

GUIDELINES

FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT POLICY



gef

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY
INVESTING IN OUR PLANET



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Introduction

The need for stakeholder engagement, including information dissemination, consultation, and stakeholder participation, is a cornerstone feature of the work of the GEF. This has been recognized very early in the GEF, when the Council approved the *Policy on Public Involvement in GEF Projects* (1996).¹ This Policy is critical to GEF's approach since it enhances the environmental, social, and financial sustainability of Projects. Since then, the Public Involvement Policy has been applied through the GEF Agencies, all of which have policies, guidelines, or procedures regarding this issue that are coherent with the GEF Policy, as these Agencies are responsible for implementing projects and programs.

The Council also has considered and approved other policies and documents that elaborate upon key aspects of public engagement in the work of the GEF. These include: the *GEF Guidelines for Engagement with Indigenous Peoples*; the *Policy on Agency Minimum Standards on Environmental and Social Safeguards* (PL/SD/03) (hereafter referred to as "the GEF Safeguards

Policy); the *Policy on Gender Mainstreaming* (PL/SD/02) and the *GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy* (GEF/ME/C.39/Rev.01).² The GEF2020 Strategy presented to Council in May 2014 indicated that, as one of its core operational principles, the GEF will seek a stronger engagement with civil society organizations in the global environment arena. In addition, the replenishment process for GEF-6 welcomed the development of guidelines for public involvement.

In this context, the GEF Business Plan presented to Council in May 2014 noted the positive and crucial roles played by civil society organizations (CSOs), including Indigenous Peoples, in safeguarding the global environment and contributing to the work of the GEF. In support of this engagement, and in follow-up to the replenishment process, the Secretariat committed to provide new public involvement guidelines to Council for information in October 2014, including an action plan and clear

1 The draft policy was presented in Council Document GEF/C.7/06, *Public Involvement in GEF Projects*. For ease of reference and use, the GEF Secretariat posted the policy as a stand-alone GEF Policy (PL/SD/01), which can be found at: <http://www.thegef.org/gef/content/public-involvement-policy>.

2 These documents can be accessed at: http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/publication/GEF%20IP%20Part%201%20Guidelines_r7.pdf
<http://www.thegef.org/gef/content/environmental-and-social-safeguards>
http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/document/PL_SD_02.Policy_on_Gender_Mainstreaming.05012012.Final_.pdf
http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/Policies_and_Guidelines-M_and_E_Policy-english.pdf

