



## **GEF Expanded Constituency Workshop MENA Region 2016**

### **CSO Consultation Meeting**

**Le Royale Hotel, Beirut, Lebanon  
20 September 2016**



Prepared by :

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## **INTRODUCTION:**

GEF CSO Network organized half day consultation prior to the MENA ECW conducted in Beirut, Lebanon from 20-23 September 2016. The consultation was facilitated by Essam Nada, the North Africa Regional Focal Point (RFP) of GEF CSO Network and attended by CSOs representatives from 11 MENA countries “Algeria, Afghanistan, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Pakistan, Syria and Tunisia”. OFPs from Algeria, Libya, Iran and Morocco attended the consultation as well as SGP representatives from New York and Lebanon. See list of participants in **Annex 1**.

It was –indeed- strange that no CSOs from Lebanon (host country) were invited to attend the consultation and even the ECW as GEF Sec sent a letter to Lebanese Ministry of Environment to nominate national CSOs to attend the meetings but this was not successful to get CSOs. GEF Sec did not coordinate with the CSO Network in this regard as we have list of active CSOs in Lebanon either members of the network or non-members who would add new dimension to the meetings with minimal cost. It is the same case for Turkey as whole country did not participate in this ECW.

The consultation was moderated by discussion and exchanging experiences with open negotiable presentations for updating the audience with the role of CSOs in GEF processes in general and their role in CSO Network in particular. It was an added value that GEF Sec, OFPs and SGP representatives were sharing the ideas and build bridges of cooperation. See agenda in **Annex 2**.

It was fruitful discussions and deliberates between participants during the consultation and many questions were raised from CSOs regarding the relationship between GEF concerned parties and how to build confidence between them for the sake of better environment in this region which has very specific environmental problems and conflicts.

## **PROCEEDINGS:**

### **Session One: Introduction**

Essam Nada, NA RFP opened the session by welcoming all participants and giving an overview of the consultation. This is followed with a brief presentation of the program for the upcoming 3 days by William Elhers of GEF Sec. The participants then started to introduce themselves.

#### **Presentation on CSO GEF Network by NA RFP**

Introduction about GEF (history, its establishment, area of works, cross cutting and programs, financial mechanism and the current GEF agencies) with the GEF national focal points and the relation of GEF with the civil society and how CSO engagement benefits from GEF programs.

GEF CSO network contains members from 16 countries when established, presenting its role, and how to build trust and coordination between GEF and CSOs. How this network is governed

by coordination committee and overseen by a management team. This network is guided by the network strategic plan (2015-2022). RFP announced that there was a call for proposal for hosting the permanent secretariat of the network to be functioning by the beginning of 2017.

GEF CSO network of MENA region mainly consists of two regions (North Africa and West Asia) and there are currently 32 members plus representatives from Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey and Pakistan.



Question rose about no presence of CSOs from Lebanon. It was explained that GEF sent invitations to Lebanon via Ministry of Environment but it did not get through.

The reactive presentation showed the essential role of CSO Network in the establishment of GEF SGP mechanism and implementation.

Ms. Sana from Tunis had 2 comments:

1: SGP was a an opportunity for CSOs especially via the GEF CSO network but CSOs still have a communication problem with the government and with GEF representative and GEF focal point (government), How we can involve and coordinate more with government (GEF focal point) for the benefit of GEF and CSOs and the country.

2: Communication between CSOs and GEF secretariat, request to find new ways to communicate and share experience and success stories.

The relationship between CSOs and Government should be built on mutual understanding of both roles with applying win-win approach. In many countries “such as Brazil”, CSOs have a good relationship with the government. Being a member or not member of CSO GEF network is not obligatory for submitting a proposal to SGP; Essam Nada replied

Ana Maria of SGP explained the procedure of SGP call for proposal, submitting proposal with NSC work depending on countries.

Mr. Melha from Algeria had a question about the exact role of CSO network role in financing the participants to such regional meeting.

Answer came from William, that GEF Sec is covering all costs of funded participants according to the financing procedure and resources. Essam also explained that CSO Network has very limited financial resources that could not enable it to organize regional meetings.

Mr. Imad from Syria asked why there is still no Small Grant Program in Syria. Small program projects in the crisis should continue for the local communities. What is the role of GEF in the crisis management and after crisis?

Ana Maria answered that the SGP could not guarantee the security of people working there or taking risk for workers. She added that as soon as the situation gets better, the SGP hopes to come back. William added that it is a global decision from the head of UN and not an individual decision.

Ms. Raghda from Jordan: what about knowledge management and how we share regionally and globally experiences and success stories with all challenges and lessons learned.

RFP answered that CSO Network is publishing newsletter quarterly and it welcomes all members to share experiences by articles or coverage of events. GEF Sec also has its website and the Knowledge Management (KM) WG to disseminate knowledge among all stakeholders.

A quick review on GEF 1 - GEF 4 and on GEF 5 – GEF 6 and on issues of GEF such as level of replenishment and funding of SGP, etc. William explained that GEF 7 will be discussed in the second day of the ECW.

### GEF CSO's Network Strategic Plan

Essam Nada presented the GEF CSO Network's Strategic Plan. Its vision and mission: GEF need to build and promote for a dynamic civil society.

The objectives of the strategy plan are to enhance the role of civil society. GEF cannot force government but it just advises and recommends working with CSOs. Win-win approach is important to gain trust and corporation between different partners. Supporting CSOs enhance and provide good results.

Strategy of GEF is to support the outreach and awareness on global environment and encourage CSO contributions to the implementation of conventions.

