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**PROGRESS REPORT  
ON THE  
GEF GENDER IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

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## INTRODUCTION

1. This Progress Report aims to update the GEF Council on progress, over the last 12 months, implementing the GEF Gender Implementation Strategy, approved by Council at its 54<sup>th</sup> GEF Council Meeting in June 2018.

## BACKGROUND

2. At its 53<sup>rd</sup> GEF Council Meeting in November 2017, the GEF Council adopted a new Policy on Gender Equality<sup>1</sup>. The Policy on Gender Equality Policy (hereafter Policy) introduced a set of new principles and requirements to mainstream gender in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of GEF programs and projects. It marked a distinct shift in GEF's ambition around gender mainstreaming - moving from a gender-aware "do no harm" approach to a gender-responsive "do good" approach. The Policy further requested the Secretariat to track and report annually to the Council on portfolio-level progress and results.

3. The Policy also committed the Secretariat to develop a strategy and action plan on gender to support its effective implementation and to guide efforts and actions to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in support of the GEF-7 programming strategy. At its 54<sup>th</sup> meeting in June 2018, the GEF Council approved GEF's Gender Implementation Strategy<sup>2</sup> (hereafter Strategy) and requested the Secretariat to provide annual updates on the progress on the indicators outlined in the GEF-7 Results Framework on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE), as well as activities described in the Strategy.

4. The first part of this report provides an overview of progress related to the GEF-7 portfolio and the GEF-7 Results Framework on GEWE. The second part of the report describes key activities undertaken by the Secretariat related to the four action areas outlined in the Strategy. The report concludes with a short description of key priorities for the next 12 months.

## PROGRESS AND RESULTS

5. In line with the Policy, the Strategy introduced a comprehensive framework to improve the Secretariat's ability to capture and report on results on GEWE. As such, the Secretariat launched a gender tagging system to help (i) ensure policy compliance; (ii) prompt considerations on gender early in the project cycle; and (iii) capture portfolio results across key dimensions of gender equality relating to GEF-7 programming directions, including:

- (a) contributing to equal access to and control of natural resources of women and men

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<sup>1</sup> SD/PL/02 ([http://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/Gender\\_Equality\\_Policy.pdf](http://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/Gender_Equality_Policy.pdf))

<sup>2</sup> GEF/C.54/06 ([https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/.../EN\\_GEF.C.54.06\\_Gender\\_Strategy\\_0.pdf](https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/.../EN_GEF.C.54.06_Gender_Strategy_0.pdf))

- (b) improving the participation and decision-making of women in natural resource governance
- (c) targeting socio-economic benefits and services for women.

6. The portfolio findings presented below are derived from the gender tags and qualitative analysis of project documents linked to the indicators outlined in the GEF-7 Results Framework on GEWE (see table 1 below).

**Table 1. GEF-7 Results Framework on GEWE<sup>3</sup>**

<b>Outcome area I: Gender-responsive GEF program and project design and development</b>		
<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Baselines</b>	<b>Verification</b>
Percentage of projects that have conducted a gender analysis or equivalent socio-economic assessment	Baseline: 66%	PIFs, CEO Endorsement/ Approval, Gender tags
Percentage of projects that plan to carry out gender-responsive activities - Number of projects with specific gender action plans	Baseline: Not available	
Percentage of projects that include sex-disaggregated and gender-sensitive indicators	Baseline: 78%	
Percentage (and number) of anticipated GEF beneficiaries that are female	Baseline: Not available	GEF Core indicator 11
Percentage of projects that are tagged for expected contribution to closing gender gaps and promoting GEWE in one or more of the following categories: - <i>contributing to equal access to and control of natural resources of women and men</i> - <i>improving the participation and decision-making of women in natural resource governance</i> - <i>targeting socio-economic benefits and services for women</i>	Baseline: Not available	Gender tags
<b>Outcome area II: Gender-responsive program and project reporting and results</b>		
<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Baselines</b>	<b>Verification</b>
Percentage (and number) of GEF beneficiaries that are female	Baseline: Not available	PIRs/MTRs/TEs  (Qualitative analyses)
Percentage of projects that report on progress on gender-responsive measures, sex-disaggregated and gender-sensitive indicators, and lessons learned	Baseline: 73%	
Percentage of projects that report on results in one or more of the following categories: - contributing to equal access to and control of natural resources of women and men - improving the participation and decision-making of women in natural resource governance - targeting socio-economic benefits and services for women	Baseline: Not available	

