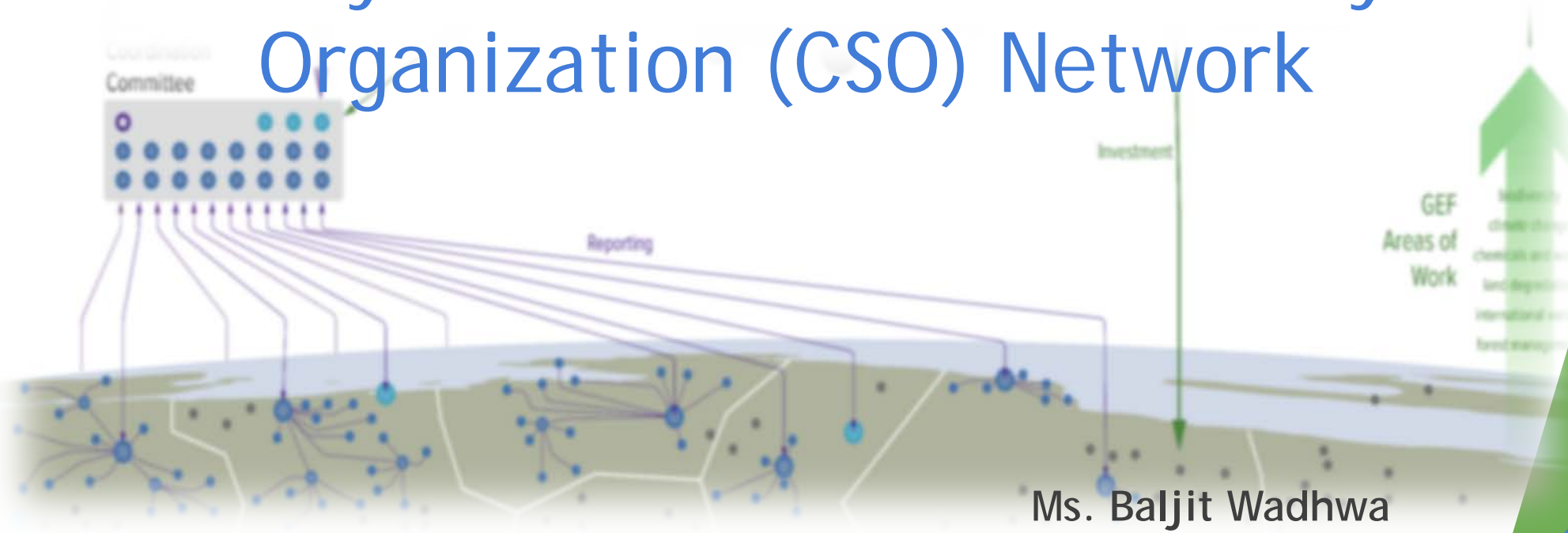




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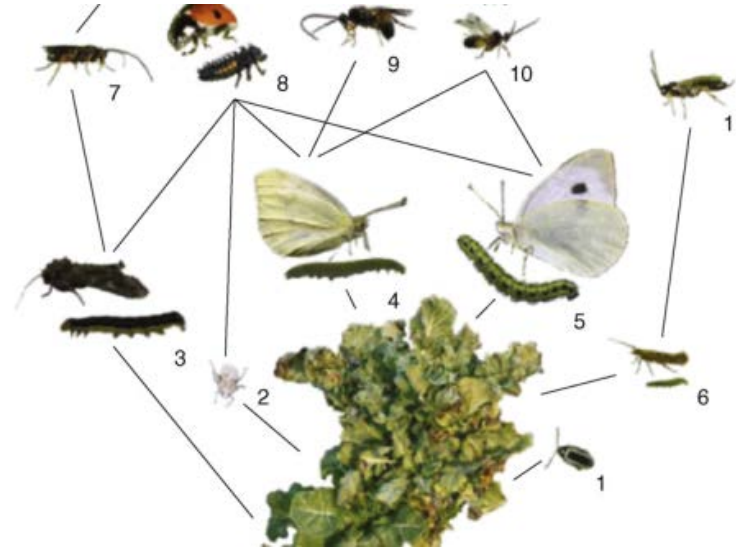
Evaluating Complex Networks – Case Study with the GEF Civil Society Organization (CSO) Network



