

Evaluation of the GEF CSO Network Approach Paper

Introduction

1. The GEF Council at its 47th meeting in October, 2014 requested the GEF Independent Evaluation Office (GEF IEO) to undertake an evaluation of the GEF Civil Society Organizations (CSO)¹ Network, with focus on the role of the Network in the context of the GEF partnership. This evaluation will be the second evaluation of the Network and will follow up on recommendations and actions stemming from a 2005 GEF evaluation of the NGO Network as well as explore new features. Based on a literature review of approaches for evaluating CSO/NGO networks and coalitions, this paper presents the evaluation objectives followed by a history of the development of the GEF CSO Network and its structures for engagement with the GEF partnership; methods and limitations for review of the Network's performance, relevance, effectiveness and results in promoting knowledge exchange and public involvement.

Background

2. Since the establishment of Agenda 21, the increase in number and influence of CSO networks worldwide has allowed for their activities to be the subject of greater scrutiny and hence, there is now a growing body of literature on network formation, development, capacity building and evaluation. Evaluators have begun to develop frameworks² for understanding networks using a mix of methods

¹ The Fifth Overall Performance Study (OPS5) Technical Study on Civil Society Engagement in the GEF revealed that there is no consistent definition today between GEF and GEF Agencies to describe *civil society*. In 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) determined that nine (9) major groups made up what was then referred to as civil society: non-governmental organizations, farmers, women, academic/research entities, youth and children, indigenous peoples, business and industry, workers and trade unions and local authorities. The OPS5 review of GEF and ten GEF agencies disclosed that at least nineteen different terms—not all entirely discrete—have been used by GEF/Agencies in official definitions of civil society. Beyond the nine included by UNCED, they include: non-profit organizations, community based organizations (CBO), foundations, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional organizations, social movements, policy/advocacy groups, volunteer organizations and political parties.

https://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/EO/TD14_Civil%20Society%20Organizations%20Engagement.pdf

² *Evaluating International Social-Change Networks. Lessons from the Inter-American Democracy Network. 2006.*
[http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/Evaluating International Social Change Networks, Ricardo W.pdf](http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/Evaluating%20International%20Social%20Change%20Networks,%20Ricardo%20W.pdf)

and tools³. Some of these are specifically designed for network evaluation, while some are borrowed from other forms of assessment⁴.

3. Based on a strategic review of the literature describing relevant network evaluation frameworks and methods, some of which is summarized in Annex 1, and focusing on the objectives of the CSO Network as articulated by the GEF Council and the Network itself, this evaluation will draw on previous experiences and evaluations of networks to examine the pivotal elements that should be included when evaluating networks: a) Credibility, b) Connectivity, c) Structure, d) Membership, e) Governance, f) Resources, g) Capacity and h) Progress to Results.⁵
4. The first evaluation of the Network which was presented to the GEF Council at its 27th session in October 2005⁶ reviewed many of these same elements and concluded overall that the then model of NGO engagement on both regional and country-level was ineffective. The evaluation also underscored that: “The Secretariat and Council, its implementing partners and the NGO community all have a vested interest to take time and resources to re-energize the Network.”⁷
5. The Evaluation recommended the GEF and the Network focus on:
 - *Increasing the network’s accountability and effectiveness by strengthening the network’s management, increasing accountability in the application of the network’s Guidelines, re-focusing the accreditation process, and strengthening outreach to NGOs;*
 - *Establishing an active partnership between the NGO Network and the GEF Secretariat and Council; and*
 - *Providing support, financial and otherwise, to build the network’s capacity.*

³ Ibid; Supporting Civil Society Networks in International Development Programs. Academy for Educational Development Center for Civil Society and Governance. December 2005; Framing Paper: The State of Network Evaluation” and casebook “Evaluating Networks for Social Change. Network Impact and Enter for Evaluation Innovation. July 2014 among others.

⁴ Social network analysis and the evaluation of leadership networks. Hoppe, B. and Reinelt, C. The Leadership Quarterly 21 (2010). 600-619; Desrshem, L., T. Dagargulia, L. Saganelidze, S. Roels. (2011). NGO Network Analysis Handbook: How to measure and map linkages between NGOs. Save the Children. Tbilisi, and Georgia and Davies, R. (2009). The Use of Social Network Analysis Tools in the Evaluation of Social Change Communications.

⁵ Framing Paper: The State of Network Evaluation: http://www.networkimpact.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/NetworkEvalGuidePt1_FramingPaper.pdf

⁶ Review of the Non-Governmental Organization Network of the GEF. https://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/C.27.Inf_5%20Review%20of%20the%20NGO%20Network%20of%20the%20GEF.pdf

⁷ Id. at para 128.

Evaluation Objectives

6. The evaluation will follow up on these recommendations and will be framed according to the guiding principles of relevance, effectiveness and results⁸ to answer the following key questions:

i. To what extent is the CSO Network meeting its intended goals and strategic objectives and adding value to the GEF Partnership and its membership?

GEF Council indicated the primary role and responsibility of CSO representatives attending GEF Council meetings is to:

- *Prepare for and report back on those meetings to the wider CSO community in their countries and regions.*

In addition the Network has as its objectives⁹:

- *Strengthening the role of civil society in safeguarding the global environment; Strengthening GEF Program implementation through enhanced partnership with civil society and; Strengthening the GEF CSO Network capacity.*

The evaluation will focus both on the Council's expectations of the Network as well as the Network's contributions to the GEF Partnership and the extent to which its roles and responsibilities are relevant and being met.

ii. How are the GEF CSO Network's features contributing to its ability to meet its objectives?