Strengthen the capacity of CSOs to engage in GEF related activities.

Enhance the corporation between several CSOs and networking between CSOs.

Without the contribution of CSOs there is no way for the implementation of GEF strategy.



## **Session 2: Implementation and review of GEF Public Involvement Policy.**

GEF has a role on how to enhance and apply the Public Involvement Policy (PIP) into GEF decision to have better solutions for current environmental problems.

This policy, which was adopted in 1996, establishes operational guidelines for assessing effectiveness of public involvement.

Three representatives of the GEF CSO Network participated in the PIP working group and the review by the consultant reached the final stage and when it is officially approved, it would be available for all.

Essam mentioned some findings of the PIP Review Report and mentioned that GEF agencies such as World Bank, UNDP, UNOPS, etc. should have also the public involvement policy more efficiently applicable.

Recommendations:

1. Updating of the PIP **to be authorities** and adopted as commitment.
2. Development of clear guidelines for agencies and governments and enhancing the access of CSOs to GEF.

Question from Tunis: How CSOs could promote GEF work and projects in events in each country or globally.

**(response??)**

### **Session 3 : The Way Forward**

The session went on to be an open discussion to identify the main environmental problems in MENA Region from the participants' point of view.

Answers from countries: 1) Land degradation, deforestation. 2) Chemical management and POPs, implementing Minamata convention on mercury, solid waste and liquid management, medicals waste, Oil spill. 3) Climate change. 4) Water and food security.

There is an official plan in Lebanon to construct a garbage landfill in the sea. This is a violation of all conventions signed by this country, as per Adnan Melki from Lebanon.

No sustainable development, another problem suggested by Iran.

Media is responsible for most of political, environmental and social problems in the MENA region, as per RFP.

Question from Jordan: they cannot always link their environmental problems directly with GEF priorities. How GEF is flexible to have a proposal from a country and how to link it to GEF priorities. For example clean energy is directly linked to climate change as per William answer. William also added that GEF is not a capacity building agency. Capacity building development strategy could be implemented under GEF funded projects or the CSO could consult an implementing agency to help designing a project within GEF strategies.

Mr. Melki from SGP Lebanon: When will GEF gives more importance to chemical issue in the region? For example the garbage crisis in Lebanon, the issue need policies and reducing the amount of waste using certain policies (triple Rs rule), sorting from the source managed by municipalities with composting. SGP put big advocacy efforts with local authorities and municipalities in Lebanon to raise awareness and capacity building to sort from the source, recycling and composting, and now actions on waste management started and it is growing fast. These alternatives need the right fund and policies to continue.

From Tunis: role of the NGO working in specific area with specific priorities but sometimes not in line with Government Strategy and national priorities or even priorities of the donor..

Essam gave an example on how the CSOs can sometimes deviates their project to get a grant for their project: Embassy of Japan open a call of proposal for a project on garbage in Cairo. No money for labors just for machines.

Adnan Melki added:” SGP Lebanon” does not accept a proposal if the project do not clarify how community is suffering from the environmental problem. We try to transfer these projects to another donor.

One of the proposals submitted to SGP Lebanon is for an area in Aarsal, a very critical village in north Bekaa in Lebanon. The community aims to increase income from carpet production, by enhancing the quality of the wool– the quality of wool is related to the quality of feeds/ legumes. This area is risked by flood. The grantee present a proposal to SGP to manage the flood in order to catch the water and to use this later to irrigate the legumes and other agricultural lands and later on this project was replicated by other donors. The purpose was not environmentally linked to their problem, but they wrote the proposal in a way to be in line with GEF priorities (land degradation) and environment protection.

The conclusion of the discussion showed that the most harming issues in the MENA region are drought and conflict (water scarcity and conflicts).

## ANNEX 1 : LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Country	Last Name	First Name		Email
Algeria	Ahmed	Melha	Mr	<a href="mailto:melhapme@yahoo.fr">melhapme@yahoo.fr</a>
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## ANNEX 2 : AGENDA

<b>Time</b>	<b>Details</b>
8.00 – 8:15	<b>Registration</b>
8:15 – 8:30	<b>Welcome Remarks</b> Essam Nada, <i>GEF CSO Network</i> William Ehlers, <i>GEF Secretariat</i>
8:30 – 9:45	<b>SESSION 1 : INTRODUCTION</b> Moderated by Essam Nada, Chair, GEF CSO Network <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-introductions</li> <li>• Objectives and agenda of meeting</li> <li>• GEF CSO Network Strategic Plan 2015-2022</li> <li>• Agenda of ECW meeting and key issues for CSO engagement</li> <li>• Open Discussion</li> </ul>
9:45 – 10.00	Coffee break
10.00 – 11.30	<b>SESSION 2 : GEF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT POLICY</b> Moderated by Essam Nada, Chair, GEF CSO Network <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Briefing on ongoing study on Public Involvement Policy and interim findings.</li> <li>• Key areas requiring input from CSOs and ECW participants (based on PIP-WG guidance)</li> <li>• Discussion and inputs from CSOs on level of engagement of CSOs in GEF Program implementation in respective countries/region</li> <li>• Presentation of 2-3 Case studies of successful/ challenges of CSO engagement in GEF project (by CSOs)</li> </ul>
11.30-12.45	<b>SESSION 3 : THE WAY FORWARD</b> <b>Open Discussion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenges facing CSO Network and CSOs in General.</li> <li>• Opportunities for better management of resources.</li> <li>• Capacity strengthening needs and opportunities for CSOs</li> </ul>
12:45-13:00	Consultation Statement to ECW and Closing
13.00 – 14.30	Lunch