

CONSULTATION DRAFT

Draft Council paper on GEF and civil society

“A New Vision to Enhance Civil Society Engagement with the GEF”

Executive Summary

Vision Statement

- A. The overarching objective of engagement between the GEF and civil society is to achieve greater results and impact through improving its collaboration with civil society organizations (CSOs).*
- B. In this context, the primary role of civil society within the GEF Partnership is to contribute to, as appropriate, the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of GEF projects on the ground, through (amongst others) engagement in projects on the ground, building awareness of the GEF in local communities, dissemination of information about the GEF to stakeholders and participation with Council members.*
- C. In addition, civil society plays an advisory role for the GEF Council on institutional policies and guidelines and help formulate strategies effectively.*

Major Recommendations

1. Structure of CSO engagement during Council Meetings

The Working Group also suggests that CSO participation in Council Meetings be more integrated with the discussion of Council members. Currently, CSOs are invited to speak at the end of each agenda item, once the Council members have spoken. To encourage more meaningful participation, the Working Group recommends that the CSOs be given the floor during Council discussions in the order in which they ask to speak, together with Council members.

2. Structure of Council CSO Consultations before Council Meetings

The Working Group proposes that the Consultations between the GEF Council and CSOs be more structured than in their current form. The Council will invite CSOs to present on specific topics – chosen by the Council, with input from CSOs and the GEF Secretariat – intended to highlight the experiences of local CSOs during project implementation while also seeking to align with the Council Meeting Agenda. To allow for adequate preparation, the GEF Council will select Consultation Meeting topics at least 12 months (or two meetings) before each Consultation Meeting.

3. Selection of CSO representation at Council Consultations and Meetings

The Working Group recommends changes to the selection of CSOs for Council consultations and meetings to ensure that CSO representatives are sharing the voices of CSOs from the field, while maintaining robust engagement on policy issues. Thus, two groups of CSOs will be invited to attend the biannual Council Meetings: regional CSO representatives and local CSOs with experience in a technical or geographical area. The GEF Secretariat would work with GEF Agencies, the CSO Network, OFPs and the GEF Small Grants Program (SGP) to establish a comprehensive list of CSOs from which to draw those to be invited to attend the Council Meetings. The selection from meeting to meeting will aim to: (i) include those CSOs presenting on the selected topic for the CSO consultation; (ii) track, to the extent possible, the Council Meeting Agenda; (iii) enable a healthy rotation of CSO representation that balances the competing needs of inclusion and expertise. The number of CSOs invited to each Council Meeting will be limited to 10-15 individuals, depending on the agenda.

Draft for Consultation

1. Introduction

Civil Society has been an essential member of the GEF partnership since its inception. The importance of civil society to GEF's work is a cornerstone feature in the GEF Instrument, and is set out in a number of GEF policies and guidelines that have been in place for many years.¹ Civil Society Organizations (CSO) have been a highly-valued voice and advocate on a wide range of GEF issues, a source of knowledge and expertise for the work on the ground, and a valuable project executing partner.

The GEF Network of Non-Governmental Organizations was formed in 1995 as a voluntary structure of environmental and sustainable development oriented CSOs working in at least one of the GEF focal areas.

The main objective that the GEF Council mandated from the CSO Network was: "to prepare for and report on the GEF Council meetings and NGO consultations to the wider CSO community at the national, regional and international levels".

In 2005, at the request of the Central Focal Point of the then NGO Network, the GEF Secretariat financed an independent review of the Network. The review concluded that the Network was operating ineffectively, and that it lacked a long-term vision for effective engagement and service delivery. The recommendations made and accepted by the NGO Network included strengthening accountability and effectiveness, outreach and the partnership with the Secretariat as well as capacity building needs for NGOs engaging with the GEF.

Over the past twenty-five years, the GEF partnership has expanded considerably, and while the role played by civil society has evolved, a strategic vision regarding its engagement in the GEF has not been established².

In 2014-2015, at the request of the GEF Council, the GEF Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) conducted an evaluation of the CSO Network and recommended, among other things, that "a contemporary vision for the CSO Network should be created within the new GEF architecture".

During its 50th meeting in June 2016, the GEF Council adopted the decision "to develop an updated vision of the relationship between the GEF and civil society, and a plan to achieve it, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, and report back to the Council at its first meeting in 2017. The Council encourages the CSO Network to establish a working group that includes balanced representation of CSO Stakeholder views, to interact with the Council Working Group

¹ GEF Instrument, paragraph 5; GEF Policies on Public Involvement, Gender Mainstreaming, Indigenous Peoples, among others.

