



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE COUNCIL'S DISCUSSIONS

67TH GEF COUNCIL MEETING

JUNE 17-20, 2024

The following is a brief record prepared by the GEF Secretariat of comments, understandings, and clarifications made by Council Members. These points are supplemental to the Joint Summary of the Chair, which records the decisions agreed by the Council. The full video of the Council Meeting can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/user/GEFSecretariat>

Agenda Item 01. Opening of the meeting

1. The CEO and Chairperson of the GEF, Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, and Mr. Dawda Badgie, Elected Chairperson, opened the 67th GEF Council meeting.

2. For video recording see:

<https://youtu.be/2QoogVpyatc?t=1606>

Agenda Item 02. Adoption of the Agenda

3. One Council Member requested to address two topics under Other Business: a regional workshop in Latin America and geographic restrictions to Agencies.
4. The Secretariat stated that the Ethics Committee Membership, as well as a reminder of the dates for the 68th, 69th and 70th Council Meetings would be addressed under Other Business.
5. The Agenda was adopted.
6. For details please see: <https://youtu.be/2QoogVpyatc?t=1606> Minute 47:29.

Agenda Item 03. Work Program for GEF Trust Fund

7. The Secretariat presented the work program requesting a total of \$454.3 million from the GEF trust fund and \$41.3 million in associated Agency fees for a total Work Program of \$495.6 million. It contains an indicative \$5.84 billion in co-financing, with means that each dollar provided by the

GEF is matched by \$12.9 in co-financing provided by other sources. This brings GEF-8 programming to almost 59% at the 50% timeline of the 8th cycle.

8. A Council member, supported by several other Council members, stressed that concentration of GEF funding approvals among a small number of Agencies remains a serious concern and recalled the Policy Recommendation decision for GEF-8 to observe a notional target of 10% for IFIs and a cap of 30% for any one Agency. Council members recognized the limited policy tools available to reduce this concentration and called on the Secretariat to elaborate options that could be deployed, for Council consideration. The Secretariat confirmed that such options will be included in the forthcoming paper on the Strength of the Partnership, to be submitted to the December 2024 Council meeting, in accordance with Decision 16/2023.
9. Several Council Members expressed strong approval on the substantial co-financing ratio achieved in this Work Program, highlighting it as a significant accomplishment and a testament to the program's collaborative financial strategy.
10. Council Members actively encouraged an increased participation of Multilateral Development Banks and International Financial Institutions in GEF projects and called for countries to augment projects in the Chemicals and Waste focal area.
11. Council Members further highlighted the need to attract more participation from the private sector as well a higher private sector co-financing. The Secretariat informed that an analysis paper will be presented in the December 2024 Council meeting on the role and evolution of the private sector on projects and programs in the different cycles.
12. For details please see: <https://youtu.be/2QooqVpyatc?t=1606>
Minute 48:53 (presentation) | 1:04:04 (Council comments)

Agenda Item 04. *GEF Business Plan and Corporate Budget for FY25*

13. The Secretariat introduced the document GEF Business Plan and Corporate Budget for FY2025 that combines the projected administrative expenses for the GEF Secretariat, STAP and the Trustee. The FY25 budget reflects a strong focus on efficiency and savings. The CEO also updated on the cost recovery progress with the World Bank.
14. Several Council members welcomed the restructuring of the GEF Secretariat and commented on the progress and timing.
15. Council members presented a number of comments and questions that were answered by the Secretariat. On the issue of relations with the World Bank, some Council members backed and appreciated the progress on the efforts and spirit of compromise on the 11% upper limit on indirect charge, and supported the GEF Secretariat assuming certain administrative services, highlighting that the GEF is a unique institution thus applying a one size fits all on financial intermediary funds is not appropriate.

16. Some Council Members requested to GEF Secretariat to present the greening of the office plans at the 69th GEF Council.
17. Proposals were made by Council Members to strengthen the draft decision to better reflect the Council's stance on the World Bank collaboration. The amended draft decision was adopted.

