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PROGRESS REPORT ON THE GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background on the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP)	1
Implementation Status of the Key Actions and Results Areas Related to Gender Mainstreaming	1
Capacity Development	1
Coordination.....	2
Project Cycle	4
Programming and Policy	5
Results Based Management (RBM).....	5
Knowledge Management and Communication	5
Annex: Implementation Status of the Gender Equality Action Plan	7

BACKGROUND ON THE GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN (GEAP)

1. Responding to the GEF-6 Policy Recommendation, the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) was developed in close collaboration and consultation with the GEF Agencies, Secretariats of the relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), and other experts. Its purpose is to enhance the coherence and effectiveness of gender mainstreaming at both corporate, program and project levels.
2. The GEAP was approved at the 47th GEF Council in November 2014¹ to serve as a framework of action throughout the GEF-6 period, from fiscal years 2015 through 2018. Following this decision, the GEF Secretariat, in collaboration with GEF Agencies, has made significant progress on all components outlined in the GEAP.
3. The GEAP aims to help operationalize the mainstreaming of gender in GEF policy and programming to advance the GEF's goal of promoting gender equality and social inclusion as a key to attaining global environmental benefits. The GEAP provides concrete action areas and an accompanying timeline to implement the GEF Policy on Gender Mainstreaming,² while building on the existing and planned gender strategies and plans of the GEF Agencies.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF THE KEY ACTIONS AND RESULTS AREAS RELATED TO GENDER MAINSTREAMING

4. The GEF Secretariat, in coordination with the GEF Agencies and other partners, has implemented the actions agreed upon for FY16 under the GEAP framework, in the areas of capacity development, coordination, project cycle, programming and policy, results-based management (RBM), knowledge management (KM) and communication. The description below highlights some of the specific actions undertaken during the past 12 months. Annex 1 shows the status of each action taken.

Capacity Development

5. The GEF Secretariat has moved forward with a number of key activities related to capacity development including
 - (a) **Augmenting technical competency and capacity of GEF Secretariat:** The GEF Secretariat hired a gender expert in April 2015 to provide technical advice to GEF management and on-going support to GEF staff for implementation of the GEAP and to ensure gender responsive programming, policies, and project cycle management procedures. Recognizing the great benefits of having a dedicated gender expert, the GEF Secretariat has recruited a full time Senior Gender Specialist to lead this work in the Secretariat. Also recognizing the imperative of simultaneously broadening capacity across the GEF Secretariat to mainstream gender, the Secretariat completed a **gender capacity staff assessment** in August 2015. This exercise, in the form of a staff survey, showed strong support across the Secretariat for gender mainstreaming, including a high level of motivation by

¹ GEF, Gender Equality Action Plan, GEF/C.47/09.Rev.01, October 2014

² GEF, GEF Policy on Gender Mainstreaming, GEF/C.40/10/Rev.1, May 2011

staff to prioritize gender and other social issues in the GEF strategy and focal areas. The exercise also highlighted the need for training in the area of gender tools and methodologies, and for technical training tailored to specific focal areas. As a result, a review of different training options is underway, including possible collaboration with UN Women training center and/or development of online modules. The intention is to launch a capacity development plan by fall 2016.

- (b) **Establishing a Gender and Social Issues Workstream:** The decision to set up this workstream, in June 2015, has proved to be an effective platform to accelerate GEF's gender equality mainstreaming efforts, while at the same time building capacity and broadening responsibility among different staff members for gender mainstreaming. At present, the core workstream members consist of staff from across the Secretariat. The workstream has developed a work plan and budget, and is now effectively supporting the implementation of the GEAP and GEF's efforts to deliver on the commitments made under the policies, guidelines, and action plans related to gender and other social issues. It operates in close collaboration with GEF Agencies, the Secretariats of relevant Conventions, and other partners.
- (c) **Supporting GEF Operational Focal Points and other partners:** The GEF Council has stressed the need to improve support to the GEF Operational Focal Points, Convention Focal Points, and other partners on the ground in implementing the GEAP. As an initial step, the GEF Secretariat has utilized existing mechanisms, including the Extended Constituency Workshops (ECWs) at the sub-regional level and National Dialogue Initiatives (NDIs) at the country level to raise awareness of the GEF policy and Action Plan on gender equality, and promote their application to GEF projects. The GEF Secretariat has conducted gender mainstreaming sessions as part of the ECWs (including in Africa, Central Asia, Europe, and the Pacific regions) and has updated the presentation materials on gender, which has helped to improve communication and efforts to raise awareness. Moreover, efforts are underway to develop capacity development modules to be launched in 2017.

