



21ST FEBRUARY 2017

GEF EXPANDED CONSTITUENCY WOKSHOP



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ROYAL SWAZI RESORT, LOBAMBA,
KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND

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Finally, I extend sincere gratitude to the participating CSOs from around the countries in the sub-region in view of the enthusiasm and lessons they shared with their counterparts, which, in our view; provided an opportunity to learn of best practices worth emulating.

Victor Kawanga, RFP, Southern Africa, 2017.

ACRONYMS

AABWA	African-American Business Women Association
AFSD	Africa Foundation for Sustainable Development
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CCP	Country Contact Point
CSP	Country Support Program
CPMT	Central Program Management Team
ECW	Expanded Constituency Workshop
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEM	Geography and Environmental Movement
GLM	Green Living Movement
JCF	Judith Chikonde Foundation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
RFP	Regional Focal Point
SEMA	Swaziland Environmental Management Association
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The half day Civil Society Forum was held simultaneously with a day before the GEF Expanded Constituency Workshop (ECW) for the Southern Africa Constituency on 21st February 2017 in Lobamba, Swaziland at the Royal Swazi Hotel.

Attendance

The half-day session was attended by representative of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), GEF Secretariat, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).



Figure 1: A snapshot of CSO representatives during the session. Picture courtesy of Thelma Munhequete, CCP, Mozambique

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 *About Expanded Constituency Workshops*

Within the framework of the Country Support Programme (CSP), the GEF organizes Expanded Constituency Workshops (ECW). The main objective of ECWs is to provide a forum for GEF Focal Points, Conventions' Focal Points and representatives of civil society 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 Stockholm Convention), as well as representatives from civil society.

2 Workshop composition and proceedings

How can GEF better align with national priorities, leverage community potential and local resources and promote better adoption and scalability? How can we better support to key decision-making processes in public and private sectors? What have been historical challenges in civil society engagement in the GEF operational phases? What is the upcoming process of GEF replenishments and how can CSO involvement be improved?

These were some of the questions addressed on the 21st of February 2017, when 15 GEF Civil Society Organization (CSO) representatives from ten countries across Southern Africa gathered for a creative knowledge exchange in Mbabane, Swaziland. Being the first of the ECWs to be held in 2017, the gathering was strategically placed as the first to contribute to upcoming GEF 7 replenishment meetings whose negotiations will commence in March. The day

also marked the first day of a larger (ECW) that had been planned to take place from 22-24 of February 2017. The Agenda (Appendix 1 included topics that were designed to address current trends and experiences across various topical issues affecting CSOs. However, the briefing on the ongoing review of Public Involvement Policy and interim findings was not discussed as it was one of the agenda items to be tabled during the ECW proper by GEF Secretariat.



Figure 2: William Ehlers making a presentation during the CSO Forum

Stakeholders were passionate women and men from community-based and non-governmental organizations and academia, working in from Angola, Swaziland, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Malawi, Lesotho, Botswana, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Representatives were both donors and recipients, with sectorial work covering women's enterprises, aquaculture, agroforestry, land degradation, sanitation, waste management, agro-ecology, climate-smart agriculture, and deforestation, amongst others. The session was chaired by Victor Kawanga, RFP Southern Africa, William Ehlers, GEF Secretariat and Charles Nyandiga from Central Programme Management Team (CPMT).

3 Challenges in implementation and process

Participants identified key challenges previously experienced in the process, such as a need to enhance the absorptive capacity of countries to be able to prepare projects fairly fast and work strictly within the required timeframe when countries' strategies are being developed. Various stakeholders identified the need to better represent CSOs and particularly women on national and parliamentary steering committees, the consideration of social inclusion in the selection of grantees, and the participation of CSOs from certain countries, such as Namibia and Swaziland. Another large challenge is to build the capacity of the most vulnerable, and supporting basic skill development of new community based organizations, e.g. for budget planning and proposal development. Finally, representatives recognized the bottleneck of developing and maintaining relationships within the GEF ECWs after meetings, as well as the need to maintain institutional memory and technical expertise within CSOs in the face of staff turnover.