² IEO's Evaluation of the GEF CSO Network. A key theme of the different documents and Council decisions pertaining to civil society and the GEF (and the Network) is that the participation of civil society in the GEF appears to have evolved in an operational manner but without being driven by deliberate strategic decisions.

on a new, updated vision for the Network, including governance, policies, guidelines and cooperation mechanisms.”

Following the Council decision, the Ad-Hoc Council Working Group on GEF and Civil Society (the WG) was established in July 2016 with participation from six GEF Council members who expressed their interest as follows: Mr. Leonardo Martinez of the United States (now Mr. Peter Wisner), Mr. Carlos Rodríguez of Uruguay, Mr. Tanyaradzwa Mundoga of Zimbabwe, Mr. Stefan Schwager of Switzerland, Mr. Kees Rade of the Netherlands (now Ms. Carola van Rijnsoever), and Dr. Mohamed -Yahya Lafdal Chah of Mauritania.

In the context of an expanded GEF partnership, the vision for civil society needs to be revised and brought up to date to reflect the role that this sector plays in GEF operations, particularly at the country level, where programs and projects are designed and implemented.

The GEF Secretariat is leading two parallel processes that are related, albeit distinct from the updating of the vision for civil society and the GEF: the updating of the Policy on Stakeholder Engagement and the updating of the Policy on Gender. In addition, the GEF is issuing a Policy on Access to Information, which will set out the guiding principles and mandatory requirements for information dissemination and access with a view to ensuring the transparent governance and operation of the GEF.

The Policy on Stakeholder Engagement will establish guiding principles and mandatory requirements for stakeholder engagement in GEF’s operations, at different stages of the program and project cycles. The present paper will complement the Policy on Stakeholder Engagement and focuses on the role that civil society should play at the GEF’s governance level, i.e. by informing GEF’s decision-making regarding policy and programming priorities, and representing the needs of a broad range of stakeholders, including communities, women and girls as well as Indigenous Peoples.

One aspect of this role is the participation of civil society in Council meetings, including the preparatory activities leading up to these meetings.

2. Background and rationale

Brief history of the role of CSOs in the GEF

For the purpose of this paper, and consistent with Council decisions,³ a CSO includes the various and diverse types of major groups and organization as set out in Agenda 21 of the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development, including NGOs, farmers, women, indigenous

³ Council Document GEF/C.39/10/Rev.01.

and local communities, women, the business community,⁴ workers and unions, youth and children, and the scientific and technical community.

The relationship between the GEF and civil society organizations (CSOs) goes back to the inception of the GEF, when NGOs, in particular, demanded active participation of civil society in the GEF. This ultimately led to the NGO-Participants Consultation which took place one or two days prior to the formal Participants' Meetings⁵.

The consultations evolved into a meeting among the NGOs from different regions of the world where common positions and presentations to Participants were formulated. In 1993, a Tripartite Task Force (Council Members, NGOs and Agencies) made recommendations regarding the NGO Consultations and concluded that the consultations should be organized in a more systematic manner with a proper agenda and written statements from the NGOs.

In 1995 the NGOs formed their own Network of accredited NGOs and Council approved criteria for the selection of NGOs to attend or observe Council meetings and NGO consultations⁶.

The GEF Network of Non-Governmental Organizations (hereafter the CSO Network) was formed as a voluntary association of non-governmental organizations working in the fields of environment and sustainable development aligned with the GEF mandate. A NGO Voluntary Trust Fund was established in order to finance participation of CSOs in the Consultations and Council meetings.

The main objective that the GEF Council mandated from the CSO Network was: "to prepare for and report on the GEF Council meetings and NGO consultations to the wider CSO community at the national, regional and international levels".⁷

In 2005, at the request of the Central Focal Point of the then NGO Network, the GEF Secretariat financed an independent review of the Network in order to identify ways to improve the effectiveness of the Network. The review concluded that the Network was operating ineffectively, and that it lacked a long-term vision for effective engagement and service delivery. The recommendations made and accepted by the NGO Network included strengthening accountability and effectiveness, outreach and the partnership with the Secretariat as well as capacity building needs for NGOs engaging with the GEF⁸.

