

Fifth Overall Performance Study

Approach paper Sub-study on GEF Engagement with Civil Society August 27, 2013

1.0 Rationale

1. According to its terms of reference approved by the GEF Council in its June 2012 session, the Fifth Overall Performance Study (OPS5) of the GEF will be conducted in two separate phases and produce two separate reports; a first report was submitted to the GEF6 Replenishment Committee in April 2013 and a final report to be presented in the final phase of the replenishment considerations (September 2013). The first report provided a report based on current results, achievements and performance of the GEF as emerging from the evaluative evidence gathered by the GEF Evaluation Office up to the end of 2012. The final report will provide updates to this evaluative evidence as well as present studies on specific sub-studies, including a review of GEF's engagement with civil society organizations.

2.0 Background

1. The global environmental conventions, for which the GEF serves as financial mechanism, all contain language regarding engagement with civil society (See Annex B). Civil society may be generally understood as different from government and the state. One broad definition of civil society covers all groups outside government such as non-government organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), voluntary associations and clubs, labor unions, indigenous peoples' organizations, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, universities, and professional associations, among others. GEF has engaged primarily with NGOs, CBOs, Associations, indigenous groups and academic institutions in its CSO engagement. Private sector is not considered in this evaluation as a category of CSOs.
2. Civil society organizations as key development actors are recognized as effective intermediaries between local communities and governments, providing voice to marginalized groups, and holding governments and private actors accountable to sustainability goals. Given this emphasis in Agenda 21, from its inception it was expected that CSOs would have an important role to play in the GEF. The involvement of civil society organizations, particularly local, in GEF projects has thus always been considered necessary for success.
3. This perspective was intertwined with GEF listening to and including local/indigenous voices. International treaties and obligations recognize the importance of protecting indigenous peoples and the lands and resources upon which they depend. The adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

highlights the rising importance of the need to secure a sustainable future for Indigenous Peoples globally. The CBD and the UNFCCC, among others, provide important guidance to financial mechanisms, such as the GEF, on appropriate activities to support indigenous peoples and the land and resources they conserve and rely upon for survival¹.

4. The main document governing GEF's mandate, the GEF Instrument², calls for public involvement in GEF supported projects and activities through access to information, consultation, and effective participation by major groups and local communities. The GEF's engagement with civil society and indigenous peoples is guided by the GEF Policy on Public Involvement in GEF projects³, adopted by the GEF council in 1996 and the GEF Policy on Agency Minimum Standards on Environmental and Social Safeguards⁴. The GEF "Principles and Guidelines for Engagement with Indigenous Peoples"⁵ review these relevant policies as well as presenting additional guidelines on enhanced engagement.
5. From these various documents, we note that GEF engages civil society, including indigenous people, organizations through multiple mechanisms:
 - a. Civil Society Initiatives:
 - i. GEF-NGO Network
 - b. GEF Initiatives
 - i. Country Support Program⁶
 - ii. Small Grants Programme
 - c. GEF Project/Program Design and Planning
 - i. Engaged as stakeholders in design consultations
 - ii. Contracted to design projects/programs
 - d. GEF Project Execution
 - i. As the main executing agency with all associated management and budget responsibilities
 - ii. Involved in the execution of projects through sub-contracting or as part of the stakeholder consultation process
 - e. Monitoring & Evaluation
 - i. Engaged in collection of data
 - ii. Contracted to undertake mid-term reviews or terminal evaluations
 - iii. Involved in evaluations of the GEF Evaluation Office
 - f. Co-financing

¹ The CBD, for example, has invited the GEF to provide special consideration in funding to projects that clearly contain elements of participation of indigenous and local communities, where appropriate, and to support the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples (COP6 Decision vi/10, 29 and 30, Convention on Biological Diversity).

² <http://www.thegef.org/gef/node/2552>

³ This policy was approved by the GEF Council at its seventh meeting in April 1996, as was proposed in Council Document GEF/C.7/6, *Public Involvement in GEF Projects*.

