



## **GEF-NGO Network Position Papers** **38<sup>th</sup> GEF Council 29 June-1 July 2010**

### **GEF Council paper GEF/C.38/5: Streamlining the Project cycle and refining the Programmatic Approach Presented to GEF Council 29 June 2010**

#### ***Project cycle***

1. We support the efforts proposed to further streamline the project cycle as long as it does not deprive the CSOs from the opportunity to receive information on the projects being developed and provide strategic input.
2. Although the project cycle will be expedited and multiple approvals will be reduced, measures will be put in place to ensure that there is still compliance with the GEF Public Participation Policy by ensuring that GEF Agencies and recipients maintain appropriate standards of Civil society engagement in project identification, development and implementation. Specific guidance on these matters should be developed as part of the process to review and enhance policies related civil society participation for discussion at the November 2010 Council.
3. Three specific measures are proposed at this stage to enhance opportunities for input of CSOs into the GEF project design and implementation:
  - a. Inclusion of an additional mandatory section in the PIF to describe compliance with the GEF public participation policy and envisaged role of CSOs in the design and implementation of the project
  - b. Mandatory inclusion in the project document development phase of effective civil society consultations and development of a detailed civil society or stakeholder engagement plan ( as earlier practiced in GEF3)
  - c. Allocation of specific resources in the PPG for civil society engagement
4. Further clarity is needed on the envisaged reduction in the overall time between project conceptualization and implementation which is not clearly described in the paper. There is still a significant problem of delays between CEO endorsement to first fund disbursement which can be up to 18 months - work is needed to seriously address this problem - which is linked to sometimes complex administrative requirements in GEF agencies and lack of standardised approach for GEF projects.
5. The Network also has significant concerns on the proposed arrangements in para 20-22 on disbursement of resources. One of the root causes in delays in the processing of PIFs in the last 2 years of GEF 4 was related to perceived cash flow problems - partly as a direct result of the trustee setting aside the full amount of project funds at the PIF stage rather than previously at



the Project brief/Project document stage. This meant that GEF4 funds were locked up at least 22 months before project approval and this prevented the submission of further PIFS. With the elimination of the 50% rule and introduction of the NPIC - some countries may prepare PIFS for most of their STAR allocation in year 1 - but may have to wait 2 years to submit the PIFS ( as they can't be approved until trustee receives more resources).

6. Combined with this - the differential proposal to only set aside funds for MSPs at the approval by the CEO of the final project document will mean that they will lag about 9 months behind the set aside of funds for FSPs at PIF stage. This will automatically mean that MSPs will be blocked due to lack of funding rather than FSPs. This will have a further negative impact on CSO led projects.
7. It is proposed to reverse this procedure to - set aside the money for MSPs at PIF stage ( as their PDs will be coming in 6-9 months but only set aside the money for the FSPs till the PD/Rq for CEO approval stage ( which will be 22 months after the PIF). This will help achieve the stated target to expedite MSP approval which may enhance CSO access to GEF resources.

### ***Programmatic approach***

1. The network supports the further development of the Programmatic approach and the proposals to use this to shorten further the period for project development and approval within the programme framework. However safeguards must be in place to ensure civil society engagement.
2. Explicit measures are needed to ensure effective Civil society engagement in the development of programmatic frameworks and associated projects. We recommend a specific change to Para 42 d) on consultation as follows:

*“describe the approach to implementation of the GEF public participation policy and the level of effective engagement with key stakeholders including civil society, during the preparation of the program and scheduled in the future for project development and implementation;”*

3. In cases where project approval will be by agencies the criteria for delegation of Authority (annex 1) should include specific reference to Civil society engagement such as modification of paragraph 4 (a) (iv) as follows:

*“Whose approval process is transparent, with the relevant Board decisions and documents publicly available and adequate resources made available for civil society consultation as required.”*



**GEF Council paper GEF/C.38/6: Policies and procedures for the execution of selected GEF activities with Direct Access**  
**Presented to GEF Council 30 June 2010**

