



## **Extended Constituency Workshop**

### **Report of the Civil Society Organizations to the GEF**

Prepared by: CENN – Regional Focal Point (RFP) for  
Easter Europe and Central Asia (EECA)

- Extended Constituency Meeting: GEF ECW, Yerevan, Armenia
- Location: Yerevan, Armenia
- Dates: 25 – 27 September, 2012
- Please attach a list of civil society participants, with emails and organization:  
List of participants is attached.



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## **1. Main expectations and objectives of the CSOs participation in the meeting**

*CSOs attended the meeting with the following expectations:*

- To understand more about the GEF;
- To gain an understanding of upcoming events in the GEF;
- Networking opportunities;
- To find out about funding opportunities for NGOs;
- To follow and understand the criteria policies of the GEF;
- To get more information about the SGP;
- To prepare for Council Meeting in Washington DC in November 2012.

*In addition, the GEF chair of the meeting identified the following objectives for the CSOs from attending the meeting:*

- To disseminate received information to other CSOs in their countries after the ECW;
- To update on the relevant conventions;
- To take advantages of joint learning opportunities.

## **2. Agenda (usefulness; relevance to Rio and other conventions implementation concerns and issues in the region/country; other comments and suggestions if any):**

According to the attending CSOs, the agenda of the ECW was relevant and well-organized. It was particularly useful in understanding the criteria and policies of the GEF. CSOs considered the practical exercise on preparing a GEF Project Application particularly helpful. The key points of the agenda are presented below (as noted by CSOs):

### **Accessing the GEF**

- Accessing the GEF Trust Fund – GEF Institutional Framework (CSOs are a part of input to the Council and secretariat);
- Accessing other funds and using the traditional methods – STAR, LDCF/SCCF, NPIF, broadening the GEF Partnership;
- Broadening the GEF Partnership - The GEF Council approved, in May 2011, a pilot to accredit up to 10 new institutions to serve as GEF Project Agencies, at least 5 national institutions; NGOs are eligible to apply for this status (IUCN, WWF, Conservation International, International Federation of Red Cross have already applied as international CSOs);
- Website:
  - Council member and focal point list
  - Country profile
  - Country fact sheet
  - Documents and publications



- Templates – PIF
- PMIS:
  - Pre-PIF tracking tool
  - Project information – includes information on where to find PIFs, PFDs, PIRs.

### **GEF as Financial Mechanism of the Conventions**

- Overview of all the Conventions and the relationship of GEF to each convention – it was highlighted that about 60-70% of the GEF portfolio are projects on climate change and biodiversity.

### **Results Based Management at the GEF**

- A results-based approach aims to improve management effectiveness and accountability by “defining realistic expected results, monitoring progress toward the achievement of expected results, integrating lessons learned into management decisions and reporting on performance”;
- Setting goals and objectives, monitoring, learning and decision making;
- RBM, which includes Monitoring, tells whether the organization is “on track”.

### **Roles of Country Stakeholders in the GEF**

- The roles of different focal points were identified in an interactive manner, which proved to be effective and memorable for the participants;
- During the session, the CSOs were also given an opportunity to share their views on how they could be more active in participating in the GEF related activities. A number of ways were highlighted by the CSOs and the Chair of the Session:
  - CSOs should be attracted to Projects at the initial stages (Project design) and not towards the end of the project;
  - NGOs should be more involved in large climate change and biodiversity projects to gain experience;
  - Establish NGO networks on the country level or on a more specific regional level where they collaborate actively;
  - Civil society participation in ECWs;
  - Active participation in COPs where they can participate in the priority setting;
  - Associations can be an effective method according to CSOs;
  - Public awareness raising activities;
  - GEF implementing agencies should be transparent and share all the relevant information to CSOs;



- Bigger involvement of scientists/experts engaged in the civil society sector in projects (involving the whole CSO in the Project as opposed to individual employee);
  - CSOs can be useful in assessing ecological risks;
  - Invite the regional representatives of international networks;
  - GEFNN website;
  - Joining the GEF NGO Network.
- A project in Kyrgyzstan was highlighted as an example where at the design stage of the project half of involved parties were the representatives of CSOs.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation in the GEF**

- Evaluation: a “reality check” on RBM;
- Evaluation tells whether the organization is “on the right track”;
- Monitoring and Evaluation Policy of the GEF is available on the GEF web-site;
- M&E informs the 4 yearly replenishments and the goal of M&E is to ensure that stakeholders are kept up to date.

