



# Global Environment Facility

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GEF Council Meeting  
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Agenda Item 25

## 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.

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## INTRODUCTION

2. The Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) network of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) was established in May 1995, following the GEF Council's decisions to establish a relationship between the NGOs and the GEF Secretariat, Council, Assembly, and partner agencies. The GEF NGO network is a volunteer structure of GEF-accredited organizations whose work in the environment and in sustainable development is aligned with the GEF mandate.

3. The objectives of the GEF NGO network are to disseminate information on the GEF to the NGO community and other stakeholders at the national, regional and international levels, to contribute to policy discussions at Council meetings, to provide feedback from the ground on GEF policies and their operationalization, and to facilitate relations between civil society and the GEF.

4. The network's goals as stated in its *Guidelines* are to:

- (a) Strengthen and influence the work of the GEF at all levels -- its ideals and philosophy, as well as the values and goals embedded in the global environmental conventions -- with an aim to integrate NGOs at appropriate levels of decision-making and implementation of programs and projects in an accountable, transparent and participatory way to ensure a maximum degree of good governance; and
- (b) Integrate the NGOs' interests in GEF operations and influence and monitor GEF operations in general to be more effective and efficient in achieving global environmental goals.

5. In early 2005 the Secretariat, at the request of the NGO network's Central Focal Point (CFP), financed an independent review of the NGO network (see document GEF/C.27/Inf.5). The terms of reference for the review were agreed upon with the NGO network, and included the following:

- (a) Identify and address shortcomings in the management and operational practices of the NGO network as well as in the network's current roles and responsibilities;
- (b) Review awareness and involvement of NGOs in the network, and provide recommendations for addressing identified problems;
- (c) Review electoral procedures for Regional Focal Points (RFPs) pursuant to the *GEF NGO Network Guidelines*, identifying ambiguities and making recommendations to address any weaknesses;
- (d) Examine how the Council, Secretariat, and Implementing Agencies (IAs), could more actively collaborate with the NGO network to strengthen its role in GEF policy development and program implementation on the national and local levels; and

- (e) Assess the current structure of the NGO network and make recommendations to increase its effectiveness.

6. 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. The review identified insufficient resources and a general lack of capacity as the largest obstacles impeding the network from achieving its goals. The review stressed that the GEF Secretariat and the network should collaborate in establishing a long-term vision for an effective relationship between the two entities.

7. The review recommended a number of actions to address its conclusions. In broad terms, these recommendations focused on three areas:

- (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.*

8. The GEF Secretariat organized a brainstorming meeting with representatives from the NGO network and the three IAs to assist it in formulating recommendations for Council consideration on how best to respond to the review. This meeting contributed to the proposals presented in this paper.

9. This paper focuses primarily on ways to strengthen the partnership between the NGO network and the GEF Secretariat and Council, and explores ways in which the Secretariat can best support the network. The paper describes short-term measures already being implemented by the NGO network and the GEF Secretariat to address recommendations of the review, and identifies elements of a longer-term strategy for promoting the more effective participation of, and engagement with, NGOs and civil society.

10. The Council is invited to consider the proposed elements of a long-term strategy with a view to advising the Secretariat on those elements that it deems suitable for further development. On the basis of the Council's guidance, the Secretariat will work with the NGO network to prepare for Council's review and approval a comprehensive proposal for supporting the NGO network.



## **BACKGROUND**

11. Effective public involvement at all levels of the GEF is critical to its success as the skills, experiences, and knowledge of the NGO community play a key role in the development of GEF policies and practices, in the formulation and implementation of sustainable GEF projects, and in the maintenance of partnerships with key stakeholders. Public involvement is also essential for strengthening a sense of country ownership in GEF projects.

12. The original intent of establishing what is now known as the GEF NGO Network was to involve constituencies not been previously represented within the GEF, similarly to the involvement in the United Nations of the UN Major Groups, which include NGOs, indigenous peoples, business and industry, women, children and youth, local authorities, workers and trade unions, scientific and technological communities, and farmers.

13. The February 1995 Council paper *Criteria for Selection of NGOs to Attend/Observe Council Meetings and Information on NGO Consultations* (GEF/C.3/5) states: "For the purposes of representation at GEF Council meetings and participation in related GEF consultations, NGOs should be understood to mean non-profit organizations whose mandate, experience, expertise, and capacity are relevant to the work of the GEF including: local, national, regional and international organizations -- including NGO networks, dedicated to preserving the environment or promoting sustainable development; indigenous people's organizations; and academic and research institutions."

