



**GEF CSO Network Statement**  
**Agenda item 10: GEF Small Grants**  
**46<sup>th</sup> GEF Council Meeting, Cancun, Mexico**

The GEF Small Grants Programme has long been recognized as one of the most successful GEF initiatives reaching out to 10's of thousands of civil society organisations in 128 countries and generating significant benefits both for the global environment and local communities. A series of reviews by the GEF independent evaluation office and decisions by the GEF council have reiterated its importance and effectiveness. During the OPS5 it was rated as *"the most effective among six mechanisms in promoting the engagement of CSOs in the GEF"*.

During the GEF 6 replenishment process, it was agreed that the core funds for SGP would be maintained at US\$140 million to enable the continuity of the programme. This was based on the understanding that countries would still be able to provide top-up funding from STAR.

Now just six weeks later we are presented with a very different scenario.

The paper to council on SGP is for an inexplicable reason proposing a 33% reduction in the resources for the SGP compared to GEF 5 (a reduction from \$257 million to \$172 million). This is being done - from our understanding - by preventing recipient countries with less than \$15 million from making any voluntary contribution to the SGP from their STAR funding and restricting countries with more funds to a maximum contribution of \$2 million (compared to the GEF 5 ceiling of 3.6 million).

There are several serious problems with this proposal:

1. GEF has stated clearly in its GEF 6 strategy and GEF 2020 strategy that it wants to enhance the engagement and partnership with stakeholders including civil society. Dramatically cutting the level of funding for SGP at this period does not make sense.
2. GEF has for many years emphasized the importance of Country ownership and now it proposes to ban or restrict countries from funding the SGP even if they want to. In GEF 5 - 35 countries with STAR less than \$15 million contributed funds to SGP. These countries will now be prevented to do so.
3. Imposing a ceiling may not be appropriate for a country that has enough STAR resources. China for example had \$211 million in GEF 5. \$2 million would be only 1% which is very little considering there are 400,000 registered CSOs in the country.

We also have some concerns about the effectiveness of the suggestion that the reduction in SGP money could be offset by SGP components in full sized projects. While this may be positive – there is no guarantee that this will happen unless it is made mandatory.

We are happy to meet to discuss this matter in more detail to help reach a positive outcome on this crucial issue.

We ask the council to seriously look at this matter and find the best way to ensure the continuity of SGP and adequate engagement of civil society to help safeguard the environment in the 128 SGP countries.