7. The Policy came into effect on July 1, 2018 and applies to all new GEF-Financed Activities submitted on or after the date of effectiveness. For GEF-Financed Activities under

<sup>3</sup> Excerpt from the GEF Gender Implementation Strategy (GEF/C.54/06: [https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/.../EN\\_GEF.C.54.06\\_Gender\\_Strategy\\_0.pdf](https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/.../EN_GEF.C.54.06_Gender_Strategy_0.pdf))

implementation, the Policy applies to Project Implementation Reports (PIRs), Mid-Term reviews (MTRs) and Terminal Evaluations (TEs) submitted after one year of the date of effectiveness. As such, this report focuses on outcome area I (Gender-responsive GEF program and project design and development) and the analysis covers the Project Identification Forms (PIFs) included in the December 2018 Work Program as well as PIFs, Program Framework Documents (PFDs) and Enabling Activities included in the proposed Work Program for the June 2019 Council meeting. Detailed analysis of projects under implementation (related to outcome area II -Gender-responsive program and project reporting and results) will be provided in the next annual progress report.

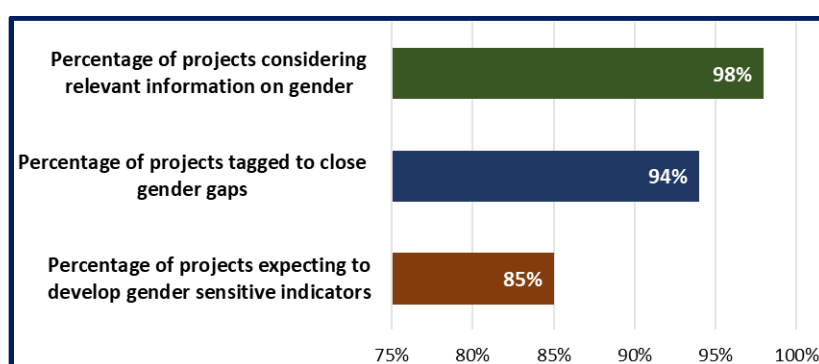
### Outcome area I: Gender-responsive GEF program and project design and development

8. GEF Secretariat has analyzed 18 PIFs included in the December 2018 Work Program as well as 29 PIFs, and 7 PFDs included in the proposed Work Program for the June 2019 Council meeting. The findings validate compliance with the Policy and suggest that projects are incorporating gender-responsive approaches in the design of GEF projects. Information requested for PIFs and PFDs are different, and as such, the below provides separate analyses for GEF-7 projects and programs.

#### *Quality at entry: GEF-7 PIFs*

9. The analysis of the 47 PIFs confirm that projects are considering gender and include plans to carry out gender responsive measures as part of their project development, implementation and monitoring activities.

**Table 2. Overview: Quality at entry of GEF-7 PIFs**



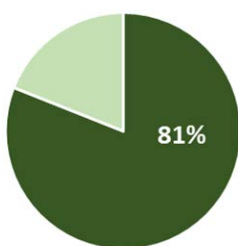
10. The detailed analysis of these PIFs found the following:

- **98 percent of projects provided indicative information on gender relevant to the proposed activities.** These figures demonstrate sound compliance with the Policy. In line with the ambition of the Policy, these early assessments are informing project planning and helping to determine the scope of and type of gender-responsive activities that will be needed later in the project development and implementation

stages. They also provide opportunities for projects to identify, at an early stage, any strategic entry points to address gender differences and gaps relevant to the project. Moreover, most projects outlined explicit plans to carry out gender analyses and developing gender actions plans during the project development stage.

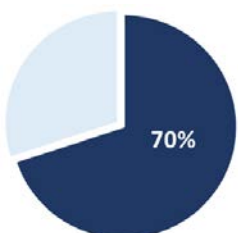
- ▶ **94 percent of projects are tagged to contribute to closing gender gaps and promoting GEWE in one or more of the following categories:**
  - (a) improving the participation and decision-making of women in natural resource governance;
  - (b) targeting socio-economic benefits and services for women; and
  - (c) contributing to equal access to and control of natural resources of women and men.
- ▶ **85 percent of projects explicitly stated that they expect to develop sex disaggregated and gender sensitive indicators.** These numbers are encouraging as they point to the fact that projects, at an early stage of design, plan to collect disaggregated data and information on gender which can serve to inform gender-responsive project development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation moving forward. **Moreover, 85 percent of projects estimated the number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender.**