⁴ While the WG was not tasked with reviewing the GEF's engagement with the business community or private sector, members were interested in giving increased attention to the involvement of the private sector within the GEF Partnership.

⁵ The Participants' Meeting later became the Council meeting. In 1994, with the restructuring of the GEF, the rules of procedures of the GEF Council authorized the head of the Secretariat to invite five NGOs to attend the Council meetings and five other to observe the meetings and to convene an NGO Consultation prior to each Council.

⁶ Per this decision, five NGOs would be invited to participate in Council and five to observe it. A wide representation of views and expertise and balanced representation from local, national and international organizations would be sought.

⁷ In parallel, the GEF Small Grants Program (SGP) administered by UNDP, started to build an active network of program grantees from NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs). The Steering Committees in each of the countries where the Programme has been active, is composed by different sectors of which the majority are civil society representatives.

⁸ GEF/C.27/Inf.5: Review of the Non-Governmental Organization Network of the GEF, 2005.

Both the CSO Network and the Secretariat adopted a number of short term and long term measures in response to the review's recommendations.

In consequence, in 2008 the GEF Council approved the following decisions: a) recreating the Voluntary NGO Trust Fund and increasing the financial support provided for the participation of eligible Network representatives at Council meetings⁹; b) the replacement of the NGO accreditation system operated by the GEF Secretariat with a membership system operated by the Network, whereby the Network took on the task of accrediting and managing the membership of CSOs in the Network while the GEF Secretariat stopped accrediting new CSOs¹⁰.

The Council's mandated objective for the Network has remained valid. However, over the years, the Network has developed an independent orientation, setting its own objectives, as follows: a) enhancing the role of civil society to safeguard the global environment, b) to promote effective engagement of CSOs in GEF operations and c) to strengthen the capacity of CSO members to participate in GEF-related activities¹¹.

In 2015-2016, at the request of Council, the IEO conducted an evaluation of the GEF CSO Network and recommended, among other things that "a contemporary vision for the CSO Network should be created within the new GEF architecture". While recognizing the value of the Network, particularly at the global level, the Evaluation concluded that the "CSO Network's activities are distant from the country level where GEF projects make their mark and from where the majority of Network CSOs operate. As such, the Network's is compromised in its ability to inform Council with country perspectives and in servicing its members".¹²

As a result, during its 50th meeting in June 2016, the Council adopted the following decision:

" The Council, having reviewed GEF/ME/C.50/02, Evaluation of the GEF Civil Society Organization (CSO) Network, and GEF/ME/C.50/03, Management Response to the Evaluation of the GEF Civil Society Organization Network, decides to set up an ad-hoc working group of interested Council Members to develop an updated vision of the relationship between the GEF and civil society, and a plan to achieve it, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, and report back to the Council at its first meeting in 2017. The Council encourages the CSO Network to establish a working group that includes balanced representation of CSO Stakeholder views, to interact with the Council Working Group on a new, updated vision for the Network, including governance, policies, guidelines and cooperation mechanisms."

⁹ From the 50,000 US dollars per Council meeting set in 1995 to 70,445 US dollars per Council meeting in 2008.

¹⁰ *Enhancing Civil Society Engagement and Partnership with the GEF*. (GEF/C.34/9) October 14, 2008

¹¹ GEF Independent Evaluation Office: Evaluation of the GEF Civil Society Organization Network, May 2016

¹² "Although the face of the Network to Council is clear, the depth of the Network's reach at a country level is not visible; credibility hinges on this. GEF projects are operationalized at the country level. Country-informed perspectives, and in particular those gained by CSO experiences with GEF operations, are necessary to the strength and value of Network deliberations." (Ibid)

The Ad-Hoc Council Working Group on Civil Society

Following the Council meeting, the Ad-Hoc Council Working Group on GEF and Civil Society (the WG) was established in July 2016 with participation from six GEF Council members who expressed their interest as follows: Mr. Leonardo Martinez of the United States (now Mr. Peter Wisner), Mr. Carlos Rodríguez of Uruguay, Mr. Tanyaradzwa Mundoga of Zimbabwe, Mr. Stefan Schwager of Switzerland, Mr. Kees Rade of the Netherlands (now Ms. Carola van Rijnsoever), and Dr. Mohamed -Yahya Lafdal Chah of Mauritania.