To assess the CSO Network's enabling conditions and constraints (internal and external) that contribute to the Network's strengths and weaknesses, the evaluation will investigate elements of governance, membership, and structure and their effect on the Network's functions as well as describing the context within which the Network has formed, developed and evolved.

7. A general question concerning lessons and learning for the development of the Network will run across all the elements examined in the evaluation. Based on the information gathered the IEO will present conclusions and recommendations to the GEF Council for the development and evolution of the GEF CSO Network.

⁸**Effectiveness:** the extent to which the Network's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance; **Results:** in GEF terms, results include direct project outputs, short- to medium-term outcomes, and progress toward longer term impacts including the global environment;

⁸**Relevance:** the extent to which the activity is suited to local national and international environmental priorities and policies and to global environmental benefits to which the GEF is dedicated; **Efficiency:** the extent to which results have been delivered with the least costly resources possible. *Extracted from the GEF M&E Policy, (2010)*

⁹ Revised Rules and Procedures for the GEF-CSO Network. Version 1.2, June 2014.

The GEF CSO Network¹⁰

A. Formation of the Network

8. The GEF has a long-standing history of engaging with CSOs. Since the GEF pilot phase in 1991, CSOs have held a set of consultations in sessions prior to the GEF semi-annual Council Meetings at which time they actively exchange their views about GEF activities and have a substantive dialogue with the Partnership about GEF projects and policies.
9. As part of the re-structured GEF, the Secretariat presented to the GEF Council, at their first meeting in July 1994, the *“Technical Note on NGO Relations”*.¹¹ It laid out various options for GEF consultation with NGOs as well as options for NGO observers of Council meetings. It also recommended that the Council or the Secretariat approve a list of “accredited NGOs” whose purposes and activities are related to the GEF¹². Finally, it also laid options for funding of NGO consultations and observers. The Technical Note concluded that the Pilot Phase had few formal rules on NGO participation and much of the involvement with NGOs was done in an *ad hoc* manner and *“with the restructuring of the GEF, it is timely to consider a more systematic relationship between the GEF and NGOs”*. The Council subsequently approved the first NGO consultation to take place prior to its February 1995 session.
10. Accordingly, in February 1995, at its 3rd meeting, the GEF Council was presented with a Criteria document¹³ that proposed that Council should *“invite the GEF Secretariat to convene semi-annual NGO consultations in conjunction with the regular meetings of the Council”*. A main objective of the document was also to put forth the criteria for NGO accreditation into the GEF to attend and observe Council meetings and lay out the NGO roles and responsibilities which were to “prepare for and report on the Council meeting and NGO consultation to the wider NGO community”. Any accredited NGO was thus automatically a member of a “GEF NGO Network”. The document indicated that NGOs should take into account the principles of self-determination in choosing which organization would attend¹⁴. With the approval of the Criteria document, the Council established, for the first time, a formal network for dialogue and partnership between NGOs worldwide and the GEF Partnership to more effectively disseminate GEF policies and project information to stakeholders and promote an ongoing dialogue at national levels.

¹⁰ The Network was formerly known as the GEF NGO Network and changed its name to the GEF CSO Network prior to the 5th GEF Assembly. The term ‘NGO’ will be used interchangeably with ‘CSO’.

¹¹ *Technical Note on NGO Relations, 1994.*

<https://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/GEF.C.1.4.pdf>

¹² To be accredited, an NGO was to submit a request to the Secretariat, stating its interest in the GEF and identifying its competence and expertise in matters relevant to the GEF.

¹³ *Criteria for Selection of NGOs to Attend/Observe Council Meetings and Information on NGO Consultations* (GEF/C.3/5). <https://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/GEF.C.3.5.pdf>

¹⁴ These principles include: the principle of broad-based geographic representation; experts on the GEF thematic scopes; those NGOs most suited to address Council agenda items at any given session; a “balance of international, national and local (including indigenous) representation”; those NGOs representing a “broad base of interests”; and rotation among NGOs at Council sessions, while taking into account the importance of continuity.

B. CSO Network Purpose

11. In February 1995 to formalize the relationship between CSOs and the GEF, the GEF CSO Network was tasked with the responsibility of *“disseminating information on the GEF to the NGO community and other stakeholders at the national, regional and international levels”*.¹⁵
12. In 2001, the NGO Focal Points started discussions to formalize the structure and responsibilities of the Network. The Network’s Coordination Committee, in 2003, adopted the *Guidelines for the Coordination Committee of the GEF-NGO Network*. One of the motivations for developing the Guidelines was to better clarify the responsibilities and process of election of the Central Focal Point and Regional Focal Points and to render more effective performance by the Network. The Guidelines also first articulated the self-determined goals and philosophy of the Network, stating them as: *“to strengthen and influence the work of the GEF at all levels”* and *“integrate NGOs’ interests in GEF operations, and to influence and monitor GEF operations to be more effective in general”*. The guidelines were revised in 2006 and 2008.
13. In 2010, revised Rules and Procedures¹⁶ were adopted by the Network which formalized the Regional Focal Point elections and the regions they represent and replaced the latest guidelines and updated the Network objectives as listed below. The Network’s Vision and Mission remain unchanged¹⁷.

“To enhance the role of civil society in safeguarding the global environment; to strengthen GEF Program implementation through enhanced partnership with civil society”; and *to maintain and enhance the capacity of the GEF-CSO Network.*

C. Structure and Governance

14. The GEF CSO Network is a voluntary structure of environmental and sustainable-development oriented CSOs whose work parallels at least one of the GEF focal areas.
15. The Network membership is currently comprised of 466 member organizations¹⁸. Of these, 189 CSOs are in the Africa Region representing 37 countries; 113 in Asia and the Pacific representing 32 countries; 79 in Europe representing 27 countries; and 85 in the Americas representing 24 countries.

