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GEF Practices on Disclosure of Information

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Introduction

1.   The *Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility* (the "Instrument") states in part, in paragraph 5, that the GEF operational policies, with respect to GEF-financed projects, "shall provide for full disclosure of all non-confidential information."

2.   In disclosing information associated with its operations, the GEF has followed what can be characterized as "best practices,"[1] disclosing all non-confidential information related to the GEF's operations and policy making processes.

3.   The Secretariat provides information to the public as part of the fulfillment of its mandate to service the GEF Council, the replenishment process and the GEF Assembly. The GEF Agencies disclose information on their GEF-financed projects and activities on the basis of their respective disclosure policies.

4.   *There is a presumption in favor of disclosure in the GEF's approach to information disclosure*, *unless there is a compelling reason for confidentiality.* For very limited cases, where disclosure could have a negative impact on the GEF, the implementation of its programs and projects, or more simply, could contrive the legal obligations pertaining to privacy or intellectual property, information is retained as confidential. Where there are such exceptions, justifications are provided.

5.   In principle, all relevant information regarding the organization, its projects and operations are made available to the general public with the intent of full disclosure.

6.   This liberal approach to disclosure has not changed despite the significant increase in information resulting from the expansion of the GEF network. In 2006, the number of agencies was expanded. In addition to the three implementing agencies under the Instrument (the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, IBRD, the United Nations Environment Program, UNEP and the United Nations Development Program, UNDP), there are seven executing agencies having direct access to GEF trust funds: four regional banks (the African Development Bank, AfDB, the Asian Development Bank, AsDB, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, EBRD and the Inter-American Development Bank, IADB) and three UN specialized agencies (the Food and Agriculture Organization, FAO, the International Fund for Agriculture Development, IFAD and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, UNIDO).

7.   This document is descriptive of the current practices of disclosure of information at the GEF.

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[1] In 2006, One World Trust published a Global Accountability Report whereby GEF was assessed and ranked highest among the ten assessed Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) for its transparency capabilities, and first for its evaluation capabilities. The GEF was however ranked third among the ten assessed IGOs for participation capacities and fourth for its complaints and response capabilities. The report recommended that the GEF consider adopting a policy on disclosure of information of its own, given that the qualities of the disclosure policies of the current ten GEF Agencies vary.

Disclosure of information by the GEF Secretariat, the GEF Evaluation Office, Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel and Trustee

8.   Information prepared by the GEF Secretariat or received by the GEF Secretariat from the GEF Agencies, the GEF Evaluation Office, the Trustee and Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) with regards to policies, projects, programs and operations to service the GEF business is disclosed by the GEF Secretariat. However, the GEF Secretariat keeps some information confidential if it determines that disclosure may cause prejudice to the GEF, or otherwise interfere with the sound implementation of its programs and projects.

9.   Information systematically made public by the GEF Secretariat, the GEF Evaluation Office, and STAP include information on the GEF partnership, policy and strategy documents, and other reports.

10.   Non-confidential information provided to the GEF Secretariat by the Trustee in the service of the Council, the replenishment process, and the Assembly is publicly disclosed.

11.   The GEF Evaluation Office and STAP produce on a regularly basis information and documents pertaining to their work that are made public.

12.   Information about the GEF is also available through the GEF Agencies.

Disclosure of Project-related information received by the GEF Secretariat from GEF Agencies

13.   The implementation of GEF-financed projects begins after they have been prepared by GEF Agencies in close consultation with countries and then approved by the Council and/or the GEF CEO, and by the relevant approval mechanisms adopted by the respective GEF Agency. Project-related documents and information for approval include the Project Identification Form (PIF), the Project Preparation Grant (PPG), the Full-Size Project (FSP) document, and the Medium-Size Project (MSP) document. All these documents received by the GEF Secretariat from the GEF Agencies are disclosed as follows:

   a. PIFs and PPGs for MSPs are posted on the GEF website (publicly disclosed) as information documents for Council Members after they have been reviewed by the GEF Secretariat program managers and approved by the CEO, on a rolling basis;

   b. PIFs for FSPs are cleared/approved by the CEO and posted on the GEF website (publicly disclosed) as part of a work program to be considered by the GEF Council. They are posted on the GEF website four weeks prior to GEF Council deliberations. PPGs are approved by the CEO upon clearance of the associated PIFs and are available in the GEF database accessible through the GEF website;

   c. FSPs for CEO endorsement are posted on the GEF website (publicly disclosed) for four weeks for GEF Council comment only if requested by Council members during the prior approval of the PIF in the work program. Other FSPs are posted on the website for information after CEO endorsement.

