

50th GEF Council Meeting

June 07 – 09, 2016

Washington, D.C.

Agenda Item 13

GEF CSO NETWORK RESPONSE TO THE EVALUATION OF THE GEF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION NETWORK

(Prepared by the GEF CSO Network)



NETWORK RESPONSE TO THE IEO REVIEW

1. The GEF CSO Network welcomes the report of the independent review of the GEF CSO Network by the GEF Independent Evaluation Office which was prepared over the last 12 months. We appreciate the thorough and participatory approach to the evaluation and the comprehensive scope looking at a) results b) credibility, c) capacity, d) connectivity, e) membership, f) structure and governance and g) resources of the Network.
2. We are happy that the Review has recorded positive progress in each category and has made an overall conclusion that the GEF CSO Network continues to be relevant and is delivering results to, and is a credible and legitimate member of, the GEF Partnership which provides benefit to members and the Council on projects and policy.
3. We agree with the Review that the focus and strength of the Network in the past has primarily been on global policy and regional coordination and information exchange. While our members are active in more than 120 countries in providing input to convention and GEF implementation, we agree that at the country level we have faced significant challenges and lack of resources for specific Network activities at country level and also barriers to effective partnership with Governments in some countries. This is one of our priority areas to address as articulated in our Strategic Plan 2015-2022 adopted last year.
4. We also agree with the importance to develop a common vision and collaboration with all members of the GEF partnership including the Secretariat and Council, the newly expanded range of GEF Project Agencies, the STAP and the Operational Focal Points at country level. We agree that the current limited allocation of resources from the GEF Family to support the work of the Network has been a significant barrier to achieving targets especially at country and regional level.
5. We are happy that the Review has recognized the significant enhancements of Network structure and governance since the last evaluation in 2005 as well as the Strategic and Action plans for Network activities.
6. We support the four recommendations of the Review in particular the first recommendation that *“a contemporary vision for the CSO Network be created within the new GEF architecture. The vision should inter alia a) clarify the Network’s role, b) set out a shared understanding amongst all parts of the Partnership of the Network’s contribution in guarding the global commons and c) identify a modality to finance Network activities.* We believe that such a common understanding can help to enhance the ability of the Network to engage effectively with all members of the GEF family. We also are extremely supportive of the recommendation to identify a modality to finance the Network activities.
7. Lack of dependable and dedicated finance has been a major barrier for the Network to undertake its work. We strongly urge members of the GEF Family including the GEF Council and donor countries as well as GEF agencies and others to provide resources contribute resources to the GEF NGO Voluntary Fund established at the request of Council in 2010 which has yet to

receive contributions other than from the GEF Secretariat. Alternatively, or in addition, we hope that the GEF Council can consider to establish a special budget line to support the Network as is provided to the other members of GEF Family including IEO, STAP and Secretariat. Only with independent and dependable funding can we effectively undertake our work.

8. We look forward to working with the GEF Secretariat to implement Recommendation 2 and develop clear rules of engagement with the Secretariat to guide cooperation and communication. We are happy to see the positive response to this in the Management Response to the Review by the GEF Secretariat.

9. We agree with the third recommendation that *the CSO Network should continue to build itself as a mechanism for strengthening civil society participation in the GEF at the global, regional and national levels, paying particular attention to: membership development, capacity building and value-added working relationships across the Partnership*. These are key elements identified within our own Strategic Plan and we hope that, with enhanced partnership, adequate resources and a common vision with the GEF family, we will make positive progress.

10. The final recommendation that the Network should continue to strengthen its governance is also in line with our plans. We intend to consider a number of issues raised in the Review process at our forthcoming meeting(s) of the Coordination Committee including but not limited to: adoption of annual workplans (with the first being for the 2016-2017 year); further harmonisation of Network and GEF Regions; enhancing work of Indigenous Peoples' Focal Points and the IPAG, and fine-tuning some aspects of the new Rules and Procedures of the Network.

11. The GEF CSO Network was established 20 years ago and was first evaluated by the GEF 10 years ago. We are very happy that this new evaluation has recognized the major strides and achievements of the Network over the past 10 years and we look forward to making further enhancements over the next 10 years with the other members of the GEF family to achieve our common vision to safeguard the Global Environment.

12. This is the Network's immediate response to the Review. Based on further feedback from members and deliberations in the coming weeks, we aim to give a more comprehensive response at the time of the next GEF Council Meeting in June.