⁴ This Policy lays out minimum standards on environmental and social safeguards that all GEF Partner Agencies are expected to meet. One of the eight core criteria is designated for Indigenous Peoples, specifying criterion GEF Partner Agencies wishing to implement projects that involve Indigenous Peoples must meet in order to implement GEF projects.

⁵ http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/publication/GEF%20IP%20Part%201%20Guidelines_r7.pdf The *Principles and Guidelines for Engagement with Indigenous Peoples* provide detailed information and guidance to GEF Partner Agencies implementing relevant projects. The document provides information on project planning, participation, governance, benefit sharing, traditional knowledge, gender, resettlement and accountability and grievance systems.

⁶ In particular, through National Dialogue Initiatives, National Portfolio Formulation Exercises and Expanded Constituency Workshops

- i. Provide funds or in-kind contributions to project budgets
6. Civil society organizations are the main actors along with other forms of community-based organizations, including indigenous peoples' organizations, in the GEF-supported Small Grants Programme (SGP). GEF created the Small Grants Programme in 1992 as a means of directly financing NGO and CBO initiatives that generate global environmental benefits in ways that address a country's sustainable development priorities. The SGP also "seeks to reach poor and marginalized populations, including women and indigenous peoples". Since its inception, the SGP has been implemented by the United Nations Development Programme⁷.
7. As directed by GEF/C.34/9, the GEF also facilitates the participation of non-governmental organizations in consultative and decision-making processes at the global level through the GEF - NGO Network⁸ and the CSO consultations which take place in conjunction with GEF Council meetings twice a year.
8. Recently, and as part of the GEF's mandate to accredit new institutions to serve as GEF project implementing partners, the GEF Council launched an accreditation process for new national, regional, and civil society organizations.⁹ Upon completion of the process, these agencies will be eligible to implement GEF-financed environmental projects, marking a significant expansion of the GEF's family of partner organizations. For the first time in its 20-year plus history, the GEF will work directly with national, regional, and civil society partners on environmental projects.

2.1 Reviews of GEF Engagement with Civil Society Organizations

9. GEF's engagement with civil society has been reviewed as part of previous studies of the GEF's performance. In the first Overall Performance Study (OPS1), it was determined that "the issuance of guidelines on stakeholder participation in GEF-financed projects" was determined by OPS1 to be "one of the most significant accomplishments...providing the basis for one of the most extensive and far-reaching policies on public involvement in projects anywhere."¹⁰ The third overall performance study (OPS3) also noted the contributions of NGOs: "nonfinancial support, including technical expertise, management capacity, equipment and technology, and other in-kind contributions" and indicated the maturation of the GEF's Small Grants Programme as leading to increased access by smaller, national NGOs to GEF activities¹¹.
10. In 2005 an independent review of the GEF NGO Network was requested by the Network itself to identify ways to improve its effectiveness. In response to this request, the Secretariat collaborated with the NGO Central Focal Point to prepare the Terms of Reference (TORs) and support a review undertaken by an independent consultant. The recommendations made and accepted by the NGO Network included strengthening

⁷ <http://sgp.undp.org/>

⁸ <http://www.gefngo.org/>

⁹ [Broadening the GEF Partnership under Paragraph 28 of the GEF Instrument](#) (May 2011 Council Document: English, Spanish, and French) GEF/C.40/09

¹⁰ Study of GEF's Overall Performance; Para 167. <http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/OPS1.pdf>
The Journey to Rio+20: Gathering Evidence on Expectations for the GEF. P. INSERT REF HERE – SEE ROAD TO RIO

¹¹ Overall Performance Study Three: Progress towards environmental Results.

<http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/OPS3%20Final%20Documents%20Complete%20Report.pdf>

accountability and effectiveness, outreach and the partnership with the Secretariat as well as capacity building needs for NGOs engaging with the GEF.