Organizational Information

14.   **The GEF as a Facility**: The publication of the Instrument contains the text of the Instrument as amended. It includes the decisions of the governing bodies of the three Implementing Agencies[2] approving the Instrument and its amendments. This publication includes decisions by the Implementing Agencies and the Trustee, replenishments resolutions, and updated commitments to the GEF Trust Fund by contributing Participants.

15.   **Conventions**: The GEF serves as a financial mechanism to four International conventions, namely the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). GEF documentation submitted to these Conventions is posted on the GEF website. The GEF, although not linked formally to the Montreal Protocol on Substances That Deplete the Ozone Layer (MP), support implementation of the Protocol in countries with economies in transition. Information and documentation prepared in that context are also made public.

16.   **GEF Assembly**: The governing body of the GEF, in which representatives of all member countries participate, meets every three to four years and is responsible for reviewing and evaluating the GEF's general policies, the operations of the GEF and its membership. All the information and documentation prepared, considered and approved in the context of an Assembly and those related to past Assembly meetings are available on the GEF website.

17.   **GEF Council**: It has primary responsibility for developing, adopting, and evaluating GEF programs. Council members representing 32 constituencies (16 from developing countries, 14 from developed countries, and 2 from countries with transitional economies) meet twice each year for three days and also conduct business by mail. Documents submitted for the Council's deliberation are posted on the GEF website four weeks prior to a Council meeting. The GEF website contains documentation submitted for all Council meetings and Joint Summaries of the Chairs from each meeting. The Rules of Procedure for the GEF Council and the list of all the Council and Alternate members are also accessible on-line.

18.   **GEF Secretariat**: The GEF Secretariat coordinates the formulation of projects included in the work programs, oversees its implementation, and makes certain that operational strategy and policies are followed. A wide range of information is posted and updated on the GEF website on a regular basis. The GEF institutional information is thoroughly described on the GEF website, including the organizational structure of the GEF which also includes information on the personnel, the GEF CEO as well as any official speeches made and public statements. A complete list of the GEF Secretariat staff with their contact information is available on the GEF website.

19.   **GEF Trustee**: The World Bank serves as the GEF Trustee. A brief description of the GEF Trustee is available on the GEF website. All documents submitted by the Trustee to the GEF Council, Replenishment, and Assembly are available on the GEF website.

20.   **GEF Agencies**: GEF projects are implemented by GEF agencies. A description of these institutions and their comparative advantage are provided on the GEF website.

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[2] World Bank, UNDP, and UNEP.

21. **Scientific and Technical Advisory Pane**l **(STAP)**: Provides strategic scientific and technical advice to the GEF on its strategy and programs. This Panel consists of six members who are internationally recognized experts in the GEF's key areas of work, and are supported by a network of experts. The Panel is supported by a Secretariat, based at the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) Regional Office in Washington, D.C. STAP's mandate in accordance with the terms of reference adopted by the GEF Council in 2007 is available on the GEF website as well as the link to the STAP webpage.[3] All documents submitted by the STAP to the GEF Council and Assembly are available on the GEF website. They can also be obtained from STAP[4].

22. **GEF Evaluation Office (GEF EO)**: To enhance global environmental benefits, an Evaluation Office was established within the GEF. The work of the GEF Evaluation Office is guided by the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy, which can be found on the GEF Evaluation Office website. In addition, GEF Evaluation Office conducts GEF Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Reports that are published and available at the GEF Evaluation Office and on its website (which is a section of thegef.org website). The GEF Monitoring Evaluation Policy, which explains the concept, role and use of monitoring and evaluation within the GEF establishes minimum requirements of how projects should be monitored and evaluated in line with international standards, is also available on the website in the following different languages: English, French, and Arabic. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) publications such as the Overall Performance Studies; Country Portfolio Evaluation Reports; Annual Performance Reports; Lessons Learned developed by stakeholders; Evaluation of GEF Capacity Development Activities; Joint Evaluation of the GEF Small Grants Program are all posted on-line and can also be accessed through the GEF Evaluation Office Documents Database. The Evaluation Office can be contacted directly for specific information[5].