For details please see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2QooqVpyatc&t=4865s>

Minute 3:25:45 (presentation) | 3:36:01 (Council comments)

Agenda Item 05. *Streamlining the GEF Project Cycle: Report from the Working Group on the Streamlining Process*

18. On behalf of the Council Working Group on the Streamlining Process, the Secretariat introduced the document that serves as an interim report, summarizing the outcome of the work to date and outlining next steps on the Working Group.
19. The Secretariat reminded that the Working Group was established by the Council through Decision 3/2024 requesting to elaborate additional measures for streamlining the GEF project cycle, considering ongoing efforts to enhance coordination and harmonization across the climate and environment funds, in consultation with GEF Agencies, GEF Focal Points and others as appropriate.
20. Council Members expressed support for the goals of the Working Group, appreciation for the analysis by the Secretariat and looked forward to the final report that will be presented at the 68th Council meeting.
21. A number of Council Members cautioned about potential risks associated, emphasizing that while a streamlined project cycle is desirable, it cannot come at the expense of quality, consultations or stakeholder participation.
22. Several Council Members mentioned that coordination between climate funds will help with streamlining and improve efficiencies. Some encouraged wide consultations regarding potential measures, including with countries as well as implementing and executing agencies, calling up on them to advise on areas where they can improve efficiency.

For details please see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2QooqVpyatc&t=4865s>

Minute 6:48:42 (presentation) | 6:56:31 (Council comments)

Agenda Item 06. *Gap Analysis of GEF Policies and Key Social Inclusion Issues - Timetable for Policy Actions*

23. The Secretariat recalled that this document responds to the Decision 12/2024 where the GEF Council requested the Secretariat to present a timetable for any required modifications to policies concerning social inclusion. Thus, the Secretariat will prepare an overarching narrative for the three GEF policies on Gender Equality, Stakeholder Engagement and Environmental and Social

Safeguards, in the form of a Guidance Note, aiming towards a practical implementation at the project level. The proposed modifications will consider efforts to enhance coordination and harmonization across the climate and environmental funds.

24. Council Members highlighted that social inclusion is key to delivering global environment benefits and were supportive on the timetable and efforts to strengthen inclusion.

For details please see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2QooqVpyatc&t=4865s>

Minute 8:03:18 (presentation) | 6:06:11 (Council comments)

Agenda Item 07. *Co-financing in the GEF and Management Response*

25. The IEO introduced the evaluation report stating that, this assessment was requested by the GEF Council. The IEO assessed the effectiveness of co-financing in achieving its intended benefits, including scaling up activities, achieving results, ensuring the sustainability of outcomes, and strengthening partnerships.
26. The Secretariat presented the management response, expressing appreciation for the report and its findings, conclusions, and recommendations. They acknowledged these as a valuable foundation for ongoing enhancements in the areas of incentivizing, monitoring, and reporting on co-financing, emphasizing that co-financing plays a crucial role for the GEF.
27. Several Council Members called for enhancing private capital mobilization and stressed the need for continued cooperation with Agencies to clarify co-financing definitions and criteria. At the same time, Council Members appreciated the GEF's flexible approach to co-financing, recognizing the varying capabilities across SIDS, LDCs, and different regions.

For video recording please see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DePxtZSuYLY&t=13249s>

12:16 (presentation) | 30:02 (Council comments)

Agenda Item 08. *Evaluation of the Global Wildlife Program and Management Response*

28. The IEO presented the evaluation which reviewed the program's performance, evolution, programmatic additionality, approaches, processes, monitoring, evaluation, and knowledge management. The evaluation placed particular emphasis on GWP's relevance in addressing illegal wildlife trade in ongoing and recently completed GEF-6 and GEF-7 projects. The evaluation also considered cross-cutting issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic, risks, and stakeholder engagement.
29. The Secretariat welcomed the report and findings in the management response and was pleased that the evaluation highlighted the progress made in supporting coordination knowledge exchange, and learning among national child projects, stakeholders, and partners. The Secretariat also valued that the evaluation stresses adaptive management, resilience, and responsiveness of the global coordination and national child projects to the COVID-19 pandemic.