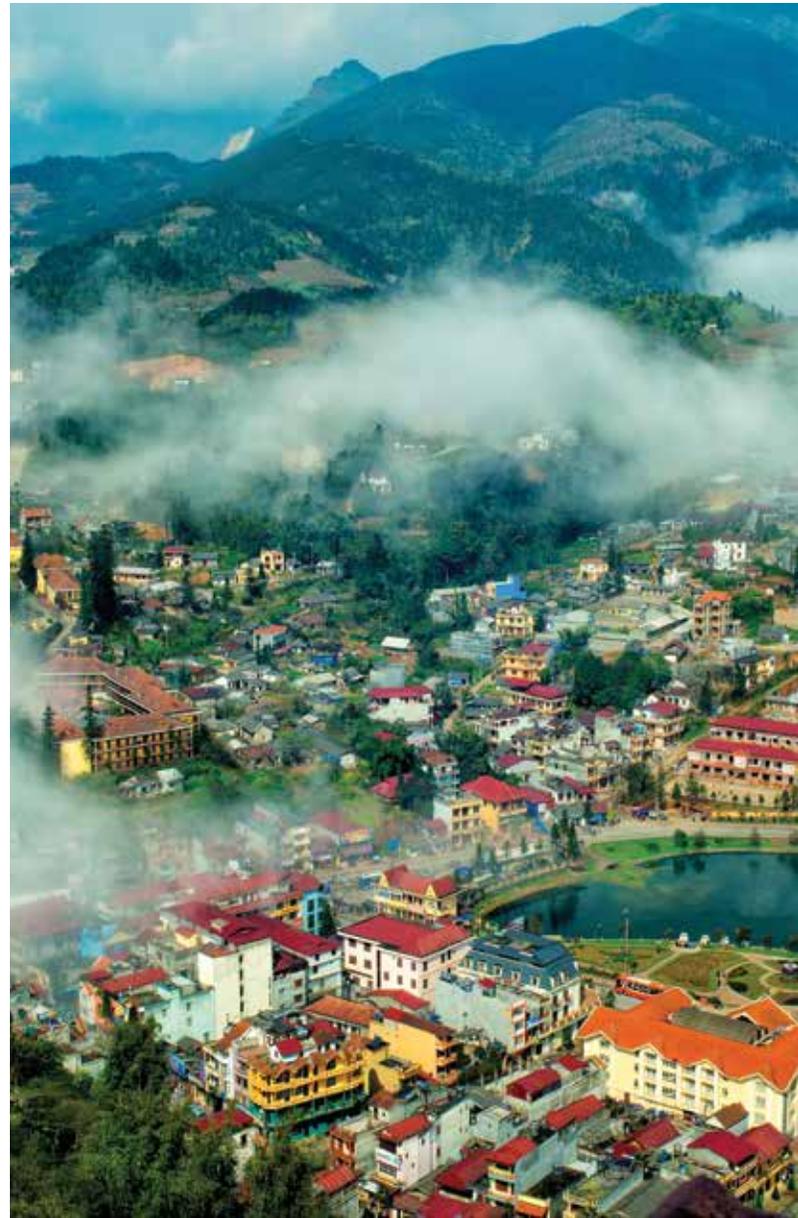


guidance for effective implementation and monitoring of the Public Involvement Policy.³ The general guidelines on public involvement presented here reflect this commitment. They also seek to foster coherence in the implementation of the various related GEF policies mentioned in this document.

During 2013-2014, the GEF CSO Network conducted a review of the *Public Involvement Policy*. This review was supported through a grant to the Network from the GEF NGO Voluntary Fund to provide “input and recommendations to the GEF Secretariat for the formulation of guidelines for agencies and governments on public participation in GEF project development and implementation.”⁴ The guidelines presented here take into consideration many of the suggestions contained in the GEF CSO Network’s report to the GEF Secretariat.

3 GEF/C.46/08/Rev.01, May 8, 2014.

4 GEF CSO Network: Review of the GEF Public Involvement Policy (Final Draft Report, 2014)





Objectives and Principles

The Public Involvement Policy states that effective public involvement “is critical to the success of GEF-financed projects”, and improves project performance and impact in many ways. These include by: (a) enhancing recipient country ownership of, and accountability for, project outcomes; (b) addressing the social and economic needs of affected people; (c) building partnerships among project executing agencies and stakeholders; and (d) making use of skills, experiences and knowledge particularly from CSOs, communities and local groups, as well as from the private sector in the design, implementation and evaluation of project activities.⁵

These Guidelines aim to provide further detail on steps to achieve and implement the principles stipulated in the Public Involvement Policy:

- a) Effective public involvement should enhance the social, environmental, and financial sustainability of projects and programs.
- b) Responsibility for assuring public involvement rests within the country, normally with the government and project executing agency or agencies, with the support of the GEF Partner Agencies.
- c) Public involvement activities should be designed and implemented in a flexible manner, adapting and responding to recipient countries’ national and local conditions and to project requirements.
- d) To be effective, public involvement activities should be broad-based and sustainable. GEF Partner Agencies will include in project budgets, as needed, the necessary financial and technical assistance to recipient governments and project executing agencies to ensure effective public involvement.
- e) Public involvement activities will be carried out in a transparent and open manner. All GEF-financed projects and programs should have full documentation of public involvement.

⁵ Policy on Public Involvement in GEF Projects (PL/SD/01), paragraph 2.



