



GEF Expanded Constituency Workshop, 19-21 Mar 2013, Cambodia

Report of the Civil Society Organizations to the GEF

(prepared by Global Environment Centre, Malaysia - Central Focal point of GEF-NGO Network)

- Expanded Constituency Meeting: South, North-East and South-East Asia
- Location: Sokhalay Angkor Hotel, Siem Reap, Cambodia
- Dates: 19 - 21 March 2013
- Participating Countries: Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.
- Participating civil society organizations (see Appendix 1)





The Expanded Constituency Workshop for South, North-East and South-East Asia was held on 19 – 21 March 2013 in Siem Reap, Cambodia. The ECW was attended by more than 100 participants comprising of GEF focal points, focal points from the UNFCCC, representatives from civil society and representatives from the GEF Secretariat and the GEF Agencies (UNDP, UNIDO, ADB and UNEP). The workshop provided the participants with knowledge of GEF-5 strategies, programs, policies, and procedures with focus on national capacity self assessment (NCSA), results-based management, monitoring and evaluation, and synergies in convention implementation. Focused group discussions were held on the GEF 2020 Strategy and the Project Cycle harmonization. Part of the meeting was also dedicated to engaging the countries in the Overall Performance Study of GEF-5 (OPS5) exercise led by the GEF Evaluation Office. A session on civil society involvement in GEF was held on Day 2 which outlined the policies and procedure for civil society participation in GEF programme and projects. It also included a practical exercise on the CSO engagement and GEF Public Involvement Policy. This session was led by Faizal Parish, from the Central Focal Point of GEF-NGO Network.

The meeting was attended by representatives from 20 CSOs representing 10 countries (see participant's list in Appendix 1). The following summarised the main expectations and objectives of the CSOs who participated in the meeting :

- Increased understanding on GEF portfolio on the global priority issues related to overall environment, finance mechanism especially climate finance
- To learn about GEF processes, particularly on CSO engagement at global, regional and national level.
- To learn about the processes for CSO involvement in GEF during project implementation, monitoring and evaluation
- Opportunity to meet people of other countries and get to share their expertise.
- Learn new approaches in global conservation efforts
- Build capacity and resource opportunity (expertise and knowledge)

Generally, the CSOs found the agenda of the meeting good, useful, informative and educational.

However, there are some comments and suggestions to the agenda as follows :-

- Since for many CSOs this was their first ECW meeting, some more basic introduction on GEF would have been useful.
- More case study, good practices and success of GEF projects should be presented.
- M&E results of some GEF supported projects could be shared

Among the main topics of interest of the CSOs are as follows :

- Feedback from the country and GEF staff on the role and involvement of CSO in project design, evaluation and implementation
- Feedback on the options of stronger involvement of CSO in GEF activity
- M&E of GEF supported climate change projects
- Climate change, Rio conventions, environment and water
- GEF overview, GEF Conventions, National Capacity Self-Assessment, CSO session



Recommendations

The CSOs present made the following recommendations:

- CSO involvement should be formalized as a standard protocol for all GEF project preparation and planning and evaluation.
- Each participating country could make a short presentation on how CSOs were involved in the GEF project implementation
- Regular involvement of CSO in GEF meeting at national level should be formalized
- A local evaluation expert from NGOs/CSOs should be involved in the evaluation process of GEF projects
- CSOs should have easy access to GEF-related information which ideally should be in their local language
- More CSO be involved in meetings and projects
- Bring presentation from selected regional/national/local level projects to the meeting where the ECW takes place

A practical exercise was conducted during the meeting where the participants were asked to deliberate on two discussion topics as follows :

Group 1 – CSO engagement in respective countries/issues

Group 2 – Feedback on implementation of Public Involvement Policy.

The summary of the feedbacks from the groups are given in Appendix 2.