14. Since the inception of the Global Environment Facility, opportunities for the GEF to work together and partner with NGOs have steadily increased. While this paper will focus on strengthening the involvement of the NGOs and indigenous community groups in the Network, the long-term vision and strategy will take the original intent of establishing the network into consideration.

15. Historically, NGOs have been involved with the GEF in the following fields:

- (a) Governance and policy formulation and development through NGO representation at consultations and Council meetings;
- (b) Project preparation and execution in countries; and
- (c) Advocacy, awareness, and outreach on global environmental issues.

### **Role of NGOs in GEF Governance and Policy Formulation and Development**

16. NGOs have played a role in GEF governance and in policy formulation and development at the national, international and GEF Council and Assembly levels.

### *National level*

17. At the national level, strong NGOs are key to ensuring country ownership of GEF projects and to on-going efforts to mainstream the GEF mandate and policies within national development and environmental plans and strategies. NGOs, through participation and representation in national steering committees of such planning tools as national environmental action plans, national sustainable development strategies, and national conservation strategies, and in GEF national committees can contribute effectively and proactively to integrating GEF goals into national policies. Furthermore, NGOs can assist GEF national Focal Points in identifying national priorities relating to global environmental issues.

### *International level*

18. At the international level NGOs, through participation in international meetings and conferences convened under the multilateral environmental conventions, provide views and technical input to the government participants and the parties to the conventions on the recommendations and guidance that is directed to the GEF and other international institutions.

### *NGO consultations and representation at Council meetings*

19. During the pilot phase of the GEF, NGO consultations were held prior to each semiannual Participants' Meeting. The NGO consultation was designed to provide an opportunity for NGOs to express their views about GEF activities and to engage in a substantive dialogue with the IAs about GEF policies and projects.

20. After the GEF was restructured, the Council agreed to continue financing, through the corporate budget, NGO consultations prior to each regular Council meeting. The Council agreed to invite five NGO representatives to attend Council Meetings as well as five other NGO representatives to observe the meetings. In addition, the Council agreed to provide resources to finance the travel of a limited number of NGO representatives from recipient countries to attend the NGO consultations and the Council Meeting.

21. The model of inclusive representation and participation of NGOs in the GEF Council is one that is unique among governing bodies of international financial institutions. The review of the NGO network highlights that many NGO representatives who have attended Council meetings showed over the years an increasing sophistication in preparing and articulating their positions on many Council agenda items. The review notes, however, that in the last couple of years the level of preparation and participation of NGOs at Council Meetings has declined.

22. NGOs are also invited to participate in various working groups and task forces convened by the GEF Secretariat, and provide inputs to technical workshops and other activities initiated by the Council, the Secretariat, and the Evaluation Office. For example, NGOs played a leadership role in formulating proposals that led to the establishment of procedures for medium-sized projects and for subsequent proposals as to how to improve these procedures. NGOs also participated in the Resource Allocation Framework technical seminars, OPS consultations, and the Local Benefits Study.

## Role of NGOs in GEF Projects

23. The value of civil society contributing to GEF projects is explicitly recognized in the *Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured GEF*. Paragraph 5 of the Instrument provides that “GEF-financed projects shall provide for full disclosure of all non-confidential information, and consultation with, and participation as appropriate of, major groups and local communities throughout the project cycle.”

24. At its meeting in April 1996, the GEF Council approved a policy on public involvement in GEF-financed projects. The policy calls for public involvement to consist of three related, and often overlapping, processes:

- (a) *Information dissemination*: the availability and distribution of timely and relevant information on GEF-financed projects;
- (b) *Consultation*: the sharing of information among the government, IAs, project executing agencies, and other stakeholders; and
- (c) *Stakeholder participation*: the collaborative engagement, as appropriate, of stakeholders in the identification of project concepts and objectives, the selection of sites, the design and implementation of activities, and the monitoring and evaluation of projects.

25. NGO participation in GEF projects may include involvement in one or more of the following capacities:

- (a) *Project execution*: an NGO is the sole national executing agency;
- (b) *Managerial*: NGOs are sub-contracted by the national executing agency to manage GEF projects in their entirety;
- (c) *Contractual*: an NGO undertakes specific tasks within a project through a sub-contract by the national executing agency;
- (d) *Policy and/or advisory*: an NGO participates in the project’s national steering committees, scientific advisory committees, etc.;
- (e) *Co-financier*: an NGO makes in-kind or cash contributions to a project; and
- (f) *Stakeholder*: an NGO participates in the process of stakeholder consultations of a project during the design, implementation or evaluation phase.