These core principles were reinforced at the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, Republic of Korea. This Forum resulted in the creation of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC), and set a new international standard on effective aid and good development practice. A significant outcome of the meeting was the broadening of “country ownership,” to development as a process driven by public involvement, not only governments, and not by donors.⁶ Country ownership of GEF-financed projects is intended to result in more coordinated and predictable support, giving recipients greater control over how the GEF money is spent.

⁶ Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (2011), endorsed at the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. Busan, Republic of Korea, November 29-December 1, 2011.

Definitions

Civil Society Organization (CSO): A CSO is a non-governmental, not-for-profit organization that represents different major groups as defined by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992 (Agenda 21, Chapter 23). This term includes various and diverse types of organizations, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), farmers, women, the scientific and technological community, youth and children, indigenous peoples and their communities, business and industry, workers and trade unions and local authorities (as approved by the Council in Council Document GEF/C.39/10/Rev.01).

Consultation: Consultation involves information exchanges and other forms of engagement and dialogue among the government, the GEF Partner Agencies, CSOs and other stakeholders, in support of the objectives and principles of the Public Involvement Policy (see also “Level of engagement”, below). Consultation specifically with Indigenous Peoples is referred to in paragraph 6 of the *Policy on Agency Minimum Standards on Environmental and Social Safeguards (PL/SD/03)*.

GEF Agency: A GEF Agency is any one of the ten institutions that were entitled to receive GEF Trust Fund resources directly as of November 2010. They include the following organizations: the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Inter-American Development Bank, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the United Nations Development Program, United Nations Environment Program, and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

GEF Partner Agency: A GEF Partner Agency is any one of the entities eligible to request and receive GEF resources directly from the GEF Trustee. This category includes both the ten *GEF Agencies* and *GEF Project Agencies*.

GEF Project Agency: A GEF Project Agency is any one of the institutions that the GEF has accredited to receive GEF resources to implement GEF-financed projects and programs apart from the ten GEF Agencies.

GEF Executing Agency: A GEF Executing Agency, also known as project executing agency, is an entity or agency that receives GEF Funding from a GEF Partner Agency in order to execute a GEF project, or parts of a GEF project, under the supervision of a GEF Partner Agency.

GEF CSO Network: The GEF CSO Network is an independent global alliance of Civil Society Organizations working to address global environmental challenges in areas linked to the six GEF focal areas. This Network acts as a bridge between civil society and GEF, and its goal is to strengthen civil society partnership with the GEF

by enhancing public participation, contributing to policy implementation and stimulating action on the ground.

Information dissemination: Information dissemination refers to the availability and distribution of timely and relevant information on GEF-financed projects and programs, including notification, disclosure, and public access to such information.

Level of engagement: This definition refers to the different levels of stakeholder engagement, as specified in the table below:

LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT	ACTIVITY	NATURE OF INTERACTIVITY	LEVEL OF DECISION MAKING	EXPECTED OUTPUTS
1	Information access and dissemination	One-way	None	Better informed outside stakeholders
2	Policy dialogue	Two-way	None	Both sides better informed
3	Policy and programmatic consultation	Two-way	Low	Views of stakeholders taken into account
4	Collaboration	Two-way	Shared	Shared goals and action(short-term and ad-hoc)
5	Partnership	Two-way	Equal	Common goals and action (long-term, institutional)

* The World Bank (2013): *World Bank Civil Society Engagement*. Review of Fiscal Year 2010-2012.

Stakeholders: Stakeholders are the individuals, groups, or institutions which have an interest or “stake” in the outcome of a GEF-financed project, including those who are potentially affected by it. Stakeholders include the recipient country government; project executing agencies; groups contracted to carry out project activities and/or consulted at various stages of the project; project beneficiaries; groups of people who may be affected by project activities; and other groups in the civil society which may have an interest in the project.

Stakeholder engagement: Stakeholder engagement consists of three related, and often overlapping, processes: information dissemination, consultation, and stakeholder participation (as defined by the levels in the table previous page).