23. **GEF Member Countries**: A complete list of the 182 GEF member countries is available on the GEF website along with the dates of participation.

24. **GEF Focal Points**: Each GEF member country has designated government officials responsible for GEF activities. These officials are known as GEF Focal Points. The Political Focal Points are responsible for GEF governance issues, policies and communications with their constituencies. On the other hand, the Operational Focal Points (OFPs) are responsible for in-country program coordination of GEF projects and other operational activities. A complete list of the GEF Focal Points is available on-line along with the change of Focal Point Notification Form, Operational Focal Point Endorsement Template, and the Procedure for Joining Constituencies of GEF Council. The Focal Points for the Conventions are designated by each member country to perform administrative and communication functions. The list of Focal Points for each different Convention is available on the GEF website.

25. **Civil Society Organizations (CSOs):** The GEF interacts extensively with civil society organizations. A successful engagement process takes place through a GEF NGO-Network with a diverse membership. According to the GEF Council decision GEF/C.34/9, accreditation of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) is the responsibility of the GEF NGO-Network. Information concerning membership is directed to the GEF NGO-network website accessible through the

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[3] http://stapgef.unep.org/
[4] STAP 900 17th Street, NW, Suite 506, Washington DC 20006 USA - Tel.: 202-974-1318
[5] The GEF Evaluation Office, 1818 H Street, NW, MSN P5-400, Washington, DC 20433 USA, Tel. 202-453- 6078

GEF website.[6] The GEF has also a small grant program[7] that supports projects of non-governmental and community-based organizations in developing countries. Information on activities related to this program is made public.

Policy and Strategy Documents and other Reports

26.   **Replenishment:** Donors fund the GEF every four years by committing resources through a process called replenishment. The information and documents on the last three replenishment periods are disclosed on the GEF website including the latest updates on the initiation of the replenishment process, the timing of the replenishment, the participation in the negotiations, and all other documents related to the replenishment meetings.

27.   **GEF Annual reports**: Consists of financial statements and audit reports, which are both available in printable versions, CDs and released on the GEF website.

28.   **Policies and strategies**: The GEF operates on the basis of series of policies, strategies and procedures adopted by the GEF Council. The GEF website provides information regarding the main policies (i.e. Recommended Minimum Fiduciary Standards for GEF Implementing and Executing Agencies, Focal Area Strategies and Strategic Programming for GEF- 4 and GEF-5, System for a Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR) allocations, Policies and Procedures, public involvement in the design, implementation, and evaluation of GEF-financed projects).

29.   **Country Profiles**: Country profiles are available on the gefonline.org website. The profiles provide information about individual member countries including the GEF constituencies, GEF Council and Alternate members, the GEF Operational and Political Focal Points. Moreover, a list of GEF accredited/partner CSOs, GEF resources country allocations and utilizations, approved projects and projects under preparation are all posted and updated on a regular basis. Any restricted information is circulated via email among the concerned parties. Final approved project documents are only published on the GEF website after approval of both the GEF CEO and the Council. Approved/cleared PIFs are available in the database. The internal communication reviews of the projects are confidential and may only be shared with the GEF Agencies. Starting from May 1st, 2009, the review sheets have been shared (through Project Management Information System, PMIS access) with the GEF Focal Points.

Information related to the GEF Focal Areas

30.   Extensive information is available on the six focal areas of the GEF.

31.   **Biodiversity**: The GEF is the financial mechanism for the CBD. Focal area strategies programming publications and other information related to the portfolio are posted on the GEF website.

32.   **Climate Change:** As the financial mechanism of the UNFCCC, the GEF allocates and disburses grants per year in projects related to energy efficiency, renewable energies, and sustainable transportation. Information on Mitigation, Adaptation, Special Climate Change Fund, Least Developed Countries Fund, and the publication are posted on the GEF website.

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[6] http://www.gefngo.org
[7] http://sgp.undp.org/

33.   **International Waters:** The GEF international waters focal area targets transboundary water systems, such as river basins with water flowing from one country to another, groundwater resources shared by several countries, or marine ecosystems bounded by more than one nation.

34.   **Land Degradation**: In 2002, the GEF Assembly expanded GEF's mandate by adding land degradation to the GEF portfolio. In 2003, the GEF was designated a financial mechanism of the UNCCD. Guide to projects, project list, project themes, and publications on land degradation are all accessible through the GEF website.