11. The detailed analysis of the GEF-7 PIF cohort shows that projects expect to contribute to gender results in different ways. Information derived from the gender tags suggest that:

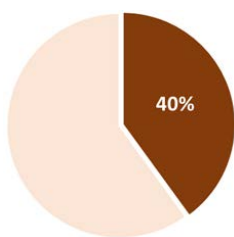


- ▶ **81 percent of projects expect to improve the participation and decision-making of women in natural resources governance.** Gender relations determine women's access to environmental decision-making as participants and leaders. Without participation and influence on environmental priority setting, women are less likely to feel ownership for decisions and to contribute to the success of environmental policies and projects. The analysis found that a large

majority of projects expect to improve women participation and decision-making, including addressing adverse gender norms, women's time constraints and other socioeconomic and cultural barriers that prevent women the same opportunities as men to decision-making related to the management and use of natural resources at local, national and regional levels.



- ▶ **70 percent of projects expect to target socio-economic benefits and services for women.** Women face more obstacles than men accessing income-generated activities, services, credit, technology, information and capacity building activities. Addressing these gender gaps can help generate global environment benefits in areas such as



protection of natural resources, afforestation, reducing land degradation, renewable energy, sustainable fisheries and waste management. The analysis found that projects that expect to contribute to socio-economic benefits or services for women include plans to leverage opportunities to target women as specific beneficiaries, including supporting alternative income generating activities and providing targeted training and capacity development and financing.

- **40 percent of projects expect to contribute to more equal access to and control of natural resources of women and men.** Women’s rights to own and to have secure access to natural resources such as land, water, forest, and fisheries are linked to environmental sustainability. Women and men that lack ownership or have less secure access are less likely to contribute to improved environmental management practices. Despite the challenges addressing the diversity of land rights and the complex relationships between use, control and ownership of land and other natural resources, the analysis found that about 40 percent of projects include plans to boost women’s access and control over resources. Plans include to, among other things, explicitly engaging women in land use planning activities, raising awareness of women’s rights and improving women’s access to productive inputs.

#### Quality at entry: GEF-7 PFDs

12. The analysis of 7 GEF-7 PFDs also demonstrates sound compliance with the Policy and reflects a district shift from a “gender aware” to “gender-responsive” approach. In the with the Policy, all new programs have incorporated:

- (a) Indicative information on gender relevant to the specific program objectives and components;
- (b) Details on planned gender responsive measures; and
- (c) Considerations to develop sex-disaggregated and gender-sensitive indicators, including estimates on direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender.

13. In line with the Strategy, the four Impact Programs (IP) included in the Work Program, June 2019<sup>4</sup> have incorporated plans to mainstream gender, including carrying out relevant gender analyses and developing program level gender actions plans. All IPs have estimated the number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender and are considering developing gender sensitive indicators. Moreover, they have identified strategic entry points to address gender gaps relevant to their specific program, including:

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<sup>4</sup> (1) Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration (FOLUR) Impact Program; (2) Sustainable Forest Management Impact Program on Dryland Sustainable Landscapes; (3) Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Program - Phase I; and (4) Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program (CBSL IP)

- (a) Ensuring women's participation and role in natural resources decision-making processes;
- (b) Targeting women as specific beneficiaries and investing in women's skills and capacity; and
- (c) Supporting women's improved access, use, and control of natural resources.

**Box 1. Examples of expected entry points to address gender in GEF Impact Programs**

- (1) Enhancing women's participation and role in natural resources decision-making processes.** Inequalities embedded in resource management institutions (rules of membership, benefit sharing and access) determine if and how women's voices are heard. The Amazon IP recognizes the need to improve the participation of women in protected area management and planning and natural resources management more generally, and, as such, plans to increase women's voice in the dialogue and decision-making in both areas. Similarly, the Congo Basin IP plans to address gaps in the participation and decision-making of women in land use planning processes, including protected area management and community governance structures.
- (2) Supporting women's improved access, use, and control over land, water, forests and other natural resources.** Laws, practices and institutions that impose unequal access to and control of resources can contribute to the degradation of natural resources. The Dryland Sustainable Landscapes IP incorporates plans to improve women's access to and control over land and related natural resources by influencing policy and gender norms, contributing to the revision of the land tenure policy as well as advancing the operationalization of the Voluntary Guidelines on Governance and Tenure (VGGT) to promote the land rights of women farmers. Likewise, the Congo Basin IP will place specific attention to women's rights related to amendments to existing laws as well as developing the capacity of women and women CSOs for sustainable land use planning and management.
- (3) Targeting women as specific beneficiaries.** Women often face more obstacles than men accessing income-generated activities. The FOLUR IP incorporates plans to improve women's income diversification through targeted actions that can help women move 'up the value chain' in targeted commercial commodities and food staples, and through improved access to restoration activities and related benefits. Similarly, the Congo Basin IP is prioritizing activities that will benefit women such as ecotourism, agroforestry, sustainable NTFP value-chains and related access of women to markets and financing.