Appendix 1 : CSO representatives to the ECW Cambodia

No	First Name	Last Name	Official Title	Organization	Email Address	Country
1	Md. Golam	Rabbani	Fellow	Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies	golam.rabbani72@gmail.com	Bangladesh
2	Khairul	Hafiz	Programme Manager	Save the Earth Cambodia	kh.hafiz@gmail.com	Cambodia
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14	Padma Nav	Paudyal	PROJECT TEAM LEADER	VILLAGE ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDS CONFEDERATION	padamnav@gmail.com	Nepal
15	Ishana	Thapa	Senior Conservation Officer	Bird Conservation Nepal	ishana@birdlifenepal.org , ishana.thapa@gmail.com	Nepal
16	Chalong	Ditsri	project coordinator	Foundation for Thailand Rural Reconstruction Movement Under Royal Patronage (TRRM)	chalonggef@yahoo.com	Thailand



No	First Name	Last Name	Official Title	Organization	Email Address	Country
17	Nguyen Manh	Ha	Biodiversity and Conservation coordinator	Centre for Natural Resources and Environmental Studies (CRES)	Ha@cres.edu.vn, Ha.nguyenba@gmail.com	Vietnam
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20	Adelaine, Beng Hun	Tan	Coordinator	Global Environment Centre	adelaine@gec.org.my	Malaysia



Appendix 2 : Feedback from Practical Exercise in CSO Session, Day 2

CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT IN RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES/ISSUES

- Bangladesh – involvement of CSOs in implementation of GEF projects are quite extensive. Currently Ministry of Environment is implementing first NCSA project where several components are implemented by CSOs
- Maldives – issue in trusting CSOs as there are many CSOs with a broad mandate and generally includes environment. However, most lack of capacity, hence need a system to accreditate CSOs. Ideally the Ministry of Environment should have a list of environmental CSOs that have the capacity. Government highlights the important for CSOs to have an established institutional framework so that government can trust and work together.
- Maldives – issue about CSOs not knowing about GEF and its role – important to have it in laymens terms and disseminate the information through multi-media (eg. Tv, radio, sms) and not limited to only website which currently is the case. Due to governments perception of weak civil society, it is crucial to strengthen the capacity of CSOs.
- Bhutan – several mechanisms exist to engage CSOs
- Vietnam – CSO participation in the whole project cycle can be improved. It is recommended that CSOs are given the opportunity to be agencies of GEF.
- Nepal - No specific policy for CSO engagement but opportunities given to CSOs in GEF projects. Can be improved through increased transparency, giving ownership for CSOs and strengthening capacity of CSOs
- Mongolia – CSOs are engaged but actions are mostly done spontaneously therefore hard to say that it is in align with a policy. CSOs are very much dependent on government which is an issue. Governments have the right and do exclude CSOs in implementation of some conventions.
- China - Policy in place for involvement of CSOs – mostly included in public awareness.
- Bangladesh – NGO capacity in some cases weak and needs to be strengthened to implement projects
- Cambodia – governments do engage well with some established CSOs in policy development, NAPA, NC therefore CSO views are reflected in the policy. Well established CSOs are represented in the steering committee of SGP. NGOs in rural community are weak and don't know much about GEF.
- UNDP – 100% of the projects involved CSOs. It is an essential part of project design and implementation. Environment and social safeguard screening guidelines are applied during development of the PIF.
- ADB – CSO engagement is important to ensure project ownership, improves designs of projects, improves outcomes and safeguards projects. Stakeholder identification at the start of the project is crucial and needs to happen early. ADB has a public engagement policy and safeguard policy with requirements for meaningful consultations.



FEEDBACK ON IMPLEMENTATION OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT POLICY

- Thailand – engaged as it is a constitutional right
- Malaysia – engaged but not with reference to the GEF policy. Not so familiar with the GEF policy. Local language of the policy is very important and accessibility needs to be increased.
- Maldives – government stakeholder feels that CSOs are meaningfully engaged though the CSO representatives feel that they are not meaningfully engaged. Government does acknowledge there is room for improvement and the limited engagement is mainly due to limited time together with limited funding and geographical distribution which pushes them to give more priority to tangible outcomes rather than meaningful engagement of CSOs.
- Sri Lanka – CSOs are involved particularly in SGP ; however, noted that it is important that GEF policy be in-line with the government policy.
- Maldives – though CSOs engagement has not been meaningful due to limited funding and time and geographical constraint, willing to engage CSOs more meaningfully through annual CSO forums where best practices are shared as well as CSOs are informed about GEF public policy, about the updates and opportunities and facilitate ownership of projects.
- Thailand - It is important to restructure GEF to involve more CSOs more meaningfully.