Ms. Baljit Wadhwa

Senior Evaluation Officer

Networks



Social-Change Networks

Literature review tells us that networks are:

- Formal and informal structures
- Growing in number and influence due to:
 - Globalization
 - Governance allowances for more non-state actors
 - Recognition of social capital
 - ICT
- By 2000 it was calculated there were over 20,000 transnational civic networks active on the global stage.




Social-Change Networks

- Differ in:
 - Sectors represented (single or multiple)
 - Membership (organizations, individuals or both)
 - Geography (single community or across many locations)
 - Size (small or very large)
 - Funding sources (local, state, federal, foundation, individual, corporates)
- Have in Common:
 - Convene organizations or people
 - Filter, process and manage knowledge for members
 - Promote exchange, dialogue, learning
 - Shape agendas
 - Facilitate action



The Evaluation Challenge

- Numerous players can be entering and exiting the network at the same time; hence networks are dynamic “moving targets” that adapt and evolve, often rapidly, to changes in their context or changes among their membership.
 - Success depends on the degree to which members connect amongst themselves
- 
- Evaluating a network requires studying how decisions and activities occur in diffused decision making models

The Evaluation Challenge cont'd

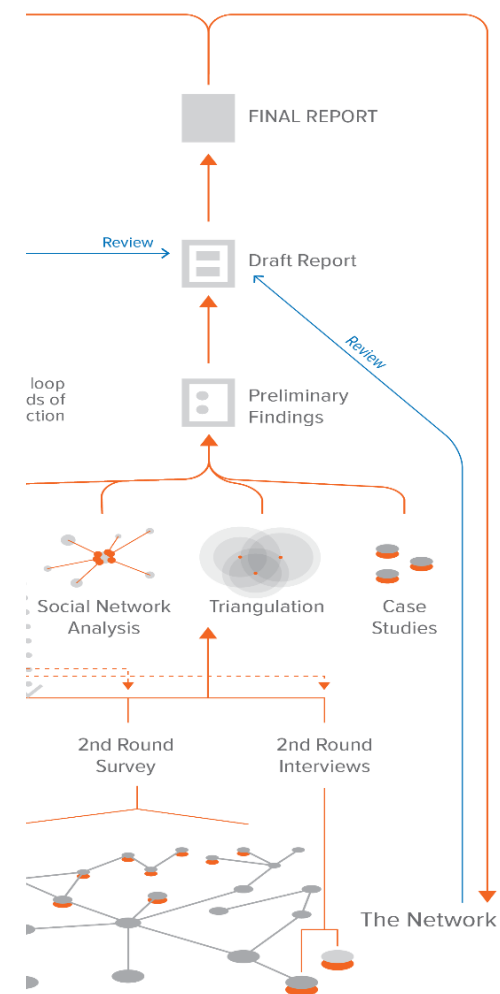
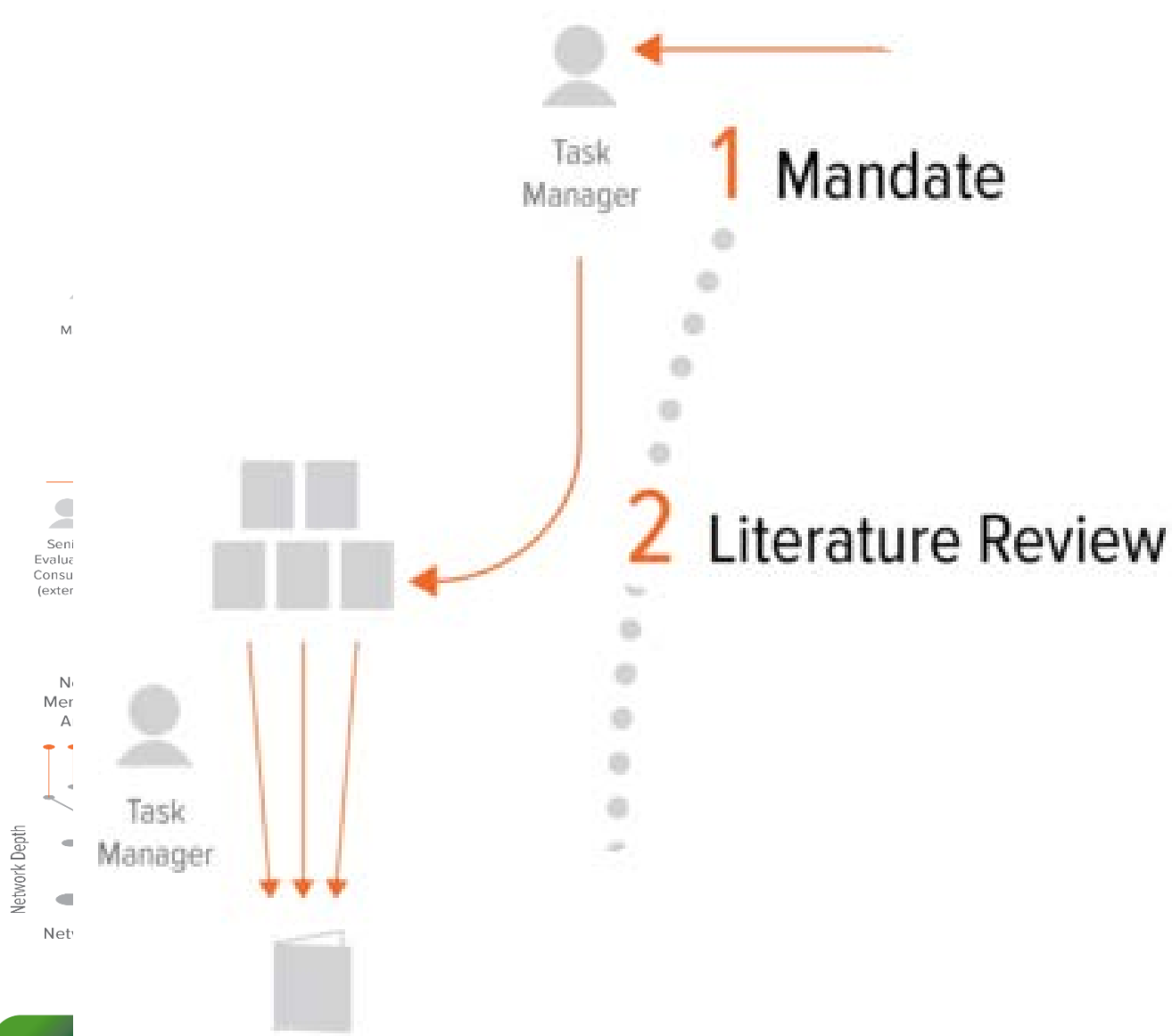
Conventional evaluation methods may not work because:

- Networks also evolve through stages and can take time to organize and show results. Funders and evaluators have to consider this development and the time lag for “chain impact” (Wilson-Grau and Nunez, 2006)



- Understanding network function and purpose matter for design of an evaluation and setting expectations about what results can be expected and by when
- Despite the challenges, it is possible to assess specific elements

The Evaluation



Elements for Network Evaluation

- Community served
- Network participants (Membership)
- Democracy
- Diversity
- Dynamism
- Performance/Results
- Governance
- Participation.
- Interconnectivity
- Creditability
- Purpose
- Results
- Structure and Management;
- Leadership