11. The Small Grants Programme also has been evaluated several times, most recently in 2008. The Evaluation Offices of GEF and UNDP will undertake another joint evaluation of SGP, of which the first phase results will be included in the final report of OPS5¹². Although one of the conclusions of the 2008 review was that the SGP is a cost-effective instrument for the GEF to generate global environmental benefits through NGOs and community based organizations, it did not focus on the engagement with CSOs per se.
12. The Mid-Term Review of the Resource Allocation Framework (2009), introduced for GEF4, stated that the RAF had led to reduced involvement of CSOs and the private sector in the execution of projects. Elements that could have contributed to this were the lack of involvement of CSOs and the private sector in the development of the RAF, but also country circumstances which would dictate the level of civil society involvement in project development and execution. While there were a few excellent examples of NGO and civil society cooperation under the RAF, in the majority of countries the involvement of the NGO community declined, and the private sector was largely excluded from project proposals and government-led consultations on the GEF portfolio. A review undertaken by the NGO Network¹³ also concluded that the implementation of the RAF had significantly impacted the GEF-CSO partnership. The number of CSO projects was reduced and the value of the CSO-executed projects had fallen significantly.
13. The mid-term review of the System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR) currently being undertaken as part of OPS5, will provide information on participation and resource flow patterns during GEF-5 for different groups, including involvement of NGOs and civil society.
14. OPS4 did not delve specifically into civil society or indigenous people's engagement with GEF.
15. In May 2012, an internal GEF Evaluation Office analysis, undertaken by the Knowledge Management Team, provided a preliminary review of GEF and CSO engagement based on a sample of 70 projects and their terminal evaluations (TEs). The summary of findings and recommendations indicated a need for more detailed performance assessment of CSO-executed projects and more precise information in TEs on CSOs roles in project identification. These and other findings and recommendations are considered for this evaluation.

2.2 GEF- Engagement with Civil Society

16. The Project Management Information System (PMIS) does not currently allow 'tagging' of projects and the modalities in which GEF may engage civil society and indigenous people. Furthermore, "engagement of civil society", as indicated earlier takes place and

¹² <http://www.thegef.org/gef/Program%20Evaluation%3A%20Joint%20Evaluation%20GEFEO-UNDP%20SGP>

¹³ The Impact of the Global Environment Facility's Resource Allocation Framework on Civil Society Organizations. A Joint NGO Report by Universal Ecological Fund in collaboration with WWF.

can be interpreted broadly within the GEF partnership to extend from outreach to NGOs/CBOs as part of stakeholder consultation to execution of projects by CSOs as well as involvement of CSOs in the policy realm. Thus, gathering a list of projects that engage civil society is not a straightforward task. Nevertheless, further analysis of the GEF portfolio, particularly the portfolio of projects executed by CSOs, will be one of the primary tasks undertaken during the evaluation¹⁴. The portfolio of projects that engage with indigenous people is likely easier to arrive at, as the number of projects are also tracked separately within the Secretariat. As of June 30, 2012 there are 174 projects (medium and full size) that have significant, moderate or marginal engagement with indigenous people.

3.0 Proposed Evaluation Study

3.1 Evaluation Scope and Approach

17. According to its Terms of Reference, approved by Council in the June 2012 session, the fifth Overall Performance Study, in its second report to be presented in the final phase of replenishment, will present specific sub-studies. The sub-study on GEF engagement focuses on key question 8 of the OPS5 final report: ***“What are trends in involvement of civil society?”***
18. GEF’s primary approach to support country ownership through strategies and plans has been to date focused on partnership with *government* systems. This is expected as Governments are the official partners of the GEF. The effectiveness of enhanced engagement with civil society as executing agents (outside the SGP) to help extend ‘ownership’ beyond central government has to date not been fully explored.
19. This evaluation proposes to answer the broad OPS5 question through simultaneous examination of two key questions. The first question pertains to examination of the portfolio of projects where CSOs have been the executing partner in order to determine:

Key Question 1: What are the trends in involvement of CSOs in projects?