30. The Council welcomed the report and supported its recommendations, with a comment on continuing fostering the collaboration with Indigenous Peoples.

For video recording please see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DePxtZSuYLY&t=13249s>

2:08:05 (presentation) | 2:25:19 (Council comments)

Agenda Item 09. *Assessing Portfolio-Level Risk at the GEF and management response*

31. The IEO introduced the document by stating the importance of ensuring an effective balance between risk and rewards in the pursuit of environmental impact. The IEO underscored this evaluation comes in the context of the GEF's Risk Appetite adopted in 2024 and aims to shed further light on the tradeoff between enhanced risk and environmental outcomes.
32. The Secretariat welcomed the IEO's efforts on assessing portfolio-level risk of the GEF financing, and introduced the Management Response providing context on the GEF's Risk Appetite document, prepared by a Working Group of GEF Secretariat, Council, and STAP members. The Secretariat stressed the importance of risk management in the GEF portfolio and outlined its commitments to the two recommendations, indicating these will be considered during the revision of the risk framework for GEF-9.
33. The Council welcomed the report and supported its recommendations. Comments included the need to take adequate risks to achieve transformation, innovation, and attract more funds, involving all stakeholders.
34. Council Members highlighted the importance of clarifying risk ownership within the GEF partnership. They noted that while fiduciary responsibility lies with Agencies, the GEF faces reputational risk. They emphasized that risk ownership should reside with the institution best positioned to manage it, ensuring good communication across the GEF partnership as problems arise.
35. Council Members also stressed the need to work with Agencies to implement the GEF's risk framework consistently, providing guidance and other support. A Council Member suggested sharing knowledge on risk management among Agencies, given their varying strengths in this area.
36. A comment was also made in the context of streamlining discussions about the need to explore how the level of risk in projects may help determine the extent of review required during project preparation.

For video recording please see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DePxtZSuYLY&t=13249s>

2:31:47 (presentation) | 2:51:10 (Council comments)

Agenda Item 10. *Eighth Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF (OPS8) Approach Paper*

37. The GEF IEO presented the Eight Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF with the theme: integration. The IEO explained that the OPS 8 aims to provide guidance for the GEF9

replenishment, as well as to identify potential areas of improvement and assess the GEF8 progress on programming directions.

38. The Council expressed its gratitude to the IEO for the effort on the approach paper. Some Council Members commented on the concentration of Agencies and diversification, as well as on indicators.
39. The IEO assured that the concentration will be examined and that the monitoring of results would be discussed in the upcoming December Council Meeting.
40. Some Council Members expressed interest on the approach of the integrated programs.

For video recording please see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DePxtZSuYLY&t=13249s>

1:29:27 (presentation) | 1:40:07 (Council comments)

Agenda Item 11. IEO 2025 Work Program and Budget

41. The IEO presented its budget for the coming fiscal year and the activities that is planning to carry out, including the preparation of the comprehensive evaluation of GEF8.
42. The Council welcomed the presentation, made some comments and approved the revised decision.

For video recording please see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DePxtZSuYLY&t=13249s>

3:11:47 (presentation) | 3:25:15 (Council comments)

Agenda Item 12. Report of the Chairperson of the STAP

For details please see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2QooqVpyatc&t=4865s>

Minute 5:09:01 (presentation) | 6:09:01 (Council comments)

Agenda Item 13. Relations with the Conventions and Other International Institutions

43. The Council heard from Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, Executive Secretary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in virtual format, Mr. Miguel de Serpa Soares, Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel in virtual format, to Mr. Rolph Payet, Executive Secretary for the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions present in the room, Ms. Monika Stankiewicz, Executive Secretary for the Minamata Convention on Mercury in virtual format, Mr. David Cooper, Acting Executive Secretary for the Convention on Biological Diversity present in the room, and Mr. Daniele Violetti, Senior Director of the Programs Coordination for the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), in video format on behalf of Mr. Simon Stiell, Executive Secretary for the UNFCCC.
44. Mr. Thiaw briefed the Council on the forthcoming CCD COP 16 in Riyadh in December 2024, highlighting opportunities for GEF collaboration, particularly in large-scale land and drought resilience investments.