Figure 1. CSO Network Members

¹⁵ CSO Network Webpage: <http://www.gefcso.org/index.cfm?&menuid=75>

¹⁶ GEF CSO Network Webpage - Revised Rules and Procedures for the GEF-CSO Network. June 2014. <http://www.gefcso.org/index.cfm?&menuid=154>

¹⁷ The Network’s new strategic plan may have updated Vision and Mission.

¹⁸ Membership List received from GEF-CSO Network, 05/20/2015. The membership has fluctuated over time. A 2008 GEF Council document “Enhancing Civil Society Engagement in the GEF” cites the number at 660 organizations which had been accredited to the GEF.

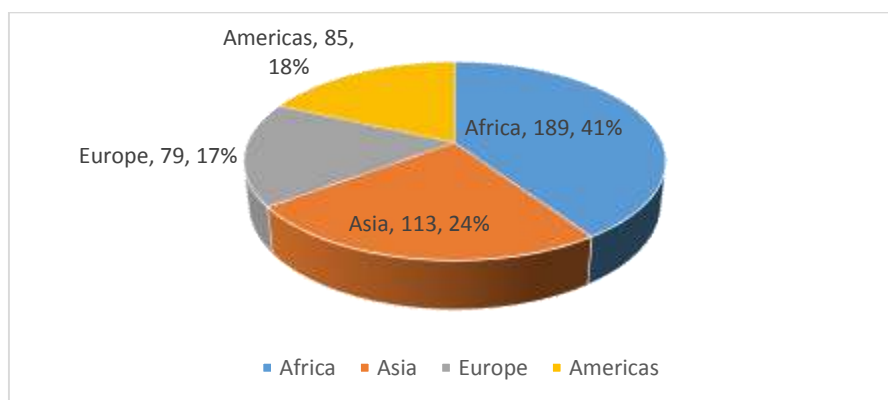


Table 1: Distribution of CSO Network Membership

Region	Number of CSOs in Region	Number of Countries Represented
Africa	189	37
Central Africa	37	6
Eastern Africa	53	8
Northern Africa	12	7
Southern Africa	30	7
Western Africa	57	9
Asia Pacific	113	32
North East Asia	27	5
South Asia	41	5
South East Asia	20	7
West Asia	18	8
Pacific	7	7
Europe	79	27
East Europe & Central Asia	36	13
Europe	43	14
Americas	85	24
North America	29	2
South America	24	7
Caribbean	12	8
Mesoamerica	20	7
Total	466	120

16. Overall, the structure of the Network has come about as a result of self-regulating initiatives, i.e. coming together at national, regional and international levels to develop common norms and standards¹⁹. The structure consists of elected NGOs each of whom represents a region encompassing more than one country, or NGO constituency.
17. These organizations are called Regional Focal Points (RFPs) and are members of the “Coordination Committee” of the Network. The Coordination Committee is currently made of 16 RFPs, 1 each from different geographic regions. In addition, 3 Indigenous Peoples Focal Points representing Indigenous People’s organizations (IPFP) are appointed by the Indigenous Peoples’ groups from three main regions – Asia Pacific, Africa and the Americas.²⁰ Indigenous Peoples’ representation was established as a result of an evaluation of the NGO Network in 2005, and IPFPs were formally introduced to the governance and structure through CSO Network Guidelines in April 2008 and the Network Strategic Plan in August 2008. The Coordination Committee acts as the final ruling body of the Network and makes decisions on its behalf.
18. The work of the Coordination Committee is facilitated by a Central Focal Point (CFP) for the Network. The CFP is elected by the Coordination Committee for a four (4) year term from members of the Coordination Committee²¹. Sub committees are established by the Coordination Committee to assist

¹⁹ *Civil Society Self-Regulation*. http://coddeconduitaong.ro/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/CSO_self_regulation.pdf

²⁰ The number has also fluctuated. At one point two RFPs, representing donor constituencies were also on the Coordination Committee. Indigenous Focal Point representation was included in 2006.

²¹ GEF-CSO Network website. <http://www.gefcso.org/index.cfm?&menuid=13&lang=EN> Accessed 05/19/2015

with its work or undertake work between meetings. The main sub-committees are: Management Sub-Committee; Governance Sub-Committee; Outreach Sub-Committee; Strategy Sub-Committee and GEF-related Conventions Sub-Committee. Figure 2 below shows the current structure of the Network.

Figure 2: Governance Structure of the GEF CSO Network



19. Elections for the Focal Point positions are carried out by an Election Task Force established by the Governance Sub-Committee and overseen by the Coordination Committee. The period of office of the Regional Focal Points and Indigenous People's Focal Points(IPFP) is also four years from the time of election. Neither CFPs, RFPs nor IPFPs may serve more than two consecutive terms.
20. Between 1995 and 2008, Network member organizations were accredited by the GEF. In November 2008, the Council at its 34th session considered the document *Enhancing Civil Society Engagement and Partnership with the GEF* (GEF/C.34/9) and thereby decided to replace the accreditation system for NGOs operated by the GEF Secretariat with a membership system operated by the Network. The membership/accreditation process and maintenance of the membership database thus became the responsibility of the Network. Organizations admitted as members are eligible to attend GEF CSO Consultations and Council/Assembly meetings in a similar manner to formerly accredited organizations.