20. Within this framework, the following sub key- questions will be specifically addressed:
 - i. To what extent and in what ways are CSOs involved in GEF projects?
 - ii. What are trends in the relationships and interactions between CSOs and the GEF?
 - iii. What are trends in effectiveness, efficiency and progress toward impact of projects that involve CSOs in execution?
 - iv. Are the RBM systems in GEF and within GEF Agencies adequately tracking CSO contributions to the GEF mandate?
21. The second key question will focus on GEF’s responsiveness to its policy on public involvement by examination of its dealings with civil society organizations in order to assess:

¹⁴ The GEFEO preliminary review of GEF engagement with CSOs found that the sample had errors in information about project execution agency and these inconsistencies could necessitate revamping of data entry procedures in PMIS so that actual numbers of projects executed by CSOs could be accurately identified from the PMIS.

Key Question 2: To what extent and how effectively has the GEF Public Involvement Policy been implemented by GEF Secretariat, Agencies and recipient countries?

22. The following sub-questions will be addressed:

- i. What are the constraints and opportunities in current policies and GEF modalities for enhanced engagement with CSOs?
- ii. Has there been effective participation of civil society in the work of the GEF?
- iii. Are lessons and experiences available within the GEF NGO Network adequately received and incorporated into GEF and GEF Agency systems?

3.2 Synergies with Parallel Evaluations

23. The GEF EO is currently undertaking several sub-studies that will feed into the second report of the OPS5 and provide evaluative evidence concerning trends in GEF's engagement with CSOs. The mid-term review of the System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR) will provide information on participation and resource flow patterns during GEF-5 for different groups, including involvement of NGOs and civil society. The mid-term review of the National Portfolio Formulation Exercise (NPFE) will assess CSO engagement in that process and the Joint GEF/UNDP SGP Evaluation: *Preparing for GEF-6* will contribute to information on impact of local level CSO engagement for generating global environmental benefits. The SGP evaluation will also take on the examination of the involvement and contribution of indigenous people organizations in small grants projects.

24. In turn, this evaluation will focus on lessons from CSO-executed GEF projects and regarding the implementation of the GEF Public involvement Policy. The study will also contribute information to the aforementioned parallel evaluations. Overall, evaluative evidence will be combined to address key questions in OPS5.

Key Question 1 Methodological Considerations

25. **Portfolio Review:** The review will constitute a first step in the evaluation and work will be undertaken to review/ build and assess a portfolio of projects that involve CSO as design or executing partners to answer questions of effectiveness and efficiency. Specifically, the portfolio review will analyze aspects of CSO engagement in GEF projects vis a vis categorizations described under Paragraph 5 of this Paper and further, to the greatest extent possible:

- i. Size, type of CSO and country, region and focal area concentrations;
- ii. Role of CSO partner
- iii. Average project grant size executed/partnered;
- iv. Focal areas/project types
- v. Levels, sources and types of co-financing; and
- vi. PIR, MTR and post project ratings
- vii. Value added of CSO engagement if documented

26. **Desk and literature review:** Key GEF policy documents concerning engagement with CSOs will also be examined to assess alignment of the portfolio with therein contained guidelines. + project-related documentation (PIRs, MTRs, TE, etc.).
27. **CSO Consultations:** The GEF EO will engage in focus groups and workshops with CSOs to examine the success and challenges to enhanced engagements. The GEF EO engagement will take advantage of efficiencies to be achieved at CSO gatherings such as Expanded Constituency Workshops¹⁵ and the CSO meeting prior to June 2013 Council.
28. **Agency and Secretariat Consultations:** The GEF EO will engage in interviews and surveys with GEF Agencies and the Secretariat to review the trends in CSO engagement including barriers to enhanced engagement and lessons learned.
29. These results will be triangulated with information obtained from a sample of completed projects. The desk and literature review will also contribute to the concurrent review of the contributions of GEF network, assessing alignment of activities with guidance in policy.

