

60th GEF Council Meeting
June 14–18, 2021
Virtual Meeting

Agenda item 8

**MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO:
EVALUATION OF THE COUNTRY SUPPORT PROGRAMME (CSP)**

INTRODUCTION

1. The Secretariat appreciates the useful findings arising from the Evaluation of the Country Support Program (CSP) and is in broad agreement with its conclusions and recommendations.
2. The Secretariat is encouraged by the many positive findings of the report, including the contribution of the CSP to enabling a greater, more strategic, better-coordinated access of countries to GEF resources, and the role of the program as both a communication-mechanism for the changing requirements of the GEF and as a feedback-mechanism on new GEF policies. The Secretariat welcomes the report's acknowledgements of the role played by the CSP in engagement and knowledge-sharing between stakeholders, and in facilitating dialogue between increasingly diverse stakeholders. The Secretariat is pleased by the report's conclusions on the quality and timeliness of CSP support and communications.
3. At the same time, the Secretariat welcomes the areas that are identified for improvement and further evolution of the program, particularly the areas highlighted by the six recommendations of the Evaluation. This management response focuses specifically on these recommendations and articulates potential strategies for addressing them going forward. As the Evaluation highlights, the CSP has evolved in accordance with past evaluation recommendations and GEF Council decisions, which have guided the transition of the program into its current formulation. Therefore, the Secretariat is confident that the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of this Evaluation will similarly guide the future evolution of the program that will be articulated by the CSP Strategy currently under development for the GEF-8 replenishment.

RECOMMENDATION (A)

“Build on current efforts to collaborate with other global environmental funds. To help countries to respond better to the commitments of countries vis-à-vis the implementation of the multilateral environmental agreements that the GEF is supporting along with other global funds, CSP management should build further on past efforts to collaborate on readiness activities with other funds. Overall, the management of the CSP should continue to monitor developments to identify where substantive opportunities for collaboration can be established beyond the current efforts.”

4. The Secretariat welcomes this recommendation. The Secretariat has already been taking steps towards closer collaboration with other funds and will intensify these efforts in response to this recommendation. The GEF CEO has stated as one of his goals a broad relation of complementarity with related funds, in particular the Green Climate Fund (GCF). To this end, a parallel document¹ is being presented for discussion and consideration at the current 60th

¹ GEF/C.60/08, *Long-Term Vision on Complementarity, Coherence and Collaboration between the Green Climate Fund and the Global Environment Facility*, https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF_C.60_08_Long-

Council meeting that describes the agreement reached between the GEF and GCF Secretariats and sets the overarching framework for deeper cooperation between the two funds. Within this framework, the CSP will explore options to enhance collaboration in a manner that most effectively build capacities of OFPs and other stakeholders to access GEF resources and to learn about GEF policies and guidelines. Any progress will be reflected in the annual joint progress report that will be submitted to both the GEF Council and the GCF Board. The experiences and lessons from this initiative as it develops, can serve as guidance for possible collaborations with other global environmental funds as appropriate and relevant.

RECOMMENDATION (B)

“Develop a clear CSP Strategy and an implementation plan with an appropriate budget and resource envelope. The CSP would benefit from developing a comprehensive program strategy for every replenishment cycle, with appropriate activities designed based on country grouping needs, and with proper implementation plans to guide its actions. Such a strategic planning approach should develop a validated theory of change for the program, with clear expected results, milestones, and targets in its main spheres of influence. The CSP has a significant scope and reach and can more proactively strengthen the crucial role it plays moving forward as a key entry point in the GEF dialogue, knowledge sharing and capacity building process with GEF partners at the global, regional and country level.”

5. The Secretariat is in agreement with this recommendation. The Secretariat is in the process of developing a comprehensive program strategy for the GEF-8 replenishment negotiations that includes activities and the necessary corresponding implementation plans. As a part of shaping this strategy, and in response to this recommendation, the Secretariat will develop a logical framework that defines its intervention logic.

RECOMMENDATION (C)

“Strengthen technical expertise in the CSP team and monitoring and reporting systems. CSP management should improve the program’s dedicated technical capabilities and its ability to provide more localized support, to meet the high demands placed on the CSP team across countries and regions. In light of the insufficient program data management and reporting, CSP management should also put in place results-based data management, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting systems to track the use of resources, as well as activities, outcomes, and impacts. These systems should provide the basis for more systematic and comprehensive reporting at each GEF cycle to both GEF management and the GEF Council.”

6. The Secretariat takes note of this recommendation. As discussed in response to recommendation (b) above, the Secretariat is in the process of developing a comprehensive program strategy for the GEF-8 replenishment negotiations. Resulting from the scope of this strategy, the Secretariat will also elaborate on any further technical team skill gaps to meet the

[Term%20Vision%20on%20Complementarity%2C%20Coherence%20and%20Collaboration%20between%20the%20Green%20Climate%20Fund%20and%20the%20Global%20Environment%20Facility.pdf](#)

high demands for more localized support that has been identified by the Evaluation. In response to this recommendation, this strategy will elaborate a logical framework, and this framework will also include proposed monitoring, evaluation, and reporting systems for the program.