14. Overall, the findings above validate solid compliance with the principles and requirements set out in the Policy. Although the findings suggest a positive trend in terms of projects incorporating gender consideration early in the design phase, the analysis reveals that there still remain variations with regards to the quality and scope of these early considerations of gender. As such, there might be room to for further up-stream engagement with Agencies and guidance. The fact that most projects, however, have incorporated plans to carry out gender analyses during project development and to develop sex-disaggregated and gender sensitive indicators will help to, among other things, ensure that:

- (a) Gender-Responsive Approaches will be applied throughout project development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- (b) Stakeholder Engagement and analysis will be conducted in an inclusive and gender- responsive manner, so that the rights of women and men and the



different knowledge, needs, roles and interests of women and men are recognized and addressed; and;

- (c) Opportunities to address gender gaps and support the empowerment of women can be identified to help achieve global environmental benefits.

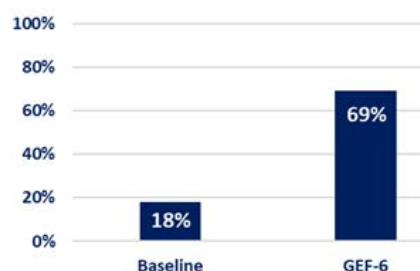
### GEF-6 CEO Endorsements/Approvals

15. While the Policy only applies to new GEF-Financed Activities submitted on or after the date of effectiveness, July 1, 2018, the Secretariat has continued to monitor the GEF-6 portfolio.

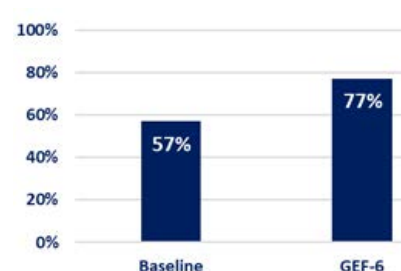
16. The review of the GEF-6 cohort (240 full-sized and 106 mid-sized projects<sup>5,6</sup>) endorsed/approved between July 2014 and May 2018 corroborate a steady positive trend in terms of considerations of gender in project design and development.

**Table 3. Progress on GEF-6 Quality of Entry**

Percentage of projects that have conducted gender analysis during project preparation



Percentage of projects that have conducted gender analysis during project preparation



17. Specifically, the analysis found that:

- (a) **Percentage of projects that have conducted gender analysis during project preparation:** The analysis of the GEF-6 cohort to date found that 69 percent of projects carried out some type of gender analysis that described gender differences, gender differentiated impacts and risks, and or opportunities to address gender gaps and promote the empowerment of women relevant to the proposed activity. These figures demonstrate a continued increase of projects

<sup>5</sup> See: <https://www.thegef.org/documents/gef-corporate-scorecard-may-2018>

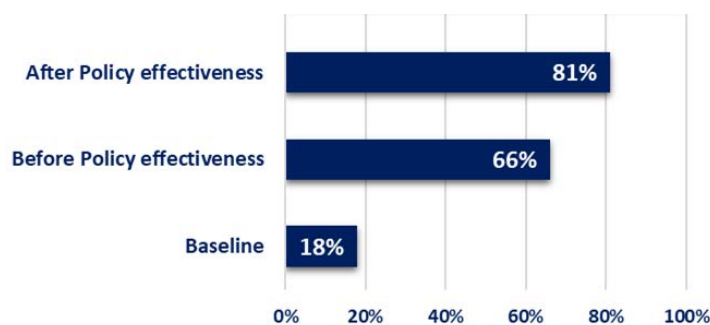
<sup>6</sup> Incorporates projects and findings from reviews included in previous GEF Scorecards and may include some GEF-5 projects endorsed/approved between July 2014 and March 2018

that conduct gender analyses in the project design and planning stages compared to the GEF-5 baseline of 18 percent.<sup>7</sup>

- (b) **Percentage of projects that have incorporated a gender responsive project results framework:** The analysis found that 77 percent of projects included a gender-responsive results frameworks. These projects have incorporated sex-disaggregated data and targets or indicators. The numbers show a notable increase of projects that incorporated gender consideration in monitoring and evaluation compared to the GEF-5 baseline,<sup>8</sup> where only 57 percent of projects were estimated to have referred to gender in their results frameworks.