Key Question 2 Methodological Considerations

30. The effectiveness of implementation of the GEF public involvement policy will be assessed through a combination of:
- i. Meta-analysis of key documents, including Council, Secretariat and Agency documents pertaining to GEF Public Involvement Policy.
 - ii. Communication and interviews with relevant representatives of the GEF Secretariat, GEF Agencies and recipient countries on perspectives re CSO engagement.
 - iii. Electronic Survey with members and non-members¹⁶ of the GEF NGO network to seek feedback on the implementation of the GEF Public Involvement Policy.
 - iv. Workshop with CSOs (through ECWs) and at NGO Network June 2013 meeting to seek input to the approach paper and the study.
 - v. Engagement with the work of the GEF NGO Network to review the GEF Public Involvement Policy.
 - vi. Engagement with GEF Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group on the preparation and implementation of the GEF “Principles and Guidelines for Engagement with Indigenous Peoples”
31. Evaluation findings are expected to inform the GEF Partnership (GEF Council, Secretariat, Agencies) with an assessment of the level and effectiveness of civil society engagement in the work of the GEF the study will also provide feedback and knowledge sharing to inform GEF’s future engagement in the context of the GEF-6.
32. The evaluation will be conducted by staff and consultants of the GEF Evaluation Office. The GEFO will be supported by a small team of consultants that include:
- International civil society engagement specialist

¹⁵ ECWs between July-October 2013

¹⁶ Non-member NGOs will be based on those CSO organizations that attended GEF ECWs but are not part of the GEF NGO Network.

- i. Review of key documents, meetings and interviews with CSOs including Indigenous Peoples organizations as well as GEF agencies and secretariat. Interviews and/or survey with NGO Network and other CSOs
 - ii. Facilitation at key workshops (Council 2013 meeting)
 - iii. ROTI theory of change development
- Research analysts for portfolio review,
 - i. Build and assess (sample of) portfolio of GEF projects with CSO as the executing agency
 - ii. Assess portfolio of GEF projects that engage with indigenous peoples

33. The methodology entails a combination of qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods and tools. The expected sources of information include:

- Documents governing GEF engagement with civil society engagement
- Project level documents
- Agency level documents
- Workshop & Interviews with GEF stakeholders (GEF Secretariat, Agencies, beneficiaries, CSOs)
- Workshop & Interviews with members of GEF NGO Network, CSOs
- Field visits to relevant initiatives (data from field visits in the context of other evaluations in the Office will also be considered in the evaluation)
- Surveys with GEF stakeholders/beneficiaries/CSOs

34. **Methodological Limitations:** Within the scope of this study, it would be difficult for the GEFO to evaluate sovereign country policies and engagements with CSOs. For this reason, there is not a specific key question directed at country conditions for GEF and CSO engagement. To address this important issue, the GEFO will engage Operational Focal Points (OFPs) at Expanded Constituency Workshops (ECWs) and through consultations for information on in-country barriers and enablers for CSO engagement.

35. Of the many ways in which GEF can engage with CSOs, the categorization is not specified out in project information systems thus “engagement with civil society” can be broadly interpreted. The evaluation will be limited by the extent to which it can review and label the type of categorizations and draw findings on effectiveness of one form or another.

4.0 Deliverables:

36. The main deliverable of this assignment is to be a final technical report not exceeding 50 pages in length (excluding annexes) with evidence based findings and conclusions focusing on role of GEF engagement with the civil society organizations as determined by further examination of CSO-executed projects and a review of the GEF NGO network contributions.

