

## **Focal Points Roles explained**

(This is the excerpt from the document available at <https://www.thegef.org/council-meeting-documents/roles-and-responsibilities>)

### *Operational Focal Points*

#### **General Responsibilities**

**Serve as the main contact of the GEF Secretariat, GEF Agencies and national stakeholders with respect to country environmental strategies and objectives, GEF project information and country GEF project reports.**

OFPs serve as the main contact for the GEF Secretariat, GEF Agencies and other stakeholders. They keep all parties involved in the project constantly updated to ensure that information is received by the right person. This assures that they are aware of the status of projects, including details about project implementation, results and impacts.

**Consult with CSO and other key stakeholders in country on GEF matters as well as provide information on GEF activities, including project implementation, results and impacts.**

OFPs are the in-country facilitator contact point for consultations with national partners (including CSOs) and other relevant stakeholders on GEF operational matters. Hence, they should ensure that they are well up to date and versed on all projects. They should ensure that views of all parties are taken into account when decisions are being taken.

**Convene and lead a National Steering Committee for GEF-related work as feasible and appropriate to the national situation.**

The most successful OFPs are those that have the institutional support of a National Steering Committee (or its equivalent) where the main line ministries involved in GEF projects are represented. This allows for regular consultation and information sharing. It also provides for coherence and consistency in decision making. This OFPs have the necessary support and consensus around the decisions they take.

**Follow projects and participate in all stages throughout the project cycle.**

OFPs have the right and the obligation to be informed and involved in projects throughout the life of the projects. This involves being informed and consulted whenever necessary and certainly at the main milestones of a project. To this effect they should have good coordination with the executing partners, especially other line ministries; they should have the support of GEF Agencies and of the GEF Secretariat.

OFPs should be members of project steering committees.

OFPs should receive early copies and be provided an opportunity to comment on annual Project Information Reports (PIR), Mid Term Evaluations (MTR), Terminal Evaluations (TE) and financial reports.

#### **Country Support Program Activities**

**Request and organize National Dialogues**

The National Dialogues serve multiple purposes. Early in the replenishment cycle, they enable countries to conduct a broad consultation process, including government line ministries and agencies, involved in national GEF activities, to set priorities for GEF resource programming as well as discussing specific project ideas.

In addition, and at any time, these National Dialogues provide targeted and flexible support for the country's government ministries and agencies, NGOs, communities, academic and research institutions, the private sector, as well as its partners and donors to share information, experiences and concerns. They can also serve to validate and disseminate policies, regulations and priorities.

### **Operational Responsibilities**

**Represent the government to support and ensure country ownership in the GEF's work. To this end, work and coordinate with line ministries and stakeholders in choosing projects and programs, as well as the GEF Implementing Agency for each project**

OFPs are responsible for ensuring country ownership. To this effect they decide which project ideas will be pursued. They choose the Implementing Agency that will assist them in preparation and submission of the project to the GEF Secretariat.

To this effect they work with relevant line ministries and stakeholders. The best practice in this regard is to use the GEF National Steering Committee as mentioned above.

**Work with the Agencies in the preparation of the Project Identification Form (PIF) to request funding from the GEF, and in responding to comments from the GEF Secretariat made as part of the project review sheet, as appropriate.**

Once the decision is taken, the OFP should work closely with the Implementing Agency in preparation of the PIF. This can be done by assigning a country official to work closely with the Agency staff member preparing the document.

The GEF Secretariat reviews the PIF and sends review sheets, often, requesting additional information or clarification. The Secretariat should make those review sheets available to OFPs who, in turn, should work with the Agencies to reply promptly to any comments or requests.

Many times the information requested can only come from the country and the OFP is responsible for helping to obtain that information.

### **Endorse projects before the Agencies submit the PIF to the GEF Secretariat**

Take a decision on endorsing projects before the Agencies submit the Project Identification Form (PIF) to the GEF Secretariat.

Once the PIF is prepared to their satisfaction, the OFPs sign a letter of endorsement that will accompany the submission made by the Agency. These letters serve to confirm that GEF project proposals are consistent with country priorities and with the commitments they made under the global environment conventions. The project cannot be considered and reviewed by the GEF Secretariat without this endorsement. It is expected that when a PIF is endorsed, the project idea has been widely discussed with the appropriate stakeholders, including the global environmental convention focal points.

OFPs are under no obligation to sign a letter of endorsement until they are satisfied with the Project Information Form (PIF) that will be submitted.

OFPs are under no obligation to provide these letters in advance, nor are they required to guarantee a project or a full portfolio to any particular Agency. OFPs should not be subject to undue pressure in this regard.

OFPs should ensure that their superiors are well informed of this process to ensure consistency in the approach.

The issue of co-financing is often a source of misunderstanding. The concept is presented in GEF Council documents. The aspirational level of 7 to 1 mentioned in the replenishment documents does not apply to individual projects or countries. It applies only to the whole GEF portfolio for the full replenishment period. Each project's co-financing will be evaluated by the GEF Secretariat on a case by case basis. Agencies are required to help countries to identify sources of co-financing.

Whenever, questions, concerns or difference of views exist, the OFPs should seek advice, clarification and guidance from the GEF Secretariat.

**Be fully informed by Agencies and the GEF Secretariat on projects, their development and execution.**

OFPs have the right to be fully informed on GEF projects at any time by the GEF Secretariat, the Implementing Agencies and the Executing Agencies. No information can be denied; with only exception of private sector proprietary information, as appropriate.

**Collaborate on Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) at project, program, and portfolio levels**

In line with the GEF operational principles and the increased GEF emphasis on country ownership, OFPs have an active role in M&E activities.

In this respect, OFPs will be fully consulted and informed by the GEF Agencies and the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) about the planning, execution, and results of any evaluation performed in the country. Staff members of the relevant government institutions will be expected to assist with the evaluations by responding promptly and fully to the IEO's requests for information relating to GEF projects, portfolios, and policies as well as sharing relevant experiences.

In addition, OFPs are responsible for following up with the evaluation recommendations related to GEF matters. The OFP also plays a key role in consulting with and keeping all national stakeholders informed on, and involved in the plans, implementation, and results of country-related GEF M&E activities, as may be required.

Upon specific request, the GEF Secretariat, the GEF Agencies and the GEF IEO will endeavor to provide support to OFPs on M&E activities.

**Ensure GEF visibility policy is respected**

The visibility of the GEF contributions to a country's environmental objectives is vital to ensure that the GEF is known, recognized and funded. Therefore, the Council adopted a decision on Enhancing the Visibility of the GEF contained in Document GEF/C.40/08. Operational Focal Points are expected to know

the content of this decision, to promote its implementation and to inform the GEF Secretariat when it is not being respected so that the Secretariat may take appropriate action.