35.   **Ozone Depletion**: The GEF, in partnership with the Montreal Protocol, funds projects that enable Eastern European Nations and Central Asians to phase out their use of ozone destroying chemicals. A brochure on the Ozone Layer Depletion focal area strategy and strategic programming for GEF- 4 is posted on the GEF website.

36.   **Persistent Organic Pollutants**: The GEF is the interim financial mechanism of the Stockholm Convention. Initial Guidelines for Enabling Activities of the Stockholm Convention on POPs, which approves the initial guidelines as an early response for assisting developing countries and countries with economies in transition to implement measures to fulfill their obligations under the Convention, can be found on the GEF website. POPs-related publications and project information are also accessible on the GEF website.

37.   **Cross cutting issues**. Information exists also on cross cutting issues such as capacity development. A GEF's Strategic Approach to capacity development was adopted by the Council in 2003 (GEF/C.22/8). Many documents have been posted on the GEF website such as the Strategic Approach to Enhance Capacity Building, Operational Guidelines for Expedited Funding of National Self Assessments of Capacity Building Needs, the Guide for Self-Assessment of Country Capacity Needs for Global Environmental Management, the Assessment of Capacity Development Efforts of other Development Cooperation Agencies, and Monitoring Guidelines of Capacity Development in GEF Projects.

Disclosure of Information at the GEF Agencies

38.   There has been good cooperation between the GEF Secretariat and the GEF Agencies in fulfilling the intent of paragraph 5 of the Instrument.

39.   Each GEF Agency has its own policy/approach to disclosure of information. In general, the Agencies' approaches all have some common features, including a presumption in favor of disclosure, commitment to transparency and accountability. Each GEF Agency's respective policy on disclosure of information applies to the information produced by that GEF Agency and to specific information that is in the possession of that GEF Agency. Constraints on disclosure are specified by each Agency's respective disclosure policy.

40.   **World Bank**. Although the World Bank approved a formal information disclosure policy in 1993, it had informally begun disclosing information to the public in the mid-1980s. In 1985, the Bank started issuing instructions to staff i.e. "Directive on Disclosure of Information" which established a presumption in favor of disclosure in the absence of compelling reasons not to disclose. In 1993, with the approval of the Board of Executive Directors, the number of existing documents available to the public expanded as well as outreach efforts, including the dissemination of information to the public through a network of World Bank country offices. In

2001, major revisions were introduced into its disclosure policy and implemented in 2002. In 2003, the World Bank proposed improving its public information centers, and adopted a Translation Framework that facilitated easier access and dissemination of information "to stimulate interest and encourage participation in the World Bank's work". This objective was further reflected in 2005 when the Executive Directors approved an updated policy that significantly expanded the disclosure of World Bank documents. The World Bank's latest Policy on Access to Information[8] took effect on July 1 2010. The Access to Information Policy was approved by the Board of Executive Directors in November 2009. Under the new Access to Information Policy, the Bank moves from an approach that spells out what information it can disclose to one under which the Bank can make public any information in its possession that is not on a clear list of exceptions. The successive revisions provide greater transparency and accountability.

41.   **Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)**. The Inter-American Development Bank submitted a draft Access to Information Policy[9] to its Board of Executive Directors on April 26, 2010. The document and an accompanying Background Paper are simultaneously being made available to the public, after incorporating suggestions from a public consultation that concluded April 18. The new proposal aims to vastly expand the information available to the public on project documents and Board proceedings and establish a new system for classifying and declassifying documents, among other reforms. This proposal for a new Access to Information Policy to replace the current Disclosure of Information Policy (OP-102). OP-102, Disclosure of Information, first published in November 1994, and revised in February 1998 and April 2001, continues to apply to documents prepared between January1, 1995 and January 1, 2004.

42.   **African Development Bank (AfDB).** The Bank published its most recent Policy on Disclosure of information in 2005[10]. This document is a revision of the 1997 African Development Bank Group Policy on Disclosure of Information. That policy established the procedures and the types of information for disclosure in the absence of compelling reasons for confidentiality. The revision of the 1997 policy was to expand the scope and the type of information for public disclosure to incorporate changes in the Bank Group's lending activities and new documents that are not explicitly covered by the 1997 policy. It was also justified by the Bank's desire to further deepen and improve information disclosure to increase transparency, and the need to harmonize the Bank Group's Disclosure of Information Policy with the policies of sister institutions.

