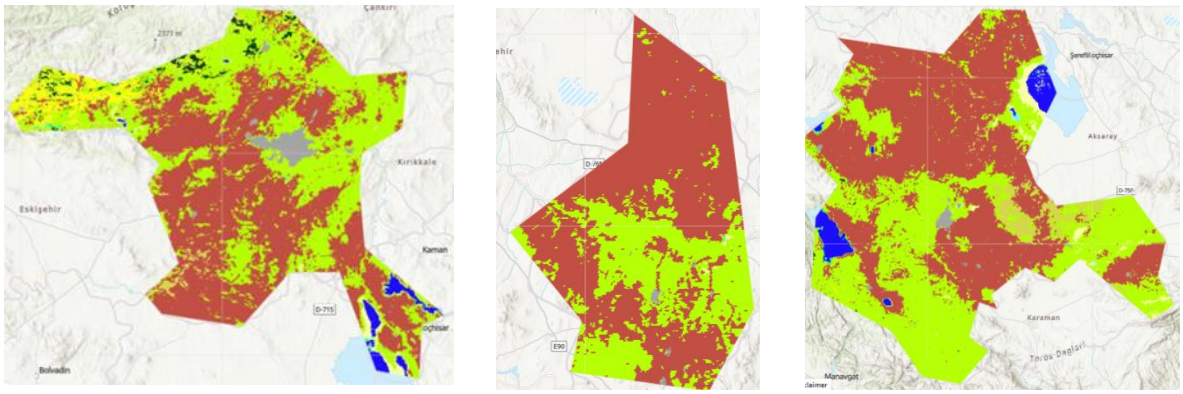
In the final stage of the study, the land cover type in the provinces where GEF projects are being carried out was examined (Table 7) according to the land cover analysis type in the World Bank Map tool. In this way, the possible partial effects of the projects being implemented, even at a certain level, on the vegetation grown on the land can be analyzed at the macroscopic level. Of course, although it is accepted that this evaluation will be a very ambitious interpretation at this stage, it is envisaged that it may shed

light on future studies. The presentation of the land cover type of the provinces in question on the map was also examined (Figure 2).

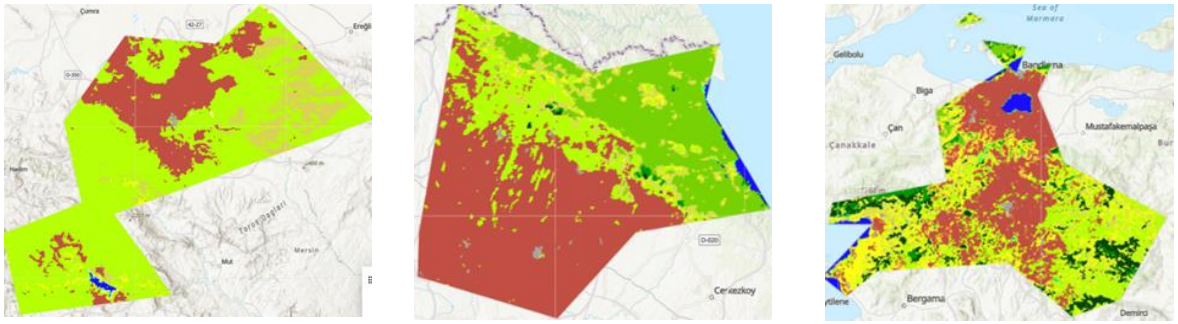
When analyzing the type of land cover by province, the following results are obtained. In Ankara, grasslands have the highest share, followed by croplands. In the provinces of Nevşehir, Konya, Karaman, Kırklareli, Kırklareli, Eskişehir, and Yozgat, croplands and grasslands are in first place. In Balıkesir province, in addition to croplands and grasslands, savannas, woody savannas, and evergreen needleleaf forests are important. In Hatay province, croplands, savannas, and grasslands have the highest shares of land cover type. In Şanlıurfa Province, croplands are at a very high level, followed by open shrublands and grasslands. In Manisa province, grasslands, savannas, and croplands are in first place respectively, while in Isparta province, grasslands are in first place with a very high area, followed by croplands and savannas.