Provan and Milard, 2005

Wilson-Grau and Nunez, 2006

Smith and Lynott, 2007

Network Impact and Center for
Evaluation Innovation, 2014

The Evaluation

3 Approach

- network elements
- questions for evaluation

Review

Results
Credibility
Capacity
Connectivity
Membership
Structure & Governance
Resources

(subject matter
expertise
stakeholder
representation)

Key Evaluation Questions

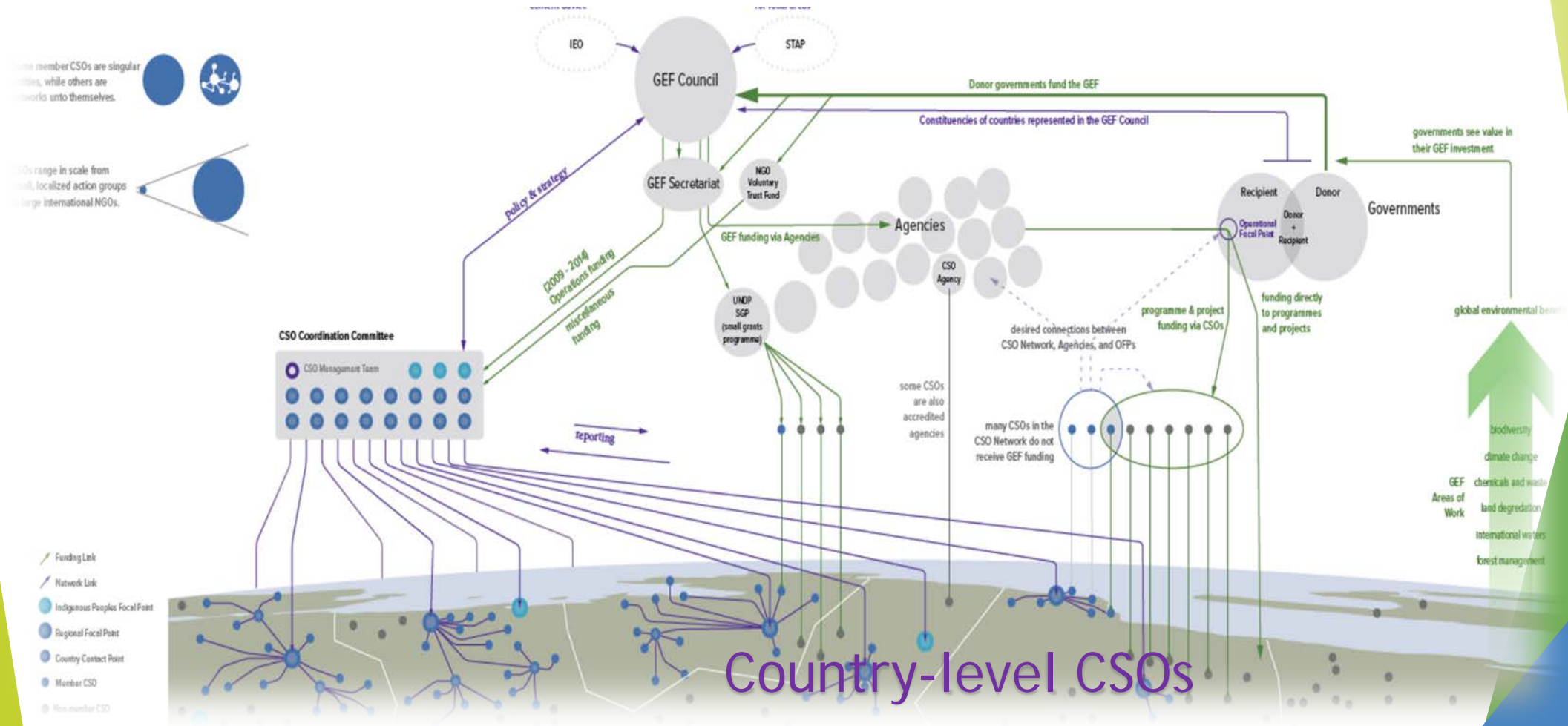
Performance

- 1. To what extent is the CSO Network meeting its strategic objective and adding value to the GEF Partnership and its membership?
- 2. How are features of the GEF CSO Network contributing to effectiveness and efficiency?