18. The detailed analysis of the cohort further shows that there has been a marked improvement since the new Policy came in to effect (July 1st, 2018) in terms of projects that have carried out a gender analysis prior to CEO endorsement/approval. The analysis showed that 81 percent of projects (55 full-sized and 10 mid-sized projects) that were CEO endorsed/approved between July 2018 and May 2019 had conducted a gender analysis.

**Table 4. Quality at Entry improvements following the Policy effectiveness in July 2018**



19. Overall, the findings indicate a noticeable improvement compared to projects that had been endorsed/approval before the effectiveness of the Policy, where only 66 percent (185 of 281 projects) were assessed to have carried out a gender analysis<sup>9,10</sup>). Moreover, the analysis of the projects that were CEO endorsed/approved after the Policy came into effect suggest that 69 percent included distinct and specific gender activities and/or had developed standalone gender action plans. This is a notable improvement compared to findings in CEO endorsed/approved projects before the Policy effectiveness, where only 21 percent of projects were estimated to have included gender-responsive measures.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Baseline information emanates from data provided in GEF-IEO (2013) and GEF (2008).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> See: <https://www.thegef.org/documents/gef-corporate-scorecard-may-2018>

<sup>10</sup> See: <https://www.thegef.org/documents/gef-corporate-scorecard-may-2018>

<sup>11</sup> See: <https://www.thegef.org/council-meeting-documents/progress-report-gender-equality-action-plan-1>.

## IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

20. The results and analysis of the gender tags presented above (para 8-13) suggest that the Secretariat's activities, guided by the Strategy, are contributing to the effective operationalization of the Policy.

21. The Strategy elaborated on a set of actions in four priority action areas, including:

- Action area 1:** Gender-responsive approaches and results are systematically promoted in GEF programs and projects
- Action area 2:** Strengthened capacity of GEF's Secretariat and its partners to mainstream gender and seize strategic entry points to promote gender equality and women's empowerment
- Action area 3:** GEF's collaboration with partners to generate knowledge and contribute to learning on links between gender and the environment are improved
- Action area 4:** GEF's corporate systems for tracking and reporting on gender equality results are enhanced

22. During the first year of the implementation of the Strategy, the Secretariat has focused on the immediate actions needed to build the foundation for the practical operationalization of the Policy. As such, many of the activities carried out by the Secretariat during the past 12 months, described below, relate to operations, procedures and initial capacity building efforts.

### **Action area 1: Gender-responsive approaches and results are systematically promoted in GEF programs and projects**

23. Key efforts to direct compliance with the new Policy and promote gender-responsive approaches and results in GEF programs and projects, by the Secretariat, include:

- **Revisions to GEF templates, including PIFs; PFDs; and CEO Endorsements/Approvals.** The new templates, including the gender tags and accompanying guidance notes have been incorporated, in consultation with GEF agencies, in the GEF portal. The new templates not only enable the Secretariat to fulfill its responsibility to assess whether the documentation reflects the principles and requirements set out in the Policy but are also prompting early and meaningful considerations of gender in GEF projects and programs by all Agencies.
- **Proactive dissemination of the GEF Guidance to Advance Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in GEF Programs and Projects.**<sup>12</sup> The guidance, developed in close collaboration with the GEF Gender Partnership, is organized around the GEF project cycle and provides details on key steps and practical actions to help Agencies and partners meeting the principles and requirements set out in the Policy. In

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<sup>12</sup> GEF/C.54/Inf.05 (<https://www.thegef.org/publications/gef-guidance-gender-equality>)

collaboration with the GEF Gender Partnership, the guidance document has been actively promoted, among others, during Agencies Retreats, Secretariat meetings, GEF Introduction Seminars, and Extended Constituency Workshops (ECWs).

- **Incorporation of gender considerations in other relevant GEF operational procedures, policies and guidelines**, including the GEF Policy on Agency Minimum Environmental and Social Safeguard Standards, approved by Council in December 2018, and the GEF Monitoring Policy (forthcoming, June 2019).