### **Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP)**

- The Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) provides strategic and independent advice on projects, programs, and policies;
- STAP is administered by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and it is supported by a Secretariat in Washington D.C.

### **Practical Exercise**

- The participants were divided in the groups where they prepared a project application to the GEF based on an imaginary, but realistic case;
- The groups made presentations of the project proposals, after which the representatives of the GEF agencies, as well as the GEF made their comments and recommendations.

## **3. *Main topic(s) of interest of the CSOs:***

The following aspects of the ECW were considered to be particularly useful for the attending CSOs:

- Presentation on the GEF, its structure and way of accessing it;
- The practical exercise was found to be useful in understanding the process of application and receiving the feedback from the GEF staff on the spot;
- Discussion on the funding mechanisms of the GEF;



- The reception at the end of Day 1, as well as the site visit on Day 3 of the ECW was considered to be useful in terms of allowing for more informal communication between participants and providing networking opportunities.

#### **4. Summary of CSO interventions and suggestions:**

After almost every presentation at the ECW, Q&A session was conducted. CSOs posed a number of questions and expressed their opinions during such sessions. Additionally, a representative of CENN (regional focal point of the GEF NGO Network for EECA region) conducted an additional session solely for the CSOs at the end of Day 1, where CSOs were given an opportunity to provide their feedback and expectations regarding the ECW.

- During a presentation on the GEF Projects and the application process, one of the CSOs asked what are the most common mistakes at the application stage
  - The answer to this question was that one issues that causes the most back-and-forth is the issue of co-financing; another issue is not having a well-developed baseline information (not well-developed in PIFs); overall, about 70% of the projects go through, others require a lot of additional work.
- One of the CSOs required a clarification on the transparency policy of GEF in regards to one of the projects in Armenia, where the participant considered that not a highly environmentally friendly project was approved by GEF
  - The GEF replied by stating that the Project agency and implementer were providing ongoing communication that proved that so far the project is being environmentally friendly; the communication is reviewed by an independent council of 3 people.
- During a presentation on GEF as a Financial Mechanism of the Conventions, a representative of one of the CSOs asked whether there are any priorities on national, regional scale while registering projects
  - The response was that GEF does not assign priorities by country level or regional level. The only priority is maximizing the benefits on the global scale – no priorities by scope of theme.
- During the presentation of the GEF evaluation office, a question was posed regarding the possibility of appeal of decision on projects
  - The answer: normally, the option of appeal is not available, but it is rarely the case, as all PIFs describe consultations that take place, as it is a policy of all the agencies, they require projects to consult CSOs, so it is rare to find a project that has not consulted a CSO and has not undergone the consultations from various stakeholders.

#### **5. Additional comments and/or suggestions: (how can these ECW be improved)**

- Representative of CENN (regional focal point of the GEF NGO Network for EECA region) organized an additional session at the end of the Day 1 only for the representatives of CSOs, where the discussion focused on the GEF NGO Network, the benefits of joining the Network, the requirements and processes for joining, among other things. CENN also



distributed the prepared packages to the CSOs, which included all the relevant information on the GEF NGO Network and on how to start the process of application towards becoming a member;

- At the additional session organized by CENN on Day 1, as well as during the session regarding CSO activity on Day 2, one of the NGOs expressed the feeling that the CSO attendance at the ECW is a mere formality and inquired why only one CSO representative from different countries were invited
  - The response from the GEF was that CSO attendance is not just a formality, and CSOs at the ECW are full-fledged representatives of the CSO communities in their country, but CSOs need to be active and participate;
  - Regarding the comment on only one representative from each country, this fact is caused by limited funds (CSOs working in the country where ECW is held participate easily in the meeting) and on the understanding that the attending CSO is a representative of all CSOs and will disseminate received information. Furthermore, other CSOs will participate in the future ECWs.
- On Day 1, one of the CSO representatives also expressed the opinion that the ECW is mostly focused on government officials, but this opinion was more or less changed on Day 2 of the ECW;
- While the majority of CSOs considered the ECW to be well organized, one wish expressed by several of them was to have an ECW authorized gathering at the end of Day 3 (the program on Day 3 ended at around 3 PM). The logic was that the CSOs expected to see other participants later in the evening and did not say good-bye/did not make specific plans on how to continue communication, and in reality it was hard to gather everyone informally at the end of Day 3, when no activity was planned;