Annex A: GEF CSO/Indigenous People Key Policy / Document

1. Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility March (2008)	The Implementing Agencies shall cooperate with the Participants, the Secretariat, parties receiving assistance under the GEF, and other interested parties, including local communities and non-governmental organizations, to promote the purposes of the Facility (Para 22).
	The Implementing Agencies may make arrangements for GEF project preparation and execution by multilateral development banks, specialized agencies and programs of the United Nations, other international organizations, bilateral development agencies, national institutions, non-governmental organizations, private sector entities and academic institutions, taking into account their comparative advantages in efficient and cost-effective project execution (Para 28).
2. Public Involvement in GEF Projects (GEF/C.7/6)	Excerpt: (d) making use of skills, experiences, and knowledge, in particular, of non- governmental organizations (NGOs), community and local groups, and the private sector in the design, implementation, and evaluation of project activities (Para 4).
3. Enhancing Civil Society Engagement and Partnership with the GEF (GEF/C.34/9)	The Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) Network of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), referred to as the Network, was established in May 1995, following the GEF Council's decisions to strengthen relationships and interactions with NGOs by establishing a formal role for them with the GEF Secretariat, the Council, the Assembly and GEF agencies. The Network is an association of GEF-accredited organizations working in the fields of environment and sustainable development aligned with the GEF mandate (Para 1). The Council approves the replacement of the NGO accreditation to the GEF with membership in the Network (Recommended Council Decision). Prepare strategic assessments to support the engagement of CSOs in the development and implementation of the GEF 5 (Para4).
4. Enhancing the engagement of Civil Society Organizations in the operations of the GEF (GEF/C.39/10)	Put in place further reforms and redouble efforts by all stakeholders (including civil society organizations, governments, GEF agencies and the GEF Secretariat) to enhance the effective participation of civil society in all stages of project design, execution and evaluation of GEF programs and projects (Para 15).
5. GEF Policy on Agency Minimum Standards on Environmental and Social Safeguards (GEF/C.41/10/Rev.1)	This document proposes the adoption of a Policy on Agency Minimum Standards on Environmental and Social Safeguards. This policy is a revision of the Provisional Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguard Standards that was adopted by the Council at its Fortieth Meeting in May 2011, which set out minimum standards on environmental and social safeguards that all GEF Partner Agencies will be expected to meet.

	The GEF Secretariat revised the paper based on comments received from Council members, civil society organizations (CSOs), particularly from the GEF Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Network, and GEF Agencies (Para 1). In order to be accredited as a GEF Project Agency, applicants will need to demonstrate to the GEF Accreditation Panel that they have policies and systems that comply with the criteria of all eight minimum standards (Para 4) .
	The Accreditation Panel would have the ability to make a similar finding for agencies that apply for accreditation as a GEF Project Agency, taking into account types of projects they would be expected to implement according to its comparative advantage in GEF network. The GEF Secretariat will not screen GEF Partner Agency (see Para 28 of Instrument above) compliance with this policy on a project-by-project basis (Para 6) .
6. The GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy (2010)	The GEF is also pioneering institutional relationships among international financial institutions, UN agencies in partnership with the participant countries, international conventions, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and other organizations. Monitoring and evaluation are a shared responsibility within the GEF partnership. Therefore, the M&E Policy makes full use of the combined capacities of the expansive GEF partnership and the respective comparative advantages of each GEF partner. The multiplicity of stakeholders also places a premium on learning and improvement by continuously sharing knowledge from M&E, both within and among the GEF partners and with external stakeholders (Para 5) .
	Partner : Other stakeholders (NGOs and civil society organizations, private sector, community members) Key Roles: Participate in monitoring activities and mechanisms & provide views and perceptions to evaluations (P.13)
	NGOs and civil society organizations may play an important role in monitoring project or program activities, as well as in providing feedback as beneficiaries or as representatives of community groups (Para 69) .
	GEF evaluations shall be carried out with the participation of in-country stakeholders, in particular the GEF OFP, as well as other national stakeholders such as project managers and NGOs involved in the project implementation; this participation will enable the project and program beneficiaries to participate in the learning process with the GEF and to enable the GEF partnership to learn from them (Para 80) .
	GEF monitoring activities shall be carried out with the participation of relevant stakeholders including national and international government agencies, NGOs and civil society organizations, the private sector, and representatives of local communities including representatives of indigenous people (Para 82) .
7. The GEF and Civil Society Organizations: A Strategic Partnership (2010)	GEF was one of the first international financial institutions to actively engage CSOs in its projects & programs as well as its policies. There are various channels through which CSOs have been participating in GEF processes. These include: access to GEF funds for specific