21. In 2011, the Network split the sub-region of West and Central Africa into 2 sub-regions with an RFP for each constituency, thereby adding an additional RFP to the Coordination Committee of the Network and raising the number to 16 RFPs. In 2012, the Network amended its rules to include procedures for the Indigenous Peoples Focal Points (IPFPs). “In Dec 2013, the Network changed its name to GEF CSO Network (as reflected in the June 2014 version of Rules).”
22. At the June 2015 meeting of the Coordination Committee, the CSO network agreed on a revised governance structure that will replace the position of the CFP with a separate Chair and Co-Chair and a Secretariat. The CSO Network also announced the completion of a new 7-year strategy.

D. Funding Arrangements

23. The *Technical Note on NGO Relations with the GEF* presented at the first council in July 1994 laid out three options for funding of NGO consultations and observers. The costs of NGO consultation have always been included in the administrative budget of the, item “GEF Administration”. At its 3rd Council session in 1995, the GEF Council approved a \$50,000 budget for each CSO Consultation²². The Council decision also states that the “Secretariat could seek voluntary contributions to supplement its budget where possible and appropriate”²³. In 1996 a Voluntary NGO Trust Fund was established to support NGO consultations.²⁴
24. The “Voluntary NGO Trust Fund” was dormant for several years and in October 2008, at its 34th session, the Council approved re-activating the Trust Fund and adjusted the support provided for the participation of eligible Network representatives at Council meetings from the 50,000 US dollars set in 1995 to 70,445 US dollars, to “account for cost increase of services, travel and inflation.”²⁵
25. At its November 2010 meeting, the Council reiterated the need to reactive the NGO Voluntary Trust Fund through a new multi-donor trust fund to be established in the World Bank and seeded by the Secretariat with a 150,000 US dollars contribution. Funds remaining in the Voluntary NGO Trust Fund were transferred to the multi-donor trust fund. The trust fund is used to “support the work of the Network to achieve heightened engagement by CSOs in the GEF through results oriented activities with an emphasis on more effective engagements at the local and regional levels.”²⁶ The trust fund has not received any additional funds since the initial contribution.

²² Although discussed, Council rejected a Secretariat 1995 recommendation to fund regional consultation workshops for NGOs.

²³ *Criteria for Selection of NGOs to Attend/Observe Council Meetings and Information on NGO Consultations*, 1995 <https://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/GEF.C.3.5.pdf>

²⁴ *Enhancing Civil Society Engagement and Partnership with the GEF* (GEF/C.34/9) <https://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/C.39.10.%20Enhancing%20the%20Engagement%20of%20CSOs.pdf>

²⁵ *Enhancing Civil Society Engagement and Partnership with the GEF* (GEF/C.34/9) <https://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/C.34.9%20Enhancing%20Engagement%20of%20Civil%20Society%20with%20the%20GEF.pdf>

²⁶ Ibid.

E. GEF Secretariat and Network Interaction

26. The GEF Secretariat plays a substantive role in supporting the Network for participation at Council and other GEF project activities. GEF CEOs over the years have provided varying levels of endorsement and promotion of the Network. The CEO at each Consultation hosts a question/answer period with CSO Network members, providing a forum for substantive discussions. A CSO coordinator acts as the Secretariat's point of contact with the CSO Network.
27. The Coordinator position was held by five staff members over the years on a part time basis until the recent hiring of the current full time Civil Society Relations and Capacity Development officer in 2012. Apart from organizing meetings and logistics for providing funding to the Network, the CSO Coordinator carries out communication and coordination activities with the CSO Network's CFP and other CSOs leading up to and during Council sessions and CSO consultations and responds to queries or comments from CSOs. Prior to 2008, when the CSO accreditation system was operated at the GEF Secretariat, the basic duties of the CSO Coordinator also included accrediting CSOs to attend GEF Council and Assembly meetings and maintaining the database of accredited organizations.
28. Following the 2005 evaluation, the GEF Secretariat presented to the Council at its 28th meeting in May 2006 an Action Plan to address the recommendations of the evaluation. The Action Plan focused on the three main recommendations of the evaluation and presented a set of short term measures that the GEF start implementing in order to strengthen the Network's management and increase its accountability²⁷. The Action Plan was unfortunately not discussed by Council due to competing Agenda items and was never re-introduced.

Approach, Methodology and Limitations

29. The evaluation's key questions will be analyzed in the context of Network elements as indicated in Table 2 below.

Table 2: CSO Network Evaluation Matrix.

Key Evaluation Questions	Network Elements	Example Evaluation Questions	Information Sources	Possible Approaches
- Is the CSO Network meeting its intended goals and strategic objectives and adding value to the GEF partnership and its members? Network Objectives as set by the GEF Council: i. Preparing for and reporting on the GEF Council meetings and NGO Consultations to the wider CSO community at the national, regional & international levels Network Objectives as set by the CSO Network:²⁸ i. To enhance the role of civil society in safeguarding the global environment ii. To strengthen global environmental policy development through enhanced partnership between Civil Society and the GEF iii. To Strengthen the GEF NGO Network Capacity	Connectivity	What GEF-relevant information (knowledge products, presentations, reports, etc.) is flowing through the Network to its membership and other stakeholders?	- Network Documents - Data / Results from Surveys, Interviews, and other primary sources (e.g. workshops)	(Online) Self-Assessment - Interviews and Focus Groups/Focused meetings with key stakeholders - Cost / Level of Effort Overview Assessment - Social Network Analysis
	Credibility	- Are the Network's objectives still relevant? - To what extent has the Network aligned with GEF goals on gender mainstreaming and indigenous peoples' inclusion? - Has the CSO Network contributed to shaping the GEF agenda (getting new issues on the GEF agenda, policies incorporated by the Council)?	- Council and GEF SEC Documents - Network Documents - Non-GEF CSO Networks	- Document review - Interviews and Focus Groups/Focused meetings with key stakeholders - Surveys (Online) Self-Assessment - Comparative analysis with other networks
	Capacity	- How are Network members adding value to one another's work, i.e. achieving more together than they could alone? - Are there clear signals of development of CSO/member capacity?	Data / Results from Surveys, Interviews, and other primary sources	- Interviews and Focus Groups/Focused meetings with key stakeholders - Surveys (Online) Self-Assessment
	Progress towards Results	- Are there clear signals of influence on GEF policy and program implementation? Can a case be made as to Network contribution? - Has the Network membership monitored the implementation of GEF portfolios and policies at the country level?	- Council and GEF SEC Documents - Network Documents	- Document review - Interviews and Focus Groups with key stakeholders - Surveys (Online) Self-Assessment
How are the CSO Network's features (governance, structure, membership, connectivity, etc.) contributing to its ability to meet its objectives	Connectivity	- How effective and efficient are the connections the network makes? - Are all members contributing, individually or through joint efforts, to network goals?	- Network Documents - Data / Results from Surveys, Interviews, and other primary sources (e.g. workshops)	(Online) Self-Assessment - Interviews and Focus Groups/Focused meetings with key stakeholders - Cost / Level of Effort Overview Assessment - Social Network Analysis