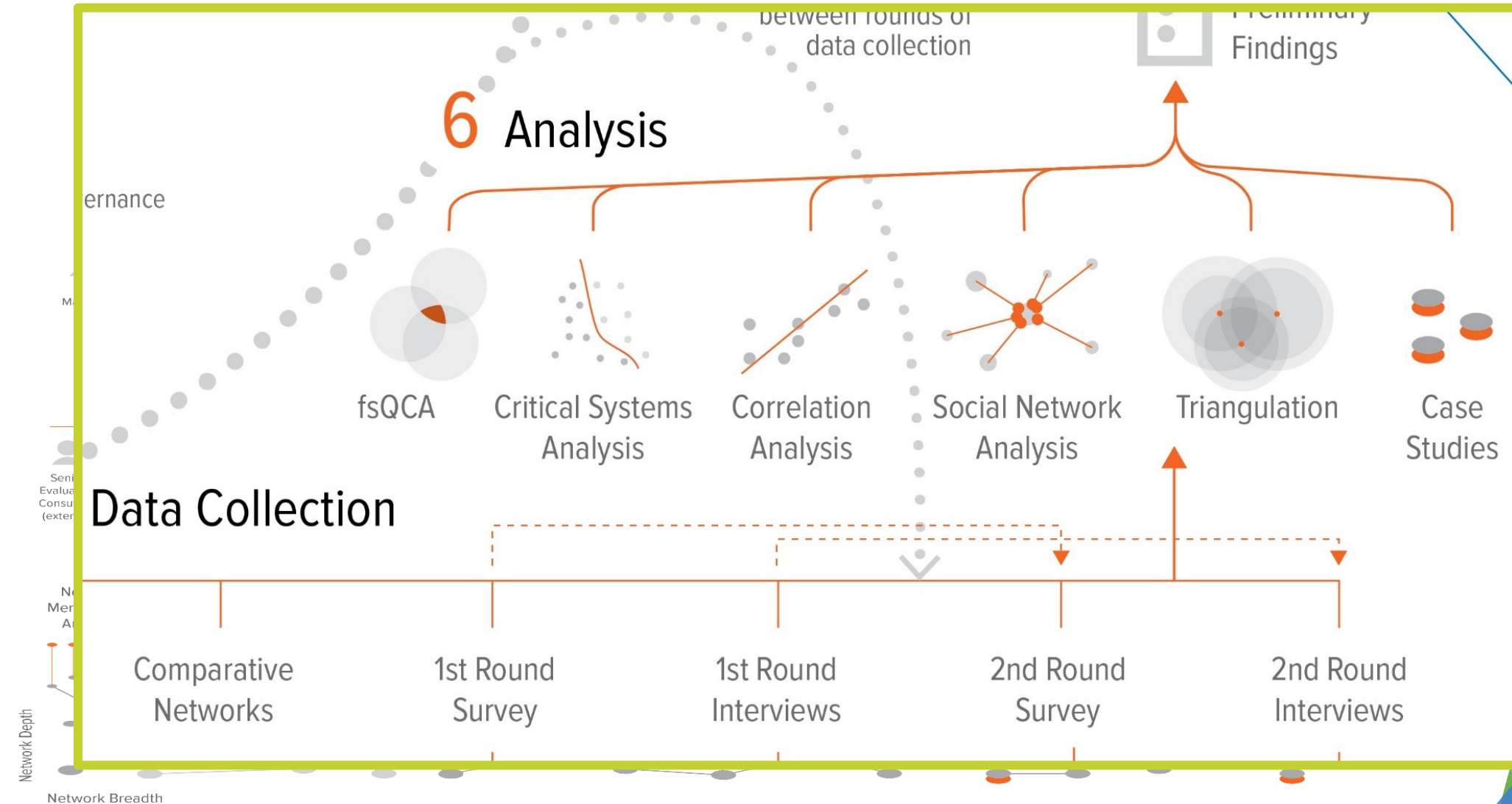
Learning

- 3. What are the implications for the next phase of the development and evolution of the CSO Network?