The WG conducted its first teleconference in August 2016 where the US Council member was selected as Chair. Since then, the WG has met [redacted] times via teleconference and twice in person and it has corresponded and deliberated over email to carry out its responsibilities under the Council Decision.

The WG held a conference call with the GEF Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) to discuss the major findings and recommendations of their evaluation of the CSO Network. While the work of the WG focused on civil society engagement, the members believed that understanding the advantages and shortcomings of the current Network oriented system would help inform their work.

The IEO highlighted the importance of the CSO Network in disseminating information about the GEF to other stakeholders, but they also provided several recommendations and areas where there is room for improvement. The IEO highlighted that the network needs to modernize to keep pace with the changes in the GEF partnership, which was in line with the WG's discussions to date. In addition to developing a modern vision, the IEO evaluation also suggested the CSO Network:

- (a) Set clear rules for engagement,
- (b) Better define its value-added to the GEF partnership,
- (c) Strengthen its governance structure, and
- (d) Establish a working relationship with the GEF Agencies.

To get a better understanding of the views of CSOs, the WG convened two global consultation meetings via teleconference in January of 2017 with fifty CSOs from both inside and outside the CSO Network.¹³ While several attendees raised project specific questions and comments, the

¹³ Invitations were sent out in December 2016 for 2 teleconferences (scheduled to accommodate two broad time zones) to about 2,000 CSOs that include members of the GEF CSO Network and others that have had contact with the GEF for various activities. About 250 registered to participate and about 50 actually participated in the two teleconferences.

most relevant comments related to an updated vision for civil society and the GEF include the following:

- (a) CSO participation at the country level is weak, partly due to the unwillingness of the government (OFPs) to include this sector in both the definition of projects and the setting of priorities.
- (b) More collaborative and transparent approaches to programming and project design are needed.
- (c) Capacity building of CSOs and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) is needed in order to ensure their active participation in GEF programming and project execution.

Based on the information revised, its deliberations and consultations conducted, the WG prepared and presented a progress report to the 52nd GEF Council meeting in May 2017. The report contained a summary of the activities conducted by the Working Group towards developing the elements of an updated vision for civil society organizations engagement at the GEF, and a plan to achieve it. Elements of a draft Vision Statement for the participation of civil society in the GEF were presented as follows:

- (a) The overarching objective of engagement between the GEF and civil society is to achieve greater results and impact through improving its collaboration with CSOs.
- (b) In this context, the primary role of civil society within the GEF Partnership is to contribute to, as appropriate, the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of GEF projects on the ground. Civil society will play an advisory role for the GEF Council on institutional policies and building awareness of the GEF in local communities. Civil society will also continue to disseminate information about the GEF to local stakeholders.

This progress report was used as a consultation note to collect views and feedback from both Council members and CSOs and other participants during the GEF Consultations with Civil Society on the day prior to the 52nd Council meeting and at the Council meeting.

In addition, the WG met with the CSO Network's own working group in the margins of the GEF Consultations with CSOs and had a very constructive discussion about the ideas presented in the paper as well as the Network's efforts to strengthen its capacity to engage at the country level, among other matters.

During these consultations, the following were the main comments and feedback received:

- (a) Civil society plays a valuable role in GEF's operations and in informing Council decisions regarding the programs and projects on the ground;
- (b) Civil society can help bridge the gap between country level activities and decision-making activities at the Council level;

- (c) Civil society engagement varies across countries. There are capacity issues which restrict effective engagement of CSOs at the national level;
- (d) The role of civil society in the GEF partnership should reflect the evolving and unique portfolio of the GEF;
- (e) There is a role for agencies and governments in the engagement of civil society at the national level;
- (f) Coordination and capacity building of CSOs require dedicated funding

3. A New Vision for Civil Society Engagement with the GEF

3.1 Updated vision statement

Based on the deliberations to date, the WG's updated vision for the relationship between civil society and the GEF is as follows:

- A. The overarching objective of engagement between the GEF and civil society is to achieve greater results and impact through improving its collaboration with CSOs.
- B. In this context, the primary role of civil society within the GEF Partnership is to contribute to, as appropriate, the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of GEF projects on the ground¹⁴, through (amongst others) engagement in projects on the ground, building awareness of the GEF in local communities, dissemination of information about the GEF to stakeholders and participation with Council members.
- C. In addition, civil society plays an advisory role for the GEF Council on institutional policies and guidelines.