43.   The objective of the revision of Bank Group Policy on Disclosure of Information was to enhance broader stakeholder participation in Bank operations and activities, and to provide for the disclosure of Bank documents, consistent with the legal provisions of the Bank and the best practices of other multilateral development banks. The Policy requires the Bank to disclose all information on its operations and its activities unless there are compelling reasons not to do so. It contains the principle of derogation from full disclosure and categories of information to remain confidential are referred to. The Policy specifies the Bank Group's Public Information Centre as the reference point for persons seeking information. The public can also access information on the Bank Group's operations and activities through the Bank Group's field offices, as well as through the Bank's website.

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[8] www.worldbank.org
[9] www.IADB.org
[10] www.afdb.org

44.   **United Nations Development Program (UNDP).** UNDP introduced its first official draft of Information Disclosure Policy in July 1996, which was approved by the Executive Committee in January 1997. Taking into consideration the results of the independent evaluation of the Policy carried out in 2001, the Policy was revised in 2004 and minor revisions were made in 2007. However in 2008[11], the Policy was revamped and major revisions were introduced. UNDP's Policy was developed taking into account major UN intergovernmental statements and conferences such as the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992), the Copenhagen Declaration and Program of Action of the World Summit for Social Development (1995), the Millennium Development Goals of the UN Millennium Declaration (2000) and the Plan of Action of the World Summit on the Information Society (2003).

45.   The Organization discloses to the Public, once finalized, documents such as its Common Country assessments, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, its country program/project performance report and program performance report. The Organization does not disclose its budget figures. Certain documents disclosed are made available to the public in the six official UN languages. The policy applies to UNDP and to those associated funds and programs administered by UNDP, as well as the websites of the country offices and the associated funds and programs. To the extent that much of UNDP information is already available to the public through various means, including through the UNDP corporate website and individual Country Office websites, the Policy codifies existing principles, practices and procedures.

46.   **The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP).** UNEP has an information disclosure policy that guides disclosure on operations related to the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The UNEP's information disclosure meets all the principles of good practice, stipulating narrowly defined conditions for non-disclosure of information, an appeals process for denied information and identifying the timeframe in which requests for information will be responded to. UNEP's disclosure policy covers both financial disclosure of staff members, as well as access to information, and follows policies and procedures stipulated by the General Assembly. These can be found on the public websites of the UN Secretariat12 as well as the Committee on Information of the General Assembly.[13]

47.   **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).** FAO does not presently have a formal Policy on Disclosure of Information. The Agency does not publicly disclose draft policies, strategy reports, legal agreements or budget figures. All Council and Conference documents as well as Final policy and strategy reports are made available to the public after formal approval by the relevant governing body. Currently, the Organization provides its documents in all six official UN languages.

48.   **International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).** In 1998, the Governing Council of IFAD introduced its Policy on Disclosure of Information[14] for an interim phase of 18 months. During this interim phase, governing body documents were made available on the IFAD website in the four official languages of the Fund. In 2000, the Governing Council reviewed the Policy and consequently adopted it. The adoption approved the expansion of the Policy and

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[11] www.undp.org
[12] http://www.un.org/en/mainbodies/secretariat/
[13] http://www.un.org/ga/coi/
[14] www.ifad.org

included disclosure of its all evaluation reports as well as documentation submitted to the Evaluation Committee. In 2006, the Policy was revised and then again in 2009 and 2010.

49.   **European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).** The EBRD introduced its Public Information Policy (PIP) in 2000[15]. In March 2006, the EBRD proceeded to undertake a review of its PIP and a draft version of the Policy was made available on the Bank's website for public comment until April 2006. In May 2006, the Board of the EBRD approved many of the recommendations made during the review process and consequently new transparency requirements were introduced into the Policy. The Policy was further revised and approved by the Board of Directors in July 2011. In its Public Information Policy, the EBRD commits itself to enhancing transparency and accountability and fostering good governance in all its activities, so as to promote economically and environmentally sustainable transition in its countries of operations, with emphasis on the private sector. The policy outlines key principles, transparency, accountability and governance, willing to listen and receptive comment. The policy lists the categories of information for disclosure (Institutional information, information on strategies and policies, project-related information, accountability and governance-related information). The policy spells out the type of information it considered confidential.