²⁸ Rules and procedures for the GEF-CSO Network, June 26, 2010 – Revised June 2014 - <http://www.gefcso.org/index.cfm?&menuid=154&lang=EN>

Key Evaluation Questions	Network Elements	Example Evaluation Questions	Information Sources	Possible Approaches
	Membership	- Who participates in the Network and why? Are women's, indigenous peoples' and youth organizations represented? Has the Network assembled member organizations with the capacities needed to meet Network goals (experience, skills, and connections)? - Is the process for Network membership transparent, effective, and efficient? Has it changed over time? - What is the geographic distribution of membership in relation to GEF operations? - What have been the trends in membership?	- Council and GEF SEC Documents - Network Documents - Data / Results from Surveys, Interviews, Focused meetings with key stakeholders and other primary sources	- Document review - Social Network Analysis - Surveys - Meta-Evaluations - Comparison to other Networks - Visual Timeline (infographic Representation)
	Structure	- Has the Network and GEF Partnership adjusted to meet changing GEF needs and priorities? - What infrastructure is in place for Network coordination and communications? - Are these coordination and communication structures efficient and effective? - Are lessons from similar networks (Adaptation Fund, GCF, CIF, etc.) used to inform the workings of the GEF CSO Network?	- Membership Databases - Council and GEF SEC Documents - Network Documents	(Online) Self-Assessment - Social Network Analysis - Visual Timeline (infographic Representation) - Document review
	Governance	- Are the Network's governance rules applied in a transparent manner? - Is there a transparent conflict resolution process? - Do Network members actively participate in Network elections? - Do decision-making processes encourage members to contribute and collaborate? - How dependent is the Network on a small number of individuals? (male/female disaggregated) - Do governance structures take into consideration gender mainstreaming?	- Council and GEF SEC Documents - Network Documents - Data / Results from Surveys, Interviews, and other primary sources	- Document review - Interviews and Focus Groups/Focused meetings with key stakeholders - Surveys (Online) Self-Assessment - Meta-Evaluations - Comparative analysis with other networks
	Resources	- What is the level of financial and technical resources provided to the Network? - Has the Network secured needed material resources? - Is the Network adapting its business plan over time? - How has the GEF partnership [GEF SEC, Agencies, OFPs, IEO, etc...] supported the work of the CSO network?	- Network Documents - Data / Results from Surveys, Interviews, and other primary sources	- Document review - Interviews and Focus Groups with key stakeholders
	Capacity	Does the Network have the needed capacities to advance members' skills & Network goals?	- Data / Results from Surveys, Interviews, and other primary sources - Network Documents	- Interviews and Focus Groups/Focused meetings with key stakeholders - Surveys (Online) Self-Assessment

30. Based on initial desk review, the evaluation team will assess the level of information available and identify data gaps. Accordingly, the team will then selectively use an appropriate combination of tools. The final decisions on which tools and methodologies to use will take place after the initial phases of data gathering. It is proposed that the evaluation will use a mixed methods approach, relying on both primary and secondary sources for data collection. Gender and Knowledge Management considerations will be mainstreamed in methodology and conclusions. Evaluation activities will be drawn from the following:

- **Document review:** Further review of documentation to include additional literature on: the subject of evaluating CSO Networks; GEF Council documents; Secretariat's policies and documents; and GEF CSO Network documents.
- **Surveys:** Surveys will be delivered in focus groups and online to capture the perspectives of a wide range of stakeholders, including the GEF Secretariat, GEF CSO Network members, GEF Council Members, GEF Agencies, STAP, GEF OFPs and other relevant government departments.
- **Meta-Evaluation:** Review of evaluative evidence from the 2005 evaluation of the Network as well as other evaluations by evaluation offices of GEF Agencies, or by other national or international evaluation departments, Agencies or organizations.
- **Comparative Analysis with Other Networks:** A number of models of CSO engagement with different International Governmental Organizations (IGOs) and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) have evolved over the years. Each institution has a different method of engagement. The evaluation will undertake a comparative analysis of networks with similar objectives to assess what structures and modes of engagement are possible and to what extent the GEF CSO network faces similar issues and levels of accomplishment.
- **Online Self-Assessment:** Could be used to assess how the Network's governing members identify strengths and weaknesses concerning the Network's activities, capacity, quality of collaboration and overall health. Such assessments can contribute to measure effectiveness, efficiency, gaps and strengths.
- **Interviews, Focus Groups, Focused Meetings with key stakeholders:** In-depth interviews and/or Focus Group or Focused Meeting sessions will be conducted with a selection of relevant stakeholders including GEF Secretariat staff, GEF Agencies, GEF CSO Network Central Focal point and Coordination Committee members CSO Network members and CSO organizations. Some stakeholder will be selected on their attendance at relevant, ongoing activities of the GEF Secretariat, for example Extended Constituency Workshops (ECWs). The IEO may also convene international gatherings of CSOs or consider other relevant international meetings for gathering information depending on the attendance of relevant CSOs.

