



GEF/C.67/06  
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67<sup>th</sup> GEF Council Meeting  
June 17 – 20, 2024  
Washington D.C., USA

Agenda Item 06

**GAP ANALYSIS OF GEF POLICIES AND KEY SOCIAL INCLUSION ISSUES**  
**TIMETABLE FOR POLICY ACTIONS**

**Recommended Council Decision:**

The Council, having considered document GEF/C.67/06, *Gap Analysis of GEF Policies and Key Social Inclusion Issues – Timetable for Policy Actions*, takes note of the timetable presented and requests the Secretariat to proceed in accordance with the timetable and approach presented.

## I. Introduction

1. At the 66<sup>th</sup> GEF Council Meeting, the GEF Secretariat presented the Council document [Gap Analysis of GEF Policies and Key Social Inclusion Issues](#)<sup>1</sup> (herein to be referred to as the Gap Analysis) responding to GEF-8 participants' request, subsequently endorsed by the Council.

2. The Gap Analysis was a response to the request set forth in GEF-8 Revised Policy Recommendations related to social inclusion<sup>2</sup> for the "Secretariat to undertake a gap analysis of relevant GEF Policies and Guidelines to identify areas that GEF may need to strengthen its approach and guidance, to include (a) attention to people marginalized by virtue of their sexual orientation or gender identity and provisions to protecting the rights of LGBTQ+ persons; (b) attention to youth as effective change-makers; and (c) disability inclusion."<sup>3</sup>

3. The GEF Council, in Decision 12/2024 Gap Analysis of GEF Policies and Key Social Inclusion Issues, requested the Secretariat *to present to the 67th Council, for decision, a timetable outlining when the policies concerning highlighted areas will be modified. The proposed modifications will take into account efforts to enhance coordination and harmonization across the climate and environmental funds.*

4. This paper responds to that request.

## II. Summary of the Gap Analysis and Recommended Actions

5. The Gap Analysis underscored that GEF policies include numerous provisions that promote social inclusion and consideration of a range of social risks and impacts. The Gap Analysis' findings reconfirmed the GEF IEO Evaluation "GEF Institutional Policies and Engagement"<sup>4</sup> that broadly found the GEF policies to be contemporary in formulation and aligned with relevant inclusion-oriented global strategies, notably the SDGs and Agenda 2030 as well as policies of peer institutions.

6. On sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI), GEF policies include broad coverage of SOGI primarily through a focus on disadvantaged groups or groups or individuals in vulnerable situations. On persons with disabilities, the Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) incorporates a broad "disability inclusion" that establishes key principles for inclusion of persons with disabilities (nondiscrimination and equality; differentiated risk assessment and mitigation, and equal participation in opportunities and benefits). Persons with disabilities are also included in requirements regarding potential risks and impacts on Disadvantaged or Vulnerable Groups/Individuals. Nondiscrimination of persons with disabilities is generally well covered in the GEF policies.

7. On child protection, the broad formulation of GEF policies encompasses key child protection issues such as the prohibition on child labor, addressing sexual exploitation and abuse and gender-based violence (SEA/GBV), and differentiated risks and adverse impacts. The GEF's approach is generally consistent with those of most Agencies and peer organizations that include children in requirements focused on risks to vulnerable or marginalized groups as well as those addressing risks of SEA or GBV.

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<sup>1</sup> GEF, [Gap Analysis of GEF Policies and Key Social Inclusion Issues \(GEF/C.66/10\)](#), January 4, 2024.

<sup>2</sup> GEF, Revised Policy Recommendations (GEF/R.08/32, 2022), p. 6 and Annex 1 Timeline for Implementation.

<sup>3</sup> GEF, [Gap Analysis of GEF Policies and Key Social Inclusion Issues \(GEF/C.66/10\)](#), January 4, 2024.

<sup>4</sup> GEF, Evaluation of Institutional Policies and Engagement of the GEF (GEF/E/C.60/06), May 25, 2021.

8. On youth as effective change-makers, the GEF has long emphasized the importance of ensuring engagement with civil society in its operations and through its projects and programs. GEF has strengthened this engagement, in particular with women, youth and indigenous peoples and local communities. At the onset of GEF-8, the Secretariat has initiated several efforts to expand engagement with youth groups and constituencies of the MEA Conventions, among others. The GEF Assembly also provided additional opportunities to seek proposals and recommendations on strengthening the GEF partnership's engagement and support.

9. In consideration of the conclusions presented above, the Gap Analysis identified **potential areas for further consideration** in the context of the ongoing GEF reform and streamlining effort, including to: i) facilitate additional knowledge sharing and consultations with Agencies and potentially peer funds or organizations that have introduced more explicit nondiscrimination measures and identify opportunities to use non-discrimination consistently across the three GEF Policies to promote inclusion of persons with diverse sexual orientation and gender identities, as well as strengthen attention to the rights of persons with disabilities; ; ii) explore options to better communicate, visualize and reflect GEF Policy requirements on issues related to persons with disabilities and child protection; and iii) continue work and activities to expand engagement with youth groups and constituencies of the MEAs/Conventions that the GEF serves.