45. Mr. de Serpa Soares spoke about the status of the Agreement under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) ratification, work of the Preparatory Commission to prepare for the entry into force of the BBNJ agreement, and about progress on the cooperation between Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS) and the GEF Secretariat.
46. Mr. Payet shared his perspectives on targets for phasing out PCBs by 2025 and 2028, on the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF) and opportunities for synergies, on intersessional work, and outlook on priorities for GEF-9.
47. Ms. Stankiewicz shared her views on the level of programming for the chemicals and waste focal area, highlighted synergies with the biodiversity focal area and Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) mandates and invited the Council to consider the outcomes of Minamata COP-5 in the GEF-9 replenishment.
48. Mr. Cooper reported about progress and expectations for the upcoming CBD COP 16, and the crucial role of the GEF in achieving the goals of the Global Biodiversity Framework. He also expressed appreciation for the rapid actions taken since COP15 to establish the GBFF and for initial donations. He called to continue this support through multilateral channels such as the GEF in contribution to the goals of the CBD and to ensure the success of the Global Biodiversity Framework.
49. Mr. Violetti informed the Council about the key outcomes of the Subsidiary Bodies (held right before the GEF Council), expectations for the “finance COP,” and his perspectives on the role of the multilateral climate funds and their collaboration.
50. The Council expressed appreciation for the presentations by Executive Secretaries and made supportive comments including the role of the GEF and its collaboration with other environmental funds. The Executive Secretaries and the GEF Secretariat further responded to Council questions.
51. Finally, the CEO introduced, and the Secretariat presented the Multilateral Climate Funds Action Plan on Complementarity and Coherence emphasizing that its implementation should prioritize streamlining access and increased impact, working closely with country focal points, and requested to be kept updated as concrete measures are operationalized. Council Members thanked for the collaboration of the GEF and the Multilateral Climate Funds for the work done so far and encouraged to continue the joint effort.
52. The report on Relations with Conventions and Other International Institutions was adopted without comment.

For video recording please see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DjNvl6mMK-M&t=3s>

2:31 (presentation) | 2:23:09 (Council comments)

Agenda Item 14. Guidelines for the Preparation of the Review of the Implementation of Article 7 of the Minamata Convention

53. The Secretariat presented the document outlining that the proposed enabling activity aims to support Parties to the Minamata Convention to review their implementation of Article 7 of the Convention including updating national actions plan to reduce the use of Mercury.

54. The Council approved the draft decision, recommending that sufficient support is provided to ensure countries can fulfill their requirements.

For video recording please see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DePxtZSuYLY&t=13249s>

3:40:56 (presentation) | 3:43:29 (Council comments)

Agenda Item 14. Report of the Selection and Review Committee

55. This Agenda item was discussed in Executive Session.

56. The SRC reappointed Carlos Manuel Rodriguez as GEF CEO for a second and final four-year term until September 2028.

57. The SRC addressed Performance Review and adjusted its calendars with the World Bank's performance system based on fiscal years.

58. The SRC updated its membership and aligned the calendar of performance objectives reviews with the World Bank's performance system.

Agenda Item 15. Other business

59. An Alternate Council Member presented their insights on eliminating geographical restrictions for GEF Agencies and suggested proposals to address this topic.

60. The Deputy Minister of a recipient country announced that his Country will host a regional GEF workshop.

61. The CEO reminded the dates of the 68th, 69th, and 70th Council Meetings.

62. The Secretariat presented the updated Ethics Committee membership.

For video recording please see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DePxtZSuYLY&t=13249s>

3:53:36 (presentation)