



**GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY**  
INVESTING IN OUR PLANET

Policy: SD/PL/01

Approved on November 30, 2017

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## **POLICY ON STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

<b>Summary</b>	This Policy sets out the core principles and mandatory requirements for Stakeholder Engagement in GEF governance and operations, with a view to promoting transparency, accountability, integrity, effective participation and inclusion. The Policy reaffirms and operationalizes the GEF's commitment, with respect to GEF-Financed Activities, to "full disclosure of all non-confidential information, and consultation with, and participation as appropriate of, major groups and local communities throughout the project cycle" (Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility, Paragraph 5). This Policy Supersedes the GEF Policy on Public Involvement in GEF Projects (SD/PL/01).
<b>Approved by</b>	GEF Council
<b>Approval Date</b>	November 30, 2017 (53 <sup>rd</sup> Council Meeting)
<b>Effective Date</b>	July 1, 2018
<b>Applicability</b>	This Policy applies to the Secretariat, and all GEF Partner Agencies (hereafter referred to as "Agencies"); and all GEF-Financed Activities.
<b>Council Doc</b>	Policy on Stakeholder Engagement ( <a href="#">GEF/C.53/05/Rev.01</a> )
<b>Related Doc</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stakeholder Engagement Guidelines (SD/GN/01)</li><li>• Environmental and Social Safeguards (SD/PL/03)</li><li>• Application of Environmental and Social Safeguard Standards (SD/GN/03)</li><li>• Gender Equality Policy (SD/PL/02)</li><li>• Gender Equality Guidelines (SD/GN/02)</li><li>• Fiduciary Standards (GA/PL/02)</li><li>• Monitoring Agencies' Compliance with GEF Policies (ME/PL/02)</li><li>• Monitoring and Evaluation Policy</li><li>• Project and Program Cycle Policy (OP/PL/01)</li><li>• Project and Program Cycle Guidelines (GEF/C.52/Inf.06)</li><li>• Principles and Guidelines for Engagement with Indigenous Peoples</li></ul>
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## Definitions

**CEO Approval** means the approval of a fully developed medium-sized project or enabling activity by the GEF CEO

**CEO Endorsement** means the endorsement of a fully developed full-sized project by the GEF CEO

**Civil Society** comprises non-stake actors, including not-for-profit 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

**Enabling Activity** means a project for the preparation of a plan, strategy or report to fulfill commitments under a Convention

**GEF-Financed Activity** means any full-sized project, medium-sized project or enabling activity financed from any GEF-managed trust fund, as well as regional and national outreach activities

**GEF Partner Agency** means an agency eligible to request and receive GEF resources directly for the design, implementation, and supervision of GEF projects

**Program Framework Document** means the document that sets forth the concept of a program that is proposed for GEF financing

**Project Identification Form** means the applicable document that sets forth the concept of a full-sized project or medium-sized project that is requesting GEF financing

**Stakeholder** means an individual or group that has an interest in the outcome of a GEF-financed activity or is likely to be affected by it, such as local communities, Indigenous Peoples, civil society organizations, and private sector entities, comprising women, men, girls and boys

**Stakeholder Engagement** means a process involving stakeholder identification and analysis, planning of Stakeholder Engagement, disclosure of information, consultation and participation, monitoring, evaluation and learning throughout the project cycle, addressing grievances, and on-going reporting to stakeholders

**Work Program:** means a group of Full-Sized Projects and/ or Programmatic Approaches that is presented for Council approval in a Council meeting

## Introduction

1. Effective Stakeholder Engagement enhances the transparency, accountability, integrity, effectiveness and sustainability of GEF governance and operations by, *inter alia*, strengthening the design and implementation of GEF-Financed Activities, reducing risks and addressing the social and economic needs of affected parties.
2. In addition, effective Stakeholder Engagement promotes country ownership by forging stronger partnerships, particularly with civil society, Indigenous Peoples, communities and the private sector, and by harnessing the knowledge, experience and capabilities of affected and interested individuals and groups.

## Purpose

3. This Policy sets out the core principles and mandatory requirements for Stakeholder Engagement in GEF governance and operations, with a view to promoting transparency, accountability, integrity, effective participation and inclusion. The Policy reaffirms and operationalizes the GEF's commitment, with respect to GEF-Financed Activities, to "full disclosure of all non-confidential information, and consultation with, and participation as appropriate of, major groups and local communities throughout the project cycle" (Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility, Paragraph 5).

## Application

4. This Policy applies to the Secretariat and all GEF Partner Agencies (hereafter "Agencies"). The Policy applies to all GEF-Financed Activities<sup>1</sup>.

## Objective

5. The objective of this Policy is to promote the inclusive and meaningful participation of Stakeholders in GEF's governance and operations in support of the GEF's mandate to protect the global environment.

## Core Principles

6. The following principles constitute the foundation for Stakeholder Engagement across GEF governance and operations:
  - (a) Constructive, responsive, accountable and transparent Stakeholder Engagement is critical to the success of all GEF-Financed Activities.

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<sup>1</sup> Including activities funded through all GEF-managed trust funds, unless decided otherwise by the LDCF/SCCF Council in response to guidance from the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

- (b) Stakeholder Engagement in the GEF supports fair, balanced, and inclusive participation in GEF governance and operations.
- (c) Stakeholder Engagement applies to all GEF-Financed Activities, irrespective of the level of potential social and environmental risks and impacts.
- (d) In order to be effective and meaningful, Stakeholder Engagement requires sustained commitment and action, including the appropriate allocation of resources, throughout the identification, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of GEF-Financed Activities.
- (e) Effective Stakeholder Engagement in GEF governance and operations is supported by appropriate documentation and easy and timely access to relevant information.