RECOMMENDATION (D)

“Revisit the reach and timing of National Dialogues to align them better with country needs for support. The CSP should explore ways to improve the timing of the National Dialogue or develop other up-front strategic dialogue mechanisms on the future use of GEF resources. These should be planned as early as possible and should pursue deeper multi-stakeholder engagement in the process. Finally, the CSP should examine with GEF programming staff how National Dialogues and ECWs could more directly contribute to programming objectives.”

7. The Secretariat takes note of this recommendation. Experience over previous GEF replenishment periods as well as the valuable findings of this Evaluation demonstrate that the National Dialogue component of the CSP needs to be rethought and reformulated. As discussed above in response to other recommendations, the Secretariat is in the process of developing a comprehensive program strategy for the GEF-8 replenishment negotiations, and as part of this strategy, the National Dialogues component can be reconfigured to bring it more in line with both GEF-8 strategies and specific country needs. The Secretariat is currently in the process of exploring the feasibility of different options to this end. For example, one such option may be the disaggregation of the National Dialogues into smaller, more specific activities with a dedicated focus to particular GEF-8 programming and policy strategies. In response to this recommendation, specific proposals along these lines will be articulated in the GEF-8 CSP strategy currently under development.

RECOMMENDATION (E)

“Enhance inclusiveness, so that inclusiveness at events turns into improved collaboration on the ground. Though the CSP cannot be held responsible and accountable for how country focal points manage their GEF programs, it is in a unique position to offer best practices that ensure successful GEF programming in practice. In this context, the CSP could play an important role in ensuring that the inclusiveness they have promoted in their events continues past the CSP activity and results in active and fruitful collaboration. The CSP can be a gateway toward better integration of CSOs and other groups into GEF programming after CSP events.”

8. The Secretariat takes note of this recommendation. The Secretariat also notes the finding of the Evaluation that while inclusiveness and diversity of participants in CSP events has increased over time, these vary greatly between countries, constituencies, and events. In this regard, the Secretariat would like to highlight that participants in CSP events are in fact determined by the countries themselves. Notwithstanding this fact, the Secretariat is currently exploring options to greatly enhance inclusivity and collaboration at CSP events as one of the parameters that can lay the groundwork for better collaboration on the ground. As an example, SES (virtual) and ECW (in person) sessions can be dedicated to sharing best practices on

dimensions that can enhance collaboration on internal organization; how to work more closely with agencies; understanding the financial aspects of projects; how to manage portfolios; how to read a PIF, project documents, project implementation reports, and financial closure reports; and how to work effectively with CSOs. In response to this recommendation, the GEF-8 CSP strategy currently under development will showcase learnings and best practices of inclusiveness through events facilitated by the CSP program.

RECOMMENDATION (F)

“Apply a customized approach to capacity building. Because a one-size-fits-all approach to capacity building limits the number of participants that can be reached, the CSP should develop more customized approaches to capacity building with consideration for more flexibility as to the number of participants from each stakeholder group and their level of capacity. The CSP should also continue to empower OFPs by better informing them on their roles in GEF portfolio management beyond portfolio development. At the same time, it should place emphasis on their crucial facilitation role in keeping an ongoing dialogue with, and bringing on board other actors such as line ministries, the private sector, local communities, and CSOs to ensure the mainstreaming and leveraging effect of GEF resources to support national commitments to multilateral environmental agreements.”

9. The Secretariat takes note of this recommendation. The Secretariat is currently exploring the feasibility of options to introduce new components of the CSP that will be targeted to specific stakeholders’ needs. For example, this can include support for OFPs tailored to their specific needs and circumstances; training for government executing agencies; CSO to CSO training on how to work with OFPs and become executing partners; creating a community of practice for GEF focal points across the world; and creating a platform for journalists to access information on GEF projects as illustration for their work. In response to this recommendation, proposals along these lines will be included in the GEF-8 CSP strategy currently under development.

CONCLUSION

10. As highlighted above, the findings, conclusions and recommendations of this Evaluation will play a key role in influencing the GEF-8 CSP Strategy that is currently under development for the GEF-8 replenishment negotiations. Detailed proposals along each of these dimensions, with references to this Evaluation, will be included in subsequent versions of the Programming and Policy Directions of the GEF-8 replenishment that will be considered during the GEF-8 replenishment negotiations, as well as in the CSP Implementation Arrangements for GEF-8 that will be presented to the 62nd Council in June 2022. Progress on the implementation of each of these recommendations will also be tracked through the IEO’s standard Management Action Record. The CSP program activities will also continue to be tracked and presented to Council by the regularly updated GEF Scorecards, as well as through other council reports as needed and appropriate.