26. Until the late 1990’s, the network’s representatives focused much of their attention on influencing Council proceedings by facilitating the participation of those NGOs most suited to address specific issues at the Council meetings and NGO consultations. As the network review has highlighted, the network’s focus during this period was oriented towards GEF policy and less on strengthening its influence on GEF activities at the country and regional levels. Over the

past few years, however, NGO involvement in GEF projects has grown more diverse and versatile.

*Opportunities to Enhance NGO participation in GEF project activities*

27. There are a number of funding initiatives that have been designed to provide increased opportunities for direct participation of NGOs in GEF-financed activities. These include:

- (a) *GEF Small Grants Program (SGP)*: Launched in 1992, the SGP is specifically targeted to providing financing for NGO and community-based projects. It supports local actions that address global environmental problems, emphasizing geographical distribution, participation, synergy through partnerships, gender and indigenous peoples' involvement, and the replication and sustainability of project outputs. The SGP also seeks to influence national environmental policies and donor agendas by increasing public awareness of global environmental issues and communicating lessons learned, including good practices from community-based experiences. The SGP is one of the few programs that funds and actively supports small, emerging NGOs and community-based organizations working on environmental issues in developing countries.
- (b) *Medium-sized projects*: In 1996, the GEF Council approved procedures for preparing, approving, and managing medium-sized projects (MSPs). An evaluation of MSP project implementation was undertaken in 2001 as an input to the GEF Second Overall Performance Study (OPS2). The evaluation showed that NGOs as a whole account for the largest share of MSP executing agencies with 41% of the total. Other executing agencies included governments, intergovernmental organizations, research organizations, and the private sector. One of the main conclusions of the MSP evaluation was that the expedited procedures envisaged for the MSPs have fallen short of expectations. The GEF Secretariat, as a follow-up to the MSP evaluation report, chaired a MSP Working Group which included representatives of NGOs. The findings and recommendations of the MSP Working Group confirmed the need to expedite the implementation of smaller projects through an initiative to streamline the processing and financing of MSP proposals. As a consequence, the GEF Council in November 2004 approved the establishment of a GEF program on smaller-sized MSPs and a pilot country-level program in Argentina to experiment with the implementation of smaller-sized MSPs through a decentralized country mechanism.
- (c) *Development Marketplace*: The GEF program on smaller-sized MSPs is being operationalized through a partnership with the World Bank Development Marketplace – an annual competitive grant program at the World Bank that funds innovative, small-scale development projects. Through such a partnership, the GEF will provide funding to the Development Marketplace for projects that fit within the GEF mandate with a view to increasing its reach to NGOs at the local level in GEF recipient countries.

## **Role of NGOs in advocacy, awareness and outreach on global environmental issues**

28. One of the main missions of the GEF is to promote global environmental benefits by influencing the behavior of in-country national stakeholders, including NGOs, through awareness and outreach campaigns. The NGO network has historically been tasked with disseminating GEF policy and project information to stakeholders and promoting an ongoing dialogue at the national level. These activities were undertaken by the network on a voluntary basis. The NGO network review found, however, that the network lacked the capacity to carry out these activities effectively, a finding which was also shared by OPS3. Lack of communication among the network's Regional Focal Points and between RFPs and their constituencies was also cited in the review as a key performance gap.

### **NGO NETWORK: CURRENT STRUCTURE AND STATUS**

29. As outlined in its *Guidelines*, the GEF NGO network is organized into a coordination committee which is made up of sixteen RFPs, two of which represent donor NGO constituencies, and fourteen of which represent NGO constituencies comprised of recipient countries and countries with economies in transition. The coordination committee also has as an additional member representing indigenous peoples. The RFPs elect from amongst themselves a Central Focal Point (CFP). The coordination committee acts as the ruling body of the network and makes decisions on its behalf.

30. The roles of the RFPs and the CFP are set out in the *Guidelines* as follows:

- (a) *Regional Focal Point*: the RFPs are responsible for keeping their NGO constituencies apprised of GEF policies and activities. The RFPs are also responsible for conveying the issues and concerns of their NGO constituents to the GEF Secretariat and Council.
- (b) *Central Focal Point*: the CFP's duties include coordinating with the RFPs in administering travel grants for NGOs participating in GEF meetings, developing the agenda for NGO consultations, and reporting on proceedings of GEF meetings to the rest of the network.