Table 7: *Land cover type by the regions implemented GEF projects (km^2)*

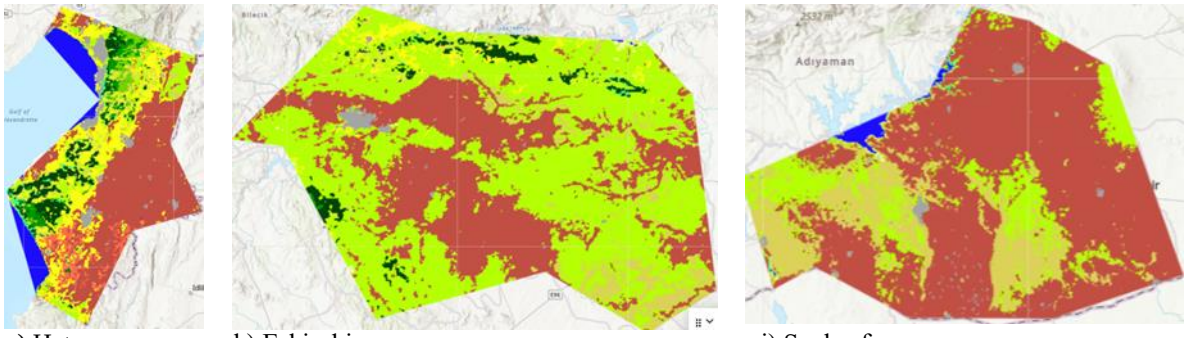
Regions	Grasslands	Croplands	Savannas	Urban and built-up plants	Open shrublands	Barren	Evergreen needleleaf forests	Water	Woody savannas	Permanent wetlands	Snow and ice	Cropland / natural vegetation mosaic	Mixed forests	Deciduous broadleaf forests	Evergreen broadleaf forests
Ankara	12,045	9,442	989	601	414	365	363	351	334	102	8	2	2	-	-
Nevşehir	2,004	3,217	-	23	-	10	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Konya	19,043	18,057	33	345	1,137	828	21	931	3	91	56	-	-	-	-
Karaman	5,830	1,607	91	18	733	26	1	21	1	9	-	-	-	-	-
Kırklareli	1,061	3,154	76	30	11	0	15	45	395	10	0	15	24	1,463	-
Balıkesir	3,282	4,530	2,720	159	0	2	1,099	339	1,539	92	-	197	425	201	1,099
Hatay	725	2,157	1,036	251	28	3	303	464	298	84	-	227	151	117	15
Eskişehir	8,098	3,087	326	101	1,032	34	288	3	102	45	-	-	8	6	-
Şanlıurfa	2,363	10,786	5	204	5,514	57	-	207	-	36	0	-	-	-	-
Yozgat	5,756	7,870	99	30	-	14	45	2	59	6	-	1	-	-	-
Manisa	4,679	3,472	3,610	266	300	7	358	60	313	25	-	96	10	0	-
Isparta	6,072	1,082	926	136	44	20	82	470	71	89	0	-	-	-	-



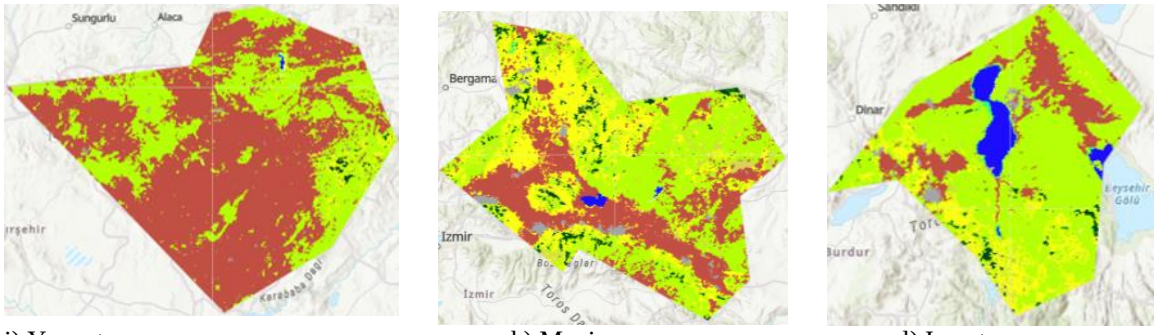
a) Ankara b) Nevşehir c) Konya



d) Karaman e) Kırklareli f) Balıkesir



g) Hatay h) Eskişehir i) Şanlıurfa



j) Yozgat k) Manisa l) Isparta

Figure *2*. Differences in Land Cover Types of Provinces Benefiting from GEF Project Support

Many factors, primarily climate conditions and geographical features, are effective on the existing land cover and therefore biodiversity in a region. On the other hand, developing technology and industrialization concepts can cause excessive exploitation and destruction of many resources such as soil and water resources and biodiversity. In this study, it is determined which types of GEF projects are supported and funded according to the provinces in Türkiye, and it also tried to determine the

differentiation in the land cover in the provinces where these projects are implemented. Of course, it is accepted that it is not correct to base the differentiation according to the provinces only on GEF projects, but it is still evaluated that it can create a significant level of awareness among policymakers and all relevant stakeholders, especially farmers. It is evaluated that this study will form the basis of studies planned to be carried out using new-generation impact evaluation methods in the coming years.

Conclusion and Recommendations

As is the case around the world, there are many projects supported by the GEF in Türkiye. In this study, using the data obtained from the World Bank Maps tool, the projects that are actively being carried out in Türkiye with the support of this fund were first identified. Then, since the main purpose of this Fund is the sustainable use of natural resources, the distribution of land cover plants in the provinces where the projects are implemented was tried to be determined numerically and on the map. Although it is expected that it will be difficult to detect the effects of these projects in the short term, it is predicted that the results will have important implications, especially for farmers and agricultural organizations, which are important stakeholders that are considered to be effective in land use. The results of this study should be considered as a baseline study. Future studies will be able to reveal the effects of the project in question more clearly by using new-generation impact evaluation methodologies.

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