Stakeholder participation: Stakeholder participation occurs when stakeholders collaboratively engage in the identification of project and program concepts and objectives, selection of sites, design and implementation of activities, as well as monitoring and evaluation of outcomes.





Guidance for Information Dissemination

As set out in paragraph 5 of the GEF Instrument, with respect to GEF-financed projects, GEF's operational policies provide for full disclosure of all non-confidential information. GEF practices on information disclosure are summarized in the Council Document GEF/C.41/Inf.03, *GEF Practices on Information Disclosure*.⁷ The GEF will continue to uphold its principles of transparency and public access to information, and to ensure relevant documents and information related to GEF programs and projects, such as approved Project Identification Forms (PIFs), CEO requests for Endorsement/ Approval, Mid-Term Evaluations and Terminal Evaluations, become publicly available on the GEF's website in a timely manner.

In addition, the GEF Agencies, subject to their own policies and procedures, will continue to make relevant GEF project documents and activities available to the public in a manner that is accessible to CSOs and other stakeholders. The policies and practices of the ten GEF Agencies on access to information and information disclosure are summarized in Council Document GEF/C.41/Inf.03,

⁷ See: http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/C.41.Inf_03_GEF_Practices_on%20Disclosure_of_Information.pdf

GEF Practices on Information Disclosure.

The GEF's Operational Focal Point (OFP), in coordination with the GEF Agencies and the GEF Secretariat, should keep and regularly update a list of CSOs and other organizations in the country, and share necessary information and consult with them, including those who may not be able to attend meetings.

The GEF promotes as best practice that OFPs hold at least one meeting every year with all interested CSOs (including the members of the CSO Network in the country) in order to inform them of, *inter alia*, the work being carried out with GEF support, the project ideas that are in development, the opportunities for CSO participation in, or contribution to project development and implementation, the opportunity to participate in GEF workshops, the opportunities available to participate in the GEF CSO Network and any other relevant information. OFPs should invite CSOs to National Dialogues and National Portfolio Formulation Exercises.

Where a country has a GEF National Steering Committee or similar arrangement, adequate CSO representation must be guaranteed.

The Secretariat will invite CSOs, including Indigenous Peoples' representatives and other potentially interested stakeholders and members of the public, to GEF workshops, including Expanded Constituency Workshops (ECW). The Secretariat will organize a special session/day dedicated to CSOs as part of the first cycle of the ECW. The need to include a similar session in subsequent cycles will be considered based on feedback from participants as well as priorities identified during the first cycle.

The GEF Secretariat will update the publication *A to Z Guide to the GEF for NGOs*.

The GEF Secretariat will conduct webinars to provide updated information on issues of interest. It will continue to provide information about the full range of GEF activities through its website, ongoing publications, and other means of communication. In addition, GEF partners, including the GEF CSO Network and national non-governmental organizations, may disseminate relevant information through their own communication channels.

The GEF Secretariat remains available to respond to any inquiries regarding GEF initiatives, work programs and related activities at telephone +1 202-473-0508 or by email inquiry at gefcivilsociety@thegef.org or secretariat@thegef.org.



Guidance for Consultation — Setting Priorities, National Dialogue

National Portfolio Formulation Exercise (NPFE)

At the beginning of each GEF replenishment cycle, each GEF recipient country, through its OFPs, has the opportunity to organize a consultative process to establish priorities for its portfolio of GEF-financed projects and programs during the replenishment period.

National Portfolio Formulation Exercises⁸ (NPFES) are one such priority setting process that countries may choose to carry out, on a voluntary basis. In conducting NPFES or similar priority-setting exercises, it is considered best practice to establish GEF national steering committees as a means to coordinate broad consultation. It is also considered a best practice that representatives of relevant national CSOs be included as members of the Steering Committee.⁹

8 See NPFE guideline at: http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/document/NPFE_New_Guidelines_03-19-2014.docx

9 See Council Document GEF/C.38/7/Rev.2, *Reforming the Country Support Program and Procedures for Implementation*, page 12, paragraph 3 (c).

