

57th GEF Council Meeting
December 17 - 19, 2019
Washington, D.C.

Agenda Item 16

**STRENGTHENING CONSULTATIONS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY:
PROPOSED TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AT THE CONSULTATIONS OF THE
58TH AND 59TH GEF COUNCIL MEETINGS**

Recommended Council Decision

GEF Council having considered Document GEF/C.57/11, Strengthening Consultations with Civil Society: Proposed Topics for Discussion at the 58th and 59th GEF Council Meetings, selects the following topic(s) to be addressed as part of the GEF Consultations with Civil Society: [a) *The Application of Traditional Knowledge by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, Stewards of the Global Environment* to be discussed at the 58th Council meeting in June 2020; and b) *Enhancing Climate Resilience and the Role of Civil Society, Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples* to be discussed at the 59th Council meeting in December 2020.]

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INTRODUCTION

1. In November of 2017, at its 53rd meeting, the Council approved an Updated Vision to Enhance Civil Society Engagement with the GEF (hereafter, Updated Vision).¹ The Updated Vision includes a revised set of objectives and principles as an overall guide to engage with civil society. At an operational level, the document focuses, in particular, on certain key aspects that relate to the enhancement of this engagement during GEF Council meetings, guidance for civil society participation at the GEF Assembly, and the Country Support Programme.
2. Regarding participation of civil society in Council and Consultations, as per the Updated Vision, the Council will invite CSOs to present on specific topics during the Consultations with CSOs intended to highlight the experiences of local CSOs during project implementation while also seeking to align with the Council Meeting Agenda.
3. Further the Updated Vision states that “(t)o 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.”
4. Following the Updated Vision, Council selected the topics of *Gender and the Environment* to be addressed at the Consultations with Civil Society preceding the 55th Council meeting in December 2018 and the topic of *Plastic Pollution: Civil Society Perspective* to be discussed at the Consultations with Civil Society preceding the 56th Council meeting in June 2019.
5. The Consultations on *Gender and the Environment* held on December 17th, 2018 served as an opportunity for the GEF Council to consult with civil society organizations and women groups about concrete opportunities on how CSOs best can support gender-responsive projects and programs and to identify recommendations for GEF-7 implementation.
6. The dialogue featured a discussion with civil society about challenges and good practices, as well as lessons learned and opportunities to connect global environmental impact and gender equality in projects and programs. The dialogue, moderated by the Canada Council member, presented experiences from a panel of 8 representatives of local Indigenous Peoples’ (IP), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Women’s organizations working on projects addressing Gender Equality and women’s empowerment.
7. At the end of the session, the publication titled: *Women as Environmental Stewards: The Experience of the GEF Small Grants Programme* was launched.

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.

8. The Consultations on *Plastic Pollution: How Do We Tame This Menace? Solutions from CSOs, government and the private sector* which took place on June 10, 2019 presented practical examples of plastic management around the world conducted by CSOs, indigenous peoples and local communities and executors of GEF projects and other similar projects, and engaged the participation of international NGOs, experts, government and private sector in an interactive dialogue with the audience. The dialogue featured practical experiences and lessons learned regarding the production, consumption and waste management of plastics in contributing to the solution at different stages of the plastics cycle. It also had a financing panel, where different private and public investment opportunities to finance the solutions were discussed.

9. At the end of the Consultations, the GEF SGP launched its publication on *Plastics Management and Circular Economy: Community Solutions*.

10. At its 55th meeting in December 2018, the GEF Council selected *Illegal Wildlife Trade: A CSO perspective* as a topic to be discussed during the GEF Consultation with Civil Society on Monday, December 16, 2019, the day preceding the 57th Council meeting. These Consultations are organized by the GEF Secretariat in collaboration with the CSO Network, the GEF Small Grants Programme, the Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group (IPAG) and the World Bank, the leading agency of the GEF-financed Global Wildlife Program (GWP).

PROPOSED TOPICS FOR GEF CONSULTATIONS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

11. This paper proposes two topics that Council may consider to be discussed at subsequent GEF Consultations with CSOs preceding the Council meetings in 2020. The Council may select either one of the topics, both topics or any new topic to be discussed in these future Consultations.

12. The suggested topics have been consulted with the GEF CSO Network and the Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group and focus on areas that are relevant to the implementation of GEF-7 and where civil society and indigenous peoples can contribute with their views and expertise to the achievement of GEF's mission and expected outcomes.