1. The GEF NGO Network supports the proposed efforts by GEF to enhance country ownership and multi-stakeholder participation. In several countries, participation of civil society in the planning of GEF resources and implementation has been low or non-existent. Although in some countries, national GEF steering committees do exist, they are generally composed of government entities and implementing agencies and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have rarely been included.
2. The GEF NGO Network supports the proposal for limited direct access for countries to: (i) undertake on a voluntary basis, GEF National Portfolio Formulation Exercises; and (ii) prepare national communications/reports/enabling activities to fulfill reporting obligations to the conventions. We see this as an opportunity to pilot direct access for recipient countries for further review and expansion of this modality. We propose an internal review after 2 years with recommendations for fine tuning and expansion of the option.
3. We strongly believe that the proposed National Steering Committees are an appropriate mechanism for civil society to participate more actively in programming of GEF resources at the national level. The role of the Steering Committees in the National Portfolio Formulation Exercises could ensure a more participatory approach than in GEF4. Civil society participation from the onset (i.e. the planning process), ensure ownership, increase efficiency in implementation and subsequent monitoring of GEF projects.
4. It is needed a mechanism or more detailed guidelines to put in place to assure that the NPFE and the processes to develop the national communications to conventions should be in conformity with the GEF Public Participation Policy.
5. Given the voluntary nature of these mechanisms, more incentives (in addition to the \$30,000 for the NPFEs) should be given to countries to stimulate organization of the NSC/NPFE. One option would be that countries which use these mechanisms will have some sort of privilege in accessing the non STAR focal areas (IW and chemicals) or access to other global set aside funds.
6. More guidance is needed to determine how the proposed CSO reps on the envisaged GEF steering committees would be selected and how they would operate and feedback to other members of civil society. We request that a transparent mechanism should be established for the selection of civil society representatives in the National Steering Committees and priority must be placed on those with relevant GEF experience.



7. We propose to work with CSOs in recipient countries to establish Groups or forums which could then identify key issues to be brought to the attention of the NPFE and Steering committees via any designated CSO representatives.

**GEF Council paper GEF/C.38/7: Reforming the Country Support Program and procedures for implementation**

**Presented to the GEF Council meeting 30 June 2010**

1. The GEF NGO Network welcomes the proposals for a new approach of the Country Support Program as well as for its integrated and coordinated management by the GEF Secretariat External Affairs Unit. For us there is no doubt this new approach is more cost effective.
2. We strongly support the proposals stated in the paper to have one CSO representative per country to attend the expanded constituency level workshops as well as the pro-active civil society engagement in the NPFE and the multi stakeholder dialogues. This will increase country ownership and not governmental ownership exclusively.
3. For the effective and transparent involvement of civil society in these mechanisms we propose that the GEF Secretariat and the GEF NGO Network work together with the GEF Operational Focal Points, to establish appropriate tools and mechanisms to engage CSOs in a systematic manner at the country level.
4. There should be recognition of the broad nature of civil society in many countries, and the need for broad consultation and participation to ensure the voices of indigenous peoples and community based organizations are heard in dialogues and national portfolio formulation, as well as those of national CSOs.
5. With regard to the familiarization seminars we also support them but we would request that CSO representatives are also invited to learn and share perspectives. In addition we believe that a significant effort should be made to prepare kits of modular training materials, that can be used by CSOs to provide training and outreach at the regional and local levels.

**GEF Council paper GEF/C.38/8: Broadening the GEF Partnership by operationalising Paragraph 28 of the GEF Instrument**

**Presented to the GEF Council meeting 30 June 2010**

1. The GEF NGO Network welcomes the proposal for the accreditation of new Executing Entities (EE). The expansion of the list of accredited organizations to execute GEF projects will potentially add value to the GEF, by introducing additional comparative advantages of new organizations. It will provide more flexibility to countries to address strategic environmental challenges at national and



regional levels using partnerships with specialized agencies which may contribute new skills and services.

2. Also, many developing countries have experience working with the GEF and have gained the skills required in order to deal directly with the GEF in a transparent and participatory way.
3. The GEF Secretariat's proposal to perform a progressive review of new EE according to explicit evaluation criteria is welcome. We suggest that this includes a procedure to fast track organizations with well-established performance records.
4. The GEF CSO Network requests more detail on the criteria presented to prospective executing agencies with regard to their proven record in channeling resources to, or executing projects related to, GEFs focal areas. More clarity is also needed on setting criteria for assessment – such as the Step 2 review by GEF Secretariat for strategic fit/value added.

**GEF Council paper GEF/C.38/9: GEF5 Operational Procedures for the System of  
Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR)**

**Presented to the GEF Council meeting 30 June 2010**

1. In the current paper there are no guidelines on the use of funds set aside at the global and regional level. We believe that there should be a better explanation of how those funds are going to be allocated or what the criteria will be.
2. We hope that a close monitoring on the implementation of the STAR will be conducted in order to avoid any unintended consequences as experienced with the RAF, i.e. the poor participation of civil society in GEF4.