50.   **Asian Development Bank (AsDB) [16].** The Bank first adopted its information and disclosure policies in 1994. As part of its long-term strategic framework (2001-2015), AsDB revised its disclosure policy and incorporated it into a comprehensive policy document, approved in March 2005[17]. AsDB established a new public information and disclosure unit (InfoUnit) within the Office of External Relations to oversee the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the policy's disclosure requirements. Under its revised policy, the list of information to be disclosed by AsDB is made available. The types of documents not released are also referred to.

51.   **United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).** A Focal Point for Ethics and Accountability (FPEA) was set up by the Director-General in 2010 to foster a culture of ethics, transparency and accountability in the Organization. It supports the implementation of a set of ethics-related policies: the Code of Ethical Conduct (2010), the UNIDO Policy for Financial Disclosure and Declaration of Interests (2010), and the Policy on Protection against Retaliation for Reporting Misconduct or Cooperating with Audits or Investigations (Whistleblower Protection Policy, 2010). Irregularities are addressed mainly in the policy on fraud awareness and prevention, the administrative circulars on disciplinary measures and the UNIDO policy for financial disclosure and declaration of interests. The FPEA has the authority to refer to Internal Oversight Services (IOS) for alleged violations.

52.   Furthermore, with the introduction of internationally recognized public sector accounting standards (IPSAS), as of 2010, UNIDO is in a position to prepare annual financial statements and thereby to carry out annual external audits consistent with recognized international auditing standards. The financial statements are audited on an annual basis by external auditors appointed by the General Conference of UNIDO.

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[15] www.ebrd.org
[16] www.adb.org
[17] Asian Development Bank, The Public Communications Policy of the Asian Development Bank – Disclosure and Exchange of Information (Manila: AsDB, March 2005).

53.   UNIDO Evaluation Group (EVA) is responsible for the independent evaluation function of UNIDO. The biennial work plans, the terms of reference of independent evaluations and the evaluation reports are available on the UNIDO website[18].

54.   It should be noted that all documents relating to the Governing Bodies are readily available on the Internet to the public at large[19]. Such documents include, UNIDO Annual Report (a primary means of informing stakeholders on UNIDO's operations), the budget of the Organization, audited annual financial statements prepared in accordance with IPSAS, and others.

Main Means of Accessing Information on the GEF

55.   **GEF website**. General information about the GEF and its activities can be obtained and accessed through the GEF's website[20]. These include also project-related public information that provide details on all types of GEF-funded projects ranging from enabling activities including Medium- Size Projects to Full-Size Projects and global programs. Different filters available in the search mask can list search results by different categories including country, focal area, and operational program, GEF Agency, project type, funding source, approval periods, GEF project financing and the GEF Evaluation Office documents. Restricted information on the GEF website can only be accessed by accredited users, which include the GEF Secretariat, the GEF Evaluation Office and STAP staff, GEF Agencies and GEF Focal Points.

56.   Information that is not readily available from the GEF's website, or any other GEF Agency, may also be requested in writing by e-mail, mail, or fax to the GEF Secretariat[21]. Requests for information are processed by the External Affairs Team at the GEF Secretariat that is in charge of communications and outreach activities. The External Affairs Team[22] has one officer per region who may also be contacted for different inquiries. Requesters are can contact the organization in English, which is the working language of the GEF. However, GEF often receives requests in other languages and endeavors to be responsive in the relevant language. If a requester believes that a request for information to the GEF Secretariat has been unjustly denied, a complaint may be submitted to the GEF's Conflict Resolution Commissioner[23], who reports directly to the GEF CEO.

57.   Direct links to websites of the GEF Agencies are provided through the GEF website.

58.   **Websites of the GEF Evaluation office and the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel**. Information on their activities can be found on their respective websites,[24] as well as the GEF website. [25] Both STAP and the GEF Evaluation Office can be contacted directly.[26]