National Dialogue

An additional part of the GEF Country Support Program is the National Dialogue. This activity aims to provide targeted and flexible support for country-level multi-stakeholder dialogues so that information and experiences can be shared. This can contribute to action on national GEF matters, such as strategic national priority setting and strengthening of coordination and partnerships. In this context, dialogues are an open consultation forum between the OFP and key national stakeholders to exchange information about past and ongoing projects and share updates on project development within the country, including opportunities for CSO involvement in these initiatives. Key partnerships in project implementation can also be built as a result from these meetings. OFPs are expected to host such dialogues once in every GEF replenishment period.



Guidance for Consultation and Stakeholder Participation in Projects and Programs

Project and Program Design and Implementation

CSOs may propose, or be invited to propose, project and program ideas to the Government, including through the responsible OFPs.

When considering project and program ideas, OFPs should consult relevant CSOs on their willingness and availability to participate actively in the project (design, execution, monitoring etc.). Agencies, OFPs, CSOs, and executing agencies should all carefully evaluate the roles that different CSOs may play in project design and implementation.

GEF Partner Agencies are required to include in GEF project and program documentation identification of affected and participating stakeholders from civil society, including Indigenous Peoples, and to describe how they will be consulted with and engaged in the project. The GEF Safeguards Policy requires that all GEF Partner Agencies have in place

policies, procedures and capacity to ensure effective and meaningful consultations with interested and affected stakeholders in project design and implementation. As set out in the Policy, these provisions for consultation and engagement are cornerstones to good projects, enabling projects to build on stakeholder knowledge and expertise and fostering local engagement and ownership, in support of broader environmental and sustainable development objectives.

With regard to Indigenous Peoples, through its Safeguards Policy, the GEF has adopted “a standard of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) for GEF-financed projects for which FPIC is required by virtue of the relevant state’s ratification of ILO Convention 169.”¹⁰ The GEF Safeguards Policy clarifies that “while there is no universally accepted definition of FPIC,” for the purposes of the GEF’s adoption of FPIC, “GEF Partner Agencies will ensure that project executors

¹⁰ See *Policy on Agency Minimum Standards on Environmental and Social Safeguards (SD/PL/03)*, paragraph 6.

document: (i) the mutually accepted consultation process between the project proponent and affected indigenous communities and (ii) evidence of agreement between the parties as the outcome of the consultations. FPIC does not necessarily require unanimity and may be achieved even when individuals or groups within the community explicitly disagree.”¹¹

The Policy further states that “for other projects, GEF Partner Agencies will rely on their systems for consultation with Indigenous Peoples and will ensure that such consultations result in broad community support for the GEF-financed operation being proposed.”¹²

GEF Partner Agencies, following their established policies and procedures, undertake various steps to involve the public adequately during project development. These include, among other things, the following:

a) Identification of needs: Consultations and workshops should be organized to reach out to communities where the project would be implemented to seek feedback on the design of the activities proposed and on adapting them more fully to local conditions. In addition to relevant ministries, local governments, and locally-affected people, participants to these consultations should include, among others, national and local NGOs, community-based organizations (CBOs), Indigenous Peoples organizations, women’s

groups, private sector companies, farmers, and research institutions, as appropriate. Needs assessments and impact evaluation studies and activities for previously implemented GEF funded projects should be incorporated in the newly designed projects, in line with principles of results based management, in order to benefit from lessons learned and decrease, mitigate or eliminate the adverse impacts of these projects on the social and economic situation of the communities involved.

b) Identification of partners: Once needs and proposed projects (or project elements) have been validated or redesigned as a result of consultations, appropriate partnerships, including with CSOs, to execute the proposed activities may be sought. The selection of partners to execute the different components of a project should be based on their particular background and experience in the area that the project is addressing as well as other relevant factors.

c) Review of proposed activities: Information on a draft of the proposal should be circulated to relevant stakeholders, and focus groups sessions should be conducted with stakeholders, particularly those who will be directly affected by or involved in the project. Each GEF-financed project should include a stakeholder engagement plan that summarizes these activities and the possible partnerships to be promoted by the project as well as provide documentation on stakeholder engagement¹³.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid, paragraph 7. The “Minimum Standards” which must be met for Indigenous Peoples are set out in Minimum Standard 4: Indigenous Peoples, pages 13-14.