31. In theory, RFPs should have the necessary resources to carry out their duties by virtue of the ongoing global environmental activities they are engaged in as part of their regular NGO work. In practice, these resources have proven to be by and large inadequate.

32. Both the NGO network review and OPS3 identified insufficient resources and lack of capacity as major obstacles to the network's success. More specifically, the review identified the following as the biggest hindrance to effective NGO participation in the GEF:

- (a) Lack of coordination and communication between the RFPs and their NGO constituencies on GEF activities;
- (b) Lack of accountability and transparency of the RFP election process;

- (c) Lack of performance targets and indicators for RFP;
- (d) Lack of long-term or short-term strategies or a clear vision by the network for achieving its goals and objective;
- (e) Diminished role of international NGOs in the GEF network;
- (f) Lack of communication between the GEF Secretariat and the NGO network between Council meetings;
- (g) Un-defined representation of indigenous peoples;
- (h) Shortcomings in the process by which the GEF accredits NGOs;
- (i) Geographical and linguistic disconnects in the current regional groupings of the network; and
- (j) Vacant RFP positions.

#### **GEF RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REVIEW**

33. A two-step approach to addressing the recommendations of the review is proposed which includes:

- (a) The immediate implementation of short-term measures that fall within the mandate of the network or the GEF Secretariat; and
- (b) The development of a longer-term strategy for promoting the greater and more effective participation of and engagement with NGOs.

34. The goals of the proposed approach are to:

- (a) Strengthen the GEF policy dialogue with active NGO participation;
- (b) Provide information and tools to enable NGOs to contribute to GEF policies more proactively;
- (c) Strengthen the NGO network in its role as a catalyst for strengthening country drivenness and ownership of GEF projects at the national level;
- (d) Strengthen and enhance in-country stakeholder participation and consultation related to GEF projects;
- (e) Enhance the quality of GEF projects;
- (f) Build the capacities of NGOs; and
- (g) Strengthen the GEF Secretariat – NGO network relationship.

### **Actions being implemented by the NGO network to address the findings of the review**

35. In an additional measure to increase its accountability and effectiveness in light of the review's findings, the NGO network is currently revising its *Guidelines*, and is also in the process of working with UNEP to propose a Medium-Sized Project to enhance the capacity of NGOs in developing countries to address global environmental issues.

36. The network is also considering structural changes to facilitate communication and accountability and to broaden its base to include a larger, more effective representation of civil society organizations, to foster better coordination of NGOs at the national level, and to increase meaningful involvement of indigenous peoples.

37. At the recent brainstorming meeting organized by the GEF Secretariat with representatives from the network and the three Implementing Agencies, the participants agreed that indigenous community groups should be integrated at all levels into the GEF NGO network, although their representation should be distinct from that of the NGOs. It was suggested that three indigenous community representatives, selected through existing indigenous peoples' forums, would be supported to attend the GEF Council and NGO consultation meetings, and be part of the GEF NGO coordination committee. It was also suggested that the indigenous community groups have a distinct voice from that of the NGO Network at GEF Council meetings.

### **Actions being implemented by the Secretariat to address findings of the review**

38. The following actions are currently underway to address relevant major findings of the review.

#### *Improving the accreditation process*

39. The Council-approved policies on NGOs provide that NGOs are to be accredited to the GEF in order to participate in NGO consultations and Council meetings. Rules for accrediting NGOs for participation in GEF Assembly meetings have also been approved.

40. The Secretariat has revised the accreditation procedures with a view to clarifying expectations accredited NGOs have of the network, and incorporating criteria for renewal of accreditation after a certain number of years. The proposed application form is attached in Annex A.

41. Once the accreditation procedures are approved by Council, relevant documentation will be posted on the GEF website.

42. The Secretariat will track, monitor and evaluate trends in accreditation, in order to analyze the geographical distribution and types of NGOs interested in working with the GEF so as to better respond to their interests and contributions.

### *Updating the NGO database*

43. The review noted that the database of accredited NGOs contained on the GEF website was outdated and neither user-friendly nor easily manipulated to produce reports for users. The review implied that these shortcomings impacted the ability of RFPs to communicate with their NGO constituents, and that maintaining and updating the NGO database would be instrumental to a more proactive and effective NGO network. The Secretariat has now updated contact information in the NGO database. This database will be ultimately linked to the Management Information System currently under development, making it a flexible tool capable of generating reports and facilitating targeted communications.