Coordination

6. The need to establish an Inter-Agency Working Group on Gender was recognized during the development of the GEAP, and was supported by the GEF Council and partners. Since June 2015, the GEF Secretariat has continued to strengthen its partnerships in implementing the GEAP, including by:

- (a) **Consolidating the GEF Gender Partnership (GGP):** The GEF Secretariat agreed with the GEF Agencies to rebrand the Inter-Agency Working Group as the GEF Gender Partnership in order to broaden the scope and membership beyond the inter-agency group and leverage the wide range of skills and experiences on gender equality and

women's empowerment from partner institutions and organizations. These include the gender focal points of other relevant CSOs, UN Agencies, and financial institutions such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Climate Investment Fund (CIF) and the Adaptation Fund. GGP is now formally operational with active participation of gender focal points from each GEF Agency, Secretariats of relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements, as well as representatives from GEF Independent Evaluation Office, GEF Network of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), the GEF Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group (IPAG) and other key partners. Initial steps include:

- i. **Facilitation of Regular Meetings:** Following a meeting of GGP members at the margin of the GEF Council meeting in June 2015, the Secretariat has organized almost monthly virtual meetings since August 2015. In May 2016, the GEF Secretariat organized a first face to face GGP workshop to review progress to-date, elaborate on guideline on Gender Mainstreaming in the GEF project cycle, and identify gaps and actions needed to fulfill commitments outlined in GEAP
 - ii. **Development of GGP Terms of References and a joint work plan:** The GEF Secretariat facilitated the development of the formal Terms of Reference (TOR) among the GGP members, which was adopted in July 2015. The members agreed that the main objective of the GGP is not only to implement the GEAP, but also to serve as a platform for iterative consultations, coordination and knowledge sharing to accelerate the GEF Secretariat's and partner organizations' efforts to mainstream gender equality and empower women within the broader context of sustainable development. A detailed work plan for the GGP was prepared and approved by GGP members in August 2015. Specific priorities and sub-working groups have been established to specifically help:
 - Develop the GEF Guidelines to mainstream gender in the GEF project cycle;
 - Further develop and strengthen the Results Based Management (RBM) framework for gender mainstreaming across the corporate and GEF focal area levels, including development of a marker system, as part of the broader GEF RBM framework; and
 - Improve the knowledge base and communication on gender as related to GEF strategy, program and project portfolio, in line with the GEF Knowledge Management framework.
- (b) **Reinforcing collaboration with other finance mechanisms:** The GEF Secretariat has continued close communication and initiated several meetings with other finance mechanisms, including the GCF, CIF and the Adaptation Fund to leverage opportunities for harmonizing approaches, reporting frameworks and measurement of outcomes. For example, the GEF Secretariat invited GCF and CIF

to meetings with GEF Agencies to explore best practices, approaches, and experiences in applying gender markers.

- (c) **Strengthening collaboration with Rio Conventions and other partners:** The GEF Secretariat has initiated and developed strong relationship with the designated gender experts of the three Rio Conventions, and actively supporting the renewed effort to harmonize gender mainstreaming efforts across the Conventions. For example, in preparation for and during the 21st Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21), the GEF Secretariat was actively engaged in a number of key discussions and events.
- i. **Participation in the Expert Group Meeting (EGM)** organized by UN Women, UNFCCC and UNDESA, to discuss the current status of gender-related mandates, and identify good practices and practical approaches in the implementation of gender-related mandates and decisions in UNFCCC processes and mechanisms. The EGM resulted in recommendations on gender-responsive climate policy and actions which were , that were presented at a side event at COP 21;
 - ii. **Highlighting gender at COP 21:** During the COP 21 Gender Day, the GEF participated in a high-level panel at the UN Women’s event on Women and Sustainable Energy. The GEF also participated in the organization of the Rio Conventions Pavilion Gender Day, and facilitated an event on ‘Exploring Synergies in the Rio Conventions to Support the Achievement of the SDGs’³
 - iii. **Collaboration on guidelines and action plans:** The GEF Secretariat has provided comments to the UNDP’s toolkit for integration of gender into National Communications (NCs); and to the Convention of Biological Diversity’s guidelines for mainstreaming gender.

Project Cycle

7. The GEF’s project templates, including the Project Implementation Form (PIF); Program Framework Document (PFD), and the Request for CEO Endorsement, are recognized as some of the key tools to ensure gender responsive project design and implementation of GEF projects.