### **III. Relevant context and developments within which the review of policies and related actions are taking place**

10. The requested review of the highlighted areas to identify related actions, including modifications in policies, is taking place in the context of a number of significant developments and ongoing processes within the GEF Partnership.

11. For one, GEF's broader social inclusion agenda is being operationalized through, among others, a more inclusive Country Engagement Strategy<sup>5</sup>, broadening CSO engagements to include people with disabilities, women and youth. Similarly, the revised Small Grants Programme (SGP 2.0)<sup>6</sup> has more substantive focus on the inclusion of people with disabilities and youth as project grantees. GEF's work with young people and youth networks is being expanded through the full roll-out of the Gustavo Fonseca Fund and ensuring youth representation and voice in GEF's ECWs and other meetings.

12. On building knowledge and evidence, facilitating knowledge exchange on, and raising visibility for gender-related issues, disability inclusion and youth engagement, several platforms and products such as the new GEF Strategy for Knowledge Management and Learning, the annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the GEF Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards and the Progress Report on Gender Equality<sup>7</sup> offer opportunities for gathering, curating, and sharing of lessons learned and best practices from GEF investments. GEF Communications raise visibility for these highlighted areas by featuring key voices and best practices representing the constituencies and issues highlighted in the Gap Analysis.

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<sup>5</sup> GEF, [Country Engagement Strategy Implementation Arrangements for GEF-8](#) (GEF/C.63/05), October 31, 2022.

<sup>6</sup> GEF, [GEF Small Grants Programme 2.0 Implementation Arrangements for GEF-8](#) (GEF/C.63/06/Rev.01), November 25, 2022.

<sup>7</sup> GEF Strategy for Knowledge Management and Learning (GEF/C.65/03/Rev.01), October 10, 2023; Progress Report on the Implementation of the GEF Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards (GEF/C.66/Inf.09), December 14, 2023; Progress Report on Advancing Gender Equality (GEF/C.66/Inf.07), January 9, 2024

13. GEF's expanding role in solidifying partnerships with specific groups of experts and champions, such as GEF Gender Partnership, and similar platforms from GEF thematic or focal areas gather regularly, with work plans that ensures sharing of data, evidence and best practices in the highlighted areas of the Gap Analysis. The establishment of the Partnership Division within the GEF Secretariat as part of GEF-8 restructuring will allow for strategic visioning and more dedicated attention and capacity to advance social inclusion issues and be more strategic in the GEF Secretariat's engagements with the groups working on or are related to the highlighted areas.

14. Amidst these enabling conditions and environment, the GEF Partnership is at the same time in the process of reviewing its project cycle, and related policies, procedures and requirements with the aim of streamlining and further reducing the time required from project concept to achievement of results. GEF is also reviewing its monitoring and reporting framework to better capture socio-economic benefits of GEF investments. Similarly, the GEF Gender Partnership and some executing partners are discussing the importance of measuring gender-specific and -sensitive results that advance gender equality in GEF projects and programs.

15. In the context of the Joint Declaration of the four climate funds presented at the 28<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP 28)<sup>8</sup>, and the work on harmonization across the four funds, the gender specialists and leads on social inclusion in the four funds – AF, CIF, GEF and GCF are working together through developing knowledge products, exchanging of best practices, evidence, indicators, data, and holding consultations and joint events, on all the highlighted areas, with a view towards greater harmonization of policies, guidelines, templates, approaches or processes.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

16. Going forward, the Secretariat will take account of the recommendation by the GEF IEO to have inclusion as an overarching narrative for the three GEF policies on Gender Equality, Stakeholder Engagement and Environmental and Social Safeguards.<sup>9</sup> The Secretariat, in its Management Response<sup>10</sup>, recognized the benefits of providing an overarching framework for inclusion and noted the importance of consolidation and streamlining of GEF policies - with a view to practical implementation at the project level.

17. The overarching narrative will be contained in a Guidance Note prepared by the GEF Secretariat and will have the following elements: definition of inclusion in the GEF context; use of non-discrimination consistently across the three GEF Policies; clarification of definitions in current GEF Policies (gender equality, ESS, stakeholder engagement) to better capture sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI); and clarification on the use of the term Vulnerable Groups/Individuals, in particular, in the context of persons with disabilities, women, youth and children.

18. The Secretariat will provide opportunities for additional knowledge-sharing and consultations with Agencies and potentially peer funds or organizations, raise visibility for these highlighted areas through GEF Communications efforts, and expand engagement with youth groups and constituencies of the MEAs/Conventions that the GEF serves.

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<sup>8</sup> Joint Declaration of the heads of the Adaptation Fund, the Climate Investment Funds, The Global Environmental Facility and the Green Climate Fund. December 3, 2023: <https://www.thegef.org/newsroom/news/enhancing-access-and-increasing-impact-role-multilateral-climate-funds>

<sup>9</sup> GEF, Evaluation of Institutional Policies and Engagement of the GEF (GEF/E/C.60/06), May 25, 2021.