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[18] www.unido.org
[19] www.unido.org
[20] www.thegef.org and www.gefonline.org
[21] GEF Secretariat- address: 1818 H Street, NW, MSN P4-400, Washington, DC 20433 USA- Tel: (202) 458-9682- Fax: (202) 522-3240/3245- E-mail: secretariat@thegef.org.
[22] Contacted by- Tel: GEF Secretariat- address: 1818 H Street, NW, MSN P4-400, Washington, DC 20433 USA- Tel: (202) 458-9682- Fax: (202) 522-3240/3245- E-mail: secretariat@thegef.org. To contact other members of the External Affairs Team, visit <https://www.thegef.org/staff>
[23] The GEF's Conflict Resolution Commissionaire works directly with member countries and agencies to help resolve disputes and address complaints and other issues of importance to GEF operations. Contact: GEF Secretariat- address: 1818 H Street, NW, MSN P4-400, Washington, DC 20433 USA- Tel: (202) 458-9682- Fax: (202) 522-3240/3245- E-mail: secretariat@thegef.org
[24] www. http://unep.org/stap/; http://www.thegefieo.org.
[25] www.thegef.org. Refer to Annex 1: "Information available on the website".

59.	**Means by the GEF Trustee**. The GEF Trustee does not have its own website or disclosure means. Non-confidential information it publishes is done through the GEF Secretariat website.

60.	**GEF Agencies' websites**. GEF Agencies publish information on GEF financed activities and projects on their respective websites in accordance with their respective policies on disclosure. The IBRD publishes information regarding its financed activities through its website.[27] UNDP regularly releases on its website[28] information on different types of activities and projects that UNDP undertakes in its capacity as GEF Agency. These include corporate programs, joint programs, monitoring and evaluation information to ensure accountability and measure results of projects, knowledge management efforts to leverage lessons learned from projects and to replicate successes, and press releases. As UNEP plays a role in supporting countries to develop and execute GEF projects that fit within its comparative advantage, a full page on the Division of Global Environment Facility Coordination (DGEF) can be found on UNEP's website.[29] AfDB also mentions its partnership with the GEF on its website's Environment section.[30] IFAD has a whole section explaining its affiliation to the GEF.[31] EBRD's web page on International Cooperation has a direct link to GEF's website and a brief description.[32] IADB[33] has a full section on its GEF-funded activities and projects under the environment heading on its website. A full page is also available on the website of UNIDO[34] and AsDB[35] on their GEF-financed projects. FAO publishes information on it GEF-related projects on its website.[36]

61.	**The GEF Project Management Information System (PMIS).** The internal review of projects at the Secretariat is tracked continuously through PMIS. This GEF project database is available on-line.[37] The system enters information, including documentation, on proposals requesting GEF funding and tracks the status of proposals submitted for review to the GEF Secretariat. It is a useful tool used by the Secretariat staff to prepare documentation for internal review, track the status of approved proposals that are under preparation by GEF Agencies and monitor the level of resources approved in each country. In order to access the database, new users must register and wait to be granted access by the GEF Secretariat database manager. PMIS is restricted and is accessible to parties such as GEF Secretariat staff, GEF Agencies, GEF Focal Points, Council Members and Alternate Members.

62.	**The online Project Database.**[38] This database offers information regarding GEF funded projects ranging from Small Grants Program, Enabling Activities, Medium-Sized Projects (MSPs), Full-Sized Projects (FSPs) and Programmatic Approaches (PAs). Different criteria can be selected when accessing the database such as the country, focal area, operational program,

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[26] STAP 900 17th Street, NW, Suite 506, Washington DC 20006 USA - Tel.: 202-974-1318 and The GEF Evaluation Office, 1818 H Street, NW, MSN P5-400, Washington, DC 20433 USA, Tel. 202-473-4054
[27] www.worldbank.org/gef
[28] www.undp.org/gef/05/
[29] http://www.unep.org/DGEF/
[30] http://www.afdb.org/en/topics-sectors/sectors/environment/
[31] http://www.ifad.org/operations/gef/index.htm
[32] http://www.ebrd.com/enviro/partners/enhance.htm
[33] http://www.IADB.org/en/topics/environment/what-is-the-global-environment-facility,2808/html
[34] http://www.unido.org/index.php?id=o39564
[35] http://www.adb.org/environment/adb-gef.asp
[36] http://www.fao.org/corp/google_result/en/?cx=018170620143701104933%3Aqq82jsfba7w&q=GEF&cof=FORID%3A9#914
[37] https://www.gefpmis.org/login.aspx.
[38] https://www.gefpmis.org/login.aspx

GEF Agency, project type, funding source, approval periods, GEF project financing and the evaluation documents.

63.   **Publications.** Information on the GEF is made public also through a wide range of publications.

64.   **Formal communication.** Each GEF entity can be contacted directly in writing to obtain information related to their GEF related activities.