**GEF Council paper GEF/C.38/Inf.5: Update on Upgraded SGP Country programs  
Provided to GEF Council 1 July 2010**

1. The GEF NGO Network strongly supports the continuation and expansion of the GEF Small Grants Programme in the GEF 5 period.
2. We believe that given the importance and success of the SGP, the total funding made available for the SGP in GEF 5 should be substantially increased through a combination of core funds and STAR funds.
3. Since there was only a relatively modest increase in core funds to \$140 million for GEF 5 – it is critical that a significant proportion of STAR funds are made available in each of the SGP countries to



provide a total GEF funding framework of at least \$300 million plus the allocations for upgraded countries.

4. We believe that there should be an enhanced mechanism for the GEF NGO Network as the formal facilitation mechanism for engagement of civil society in GEF to work with the Global SGP Steering Committee and the SGP Management Team to monitor and guide SGP more effectively.

### ***Transition***

5. At the time of the November 2009 Council it was envisioned that SGP Programme and the upgraded country programmes would be able to submit their FSPs in July 2010. Because of anticipated delays in the availability of GEF 5 funds, and in government commitment to provide needed country STAR funds -it is now envisaged that most submissions will only take place in November 2010 at earliest and could be early 2011 - depending on when GEF5 resources and STAR funds are made available. After approval of the PIFs there will be a further period of time before the approval of the Project document and release of the funds to UNDP. Thus SGP may only become fully operational in March or April 2011.
6. GEF/UNDP should provide a clear figure is given of the level of funds needed for supporting SGP beyond the end of December 2010 when its GEF-4 funds run out between July 2010 and the envisaged start date of SGP in GEF 5 including the cost of maintenance of national coordinators and programme staff as well as grant giving.
7. If the analysis shows a shortage of resources for this period - it is proposed that GEF Council or the GEF Secretariat ensure an appropriate mechanism is developed to enable GEF to advance resources or for UNDP to use its own funds for later reimbursement, to ensure continuity in the SGP especially in terms of the Contracts for the SGP Country programme staff as institutional knowledge would be lost of their contracts were allowed to lapse.
8. During the period of envisaged low SGP activity between July 2010 and possibly March 2011 in the transition between GEF 4 and GEF 5 – it is proposed that National coordinators focus on consulting with Civil society organisations in their respective countries to identify ways to further enhance and strengthen SGP in GEF 5 as well as developing strategies for SGP implementation in GEF 5 and generation of co-funding from government or other sources in the respective countries. The GEF NGO Network will be happy to work with SGP in this regards.

### ***Adequacy of resources***

9. Concerns were raised in the November Council for the 33 countries in Category II which would have very limited access to core resources in GEF 5 (\$50,000/year-150,000/year) and those ( with STAR allocations above \$15 million) where core funds can only be used for management costs and not grant-making. Efforts to encourage adequate STAR allocation in these countries are needed.



10. Paragraph 24 of the paper indicates that as of May 2010 only 3 out of the 10 countries for upgrading and only 2 out of the 123 countries under the global proposal have given an indication of allocating STAR resources to the SGP. Work needs to be undertaken rapidly to encourage countries to contribute their STAR funds to SGP as insufficient allocation of STAR funds to SGP is a major risk to the future viability of the SGP programme.
11. In order to make the upgraded SGP funding modality (via an independent FSP) viable - a funding level is needed of at least \$5 million per country for smaller countries but higher for larger countries such as India or Brazil. Assessments of the risks of inadequate STAR allocations in these countries are needed.
12. Call on all SGP countries to make significant commitments to the allocation of STAR funds to the SGP programmes to sustain the continuity of the SGP Programmes in their respective countries.

***Enhancing Active engagement of NGOs in SGP management***

13. It is mentioned that it is hoped that three or four of the countries for upgrading will explore a strengthened role of NGOs in the implementation of the SGP. The GEF 5 proposal for SGP should include clear targets and allocation of resources to build the capacity of NGOs in other countries especially in Category II countries to enable enhanced NGO execution in GEF6. The further expansion of the concept of National Host Institutions (NHIs) in GEF 5 should also be stressed.
14. Within the GEF 5 budget for SGP there needs to be adequate allocation for capacity building of national NGOs/CBOs and knowledge sharing.
15. A clear mechanism should be established by SGP to strengthen the engagement with the GEF NGO Network in planning and implementation of SGP in GEF 5.
16. Options for engagement include contributing to the development or review of proposals ( at global level or for upgraded countries) for GEF 5 funding; involvement in capacity building and outreach; enhanced involvement of network members in country steering committees; joint development of knowledge sharing programmes; establishment of common communication channels to SGP grantees; encouraging CSOs with good experience of SGP to join the GEF NGO Network; establishment of a Network task force to work with the SGP in its further development.
17. We would expect a strengthened role for country and local NGOs/CBOs involvement in monitoring and evaluation of SGP programmes in GEF-5.