Evaluating the GEF Civil Society Organization Network



Approach for Evaluation of CSO Network

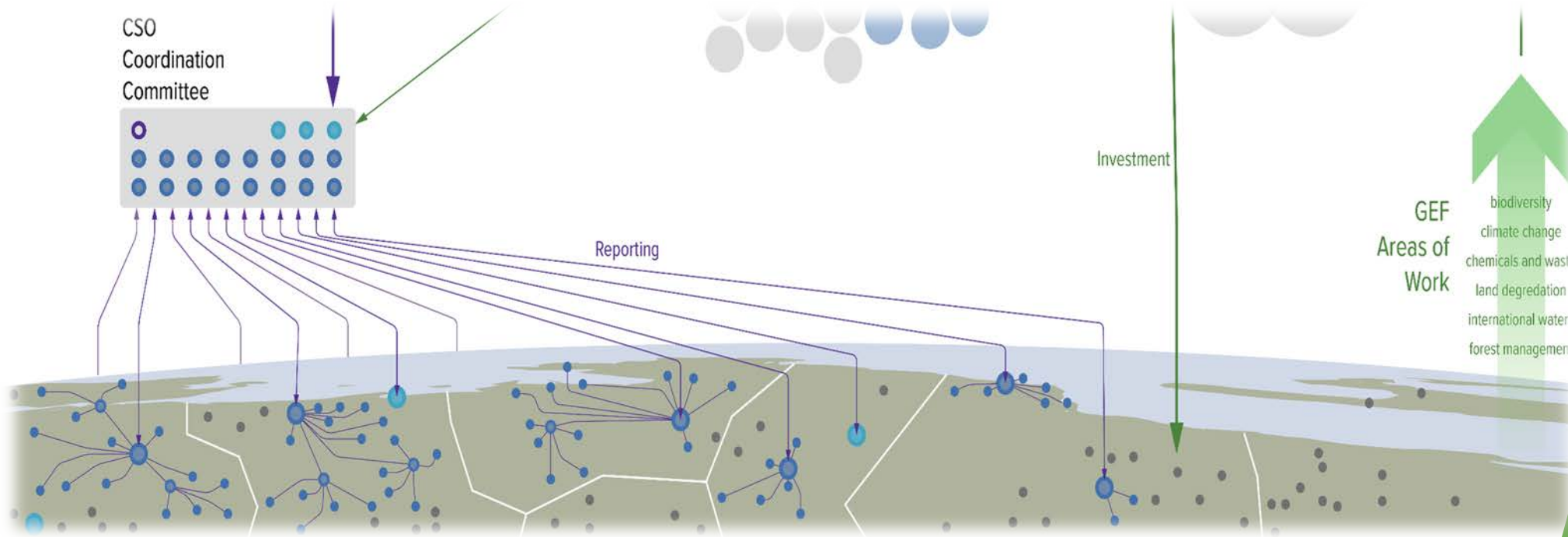


The GEF CSO Network

New structure. Oct. 2015

Prepared and reported back to the Secretariat
Council meetings to the wider CSO
community in countries and regions
16 REPs
3 IPFS

- enhancing the role of civil society in safeguarding the global environment,
- strengthening GEF Program implementation through partnership with civil society
- building the capacity of the GEF CSO Network