- (a) **Updated project templates:** The GEF Secretariat, in consultation with the GEF Agencies, has updated the project templates for the PIF and the Request for CEO Endorsement. These templates now require Agencies to clearly state gender considerations and appropriate approaches. The GEF Secretariat’s program staff are working closely with the GEF Agencies and partners to ensure that gender equality and women’s empowerment issues are adequately considered in all GEF projects.

³ For more information please see: <http://www.iisd.ca/climate/cop21/cbd-rcp/9dec.html>

- (b) **Development of GEF Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines:** In order to facilitate the comprehensive and coherent integration of gender across the GEF project cycle, the GEF Secretariat, in close collaboration with the GEF Gender Partnership, is developing Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines. A first draft of these guidelines were discussed at the GGP meeting in May, 2016, and the process of completing the guidelines over the following two or three months will be supported by a sub working group of the GEF Gender Partnership. The aim of these guidelines is to offer GEF Agencies, GEF Secretariat staff and partners a practical framework and tools to systematically include and address gender aspects across the GEF project cycle. As part of the development of the guidelines, the GEF Secretariat, in collaboration with GEF Agencies, is undertaking a review of approaches and experiences across GEF Agencies with regards to applying gender markers.

Programming and Policy

8. The GEAP commits the GEF to strengthen gender considerations in all programs and projects. As part of the objective of the Workstream on Gender and Social Issues, the core team is working closely and providing day-to day technical advice to GEF Secretariat staff to strengthen the gender equality and women empowerment aspects in programming and policy processes and procedures. Moreover, the team is working closely on the Integrated Approach Pilots (IAPs) and key Programmatic Approaches (PAs) with the staff of the GEF Secretariat, GEF Agencies, and partners to ensure that gender dimensions are appropriately reflected in the design and implementation of projects. The aim is for each IAP and key PA to have a consolidated plan and relevant set of metrics for monitoring gender-specific outcomes.

9. The GEF Policy on Gender Mainstreaming states that the policy should be reviewed and the GEAP proposes to complete this review before FY2018. The GEF Secretariat is reviewing the need and opportune timeline for revising the GEF Gender Policy.

Results Based Management (RBM)

10. The GEAP recognizes the importance of a gender responsive RBM framework as set out in the RBM Action Plan. As agreed in the GEAP, work is ongoing to strengthen the monitoring and reporting of core gender indicators as part of the GEF-6 Results Framework. This work is now being advanced in conjunction with the ongoing efforts to improve the overall GEF RBM approach and system. It is also envisaged that the application of a gender marker system will support planning, monitoring and reporting on GEF gender equality and women's empowerment results. Some of the initial results are reported in the Corporate Scorecard to be presented at the June 2016 GEF Council.

Knowledge Management and Communication

11. The GEF shared experiences and lessons related to gender mainstreaming in GEF projects at several prominent international conferences, and events. These include

participation at the High Level Session on Gender and Climate Change at COP 21 in Paris 2015, and the GEF Secretariat staff's participation and sharing information at expert group and webinar meetings related to gender and environment. On the occasion of International Women's Day, the GEF Secretariat hosted a panel discussion to celebrate women's contribution to the environment, featuring discussants from prominent development and environmental organizations. These events and other work including blogs have been increasingly promoted through GEF's website and social media effort.

12. The GEF Secretariat has also revamped and updated its gender webpage. Secretariat staff are working on a more interactive interface to better leverage the GEF Agencies work on gender relevant to their GEF portfolio. In addition, the Secretariat is utilizing social media opportunities for communication on gender and the environment.

ANNEX: IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF THE GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

