

54th GEF Council Meeting
June 24 – 26, 2018
Da Nang, Viet Nam

Agenda Item 20

**STRENGTHENING CONSULTATIONS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY:
PROPOSED TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION AT THE CONSULTATIONS OF THE
55TH GEF COUNCIL MEETING**

Recommended Council Decision

GEF Council, having considered Document GEF/C.54/07, *Strengthening Consultations with Civil Society: Proposed Topic for Discussion at the Consultations of the 55th GEF Council Meeting*, selects the following topic to be addressed as part of the Consultations in the next Council meeting, to take place in December 2018: *Connecting Environmental Impact and Gender Equality*.

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INTRODUCTION

1. In November 2017, at its 53rd Council Meeting, GEF Council approved the Updated Vision to Enhance Civil Society Engagement with the GEF (hereafter, Updated Vision) as well as a set of principles and objectives to support that engagement.¹
2. The approved Updated Vision states that “Consultations between the GEF Council and CSOs be more structured than in their current form. The Council will invite CSOs to present on specific topics – chosen by the Council, with input from CSOs and the GEF Secretariat – intended to highlight the experiences of local CSOs during project implementation while also seeking to align with the Council Meeting Agenda. To allow for adequate preparation, the GEF Council will select Consultation Meeting topics around 6 months (or one meeting) before each Consultation Meeting, as appropriate, recognizing that topics can be updated within the 6-month period in light of new circumstances and needs that may arise.”
3. In light of these decisions, this document proposes a topic to be addressed at the Council Consultations with CSOs on the day preceding the 55th Council Meeting, to be held in December 2018. The Council in its deliberations may choose to select a different topic.
4. Finally, this document provides a summary of the actions taken to date by the GEF Secretariat (Annex 1) in an effort to guarantee a process that is transparent in terms of the selection of CSO representatives at the 54th Council Meeting and the Sixth GEF Assembly, and that adheres to the guidelines and criteria contained in the Updated Vision paper.

PROPOSED TOPIC FOR CONSULTATIONS AT THE 55TH COUNCIL MEETING

5. The following is the proposed topic for Consultations with civil society at the 55th Council meeting in December: *Connecting Environmental Impact and Gender Equality*.
6. This topic is suggested based on the fact that the GEF has ramped up its efforts to address gender equality and promote women’s empowerment across its operations. This topic is also of relevance and interest for civil society and there’s much potential for them to contribute to a focused discussion on gender, and for Council to learn firsthand from the experts in gender and from those communities and civil society representatives who are affected by gender inequalities.
7. The GEF Council approved a new Policy on Gender Equality at its 53rd Council meeting. The policy marks GEF’s increased ambition to address gender equality and promote women’s empowerment across its operations. It seeks to ensure equal opportunities for women and

¹ GEF (Global Environment Facility). 2017. “Updated Vision to Enhance Civil Society Engagement with the GEF.” GEF/C.53/10/Rev.01, November 30. Agenda Item 08.53rd GEF Council Meeting, held in Washington, DC. Available at www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF.C.53.10.Rev_.01_CS0_Vision_0.pdf.

men to participate in, contribute to and benefit from GEF-financed activities and contribute to achieving global environmental benefits.

8. As the new Policy enters into force, the proposed dialogue with civil society about opportunities to connect global environmental impact and gender equality, will allow Council to learn about opportunities to engage civil society organizations and women groups to address interconnected drivers for unsustainability, exclusion and inequality. The dialogue will discuss challenges as well as emerging best practices to inform implementation of the new Policy in the context of GEF-7 programming. As such, the dialogue will focus on concrete entry points to improve women's access to land, water and productive assets and decision-making, and to ensure opportunities for women and men to equally participate in, contribute to, and benefit from environmental projects and programs.

9. After deliberating on this proposed topic, Council may decide on a different topic for the Consultations as well as on additional topic(s) for future Consultations.

