

GLOBAL
ENVIRONMENT
FACILITY

DRAFT OUTLINE OF
POLICY PAPER ON PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN
GEF-FINANCED PROJECTS

GEF Council Meeting
Washington, D.C.
October 25 - 27, 1995

GEF/C.6/Inf.5
October 6, 1995

NOTE:

1. This Information Document, *Draft Outline of Policy Paper on Public Involvement in GEF-financed Projects*, GEF/C.6/Inf.5, is submitted to the Council for comments. Council Members are invited to submit written comments on the documents to the GEF Secretariat by December 30, 1995.
2. At one of the lunch breaks during the Council meeting, the Secretariat will host a workshop aimed at facilitating an informal discussion of this document among interested Council Members, Alternates, Advisors, Representatives, and other observers.
3. Comments made during the discussion, as well as written comments, will be taken into account in preparing a revised document for Council consideration, with a view to approval, at its meeting in April/May 1996

DRAFT POLICY PAPER OUTLINE:

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN GEF-FINANCED PROJECTS

Preface

1. During its February 22-24, 1995 meeting, the GEF Council requested the Secretariat to prepare "a document proposing GEF policies for information disclosure and public participation" (*Joint Summary of Chairs*, p. 3). This *Outline* is one of a series of steps in preparing this policy document.¹ It focuses upon the general objectives of GEF with respect to public involvement in the planning, implementation and evaluation of GEF-financed projects.

Audience: GEF Council and Implementing Agencies;² recipient country governments; NGOs; and others.

Paper's Objective: To outline a possible policy in regard to public involvement in GEF-financed projects.

I. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

2. The need for public involvement³ – information dissemination, consultation and participation – is explicit in the GEF *Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility or Instrument* (see Background Paper: *Relevant Excerpts on Public Involvement Contained in GEF Council Decisions, the GEF Instrument, Convention on Biological Diversity, U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change; GEF Implementing Agencies, the U.N.'s Agenda 21 and Findings of the Independent Evaluation of the GEF's Pilot Phase*). As stated in the basic provisions of the *Instrument*, all GEF-financed projects shall "provide for full disclosure of non-confidential information, and consultation with, and participation as appropriate of, major groups and local communities throughout the project cycle" (para 5, p. 6).

3. In accordance with paragraph 21(c) of the *Instrument*, the Secretariat is to "in consultation with the Implementing Agencies, ensure the implementation of the operational policies adopted by the Council through the preparation of common guidelines on the project cycle. Such guidelines shall address project identification and development, including the proper and adequate review of project and work program proposals, consultation with and participation of local communities and other interested parties ..." (p. 12). The Implementing Agencies also

¹ The *Policy Paper on Public Involvement in GEF-Financed Projects* will be presented to the GEF Council at the April, 1996 meeting.

² The Implementing Agencies of the GEF are the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Bank (Bank). The term "Project Executing Agency" is used in this Outline to refer to the agency (or agencies) which are directly responsible for project preparation, design, implementation and evaluation. These may be recipient governments, U.N. specialized agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and/or other bodies.

³ The term public involvement is used in environmental assessment, environmental impact assessment, and social impact assessment (ref: Interorganizational Committee on Guidelines and Principles, *Guidelines and Principles for Social Impact Assessment*, Vol. 12, 1994).

have their own policies, guidelines and procedures on public involvement which are consistent with these basic provisions.

4. The Council, Secretariat and Implementing Agencies recognize that effective public involvement is critical to the success of GEF-financed projects. Public involvement improves performance and impact of GEF-financed projects by enhancing recipient country ownership of, and accountability for, project outcomes; by making use of the skills, experiences and local knowledge of affected groups of people in project design, implementation and evaluation; and by promoting transparency in decision making.

II. DEFINITIONS

5. **Public involvement** consists of three related, and often overlapping, processes: information dissemination, consultation, and stakeholder participation.

6. **Stakeholders** are the individuals, groups or institutions which have an interest or “stake” in the outcome of a GEF-financed project or are potentially affected by it.⁴ Stakeholders include the recipient country government; the Project Executing Agency or Agencies; project beneficiaries and other groups of people who may be affected by project activities; local, national and regional organizations which may be contracted to perform project activities or consulted during various stages of the project; and other groups such as the private sector and local livelihood associations and academic institutions which may have an interest in the outcomes of the project.

7. **Information dissemination** refers to the availability and distribution of timely and relevant information on GEF-financed projects, including notification, disclosure, and public access.⁵ Appropriate information dissemination, which makes use of existing communications networks (including GEF focal points, NGO networks, media), is a precondition for effective consultation and stakeholder participation.

8. **Consultation** involves information exchanges among the government, the Implementing Agency, the Project Executing Agency or Agencies, and other local, national and regional stakeholder groups. Although decision making authority rests with the government and the Project Executing Agency or Agencies, effective consultation helps project managers to make informed choices about project activities. More important, it enables communities and local groups affected by GEF-financed projects to contribute effectively to project design, implementation and evaluation.

9. **Stakeholder participation** is a process whereby the government, the Implementing Agency, the Project Executing Agency or Agencies, project beneficiaries, local groups and

⁴ Typically, stakeholders in GEF-financed projects include individuals and groups from various levels, including local, national and regional/international. They may include government agencies, local governments, parastatal organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academic institutions, private firms, trading associations, livelihood cooperatives and others from the private sector, community-based organizations or people’s associations and other groups in the civil society.

⁵ Notification includes the announcement and availability of GEF-related information. Disclosure refers to the availability of non-confidential information, often through a public information center, library or office. Such information include GEF-financed project proposals and documents, GEF reports and technical papers. Access covers the ways in which information is disseminated to a broad range of groups through electronic networks, popular media, vernacular translations and others.