13 GEF Partner Agencies should formulate stakeholder engagement plans based on their own policies and guidelines.

In addition to the stakeholder engagement plan, all GEF-financed projects and programs should have full documentation of public involvement. This is a key element of paragraph 13 of the Policy on Public Involvement, which provides that "... public involvement activities will be conducted in a transparent and open manner. All GEF-financed projects should have full documentation of public involvement activities." Full documentation includes the following¹⁴:

- a) Summary reports of stakeholder consultations;
- b) Environmental and social screening report;
- c) Draft Environmental and Social risk/impact assessment and draft mitigation/management plans (prior to appraisal);
- d) Final Environmental and Social risk/impact assessment and final mitigation/management plans (upon completion);
- e) Monitoring reports (Mid-Term Evaluations and Terminal Evaluations).

¹⁴ For more details, see the *Policy on Agency Minimum Standards on Environmental and Social Safeguards (SD/PL/03)*



Reporting, Monitoring and Evaluation

GEF Partner Agencies will include a section in the Mid-Term Evaluation and Terminal Evaluation of each project to account for participation of CSOs and other stakeholders in project's implementation as well as the mechanisms utilized to involve the public more broadly, if appropriate.

GEF Partner Agencies and OFPs are encouraged to seek partnership opportunities with relevant CSOs in the monitoring and evaluation of projects and programs, and provide effective avenues for continued input from affected stakeholders and communities regarding progress, issues and opportunities arising during project implementation.

The Annual Monitoring Review (AMR), prepared by the GEF Secretariat and presented to Council on an

annual basis, will contain a section on the analysis of the participation of CSOs and other stakeholders in the portfolio of GEF projects and programs.

Terminal Evaluations, prepared by GEF Partner Agencies, will include, where applicable, a section on the degree and manner of involvement of civil society organizations and other stakeholders, including indigenous populations.

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) will include a sub-study on public participation in GEF projects and programs as part of the Overall Performance Study (OPS) in every GEF cycle. This report will be made available to the public for comments on the IEO website.



Conflict Resolution

The GEF Conflict Resolution Commissioner and the GEF Secretariat Civil Society Operations Officer are available to receive any complaints brought forward by CSOs and other stakeholders that are not satisfactorily resolved at the local level, country, or GEF Partner Agency level. All such complaints presented by CSOs will be documented by the Civil Society Operations Officer.

The GEF Secretariat will keep a record of the number and type of complaints received which will also be available upon request.

GEF Partner Agencies are required to report annually, through the Annual Monitoring Review (AMR), on cases that have been presented to their respective resolution systems and on how they have been addressed.

The final resolution of the conflict following a complaint will be made available upon request.



Action Plan

The table below contains an action plan for the implementation of these Guidelines.

This Action Plan covers the four-year period of GEF-6.