3.2 Principles and objectives:

- 1. Principles. The GEF's relationship with civil society should be based on principles of transparency and endeavor to support fair, balanced, and inclusive participation as well as meaningful representation at the appropriate level (national, regional, and/or global).
- 2. Objectives. The key objectives for this new vision are: strengthening projects through local knowledge, increasing impact of GEF investments, strengthening the monitoring and evaluation functions of GEF's project implementation and performance¹⁵, improving transparency and awareness of the GEF at the local and national level and enhancing GEF's policies and strategies.

¹⁴ As per the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy (November 2010) the monitoring function is responsibility of the GEF Secretariat, whereas the evaluation function falls under responsibility of the GEF's Independent Evaluation Office. Other stakeholders (NGOs and civil society organizations, private sector, community members) participate in monitoring activities and mechanisms and provide views and perceptions to evaluations.

¹⁵ NGOs and civil society organizations may play an important role in monitoring project or program activities, as well as in providing feedback as beneficiaries or as representatives of community groups.

- (a) **Strengthening the design of GEF projects by providing local knowledge to GEF Agencies and Council.** As civil society represents a broad range of stakeholders, including communities, women and girls, indigenous peoples, private sector and others, it can bring knowledge, perspective, and expertise on the full range of environmental and related issues addressed by GEF-supported projects and programs. In addition, civil society, by virtue of its reach to communities in the potential project areas, can provide considerations regarding the appropriate engagement of these communities to project design.
- (b) **Increasing impact.** It is expected that when civil society is included in the design, this will result in greater impact and enhanced social, environmental and financial sustainability to GEF investments. This engagement (which is provided for in relevant GEF and GEF Agency policies, guidelines, and practices) improves the quality of project and program implementation, and helps to ensure that programming is consistent with best practices and standards. CSOs also play a valued role as project executing partners, leveraging financial and technical resources.
- (c) **Monitoring and evaluation.** Civil society complements the GEF's central monitoring and evaluation functions (conducted by the Secretariat and the IEO, respectively) by providing additional sources of feedback, especially directly from the field. Civil society helps fulfill this function not only at the end of implementation, but throughout the life of the program or project.
- (d) **Building awareness and dissemination of information.** Civil society also supports the GEF's forthcoming Access to Information Policy by building awareness of key issues, advocating for CSO involvement, and performing outreach to inform organizations, entities, and communities about the GEF and the activities of the partnership to address global environmental problems.
- (e) **Enhancing GEF's policies and strategies.** In the formulation of GEF policies and strategies, civil society can, through sharing their expertise and experiences from working with other organizations and with projects in the field, add value and increase effectiveness, by bringing the perspective of stakeholders that may be affected by those policies and strategies.

As mentioned in the introduction, the updated Policy on Stakeholder Engagement will establish minimum requirements related to the role and participation of stakeholders, including civil society, in GEF operations. The objectives set forth here are expected to be reinforced by the Policy, which encompasses the entire GEF project cycle.

4. Implementing the updated vision

This new vision for the relationship between the GEF and civil society encompasses two forms of engagement: Council Meeting participation and consultations in preparation for Council Meetings.

4.1 Participation in Council meetings

The *Rules of Procedures for the GEF Council* provide that the GEF CEO may, in consultation with the Council, invite representatives of other organizations and entities, including NGOs, to attend or observe the meetings. According to current practice, CSOs are invited to speak at the end of each agenda item, once the Council members have spoken. In order to encourage more meaningful participation and following practices of other international organizations, it is recommended that the CSOs be given the floor during Council discussions in the order in which they ask to speak, together with Council members.

4.2 GEF Council Consultations with Civil Society

The CSO Consultation with GEF Council and other participants will continue to be held on the day prior to Council and will be open to a limited number of self-funded and sponsored CSOs.

All Council members are encouraged to participate in the CSO Consultations. During the Consultations, CSOs will be invited to present on topics as chosen by the Council, with input from CSOs and the Secretariat. These topics will be chosen at the GEF meeting at least 12 months (or two Council meetings) before the Consultations and will seek to align with the Council Meeting Agenda. The Consultations will be jointly Chaired by one Council Member or Alternate Council Member and one regional CSO representative. This session should not conflict with any other GEF related events, including Working Group meetings, STAP briefings, or MEA dialogues.

