



Global Environment Facility

Summary of Document GEF/C.28/16

Action Plan to Respond to the Recommendations of the Independent GEF NGO Network Review

Recommended Council Decision

The Council having considered document GEF/C.28/16, *Action Plan to Respond to the Recommendations of the Independent GEF-NGO Review*, welcomes the steps taken by the GEF Secretariat and the NGO network to strengthen the GEF's partnership and engagement with the NGO community.

The Council welcomes the revision of the NGO network accreditation procedures to clarify expectations from accredited NGOs and to incorporate criteria for renewal of accreditation. The Council also approves the recruitment of an NGO coordinator and confirms that financing is to be made available in the GEF Corporate Budget FY07. (See decision on Agenda Item 17, GEF/C.28/8, *GEF Corporate Budget FY 07*).

The Council requests the Secretariat, in collaboration with Implementing and Executing Agencies and the NGO network, to prepare for consideration by the Council at its meeting in December 2006, costed proposals to (i) implement a GEF NGO network sharing and learning initiative, and (ii) develop a support programme for the NGO Network Coordination Committee.

Executive Summary

1. In 2005 the Secretariat, at the request of the NGO network's Central Focal Point, conducted an independent review of the NGO network (document GEF/C.27/Inf.5). The review concluded that the GEF NGO network was currently operating ineffectively, and that it lacked a long-term vision for effective engagement and service delivery.
2. The review identified insufficient resources and a general lack of capacity as the largest obstacles impeding the network from achieving its goals. The review broadly recommended the following:

- (a) *Increasing the network's accountability and effectiveness:* strengthening the network's management, increasing accountability in the application of the network's *Guidelines*, re-focusing the accreditation process, and strengthening outreach to NGOs;
- (b) *Establishing an active partnership between the NGO network and the GEF Secretariat and Council;* and
- (c) *Providing support financial and otherwise to build the network's capacity.*

3. The GEF NGO Network coordination committee has independently commenced implementation of some short term measures to strengthen the network's management and to increase its accountability. These measures include revising its *Guidelines*, developing a Medium-Sized Project to enhance the capacity of NGOs in developing countries to address global environmental issues, and the network is also considering structural changes in the organization of the network.

4. The Secretariat has also implemented some short term measures to refocus the accreditation process, update the NGO database and provide more information and resources for NGOs on the GEF web site.

5. The paper outlines the importance of effective public involvement at all levels of the GEF for successful projects and country ownership and provides some background on the history of the NGO involvement in GEF Governance and policy formulation, project preparation and execution and advocacy, awareness, and outreach on global environmental issues.

6. The review highlighted the GEF's lack of a long-term strategy for engaging the network as a key partner in carrying out its mandate of engaging local stakeholders and contributing to results and impacts on the ground and indicated that OPS3 found that encouraging, building and strengthening partnerships are the most effective and cost-efficient ways for the GEF to achieve its goals.

7. This paper, developed in collaboration with the three Implementing agencies and representatives of the NGO network, identifies elements for a longer-term strategy for promoting more effective participation and engagement with NGOs.

8. The following elements of a proposed long-term strategy are presented for Council consideration:

- (a) Appointment of an GEF NGO Coordinator

It is proposed that the Secretariat recruit a staff member fully dedicated to strengthening the relationship between the GEF Secretariat and civil society groups. The NGO Coordinator will be the Secretariat's main contact with the NGO network, responsible for the further development and implementation of a new strategy to strengthen the GEF's engagement with civil society.

- (b) GEF-NGO Knowledge Sharing and Learning Initiative

The GEF proposes to maximize knowledge sharing with NGOs by establishing two new programs as follows:

NGO Knowledge Sharing Day: An annual one day event held in conjunction with the NGO consultation and GEF Council bringing together NGOs from both the developing and the developed world in addition to international NGOs to exchange experiences and knowledge, and promote partnerships.

NGO Resources on the Web: Developing an NGO sub-site to include e-learning modules as well as a host of other e-products designed to suit the needs of NGOs as pertains to global environmental issues.

(c) NGO and Civil Society Outreach and Communications Strategy

In developing the GEF communications and outreach strategy for Council review at its meeting in November/December 2007, consideration will be given to the identification and development of communication and outreach materials and resources needed by NGOs to help them build GEF awareness.

(d) Establishment of a support program for the NGO network Coordination Committee

The Secretariat proposes the establishment of a support program for the NGO network, to be linked to the ongoing GEF Country Support Program for focal points.

The proposed program would provide the network coordination committee with resources and tools to communicate more effectively with national and regional NGOs working on global environmental issues, and thus contribute substantially to the development of NGO capacity to address global environmental issues.