- **Cost / Level of Effort Overview Assessment:** An overview assessment of the cost, budget and level of effort going into the CSO Network may be conducted with an aim to illustrate the relationship between inputs, outputs and outcomes.
 - **Social Network Analysis:** A “set of theories, tools, and processes for understanding the relationships and structures of a network”²⁹. This evaluation may use network analysis to examine the structure of the CSO Network and its relationship with the GEF Partnership (GEF Secretariat, GEF Agencies, Governments, and other stakeholders). Network analysis can also be used to examine the relationship between the Network’s members themselves and the Network’s Coordination Committee
31. Networks are inherently complex and dynamic systems which makes them difficult to evaluate. A main limitation of this evaluation will be the size and scope of the CSO Network and the size of the GEF Partnership. GEF CSO Network is a voluntary network of over 460 members located in a 120 countries worldwide. The GEF Partnership includes the GEF Agencies, Governments, STAP, the GEF Secretariat, and other stakeholders.
32. A correlated limitation is the lack of a monitored results chain guiding the Network’s activities. Without a system of aggregated metrics it will be challenging to infer the linkages between Network inputs and GEF results. To help ameliorate this challenge, the IEO has developed a GEF CSO Network logic chain based on Network and Council documents and presented as **Table 3** with proposed indicators for various levels of results.
33. This evaluation will also be limited by a relatively short timeframe. The IEO will address these limitations through close collaborations with representatives from the partnership as described in the stakeholder involvement. Regular feedback through the Reference Group and Peer Reviewers will provide the benefit of early communications on directions of the evaluation.

Additional Stakeholder Involvement

34. Two groups are proposed to be formed in order to draw additional input from stakeholders to support the evaluation.
- **Reference Group:** Representatives from the GEF Secretariat, GEF Agencies, the CSO Network, STAP, SGP and possibly country/Council representatives will be invited to become members of a Reference Group. The Reference Group will: 1) comment on the Approach Paper and drafts of the report; 2) comment on utility of the evaluation so as to provide lessons that are most useful for operations; 3) help to identify and establish contact with the appropriate individuals for

²⁹ Hoppe, Bruce, and Claire Reinelt. "Social network analysis and the valuation of leadership networks." *The Leadership Quarterly* 21.4 (2010): 600-619.

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1048984310000901>

interviews/focus groups; and 4) help to identify and facilitate access to information. The Reference Group is expected to be between 10-15 individuals.

- **Peer Review Group:** This group will consist of some relevant non-GEF stakeholder institutions such as those interested in network assessment to lend technical expertise to the subject of network evaluation as well as evaluation specialists from GEF Agency Evaluation Offices. This group is expected to be no more than 2-3 individuals who will be asked to work and comment on specific issues directly coordinated by the evaluation Task Manager.

Table 3: GEF CSO Network Results Chain

Network Objectives	Inputs	Activities	Outputs ³⁰	Outcomes	Network Vision
Network Objectives as set by the GEF Council: - Preparing for and reporting on the GEF Council meetings and NGO Consultations to the wider CSO community at the national, regional & international levels Network Objectives as set by the CSO Network: Objective 1: To enhance the role of civil society in safeguarding the global environment Objective 2: To strengthen global environmental policy development through enhanced partnership between Civil Society and the GEF Objective 3: To Strengthen the GEF NGO Network Capacity	CSO Network members time and effort GEF Secretariat contribution – staff time and effort (including GEF CSO Coordinator) Resources and Funding	CSO Network Members participation in: - GEF ECW Meetings and preparatory CSO Consultation - GEF Council Meetings and preparatory CSO Consultation - GEF Assembly Meetings and preparatory CSO Consultation - National Meetings as called by National OFPs CSO Network participation in GEF working groups concerning GEF policies and operations CSO Network member contributions to: - Project design - Project Execution - Monitoring & Evaluation	Knowledge and Information Exchange Awareness Raising and Skills Building on Global Environment Issues CSO Network Reporting to Membership - Number of National consultations of CSO Network members with Country OFPs - Number of CSO Network (non) Members attending ECW, Council, and Assembly etc. meetings - Number of Network members / CSOs participating in network - Knowledge products available (presentations publications, videos, etc.) - Number of CSO Network reports - CSO Network Formal Intervention in GEF Council and Assembly Meetings on Council documents and GEF policies CSOs as executors of GEF Projects - Percent of Projects executed (fully or partially) by CSOs/from the GEF CSO Network	CSOs are effectively engaged in shaping GEF policy and project operations CSO Network members capacity strengthened to participate in GEF-related activities - County National portfolio is inclusive of CSO inputs - GEF policies developed with input from the CSO Network	A dynamic civil society plays a role in influencing policies and actions at all levels to safeguard the global environment and promote sustainable development

³⁰ Indicators will be dis-aggregated by gender when possible.

Knowledge Management and Communications

35. Key stakeholders of this evaluation will be identified and consulted with adequate time at the beginning, during and at the end of the evaluation process. This will ensure the appropriate level of engagement using relevant channels. The evaluation findings will be presented to the GEF Council and subsequently disseminated to the key stakeholders and broader audiences.