### **Policy Requirements**

7. This Policy sets out mandatory requirements in three key areas: (A) project and program cycles; (B) activities led by the Secretariat; and (C) Agency policies, procedures and capabilities.

#### **A. Stakeholder Engagement Throughout the GEF Project and Program Cycles**

8. In Program Framework Documents and Project Identification Forms submitted for Work Program entry or CEO Approval, Agencies provide a description of any consultations conducted during project development, as well as information on how Stakeholders will be engaged in the proposed activity, and means of engagement throughout the project/ program cycle.

9. At CEO Endorsement/ Approval, Agencies present Stakeholder Engagement Plans or equivalent documentation, with information regarding Stakeholders who have been and will be engaged, means of engagement, dissemination of information, roles and responsibilities in ensuring effective Stakeholder Engagement, resource requirements, and timing of engagement throughout the project/ program cycle.

10. The Secretariat, in its review of Requests for CEO Endorsement/ Approval, assesses whether adequate measures have been proposed, supported by an adequate allocation of resources, to ensure effective Stakeholder Engagement throughout the life-cycle of the activity, and whether such measures have been adequately documented as per paragraphs 8–9 above<sup>2</sup>.

11. Agencies oversee the implementation of Stakeholder Engagement as set out in the documentation submitted at CEO Endorsement/ Approval, and include information on progress, challenges and outcomes in their annual project implementation reports as well as mid-term reviews and terminal evaluations.

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<sup>2</sup> The Secretariat also invites stakeholder inputs on PFDs and PIFs posted on its website:  
<https://www.thegef.org/partners/csos>

12. Agencies propose and allocate adequate resources in their respective program and project budgets to promote effective Stakeholder Engagement throughout the program and project cycles.

13. The Secretariat updates and maintains publicly available and easily accessible project and program templates to support the implementation of this Policy.

B. Stakeholder Engagement in Activities Led by the Secretariat

14. The Secretariat engages with Stakeholders in all other GEF-Financed Activities, such as national and regional outreach activities executed by the Secretariat, following the principles set out in Paragraph 6.

15. The Secretariat provides for appropriate Stakeholder Engagement in the development of GEF policies, guidelines and strategy.

C. Agency Policies, Procedures and Capabilities

16. Agencies demonstrate that they have in place the necessary policies, procedures and capabilities to ensure that:

- (a) Stakeholders are identified and involved as early as possible in the identification and development of activities implemented by the Agency and that Stakeholder Engagement is sustained throughout the life-cycle of the activity.
- (b) Stakeholders are engaged in meaningful consultations where they are able to express their views on project plans, benefits, risks, impacts, and mitigation measures that may affect them.
- (c) Such consultations are gender responsive; free of manipulation, interference, coercion, discrimination and intimidation; and responsive to the needs and interests of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.
- (d) A public record of Stakeholder Engagement throughout the project cycle is maintained and disclosed. In cases where confidentiality is necessary to protect stakeholders from harm, statistical information is recorded and made publicly available.
- (e) Stakeholders have access to timely, relevant and understandable information about activities implemented by the Agency, and clear procedures to request information.
- (f) Where GEF-financing supports an activity implemented by the Agency, such support is clearly identified and related non-confidential information is made publicly available and easily accessible.
- (g) The requirements set out in paragraph 16 a–f are met by governments and other executing partners that are engaged in activities implemented by the Agency.

## **Compliance, Monitoring and Reporting**

17. The Secretariat facilitates an assessment of Agencies' compliance with the requirements set out in Paragraph 16, for Council review and decision within 18 months of the date of effectiveness of this Policy.

18. If an Agency does not meet the requirements set out in Paragraph 16, the Agency, in consultation with the Secretariat, develops a concrete, time-bound action plan to achieve compliance. The Secretariat, on behalf of the Agency, submits the action plan for review and approval by the Council. Unless the Council decides otherwise, the Agency may continue to seek GEF financing while it implements the time-bound action plan.

19. Once an Agency has been found to meet the requirements set out in Paragraph 16, the Agency and the Secretariat carry out periodic reporting and monitoring of compliance using the modalities set out in the *Policy on Monitoring Agencies' Compliance*<sup>3</sup>.

20. The Secretariat reports annually to the Council on Stakeholder Engagement across GEF-Financed Activities, including the number and share of projects that effectively engage Stakeholders in line with paragraphs 8–9 above, and using gender-disaggregated data where appropriate, at CEO Endorsement/ Approval, during implementation, and at completion.

21. As part of the as part of the Overall Performance Study undertaken every 4 years, the GEF Independent Evaluation Office will review GEF's engagement with Stakeholders in governance and operations.

22. The Secretariat develops and disseminates, in consultation with Agencies, civil society, and other relevant stakeholders, Guidelines to support the implementation of this Policy within one year from the adoption of this Policy.

## **Review of the Policy**

23. The Council decides on the review and revision of this Policy.

## **Effectiveness**

24. The Policy will come into effect on July 1, 2018, and will remain in effect until amended or superseded by the Council. The Policy applies to all new GEF-Financed Activities submitted on or after the date of effectiveness. For GEF-financed Activities under implementation, the Policy applies to all annual project implementation reports as well as mid-term reviews and terminal evaluations submitted after one year of the date of effectiveness.

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<sup>3</sup> SD/ME/02 (<http://www.thegef.org/documents/monitoring-agency-compliance-gef-policies>)