### *Improving and enhancing web-based resources for NGOs*

44. The GEF NGO network review indicated that the GEF website on a whole is not user-friendly for NGOs, and suggested that NGOs should have their own sub-site dedicated to issues and topics of interest to them. The Secretariat has designed an NGO sub-site which has begun to provide web-based resources designed or compiled to address GEF NGO business. The sub-site contains the following:

- (a) Documentation on NGO consultation reports and NGO interventions at Council meetings, and supporting documents. Reports and documentation of NGO participation in other GEF-related activities will be compiled and posted in the near future;
- (b) *The A to Z Guide of the GEF: An NGO Guide to Participate in the Global Environment Facility*, developed by the NGOs to enhance their participation in the GEF. The guide describes how the GEF operates, how to access to its funds, and how to influence its policies. Due to the dynamic nature of the GEF as it evolves and adopts new policies, the guide is a live document that will be updated systematically as needed. In addition to being on the GEF website, the guide is available on CD-ROM and as a download, increasing its accessibility to NGOs;
- (c) A list of accredited NGOs with their contact details, as well as contact details for the network's RFPs;
- (d) The GEF Secretariat quarterly newsletter, Talking Points, informs NGOs about recent and upcoming events, developments, and projects. It is now web-based and downloadable, increasing its accessibility to NGOs. The newsletter also contains space dedicated to NGOs contributions;
- (e) An NGO e-forum is under development which will provide the platform for NGOs to connect online and communicate directly with each other to exchange views, suggestions, and experiences and will provide information on any upcoming NGO events and Secretariat and agency activities in which NGOs might play a role;



- (f) As part of the Country Support Program (CSP), approved by Council in November 2005, a knowledge management framework is to be developed and posted on the GEF website. NGOs will also have access to the framework; and
- (g) A link is to be provided on the GEF website to the Small Grants Program (SGP) information database, through which contacts and project information on the SGP will be provided in order to better connect GEF projects and activities on the ground with policy formulation within the network. The information database will serve as a platform for the exchange of information, experiences and knowledge among NGOs and SGP grantees.

#### *NGO Coordinator Position at the Secretariat*

45. Historically, NGO-related issues have been addressed on a part-time basis by GEF Secretariat staff with other portfolios. The review recommends that the Secretariat hire a full-time NGO Coordinator to facilitate constructive dialogue between the GEF Secretariat and the NGO network. In order to carry out the activities proposed in this paper and to signal a strong commitment to engaging civil society groups and NGOs in GEF activities, it is proposed that the Secretariat recruit a staff member fully dedicated to NGO work.

46. 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 engagement with civil society. The NGO Coordinator's work will include collaboration with the GEF Communications and Outreach team in developing and disseminating important materials to NGOs.

47. The proposed terms of reference for a full-time NGO Coordinator are attached in Annex B. Financing for this new position is being sought through the corporate budget proposed for FY07.

#### **Towards a Longer-Term Strategic Partnership and Engagement with GEF NGOs**

48. Despite acknowledging the often positive relationship between the network and the GEF Secretariat, the review highlights 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. As OPS3 made clear, encouraging, building and strengthening partnerships are the most effective and cost-efficient ways for the GEF to achieve its goals. There is therefore a need for the development of a strategy for long-term engagement with NGOs.

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

### *GEF-NGO Knowledge Sharing and Learning Initiative*

50. The review of the NGO network has identified limited or no capacity as a primary factor impeding full NGO participation in the GEF. NGOs should be able to directly benefit from the GEF's unique experiences, knowledge, tools, and approaches, thereby strengthening their capacity to contribute to global environmental management. The GEF proposes to maximize knowledge sharing with NGOs by establishing two new programs as follows:

- (a) **NGO Knowledge Sharing Day:** An annual one day event held in conjunction with the NGO consultation and GEF Council. This event will bring together NGOs from both the developing and the developed world in addition to international NGOs to exchange experiences and knowledge, exchange policy briefs/notes/updates and other outreach materials, and promote partnerships. Activities could include:
  - (i) Presentations on good practices and lessons learned from participation in GEF projects and activities;
  - (ii) Videoconferencing to link with other NGOs in developing and developed countries to share experiences and knowledge;
  - (iii) Award presentations for NGOs recognizing achievements and good practices;
  - (iv) Workshops and informal learning sessions; and
  - (v) Panels and roundtables with larger NGOs and international NGOs on effective partnering with smaller, less experienced NGOs in GEF projects and activities on the ground.
- (b) **NGO Resources on the Web:** As noted above, the GEF website will include an NGO sub-site. This sub-site could include:
  - (i) E-learning modules tailored to the needs of NGOs;
  - (ii) E-bulletin board where NGOs can post announcements on upcoming events and activities; and
  - (iii) E-publications, information sets, pamphlets, and resource kits designed to cater to the interests and capacity needs of NGOs.