Management of the Evaluation

36. The evaluation will be task managed by Ms. Baljit Wadhwa, Senior Evaluation Officer with oversight from the Chief Evaluation Officer and Director of the IEO. The Manager will lead a team comprised of GEF IEO staff and consultants. The consultants will be hired to undertake specific elements such as analysis of data collected through surveys, data collected on membership through the CSO Network and Agencies or analysis of connectivity and network health, for example, through social network analysis.

- First Phase: Phase 1 includes pre-evaluation activities such as upstream consultations, establishment of the Reference Group and Peer Review Group and drafting the Approach Paper. The first phase is expected to be completed by end of June, 2015.
- Second Phase: The second phase is comprised of desk review activities to gather information and identify data gaps. It will start in July and will be completed by August 2015. Key deliverable: Final Approach Paper.
- Third Phase: The third phase will use an appropriate combination of methods to gather and analyze additional information. These could include data collected from surveys, self-assessments, network analysis, interviews, focus groups, meetings and other stakeholder meetings that may occur. To the extent possible, the IEO will use existing and planned Office activities as well as possibly international gatherings, to also obtain information, such as at ECWs ongoing evaluations, etc. Key Deliverable: Analysis of primary data.
- Fourth Phase: The fourth phase consists of triangulation, verification and gap analysis of data from all sources and preparation of the evaluation report. The synthesis of information from the various sources is expected to begin January 2016 with a draft ready for comments from the reference group and other stakeholders towards the middle of March. Key deliverable: Draft Evaluation Report.
- Fifth Phase: The CSO Network, the GEF Secretariat and other stakeholders will be given one month to provide comments. Feedback will be sought to the greatest extent possible through in-person meetings as well as written responses. All comments will be incorporated into the final evaluation report that will be shared with the GEF Council in early May 2016 and presented at the June 2016 meeting. Key deliverable: Final Evaluation Report and knowledge products.

Time Frame

37. The Evaluation commenced with a pre-evaluation phase consisting primarily of a desk review of readily available documents and development of this approach paper. Following consultation with the CSO Network and the GEF Partnership, including GEF Agencies, GEF Secretariat, STAP, Governments, and other stakeholders, the evaluation will start its Phase 2 of data gathering and analysis, followed by inputs from the Reference Group and Peer Reviewers on appropriate methods and approaches to address data gaps in Phase 3. The final phase will be one of synthesizing and triangulating information and preparing the evaluation report. Evaluation learning products will be developed and published following the conclusion on the evaluation.

Table 3: Proposed Schedule for CSO Network Evaluation

Phase	Evaluation Phase	Time Frame
1	Pre-evaluation desk review, upstream consultations & Approach Paper	End of June 2015
2	Further desk review; identification of data gaps; further methods selection	July 2015
3	- Application of appropriate methods/tools for additional data gathering and analysis - Peer Review & Reference Group Consultation	August 2016 – January 2016 September 2015
4	- Triangulation, verification, gap analysis and preparation of Evaluation Report - Draft Evaluation shared and discussed with Reference Group/ and stakeholders and edits finalized	January - April 15, 2016
5	- Final Evaluation shared with GEF Council - Evaluation Conclusions & Recommendation presented at GEF Council meeting - Knowledge products and dissemination activities	May 2016 June 2016 May - September 2016

Annex 1: Literature Review

38. The following section presents a brief review of some key pieces of literature. The review is not meant to be exhaustive or describe the entirety of information reviewed in considering why networks and evaluations of them are important, what is unique about network evaluation and implications for relevant designs questions and methods/tools. Additional literature will be assessed in Phase 2 of the evaluation for input into selection of final scope and approach for the study.
39. Networks are defined by Perkins and Court³¹ as organizational structures or processes that bring actors who share common interests on a specific issue or a set of issues. They go on to state that networks can take multiple forms depending on the characteristics of their internal and external environments. Networks can act as: filters, amplifiers, conveners, facilitators, community builders and providers/investors and indeed can play more than one role. Usually several functions are carried out simultaneously. By 2000 it was calculated there were over 20,000 transnational civic networks active on the global stage³².
40. For Provan and Milward,³³ consistent with a multiple-stakeholder perspective, evaluation of network effectiveness can be viewed at three levels of analysis; the community the network serves, the network itself and the organizational participants. They suggest the simplest way of evaluating network-level effectiveness is the ebb and flow of agencies to and from the network. Networks obviously need to attract and retain members if they are to be viable forms of organization. A closely related form of assessing network-level effectiveness, they state, is by the range of actual services provided by the network rather than simply the number of agencies involved. A third way is to assess the strength of the relationships between and among network members, especially across the full network. One network concept that is particularly salient in this regard is multiplexity, which refers to the strength of ties between network agencies. Finally, evaluation of the administrative structure of the network is critical to evaluating effectiveness, particularly the way in which the central administrative structure acquires and then distributes resources for and to the network.
41. Wilson-Grau and Nunez³⁴ state that conventional evaluation methods are not designed for such complex organizational forms or the diverse kinds of activity to which they are characteristically dedicated. This is due to the dynamic, complex and open environments in which networks operate; changing responsibility flows from and around autonomous members; and difficulty in establishing reliable links of cause and effect between a network's activities and the results that it aims to achieve.