ANNEX 1: SELECTION PROCESS OF CSOs FOR 54TH COUNCIL MEETING AND SIXTH GEF ASSEMBLY

1. The selection process for civil society organizations (CSO) attending the 54th GEF Council Meeting, Sixth GEF Assembly, and Civil Society Forum is the first time that the Updated Vision adopted by GEF Council at its 53rd Council Meeting is being implemented.

2. GEF Secretariat has conducted the following steps in its aim to ensure a transparent selection process:

A. Consultation on Selection Criteria for Sponsored CSOs, Indigenous Peoples, and Local Communities to Attend GEF Assembly

3. Based on the Updated Vision to Enhance Civil Society Engagement with the GEF (hereafter, Updated Vision), GEF Secretariat proposed the selection criteria for CSOs, indigenous peoples, and local communities to participate in the 54th GEF Council Meeting, GEF Assembly, including the Civil Society Forum. These criteria were discussed and agreed by way of teleconference and electronic correspondence with the GEF Civil Society Organization Network (hereafter, the CSO Network), Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group, and coordinators of the Small Grants Programme (SPG).

4. Final criteria were disseminated by email and other means, with a call for applications, at the beginning of March 2018.

B. Establishment of Comprehensive List

5. As per the Updated Vision, GEF Secretariat contacted Operational Focal Points, CSO Network, Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group, and coordinators of SGP, as well as GEF Agencies and other partners, in a bid for names and organizations to create a comprehensive list of CSOs from which to select those to attend GEF Council meetings.

6. GEF Secretariat received a large number of responses. It identified those CSOs that had previously participated or had applied to participate in earlier GEF meetings and events, adding them to the list. The list comprised of over 2,000 CSOs.

C. Call for Applications

7. GEF Secretariat submitted a call for applications to those CSOs on the list, with subsequent reminders. In addition, the call for applications was announced on the GEF public website and in the World Bank's monthly Civil Society Engagement eNewsletter. The selection criteria were included in the call for applications, and applicants were requested to describe briefly how they met these criteria. GEF Secretariat received 341 applications prior to the March 31, 2018, deadline for sponsored participants.

D. Clarification of the Updated Vision

8. Subsequent to the call for applications, GEF Secretariat received interpretation questions relating to the Updated Vision. These were referred to the Chair and other members of the Ad Hoc Working Group. Responses were circulated by three members of the group, including its Chair. Regional CSO representatives from within and outside of the CSO Network also were offered the opportunity to respond in an effort to further strengthen inclusion, attract a diverse set of viewpoints, and provide some degree of rotation among CSO representatives.

E. Review of Applications

9. The GEF Secretariat reviewed the applications based on the approved criteria and the procedures set out in the Updated Vision. The Secretariat shortlisted 44 CSO candidates.

10. The selection of candidates took into account geographic representation, country diversity, gender equality, representation of indigenous peoples, SGP engagement, attendance rotation, and budget constraints.

11. This preliminary list was submitted to the CSO Network and other partners for comment, as per the Updated Vision.

12. Several valuable comments were received that added additional perspectives and highlighted the need to make some adjustments and address some gaps. As part of its review, the Secretariat also considered again the potential participants based on the criteria in the Vision and the additional consulted and approved criteria for the Assembly: (i) demonstrated relations to other GEF CSOs and networks; (ii) demonstrated knowledge and information on local, national, regional and/or global environmental issues; (iii) proven experience either from executing GEF projects or projects similar to those funded by the GEF, or from contributing as an expert to CSO Forum topics, Assembly panels, side events, and exhibits; and (iv) representation of Small Grants Programme grantees.

13. As a result, the Secretariat arrived at a very diverse list of representatives of civil society and indigenous peoples and local communities from all the regions of the world and from different backgrounds. Out of the 49 selected participants, 43 are either local or national NGOs, many of which are either grantees of the GEF Small Grants Programme or have been engaged with the programme (23) are engaged with Indigenous Peoples (14) and with Women's groups (17).

14. In addition, the list balances the needs of inclusion and rotation with those of expertise and opportunities for in-depth discussions with participants (out of the 49, 11 representatives are participating for the first time) and provides for the different geographical regions to have a level of representation proportional to what the recipient countries have on the GEF Council.