Key Elements	Actions (Outputs)	Status	F Y 1 5	F Y 1 6	F Y 1 7	F Y 1 8
Project Cycle	Develop a Guideline Paper on Mainstreaming Gender in GEF Project Cycle (particularly in relation to the implementation and monitoring of the actions identified under the gender core indicators (e.g. gender analysis, gender responsive project framework, etc.) ⁴ .	Ongoing review and compilation of related policies and practices of GEF Agencies, to inform preparation of the draft Guideline Paper; work carried out by Secretariat staff in consultation with GEF Gender Partnership.				
	Review and update GEF project templates and guidelines (including project documents, monitoring and evaluation reports) in order to incorporate or clarify specific sections on gender mainstreaming	Updating has been completed of Project Templates for the PIF, PFD, and CEO Endorsement Request, with incorporation of specific sections on gender.				
Program/Policy	Incorporate and strengthen gender elements in key GEF programs and projects, including the Integrated Approach Pilots (IAPs) and the GEF Small Grants Program (SGP)	The IAPs and SGP have incorporated strategy and approach on gender issues. The plans and approach will be further specified under the child projects of each IAP.				
	Support gender responsive projects, based on country demand and in line with GEF-6 strategies.	Gender responsive project designs have been considered for the PIFs in the June 2015 Work Program.				
	Mainstream gender in key strategic GEF Council Documents, including relevant policies and guidelines, and review and, as necessary, update the GEF Policy on Gender Mainstreaming.	A review of the GEF Policy on Gender Mainstreaming will be considered together with the Safeguards Policy after their evaluation.				
Knowledge Management	GEF Knowledge Management Strategy/Action Plan and Gender Equality Action Plan are cross-referenced to effectively generate knowledge on gender and global environment	This work will be implemented in FY16. Consultation between the Gender and KM teams are ongoing with the aim of incorporating gender elements in the KM Action Plan.				

⁴ For the development of the guideline paper, actions could include mapping of existing standards and practices of the GEF Agencies; and identifying existing guidance and tools for gender marker/screening, gender analysis, gender-responsive project framework, and others that can be used by GEF projects.)

	Develop an interactive gender equality webpage on the GEF website, with links to relevant GEF Agencies and partner sites to facilitate the exchange of good practices, approaches, and tools (including online training tools and webinars)	This work will be undertaken in FY16 and onwards as planned, once the focus of KM approaches and products are clarified.				
	Develop analytical products on thematic issues (e.g. gender and protected areas management, gender and renewable energy), aligned with the gender learning questions to be identified under each focal area and their results framework. .	This work will be undertaken in FY16 and onwards as planned.				
Results-based Management (RBM)	Report on the annual progress in implementing the GEAP, based on agreed RBM strategy.	The Annual Monitoring Review (AMR) FY15 has incorporated gender analysis of the project portfolio. In addition, this Council information paper serves as an annual progress report on the implementation of the GEAP.				
	Monitor and report on the GEF-6 core gender indicators at the corporate level	Discussion is ongoing to incorporate and track the core gender indicators together with the other focal area indicators as part of the GEF-6 results framework. Monitoring and reporting on the core gender indicators will start in FY 16 as planned.				
	Review and identify gender-responsive focal area indicators, to be cross-referenced in the RBM strategy.	The review of progress in FY16 is ongoing				
	Develop a guidance note and list of gender-responsive indicators that are relevant for GEF projects under different focal areas.	This work will be conducted in FY16 as planned.				
	Evaluate gender equality results of GEF projects (e.g. terminal evaluation, thematic and country evaluation)	The IEO in the SEAR June 2015 reports on two evaluations that include gender dimensions: The joint GEF-UNDP Evaluation of the GEF SGP and the LDCF/SCC Annual Evaluation Report 2014. The terminal evaluation guidelines are currently being reviewed, and will include gender dimensions.				
	Develop detailed implementation work plan and budget for implementing the	Work plan and budget have been drafted, and will be				

	Gender Equality Action Plan, and update it as needed	discussed with the Gender Inter-Agency Working Group before finalization.				
Capacity Development	Enhance staff capacity and expertise at the GEF Secretariat by creating a gender anchor with gender-specific expertise to oversee and coordinate implementation the GEAP; and by having gender focal points from relevant teams within the GEF Secretariat.	Gender expert has been hired through a thorough recruitment process. Gender and Social Issues work stream has been established under the GEF Policy, Partnership, and Operation Unit.				
	Establish and clarify accountability structure and appropriate incentive system on gender equality among GEF Secretariat management and staff	Internal gender capacity assessment is ongoing, and initial structure has been developed.				
	Establish an Inter-Agency Working Group on Gender (note: it will be functional throughout FY15-18)	Draft TOR of the Inter-Agency Working Group has been prepared, and will be finalized with the GEF Agencies and partners to formally establish the IAWG.				
	Conduct capacity-need assessment and provide training opportunities for GEF Secretariat staff on issues related to gender equality	This work is planned for FY16 and onwards; training will be based on an internal capacity assessment of the GEF Secretariat.				
	Provide implementation support and guidance on the GEF Policy on Gender Mainstreaming to operational focal points and partners	More than 380 GEF operational focal points, Conventions' focal points, and CSO representatives have received hands-on guidance during Gender Mainstreaming sessions given by the Extended Constituency Workshops (ECWs) and National Dialogue Initiatives (NDIs).				