4 Establishing partnerships and strategic alliances: Case Studies

From case studies presented by Thelma Munhequete (GEF Country Contact Point (CCP) from Mozambique, Dr Jessica Thorn (Namibian academic representative and participatory modeler of socio-ecological systems) and Kinnear Mlowoka (GEF CCP in Malawi), it was clear that innovative solutions are coming from communities, developed through generations of experience and knowledge sharing. However, participants felt that there is a need for national governments to better prioritize and support local coping mechanisms which incrementally lead to transformative change. Partnerships, collaborations and sharing knowledge can contribute towards this end. The participants observed that the critical process of participatory consultation involves building up from grass roots to the highest level of planning and prioritization, working at the landscape level to have a regional impact and working in an integrated manner (e.g. with biodiversity, gender, indigenous peoples, and water management).

To better leverage and scale up CSO influence, win engagement and ensure that countries prioritized strategic alliances of donors; participants recommended the need to enhance existing platforms for dialogue with government and the private sector, make coalitions, persistently advocate CSO concerns and lobby for resources. CSOs need to understand the processes of development of integrated development plans at local community to national and regional levels. Partnerships with government can be formalized through Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Further, it is important to build an evidence-base to make the case of what works.

5 Building an evidence base to support scalability

Participants recognized that to date, monitoring and vulnerability assessments have to some degree been limited in using quantifiable social and particularly ecological data, and then champion that case with persistence and make alliances and collaborations. CSOs also need to get into the habit of publishing findings and lessons learnt. Results should be collected in a uniform manner and published on open-access databases to avoid replication.

6 Additional resources

Overall, the event was effective in sharing specific case studies of how to catalyze sustainable solutions, allow for south-south regional exchange and build future partnerships. Participants left with a toolkit of additional resources shared such as a systematic review on the effectiveness of on farm conservation land management for preserving ecosystem services in developing countries:

(<https://oxlel.zoo.ox.ac.uk/resources/ecosystem-services-onfarm-conservation-map/view>), the Swaziland biodiversity database (www.swazibiodiversity.com) and Mohammad Sessay's Earthscan Routledge book entitled: "Community Innovations in Sustainable Land Management: Lessons from the field in Africa" published by Earthscan.

APPENDIX 1: AGENDA

AGENDA FOR GEF CSO NETWORK DURING GEF ECW, SWAZILAND 21st February 2017, Royal Swazi Resort

Time	Details
8.00 – 8:30	WELCOME REMARKS Victor Kawanga, <i>RFP Southern Africa</i> , and William Ehlers, <i>GEF Secretariat</i>
8:30 – 9:30	SESSION 1 : INTRODUCTION Moderated by Victor Kawanga, <i>RFP Southern 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 • Update on evaluation of GEF CSO Network by IEO • Agenda of ECW meeting and key issues for CSO engagement
9:30 – 10.00	Coffee break
10.00 – 11.30	SESSION 2 : GEF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT POLICY Moderated by Chigedze Virginia Chinyepi, <i>CCP-Botswana</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing on ongoing review of Public Involvement Policy and interim findings, GEF Secretariat • Key areas requiring input from CSOs and ECW participants (based on PIP-WG guidance), GEF Secretariat • Discussion and inputs from CSOs on level of engagement of CSOs in GEF Programme implementation in respective countries/region • Presentation of 2-3 Case studies of successful/ challenges of CSO engagement in GEF project (by CSOs) (Kinneer Mlowoka-CCP, Malawi, Jessica Thorn, PhD (Participatory approaches to complex systems & dynamics modeling in the face of climate change & uncertainty), Thelma Munhequete, CCP, Mozambique
11.30 – 12.00	SESSION 3 : GEF 7 PROCESSES Moderated by Victor Kawanga, <i>RFP, Southern Africa</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GEF7 replenishment • Funding needs assessment for CBD implementation
12.00-13.00	SESSION 4 : THE WAY FORWARD Moderated by (TBA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of options to enhance CSO engagement in GEF CSO Network activities in the region • Capacity strengthening needs and opportunities for CSOs • Summary of deliberations and meeting outcome to the ECW <p>Closing</p>
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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