³¹ Networks and Policy Processes in International Development: a literature review. Working Paper 252. August. 2005. <http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/160.pdf>

³² Edwards, Michael, and John Gaventa, eds. Global citizen action. Routledge, 2014

³³ *Do Networks Really Work? A Framework for Evaluating Public-Sector Organizational Networks*. Public Administration Review. July/August 2001. Vol. 61, No. 4. http://www.researchgate.net/profile/H_Milward/publication/228608066_Do_networks_really_work_A_framework_for_evaluating_public-sector_organizational_networks/links/0deec533acff910255000000.pdf

³⁴ *Evaluating International Social-Change Networks. Lessons from the Inter-American Democracy Network*. 2006. <http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/Evaluating International Social Change Networks, Ricardo W.pdf>

Nevertheless, Wilson-Grau and Nunez suggest that there are four qualities and three operational dimensions to take into account. The qualities are: democracy, diversity, dynamism and performance. These four quality criteria run through three sets of operational dimensions: political purpose and strategies, i.e. what social changes does the network aim to achieve; organization and management; and leadership and participation. They go on to share a matrix with evaluation criteria that does seek to be exhaustive to cover all aspects of a network that potentially should be considered in an evaluation.

42. Smith and Lynott in *Evaluating Civil Society Networks*³⁵ confirm that while the existing literature is useful for isolated aspects of network function, it does not clearly or collectively comprise a comprehensive tool appropriate for all network evaluations. Obviously, each network has different evaluative needs and structures so no two evaluations or their frameworks should be the same. Different networks would also have different objectives for their evaluation. They suggest that to ascertain the real success of a network, evaluations need to measure the strength of the network's structure and processes and the impact on members and external environments. The evaluation framework discussed in their "lessons" document is based on these two core areas and draws also on Grau and Nunez's characteristics of a functioning network. In the example that Smith and Lynott discuss *strength* was embodied by the concepts of: governance, participation, interconnectivity and credibility, while *impact* was assessed through internal and external perspectives, including internal capacity and external change objectives.
43. Another framework for network evaluation was proposed by Network Impact and Center for Evaluation Innovation. In their "Framing Paper: The State of Network Evaluation"³⁶ and casebook "Evaluating Networks for Social Change"³⁷, in which they present a set of case studies for evaluating networks. Their framework is divided into 3 pillars: (1) Network connectivity: this includes *Membership* and *Structure* of the network; (2) Network Health: this includes *Resources*, *Infrastructure*, and *Advantage* or network capacity; and (3) Network Results: this includes *Interim Outcomes* and *Goals* or *Intended Results*. The organizations also present a Network Health scorecard³⁸ by which network members can assess: (1) Network Purpose: of the network – all members have common purpose / goals – identified strategic objectives – plans reflect these goals; (2) Network Performance [relationship and communication] & [value added]: communications between members – working jointly – communication with stakeholders – adding value to the network / network is also adding value to its constituencies; (3) Network Operations: decision making process (voting, coordination) network governance; and (4) Network Capacity (of members and member organizations) – materials and resources to advance the network goals.

³⁵

http://www.partners.net/images/partners/what_we_do/civil_society/evaluating%20cs%20networks_eng.pdf.pdf

³⁶ http://www.networkimpact.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/NetworkEvalGuidePt1_FramingPaper.pdf

³⁷ http://www.networkimpact.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/NetworkEvalGuidePt2_Casebook_Rev.pdf

³⁸ http://www.networkimpact.org/downloads/NH_Scorecard.pdf

44. Browne in *Monitoring and evaluating civil society partnerships*³⁹ shares approaches and methods used by international CSOs to monitor and evaluate the quality of their relationships with partner (including southern) CSOs in networks. This paper focuses on six tools that can be used to monitor the partnership relationship itself, specifically power balances and imbalances, rather than the broader issues of partnership outcomes or impact. Among the specific tools described are: accountability surveys to assess how partners are rated on efficiency, relationship and communications, non-financial contribution, value-added and creditability; an online self-assessment tool which helps organizations identify their strengths and weaknesses; another self-assessment tool: “six lenses”, which is a framework that examines consortia context, structure, representation, diversity, attitude and communications; a monitoring tool to measure progress in relationships; and a story-telling methodology, including presentation of a visual timeline to illustrate a network’s growth.
45. Hoppe and Reinelt⁴⁰ discuss Social Network Analysis (SNA) as a method for understanding the relationships and structures of a network. Hoppe and Reinelt describe a network in terms of “nodes” (people, organizations, or events in a network) and “links” (relationship between the nodes). By collecting and analyzing network data, SNA practitioners are able to study and display the connections between network nodes. Using mathematical tools through SNA, evaluators are able to identify and understand different metrics in network evaluation. These metrics can include (1) Bonding and Bridging, (2) Clusters, (3) Density and Links per Node, and (4) Hubs among others.
46. Social Network Analysis’ purpose in evaluations is also described by Davies⁴¹ as a “representational technology”, having three aspects: network diagrams, network matrices and mathematical measures describing the structure of networks and the place of actors within them. Because of the complexity of many networks, various software packages have been developed to analyze and visualize networks. These are useful, he says, but not essentially to many of the uses of SNA proposed in his paper. The most important point of difference between SNA and other forms of analysis of social phenomena is the attention paid to the structure of relationship between actors, in contrast to the analysis of the attributes of actors. This difference in approach is one of emphasis, they do not need to be mutually exclusive. In practice, SNA would pay attention to both.

³⁹ E. Browne. *Monitoring and evaluating civil society partnerships*. December 2013. GSDRC. Helpdesk Research Report. <http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/HDQ1024.pdf>

⁴⁰ Hoppe, Bruce, and Claire Reinelt. "Social network analysis and the valuation of leadership networks." *The Leadership Quarterly* 21.4 (2010): 600-619. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1048984310000901>

⁴¹ Davies, R. (2009). *The Use of Social Network Analysis Tools in the Evaluation of Social Change Communications*. <http://mande.co.uk/blog/wp-content/uploads/2009/10/The-Use-of-Social-Network-Analysis-Tools-in-the-Evaluation-of-Social-Change-Communications-C.pdf>

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