

July 11th 2017, Radisson Blu Resort,
Hammamet, TUNISIA

CSO Consultation Report GEF MENA EXPANDED CONSTITUENCY WOKSHOP



Prepared by:
Essam Nada- Chair, NA RFP GEF CSO NETWORK



I Acknowledgements

GEF CSO Network has the privilege to organize half day CSOs consultation prior to MENA ECW 2017 hosted by Green Tunisia. It was great opportunity to meet with different CSO practitioners from 8 countries who have varied knowledge of GEF process and projects to share knowledge and experience that enabled them to add value to ECW proceedings in following three days.

We would like to thank GEF Secretariat for the support that it offered to let this consultation happened and we wish that such support sustained to ensure conveying the voices of communities to GEF and countries as well as agencies.

Also, we should thank Small Grants Programme/Central Programme Management Team New York (SGP/CPMT) and SGP Tunisia National Coordinator for attending part of the consultation and sharing their knowledge and ideas in the agenda items.

Finally, I would like to thank all CSOs participants for their enthusiasm and hard work during the consultation which leads us to reach the aim of it and for their interventions for the ECW meeting within their respective countries delegation.



II EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The half day CSOs consultation was held on July 11th in Radisson Blu Resort – Hammamet to orient participants about the GEF process and projects and the role that CSO Network plays in this regard as representative of CS.

The session's moderation based on reactive participation in both languages Arabic and English with minimum lecture style to let all involved and sharing to guarantee maximum benefit of collective thinking.

The most important topics that we discussed during the consultation were the Public Involvement Policy (PIP) and how we could -as civil society- do better to support its implementation on national, regional and global levels. GEF 7 Replenishment was oriented in brief from GEF Sec then attendance had discussions on comparing between previous GEFs and the upcoming phase. More discussions and questions occurred in the ECW meeting after that.

Unfortunately, three regional constituency meetings were set in the same time of the CSOs consultation which disabled countries representatives, OFPs and GEF Sec to take part in our consultation. However, Mr. William Ehlers – GEF Sec offered welcome speech and short presentation about GEF 7 replenishment in the opening session.

III Attendance

The half-day session was attended by **14** representative of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) from 8 countries - Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Pakistan, and Tunisia. In addition to SGP/CPMT and SGP NC Tunisia, where Syrian CSO representative arrived late for airplanes delays and he could not attend. Participants List Appendix 2.



Figure 1: A Session during the CSOs Consultation – MENA ECW



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 *About Expanded Constituency Workshops*

Within the framework of the Country Support Programme (CSP), the GEF organizes Expanded Constituency Workshops (ECWs). The main objective of ECWs is to provide a forum for GEF Focal Points, Convention's Focal Points and representatives of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) from each of the participating countries to learn about GEF strategies, policies and procedures and gain a better understanding of the GEF as the funding mechanism for the Conventions it serves.

The workshop is an opportunity for different national partners to meet with their counterparts from other countries in the region, staff from the GEF Secretariat, the GEF Agencies and other GEF partners to share lessons and experiences from the development and the implementation of GEF projects and their integration within national policy frameworks. Additionally, these workshops can encourage coordination among national officials and allow better understanding among constituency members.

These workshops are organized annually by the GEF Secretariat. The workshop covers participation for representatives from each country, GEF Political Focal Point, GEF Operational Focal Point, three of the four national Convention Focal Points (CBD, UNCCD, UNFCCC, and the Stockholm Convention), as well as representatives from CSOs.

2 Workshop composition and proceedings

Early Morning Session

William Ehlers -GEF Secretariat- gave an overview of the GEF and ECW purposes and proceedings. He showed the necessity of such meetings that concerned stakeholders from region and even from same country get together face to face rather than meeting electronically. He also briefed the audience about the GEF7 Replenishment meetings and how GEF Replenishment process goes.

All participants introduced themselves and their organizations in addition to their knowledge and work within GEF themes.

Essam Nada – CSO Network- introduced the CSOs role of being in such meetings and how we could share knowledge and expertise within ourselves and with our official counterpart in respective countries to safeguard the environment in line with GEF process.



2.1 Mid-Morning Session

The Lead Facilitator, Essam Nada made a presentation by introducing the GEF and GEF CSO Network. The presentation was conducted on participatory approach from attendants to have their feedback on spot.

2.1.1 Objectives of the CSO meeting

The objectives were:

- Enhance the engagement of CSOs at country and regional level in GEF 6 implementation.
- Inform CSOs about the GEF CSO Network, options of CSOs involvement in programmes and projects of GEF and GEF7 processes.
- Obtain feedback on the current level of engagement of civil society in GEF projects in the region and identify options to enhance this.
- Identify key issues to bring to the attention of the GEF as well as to look at ways to enhance the level of Network activities at country and regional level.

Further, the following topics were presented:

- Briefing on ongoing review of Public Involvement Policy and interim findings
- Key areas requiring input from CSOs and ECW participants (based on PIP-WG guidance)
- Discussion and inputs from CSOs on level of engagement of CSOs in GEF Programme implementation in respective countries/region
- Increasing the CSO Network Membership in the region to reach more CSOs who are interested in GEF projects and how to build effective partnership between CSOs themselves on country level and CSOs Vs Government accordingly.