<sup>10</sup> GEF, Management Response to: Evaluation of Institutional Policies and Engagement of the GEF (GEF/E/C.60/09), June 6, 2021.

19. The proposed Action Plan and Timetable is presented in Annex 1, reflecting the above context and developments, and also incorporating the GEF-9 replenishment negotiations where relevant changes to the GEF's policies will be considered.

## Annex 1: Action Plan and Timetable

<b>Preparatory work related to SOGI, disability inclusion, child protection</b>	
September 2024-December 2024	<p>Review of current developments on the highlighted areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gender Action Plans, or most recent decisions adopted on the highlighted areas by the Conventions that the GEF serves</li> <li>- Updates within the United Nations system</li> <li>- MDB reforms</li> <li>- related developments in other fora that could inform the way forward for the GEF on the highlighted areas</li> </ul>
Starting with the formal launch of the replenishment in December 2024	<p>Meetings and consultations on SOGI, disability inclusion and child protection policies and related programming guidelines, requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- GCF, AF, CIF</li> <li>- GEF Agencies</li> <li>- UN Women, OHCHR, rights-related international organizations</li> <li>- Civil society stakeholders – including those representing women/diverse genders, youth, children, people with disabilities</li> </ul> <p>(Online and hybrid; can be combined with ECWs, COPs or organized as dedicated sessions)</p>
Before UNFCCC COP 29	Continue to coordinate with the four multilateral climate funds (AF, CIF, GEF, GCF) to enhance synergies and harmonization in policy approaches
December 2024	GEF-IEO Evaluation on <i>Assessing Inclusion of Marginalized Groups in GEF-Supported Projects with special attention to Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations</i> <sup>11</sup>
July 2024 – onwards	Enhanced communications efforts to communicate, visualize and reflect GEF Policy requirements and best practices on issues related to SOGI, persons with disabilities and child protection
2026, end of GEF-8	To initiate GEF Agencies’ self-assessment and external review against GEF’s 4 minimum fiduciary standards and policies, including Gender Equality, Stakeholder Engagement and Environmental and Social Safeguards
<b>Preparatory work on strengthening youth engagement</b>	
August 2023	Support for youth participation at the 7 <sup>th</sup> GEF Assembly
January 2024 - present	Roll-out of the Gustavo Fonseca Fund
January 2022 - present	Building capacities of MEA youth networks, other young people through participation and engagements in key meetings – ECWs, UN Conferences, COPs of the MEAs

<sup>11</sup> The Evaluation will look at “how, and to what extent GEF-supported projects are inclusive of historically marginalized groups—particularly women, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), and other groups such as youth and persons with disabilities—and the effects of inclusion (or lack thereof).” “The evaluation will consider the trends for inclusion of specific marginalized groups in GEF projects, and then compare the approaches and relative prevalence in FCS contexts vis-à-vis non-FCS contexts. It also considers the effects of inclusion on project outcomes as well as socio economic co-benefits (from the IEO Approach Paper).

December 2023	Training for young people on negotiations with the Fletcher School of Diplomacy
June 2022-present	Engagement of young people, youth representatives in ECWs, thematic workshops
May 2023 -	Prioritization of youth in SGP 2.0
May 2024	Launch SGP CSO Initiatives with special focus on supporting youth and youth led organizations
June 2023 - present	Regular communications pieces on Youth Voices (GEF Website)
<b>Development of GEF's Youth Strategy</b>	
July 2024 – September 2024	Desk review on Youth Engagement strategies, policies or approaches of GEF Implementing Agencies, other climate funds, MEAs  Interviews to supplement information on youth engagement (in the context of the UN, GEF Implementing Agencies, MEA processes, climate funds)
October 2024	Consultations with Global Youth Biodiversity Network, other young people at CBD COP 16
November 2024	Consultations with the YOUNGO (Youth Constituency at the UNFCCC), other young people at UNFCCC COP 29
October 2024 – January 2025	Survey, focused group discussions with Youth Network representatives following / focusing on Land, Chemicals and Wastes, International Waters
November 2024 – February 2025	Drafting of GEF's Youth Strategy
February – March 2025	Peer review, internal review
End of March 2025	Preparation of a draft GEF Youth Strategy
<b>Modification to policies on the highlighted areas</b>	
March 2025	An overarching narrative <sup>12</sup> on inclusion for the three GEF policies on Gender Equality, Stakeholder Engagement and Environmental and Social Safeguards, developed. The narrative will have the following elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- definition of inclusion in the GEF context</li> <li>- use of non-discrimination consistently across the three GEF Policies</li> <li>- clarification of definitions in current GEF Policies (gender equality, ESS, stakeholder engagement) to better capture sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI)</li> <li>- clarification on the use of the term Vulnerable Groups/Individuals, in particular, in the context of persons with disabilities, women, youth and children</li> </ul>

<sup>12</sup> To be contained in a Guidance Note prepared by the GEF Secretariat.