	projects; Involvement & participation in GEF projects; & Involvement in policy processes through GEF Assembly and Council. Specific policies were adopted by GEF Council in this regard, setting the foundation for CSO engagement in GEF activities on two distinct levels, projects and international policy (p.7). Through its projects and programs, the GEF has been able to act as a catalyst, bringing various stakeholders together, and “creating linkages among communities, NGOs, and governments; encouraging cooperation; and improving understanding and dialogue between local and national levels.” This would not have been possible without the active involvement and participation of CSOs. Various evaluations highlighted the benefits of CSO involvement in GEF projects. The benefits include, among others, enhancing country ownership, ensuring that the needs of affected communities are adequately met, improving project design, implementation, and evaluation, and helping to strengthen the capacities of NGOs and civil society groups (p.10). Often times, CSOs are referred to as “<i>the eyes and ears</i>” of the GEF on the ground. Thus, the participation of CSOs, through input and experiences, has been valued to help shape and define GEF policies. (p.8)
9. The A to Z of the GEF – A Guide for CSOs (2011)	The GEF-CSO partnership involves two main levels - projects & policy advocacy. (p.55) Some of the most significant benefits of CSO involvement in GEF-funded projects include enhancing country ownership, ensuring that the needs of affected communities are adequately met, improving project design, implementation and evaluation, and helping to strengthen the capacities of civil society groups. (p.56) CSOs have been contributing to the GEF’s decision making process through: • Contributing to the governance and policy development by participating in consultations with the Council; • Lobbying for donor contributions during replenishment negotiations; and • Awareness and outreach on global environmental issues. (p.56)

Annex B: Environmental Conventions and Indigenous People and Civil Society Organizations

The GEF has mandate to serve as financial mechanism for the following environment related global conventions:

- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)
- UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
- Mercury Convention

The following table contains excerpts from the Convention documents regarding civil society participation in meetings. The Conventions also contain extensive additional language concerning CSO involvement in the implementation of the Conventions, which are not summarized here .

Global Environment Conventions	CSOs Engagement
Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)	The practice of the Convention and of its Cartagena Protocol is that stakeholders (including international organizations, NGOs, indigenous and local community representatives and the private sector) are allowed to participate in the work of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies, as well as in the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (COP-MOP). Furthermore, they may participate in the proceedings without the right to vote. The other way civil society can participate in the work of the Convention is through electronic communication tools. (Source: http://www.cbd.int/ngo/)
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)	Article 7, paragraph 6, of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change provides for the admission of non-governmental organizations to sessions of the Convention bodies as observers. New applicant organizations are formally admitted by the Conference of the Parties following the successful completion of the admission process. Admission to the Conference of the Parties also applies to the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol.
Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)	There are several non-governmental organizations encompassing their scope at national and international levels working for raising awareness and advocating to the cause of the Convention. These organizations have great role to play in the areas as identified in the Article 10 of the Convention.

	• List of Non-Governmental Organizations accredited to meetings of the Conference of Parties and for the purpose of inviting observers to meetings of the Conference of Parties in accordance with decision SC-2/16 paragraph 6 & 7. • NGOs not on the above list but wish to be accredited to meetings of the Conference of Parties may complete the attached application form and submit it to the secretariat.
UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)	In accordance with Article 22, paragraph 7 of the UNCCD and Rule 7 of the rules of procedure of the COP, representatives from anybody or agency, whether national or international, governmental or non-governmental, may be admitted to participate in the proceedings of the Convention's bodies under the conditions that the organization: • is qualified in matters covered by the Convention; • has informed the UNCCD secretariat of its wish to participate