Topic 1: The Application of Traditional Knowledge by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, Stewards of the Global Environment

13. Approximately 25% of the Earth's surface and ocean areas are managed by indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs), but it is estimated these areas hold 80% of the Earth's biodiversity. Most of the world's forests are found on communal lands and in many places community forestry and management has been shown to be more effective than national parks in reducing deforestation. Approximately 40% of land listed by governments as under conservation is managed by IPLCs, which means they are critical to reaching the Aichi Target on the effective management of protected areas and associated Sustainable Development Goals.

14. The GEF has long recognized the critically important role of IPLCs in protecting the planet's biodiversity and in ensuring sustainable development. Since the founding of the GEF, approximately 10 percent of GEF medium and full-size projects have had substantive involvement of indigenous peoples. In addition, approximately 15% of the grants provided by the GEF's Small Grants Programme (SGP) has gone to IPLC organizations². Projects involving the traditional knowledge of IPLCs have made a major contribution to the achievement of the protection of the global environment across the GEF portfolio.

15. Traditional knowledge is a way of life resulting from Indigenous people's interrelationship with their territories and resources and a product of thousands of years of innovation adapted to the environment. It is an important element of the world's cultural diversity and the foundation for locally appropriate sustainable development. Traditional knowledge and customary sustainable use underpin the resilience of indigenous peoples and local communities to change, including climate change, contributing directly to biological and cultural diversity, preventing land degradation, managing marine and water resources and reducing the use of harmful chemicals.

16. It is proposed that the GEF Consultations with civil society focus on traditional knowledge as a foundation for the protection of the global environment. This is an opportunity for CSOs to build with IPLCs viable and proven IPLC-led conservation approaches and models that effectively address environmental crisis with a view towards scaling up and mainstreaming them.

17. Specific aspects to be addressed would include: (a) the application of traditional knowledge in supporting targeted climate adaptation strategies to build the resilience of indigenous peoples and local communities to climate change; (b) the application of traditional knowledge for mapping to secure indigenous peoples' land rights tenure; (c) the application of traditional knowledge in supporting efforts of indigenous peoples and local communities to secure, conserve and sustainably use natural resources, through innovation approaches such as ICCAs (Territories and areas conserved by indigenous peoples and local communities) and LMMAs (Locally Managed Marine Areas); and (d) the application of traditional knowledge in different contexts and resource sectors, including in weather forecasting, health, natural resource management, food security and in agriculture.

Topic 2: Enhancing Climate Resilience and the role of civil society, indigenous peoples and local communities

18. Climate change presents a significant threat to life on earth. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) concluded that "climate change will amplify existing risks and

² GEF IEO (2017) Review of GEF's Engagement with Indigenous Peoples

create new risks for natural and human systems” and “risks are unevenly distributed and are generally greater for disadvantaged people and communities.”³

19. Since 2010, the GEF’s Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) has highlighted that many GEF focal area objectives and expected outputs are prone to risks associated with climate change through both direct and indirect effects on project interventions⁴. Building resilience to climate risks is an important factor that may determine the durability of a project’s outcomes and the project’s long-term impacts.

20. Adaptation to the adverse impacts of climate change is urgent and indispensable to safeguard development gains and to address the needs of the poor and the vulnerable. Healthy systems that are resilient to disruptions, shocks, and stressors are critical in achieving not only environmental benefits but also serve as a foundation for economic and human development.

21. The GEF has been addressing the issue of climate resilience, through investments in climate change adaptation from its Least-Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF). The GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) has financed adaptation strategies undertaken by community-based organizations and civil society organizations with co-financing from non-GEF resources, which complement the mitigation strategies financed by the GEF. Furthermore, several projects financed by the GEF’s main trust fund are blending LDCF/SCCF resources to deliver integrated solutions with adaptation and global environmental benefits. In addition, the GEF review process requires systematic consideration of the risks posed by climate change to all GEF funded projects.

22. These consultations with civil society propose to bring forward experiences from GEF projects (particularly LDCF and SCCF and the SGP) and other similar projects around the world to portray how civil society and communities are contributing to reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience.

23. In a dialogue amongst civil society, Council members, GEF Agencies, private sector and government representatives, the Consultations will also address the elements of successful mechanisms, challenges and experiences from community-driven climate change risk management projects and community-based adaptation. The Consultations aim to address the question of how the GEF and civil society can better facilitate and enhance resilience and contribute to improving the projects’ impacts and durability, bringing examples of collaboration from around the world.

³ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 2014, Summary for policymakers. In: *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Part A: Global and Sectoral Aspects. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of IPCC*, Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

⁴ (Ravindranath et al., 2010).