**Action area 2: Strengthened capacity of GEF's secretariat and its partners to mainstream gender and size strategic entry points to promote gender equality and women's empowerment**

24. Key actions to build the necessary awareness, competency and capacity, among GEF staff, Agencies and partners, to effectively operationalize the Policy have included the following:

- **Promotion and dissemination of the Open Online Course on Gender and Environment**<sup>13</sup> developed by the GEF, UNDP and the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) in collaboration with members of the GEF Gender Partnership, including the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), UN Women, UN Environment and the Secretariats of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements that the GEF serves. The course, designed to raise awareness and build capacity among GEF partners to mainstream gender in environmental policies, programs and projects, contains close to 10 hours of instructive material covering thematic areas such as biodiversity, land degradation, climate change, international waters, and chemical and waste. The course has been actively promoted by the Secretariat, the GEF SGP and the GEF Gender partnership within Agencies, as well as strategic events and workshops, including gender events at different COPs such as CBD COP 14, UNFCCC COP 25 and BRS COP 14. As of March 31, 2019, close to 6000 people had registered and close to 3000 certificates had been issued.
- **Targeted capacity building events, as well as tools and checklists** for GEF Agencies and GEF staff, responsible for project review, have been developed and disseminated.
- **Regular updates of GEF's website and promotion of GEF's work on gender** via social media, leveraging opportunities to showcase and share training materials, best practice examples, blogs and other materials related to gender responsive program/project design, implementation, and evaluation.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>See: <https://www.thegef.org/news/open-online-course-gender-and-environment>

<sup>14</sup> See: <https://www.thegef.org/topics/gender>

### **Action area 3: GEF's collaboration with partners to generate knowledge and contribute to learning on links between gender and the environment are improved**

25. In line with the Strategy, the GEF Gender Partnership (GGP)<sup>15</sup> continues to serve as the main platform for leveraging a wide range of skills and experiences on gender equality and women's empowerment from across the GEF partnership, and the platform for building a wider constituency on gender and the environment. The GGP has been an important conduit for promoting GEF's new approach to gender and also actively engaged in efforts, such as:

- Organization of the gender dialogue during the GEF Council Consultation with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) meeting in December 2018.<sup>16</sup> This event gathered civil society organizations, representation of indigenous peoples, youth and women's groups, to dialogue on the links between gender equality and better environmental stewardship. The event also served as an opportunity for the Council to hear from a diverse range of stakeholders about their current experiences addressing gender equality in environmental policies, programs and projects, and to consult on the role that civil society organizations can have in supporting gender-responsive projects and programs in GEF-7.
- Production of a video, "Investing in Women is Good for the Environment", to highlight GEF projects, including GEF-SGP and other UNDP-supported initiatives, that are promoting women's rights, participation and leadership in natural resource management.<sup>17</sup>

### **Action area 4: GEF's corporate systems for tracking and reporting on gender equality results are enhanced**

26. Main efforts to improve GEF's ability to capture and report on results on gender equality and women's empowerment include:

- **The launch of the GEF gender tagging system.** The system was successfully launched as part of the upgrade of GEF's IT platform, the GEF Portal in July 2018. The results described above (para 9-13) suggest that it is serving to
  - (a) ensure policy compliance;
  - (b) prompt considerations on gender early in the project cycle; and
  - (c) capture portfolio results across key dimensions of gender equality relating to GEF-7 programming directions.

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<sup>15</sup> GGP includes the active participation of gender focal points from each GEF Agency, relevant MEA secretariats, and representatives from the GEF Independent Evaluation Office (IEO), GEF Network of Civil Society Organizations, GEF Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group, and other key partners.

<sup>16</sup> See" <http://enb.iisd.org/gef/council55/17dec.html> and <https://www.thegef.org/news/multi-stakeholder-dialogue-gender-and-environment-held-advance-55th-gef-council-meeting>

<sup>17</sup> See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOlwPe6Dmbc&t=3s>

- Ongoing efforts to monitor the portfolio and the information derived from the gender tags to support learning and knowledge products with a view to improving guidance on gender responsive programs and projects in the future.

## **MOVING FORWARD**

27. As outlined in the Strategy, the Secretariat will continue its efforts to support the implementation of the Policy, assess projects and programs as well as monitoring and reporting on portfolio level progress and results. As many of the most essential operations related issues are concluded, the Secretariat, in collaboration with Agencies and the GEF Gender Partnership, will increasingly place its efforts on capacity building, knowledge sharing, learning and communication.