3 GEF7 replenishment

It was explained that at its 51st Meeting in October 2016, the GEF Council requested the Trustee, in cooperation with the Secretariat, to initiate discussions on the seventh replenishment of resources of the GEF Trust Fund (GEF-7).

The replenishment meetings provide an opportunity for Contributing Participants to review GEF performance and evaluate progress, assess future funding needs, and agree on a financing framework.

The first official meeting of the 7th Replenishment of the GEF was held in Paris on March 28-30, 2017. Documents and information about the GEF-7 replenishment are posted on the GEF website www.thegef.org.

4 Participants in GEF Replenishment

Invited participants are existing and potential Contributing Participants, four representatives from non-donor recipient countries representing Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean, two NGO/CSO representatives each representing a donor country-based NGO/CSO and another representing a recipient country, two representatives of the private sector, and representatives of GEF Agencies and the conventions for which the GEF serves as a financial mechanism.



Figure 2: Discussion for Recommendations



5 Comments and/or Recommendations:

The participants agreed on the following:

- Dealing with the region in particular as it is a hot zone in wars and refugees, and dealing with various issues that affect the environment as a result.
- Involve various civil society organizations, including political parties and labor unions, to be partners in development.
- How civil society organizations will play a role in the cooperation existing between GEF and governments in large and medium enterprises
- Civil society should be more organized to pressure on governments to engage them more.
- The GEF should enforce governments to disclose and announce projects in order to ensure wider participation.
- Public awareness of the obstacles to the work of the network gives the scope for better work and improvement of existing.
- The GEF should involve civil society in all its stages, starting with planning, then implementing and finally working and evaluating.
- How do we, as a network, sensitize the needs of people and work within projects that meet this need.
- The network should increase the number of members to cover different sectors and wider projects
- Linking between associations in the SGP and the work of the network.
- Overcoming the language problem facing the Middle East and North Africa region in getting the information in proper language.
- Concerning the Newsletter, We need to improve it by working on the content and making it more active and influential. More members and CSOs should be able to contribute and more articles should be published. The technical side of things needs to be improved as well. It is not easy to access the Newsletter by making it more accessible and easier to use so it will attract and reach out broader audience and eventually more contributions.
- ECW can also be an opportunity to present some CSOs' network experience and include it in the framework of SGP. This would give the CSOs a chance to share their experiences with other CSOs Network and all GEF partners.
- Train and build the capacity of institutions and associations and conduct an assessment of the institutional performance of network members.
- Institutionalization of the role of associations with governments.
- Improve the work environment and quality within countries to have more freedom in work.
- Work out a plan to consolidate efforts within the agenda and work plan of the network
- Use new media tools to communicate, work and plan.

- Express the network more broadly, and by more comprehensively speech.
- Development of the periodic journal or e-newsletter.
- Build a participatory relationship with all GEF programs.
- Strengthening regional participatory action based on regional needs.



Figure 3: Way Forward

6 Challenges in implementation and process

6.1 Building Trust with GEF:

Lack of trust leads to implementation failure and degrades the environment. Participants declared their sincere willingness to have more fruitful partnership with GEF and its agencies based on win-win approach. They believe that safeguarding the environment is inclusive process and never be done without community participation.

6.2 Capacity Building:

Without a doubt, CSOs are the driving force -as community representable- in achieving the goals of GEF, yet they need to upgrade their skills to cope with the needs of GEF process and techniques. Capacity building is not only for CSOs but also it is needed for implementation partners in countries.

6.3 Limited Financial Resources:

Voluntary work is not priceless; activities need minimum financial coverage to be implemented whereas there is least financial coverage to support CSOs in doing its role in GEF projects regardless SGP.



Figure 4: Final Session

APPENDIX 1: AGENDA

**AGENDA FOR GEF CSO NETWORK
MENA GEF ECW 2017
Hammamet, TUNISIA
11th July 2017**

Time	Details
8.00 – 8:30	WELCOME REMARKS Essam Nada, <i>RFP Northern Africa</i> and William Ehlers, <i>GEF Secretariat</i>
8:30 – 10:00	SESSION 1 : INTRODUCTION Moderated by Essam Nada, <i>RFP Northern Africa</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-introductions • Objectives and agenda of meeting • An Overview of GEF and the GEF-CSO Network • GEF CSO Network Strategic Plan 2015-2022 • Agenda of ECW meeting and key issues for CSO engagement • Mode of operation
10.00 – 11.30	SESSION 2 : GEF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT POLICY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing on ongoing review of Public Involvement Policy and interim findings (<i>GEF Secretariat</i>) • Key areas requiring input from CSOs and ECW participants (based on PIP-WG guidance) (<i>GEF Secretariat</i>) • Discussion and inputs from CSOs on level of engagement of CSOs in GEF Programme implementation in respective countries/region.
11:30 – 12:00	Coffee break
12.00-13.00	SESSION 4 : THE WAY FORWARD Moderated by Essam Nada, <i>RFP Northern Africa</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GEF7 replenishment • Discussion of options to enhance CSO engagement in GEF CSO Network activities in the region (<i>CSO Participants</i>) • Capacity strengthening needs and opportunities for CSOs (<i>CSO Participants</i>) • Summary of deliberations and meeting outcome to the ECW (<i>Rapporteur</i>)



	Group Picture and Closing
13.00 – 14.30	Lunch

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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