KEY COMPONENTS	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME
Information Dissemination	GEF website will be updated to include all relevant missing documentation on approved PIFs, Approved CEO Endorsement and Approvals, Mid-Term Reviews and Terminal Evaluation Reports.	GEF Secretariat	FY15-18
	Update GEF website to include the <i>Guidelines for the Implementation of the Public Involvement Policy</i> (hereafter “the present Guidelines”) and publish examples of good practices, approaches, and tools, as part of the updated Results-based Management action plan.	GEF Secretariat	FY15-18
	GEF Workshops (e.g. ECWs and introduction seminars) will include a session on the present Guidelines.	GEF Secretariat	FY15
	Update the <i>A to Z Guide to the GEF for NGOs</i>	GEF Secretariat	FY15
Design of programs and projects	Review and develop GEF Project Templates and Guidelines to incorporate a section on public involvement, in line with the present Guidelines and with other relevant policies and practices, including those on indigenous peoples and gender equality.	GEF Secretariat	FY15-16
Knowledge Management	GEF Knowledge Management efforts will include a provision for exchanging experiences on engagement of civil society and other stakeholders in GEF projects and programs.	GEF Secretariat	FY15-18
	A learning mission will be conducted to analyze best practices in public involvement in GEF projects and programs. Results are documented and disseminated.	GEF Secretariat/GEF Partner Agencies	FY15-16

KEY COMPONENTS	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME
Monitoring	The new Results-based Management System ¹ will include appropriate indicators and frameworks to monitor the participation of CSOs and other stakeholders in GEF projects and programs.	GEF Secretariat	FY16
	Bi-annual report on progress in the implementation of the GEF Public Involvement Policy in GEF projects and programs.	GEF Secretariat	FY15-18
	Templates for monitoring and evaluation reports include a section on engagement of civil society and other stakeholders.	GEF Secretariat	
	GEF Overall Performance Study to include a section on implementation of the Policy.	IEO	FY18
	Report on CSO participation results of GEF projects (e.g. mid-term review, terminal evaluation, thematic and country evaluation, etc.)	GEF Partner Agencies.	FY15-18
	Include results-oriented information from the SGP in the AMR portfolio, in order to present global participation of CSOs.	GEF Secretariat/UNDP	FY15-FY18
Capacity Development	Training module for CSOs, Agencies and OFPs, among others on the Public Involvement Policy and the present Guidelines to be included in GEF introductory workshops and ECWs.	GEF Secretariat	FY15-16
	Devise online training tools, such as webinars, to improve engagement of civil society and other stakeholders.	GEF Secretariat	FY15-18
	Provide support and guidance on the implementation of the present Guidelines to the GEF Operational Focal Points and other partners.	GEF Secretariat and GEF Partner Agencies	Ongoing
Policy & Guidelines	Update <i>GEF Practices on Disclosure of Information</i> (based on Council Document <i>GEF/C.41/Inf.03</i>) and post them on the GEF website as a GEF Guideline.	GEF Secretariat	FY15-16
	Analyze the need to update the GEF Public Involvement Policy, based on GEF CSO Network's study.	GEF Secretariat/ GEF Partner Agencies/ GEF CSO Network	FY15-18
Conflict Resolution	Improve information on the conflict resolution system.	GEF Secretariat	FY15-16



PHOTOGRAPHY

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ABOUT THE GEF

The Global Environment Facility is a partnership for international cooperation where 183 countries work together with international institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector, to address global environmental issues.

Since 1991, the GEF has provided \$13.5 billion in grants and leveraged \$65 billion in co-financing for 3,900 projects in more than 165 developing countries. For 23 years, developed and developing countries alike have provided these funds to support activities related to biodiversity, climate change, international waters, land degradation, and chemicals and waste in the context of development projects and programs.

Through its Small Grants Programme (SGP) the GEF has made more than 20,000 grants to civil society and community based organizations for a total of \$1 billion.

Among the major results of these investments, the GEF has set up protected areas around the world equal roughly to the area of Brazil; reduced carbon emissions by 2.3 billion tonnes; eliminated the use of ozone depleting substances in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia; transformed the management of 33 major river basins and one-third of the world's large marine ecosystems; slowed the advance of desertification in Africa by improving agricultural practices—and all this while contributing to better the livelihood and food security of millions of people.

During the latest replenishment of the GEF (GEF-6) 30 donor countries have pledged the record amount of US\$4.43 billion to support developing countries' efforts over the next four years to prevent degradation of the global environment.

For more information, visit www.thegef.org.

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