### *NGO and Civil Society Outreach and Communications Strategy*

51. OPS3 noted that the GEF needs a robust outreach campaign to inform key stakeholders of the GEF's role and accomplishments in protecting the global environment. The policy recommendations under consideration for the fourth replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund call for a communications and outreach strategy to improve the quality of, and access to, information

on the GEF and its results, to be submitted to the Council for consideration at its meeting in November/December 2007.

52. In developing the strategy for Council review, consideration will be given to:
- (a) Identifying the communication and outreach materials and resources needed by NGOs to help them build GEF awareness;
  - (b) Developing and preparing policy briefs/notes/updates and other outreach materials customized to suit the needs, interests, and capacities of NGOs, including translating and simplifying GEF documents; and
  - (c) Establishing an efficient and cost-effective mechanism for regular and systematic dissemination of the outreach materials and resources (including the NGO guide to the GEF) to NGOs in GEF recipient countries.

*Establishment of a support program for the NGO network Coordination Committee*

53. The NGO network seeks to disseminate GEF policy and project information to in-country stakeholders, as well as to promote and foster ongoing dialogue with civil society groups. The GEF NGO network review, along with OPS2 and OPS3, concluded that the network's RFPs have proven ineffective in disseminating information to stakeholders, and this shortcoming has been attributed to varying levels of communication capacity within the network, the lack of resources for translating important GEF documents into local languages, and the lack of national and regional consultations.

54. In response to this finding, the Secretariat proposes the establishment of a support program for the NGO network, to be linked to the ongoing GEF Country Support Program (CSP), which provides Focal Points with resources and capacity-building tools. The 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 a strengthened NGO network in GEF recipient countries. The establishment and implementation of an NGO support program would be coupled with the designing of a rigorous system of performance indicators and monitoring and tracking tools.

55. Under the support program, resources would be provided to finance:
- (a) Translation of relevant GEF documents and materials into local languages;
  - (b) Capacity-building activities for NGOs through regional training and mentoring of smaller NGOs by larger, more experienced NGOs;
  - (c) National and regional NGO consultations; and
  - (d) Costs of communications.



## CONCLUSION

56. This paper proposes activities to respond to the key findings and recommendations of the independent review of the GEF NGO network. The proposed actions are aimed at:

- (a) Increasing the network's effectiveness and impact;
- (b) Strengthening communication and outreach;
- (c) Strengthening the partnership between the Secretariat and the NGO network; and
- (d) Providing resources to build the capacity of the network.

57. The Council is invited to consider the proposals presented in this paper and to provide guidance on which elements it recommends to be further developed as part of its strategy for strengthening the GEF's partnership and engagement with the NGO community. Based on the comments made by the Council, the GEF Secretariat and Implementing Agencies will continue to work with the NGO network to elaborate a costed strategy for Council consideration and approval.

## **Annex A:**

### **Proposed NGO Accreditation Procedures**

#### **INFORMATION ON NGO ACCREDITATION PROCESS**

NGOs interested in becoming accredited to the GEF should complete this form.

1. Accreditation is necessary for NGOs to:
  - Become a member of the GEF-NGO network
  - Participate in NGO consultations
  - Participate in the GEF Assembly
  - Participate in or observe Council meetings
  - Receive documentation, information, and regular policy updates disseminated to NGOs
2. NGOs accredited to the GEF participate actively in the network by:
  - Supporting global environmental activities at the national level
  - Developing and presenting case studies and good practices on global environmental issues
  - Disseminating GEF-related information, fact sheets, and other material to their networks and other NGOs through their ongoing activities
3. Accreditation is for a period of three years. Accredited NGOs wishing to be re-accredited after this period are required to submit an application for re-accreditation which highlights the contributions they have made to GEF-related activities.
4. All applications for accreditation must be signed by the Chief Executive Officer or an authorized senior official of the NGO, and must be accompanied by proof of incorporation of the entity and its non-profit status.
5. Documentation of the organization's competence and relevance to the work of the GEF should accompany applications for accreditation. This may include annual reports; reports of workshops, seminars, or conference proceedings; brochures, bulletins, newsletters, newspaper articles, press releases, etc.
6. On the basis of the information provided on this form, the GEO of the GEF will accredit any NGO that has fulfilled the above requirements. NGO applications that have not fulfilled the above requirements will also be notified accordingly.