4.3 Selection of CSO representation at Council Consultations and Meetings

CSO participation at Council Meetings will focus on sharing the voices of communities and other stakeholders in the field, while still maintaining robust engagement on policy issues. For this reason, Council will invite two groups of CSOs to its biannual meetings: 1) regional CSO representatives and 2) local CSOs with expertise in a technical or geographic area, as per Council recommendations during the previous meeting. It is expected that, together, these representatives will possess knowledge of the GEF as well as project specific insights that will add value to Council consultations and discussions.

The GEF Secretariat will work with GEF Agencies, the CSO Network, OFPs and the GEF Small Grants Program (SGP) to establish a comprehensive list of CSOs from which to draw those to be

invited to attend the Council Meetings. The selection from meeting to meeting will aim to track with the Council Meeting Agenda, and also to strive for geographic, gender, and thematic diversity. The CSOs invited should be able to provide input to the GEF Council in relevant areas where the perspectives from CSOs are most valuable regarding programming, project execution and policy formulation.

The number of sponsored CSOs invited to each Council Meeting will be limited to 10-15 individuals, depending on the agenda. Representatives will not be required to be a member of the CSO Network. The Secretariat will also strive for an equal number of local and regional CSO at each Council Meeting, and appropriate representation from women's and Indigenous Peoples groups. At every meeting, except the first meeting following the endorsement of this document's recommendations, half of the CSOs invited to attend should have attended a GEF Council Meeting in the past. This will help build knowledge of the GEF's governance process that can then inform CSOs interventions and presentations during the meetings.

Criteria for selection of regional CSO representatives for participation at Council meetings are:

- a) Member of a well-established not-for-profit, non-governmental organization (CSO);
- b) CSO's alignment with the GEF's mission;
- c) Experience with GEF projects, or projects similar to those the GEF funds;
- d) Demonstrated relations to other Networks of CSOs or coordination capacity with other civil society organizations at the regional level
- e) General knowledge of the GEF's work, past and present

Criteria for selection of local CSO representatives for participation at Council meetings are:

- a) Member of a well-established not-for-profit, non-governmental organization (CSO);
- b) CSO's alignment with the GEF's mission
- c) Demonstrated relations to other Networks of CSOs or coordination capacity at the local or national level
- d) Experience engaging with or implementing GEF projects at the local or national level
- e) Desire to engage more actively in GEF projects in their country

Before the selection, the GEF Secretariat will circulate the potential participants to the CSO Network for information and comment related to relevance or expertise. Based on this process, the Secretariat will select the 10-15 sponsored CSOs to participate in the Council meeting. Self-funded CSOs will continue to be welcome to attend the CSO consultations and GEF Council Meetings.

4.4 Preparations leading up to Council meetings

Consultations on Council documents and preparations for the Council Meeting will occur virtually amongst the selected CSOs. The Secretariat will facilitate these preparations, together with Agencies. The CSO Network, GEF SGP and GEF Agencies will be asked to provide updated

contact lists of its recipients and partners ten weeks before each Council Meeting, to assist with communications and the dissemination of information.

Regional CSO representatives should consult with their constituencies in order to provide content for representative's Council interventions.

The regional representatives will develop an outline of their Council Meeting comments, seek input from their regional constituency, and submit their written comments to the Secretariat for Council distribution.

Given the valuable work that the CSO Network has performed, particularly in terms of its contribution to GEF's policy formulation and advocacy, it is recommended that the Network continues performing that role at the global level, by providing input and comments to the discussion regarding these matters.

4.5 Supporting engagement at the national level

As mentioned above, the revised Policy on Stakeholder Engagement will establish minimum requirements to GEF Agencies for stakeholder (including civil society) participation at the program and project level.

In addition, the GEF's Country Support Program will continue providing opportunities for regional, national and local CSOs to participate and interact with government officials and other CSOs in each GEF region, share experiences, lessons learned and strengthen their ability to engage with the GEF. Thus, the Secretariat will support active engagement of civil society at the national level in the Expanded Constituency Workshops, National Dialogues and other relevant workshops and events.

5. Next steps

Once this proposal is approved by Council, the Secretariat will start a process to reorganize the CSOs consultations and preparatory work leading up to Council, including reaching out to Agencies, the GEF SGP, the CSO Network and recipient Countries in order to constitute a list of CSOs to be contacted and engaged.

The Secretariat will present a progress report to Council in June 2018 regarding the implementation of the proposed actions.

In addition, the Secretariat will reallocate existing resources included in the corporate budget in order to implement the process.