7. Please send the completed form and attachments to:

NGO Coordinator  
The GEF Secretariat  
1818 H Street, NW, Washington, DC 20433 USA  
Fax: 202-522-3240; Email: [NGO@theGEF.org](mailto:NGO@theGEF.org)

8. General NGO queries or follow-up on the application for accreditation may also be directed to the same address.

## FORM FOR NGO ACCREDITATION

<b>NAME OF ORGANIZATION</b>								
<b>DATE &amp; PLACE OF ESTABLISHMENT</b>								
<b>GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE</b> <input type="checkbox"/> National <input type="checkbox"/> Regional <input type="checkbox"/> International		<b>ORGANIZATION TYPE</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) <input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous Peoples Organization <input type="checkbox"/> Community Based Organization (CBO) <input type="checkbox"/> Academic or Research Institution <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Network <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify _____						
<b>ADDRESS</b> (of principal office if multiple)	<b>STREET</b> (or PO Box)							
	<b>POSTAL CODE</b>		<b>CITY</b>		<b>COUNTRY</b>			
<b>TEL</b>					<b>FAX</b>			
<b>E-MAIL</b>					<b>WEBSITE</b>			
<b>NAME &amp; OFFICIAL CAPACITY OF CONTACT PERSON</b>								
<b>PURPOSE &amp; OBJECTIVES OF ORGANIZATION</b>								
<b>GEF FOCAL AREA TO WHICH ORGANIZATION'S COMPETENCE &amp; RELEVANCE PERTAIN</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input type="checkbox"/> Climate Change <input type="checkbox"/> International Waters <input type="checkbox"/> Land degradation <input type="checkbox"/> Ozone Layer Depletion <input type="checkbox"/> Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)								
<b>ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON ORGANIZATION'S COMPETENCE, RELEVANCE TO THE GEF, AND POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE GEF MANDATE</b> (attach relevant documents)								
<b>NAME OF CEO</b> (please print clearly)				<b>SIGNATURE</b>		<b>DATE</b> (mm/dd/yy)		



## **ANNEX B:**

### **Proposed TORs for NGO Coordinator**

The GEF NGO Coordinator is expected to carry out the following responsibilities:

1. Implement, assess and monitor the approved GEF overall strategy for enhanced partnership and engagement with NGOs, and propose ways to expand and enhance this relationship.
2. Maintain, update and develop database of NGOs based on agreed-upon accreditation criteria. Lead the accreditation process while proposing ways to streamline it.
3. Maintain and ensure the web posting of documentation of the NGO consultations and NGO interventions at Council, as well as other relevant documentation. Prepare, in collaboration and coordination with the Secretariat and the network's Central Focal Point (CFP) and Regional Focal Points (RFPs), the agenda and related logistics of the NGO Consultations.
4. Develop and maintain regular communication channels with NGOs and the network RFPs. Establish communication and carry out networking activities with the SGP National Coordinators as well as with thematic NGOs and networks of the multilateral environmental conventions for which the GEF is the financial mechanism. Collaborate with GEF EXT to address NGO communications needs and prepare fact sheets and policy notes and updates and ensure their dissemination within the NGO network. Prepare and solicit articles from NGOs and oversee the NGO section of the GEF Newsletter.
5. Propose ways for integrating views and concerns of the NGO network into the Secretariat's work.
6. Represent the Secretariat in interagency task forces, advisory committees, working groups, conferences, and other meetings relevant to NGOs and civil society.
7. Collaborate with the interagency working group on Knowledge Management and the Country Support Program to ensure that the knowledge needs for the NGOs are addressed and that knowledge products are delivered to the NGO network.
8. Prepare a 4-year strategy and work program as part of a GEF NGO network policy.
9. Liaise with the NGO coordinators of the Implementing Agencies (IAs).
10. Provide support for Secretariat / IA's activities with NGOs and civil society groups.