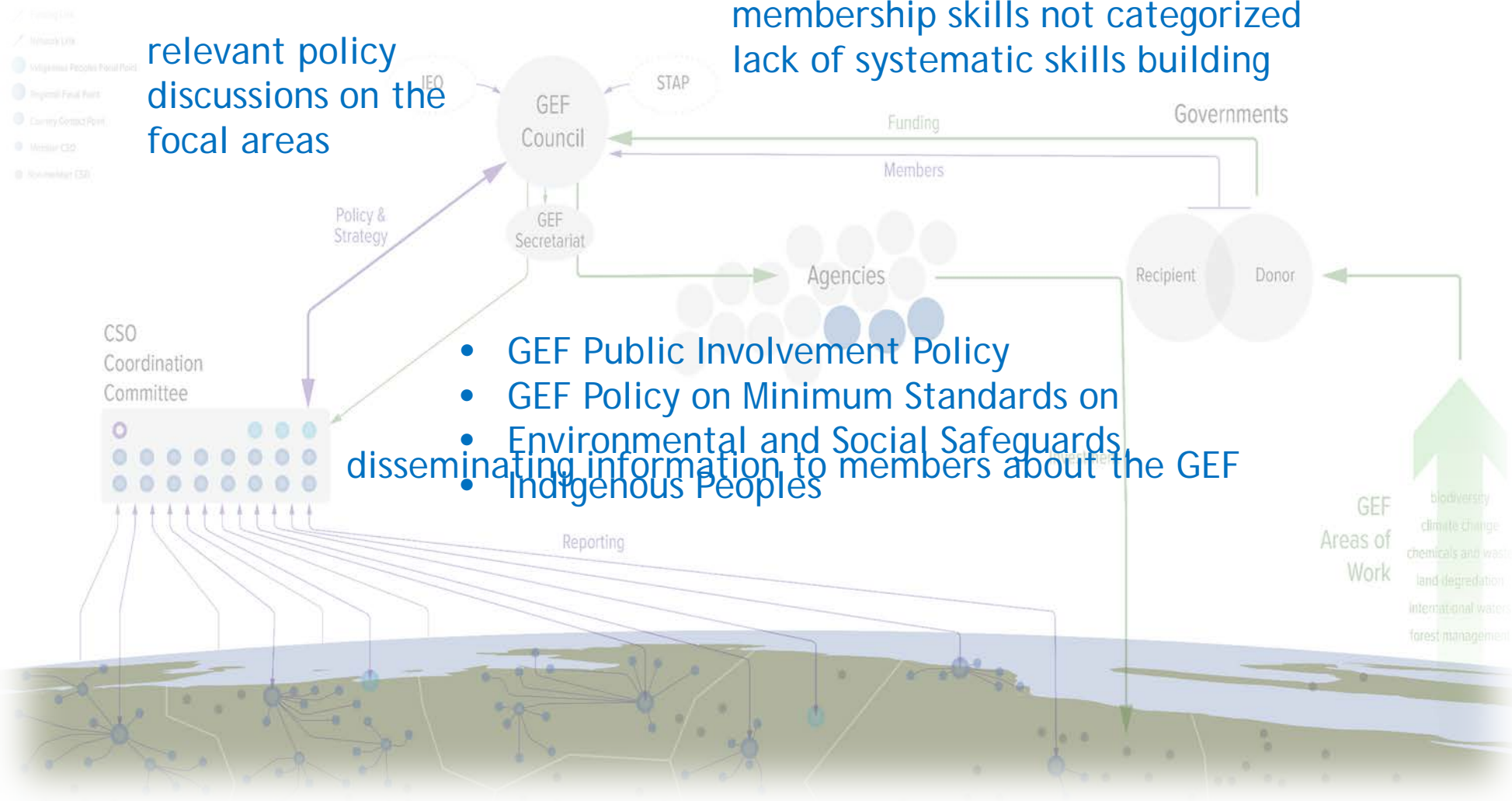


474 member organizations
across 122 countries
Country Contact Points in 20 countries

Conclusions:

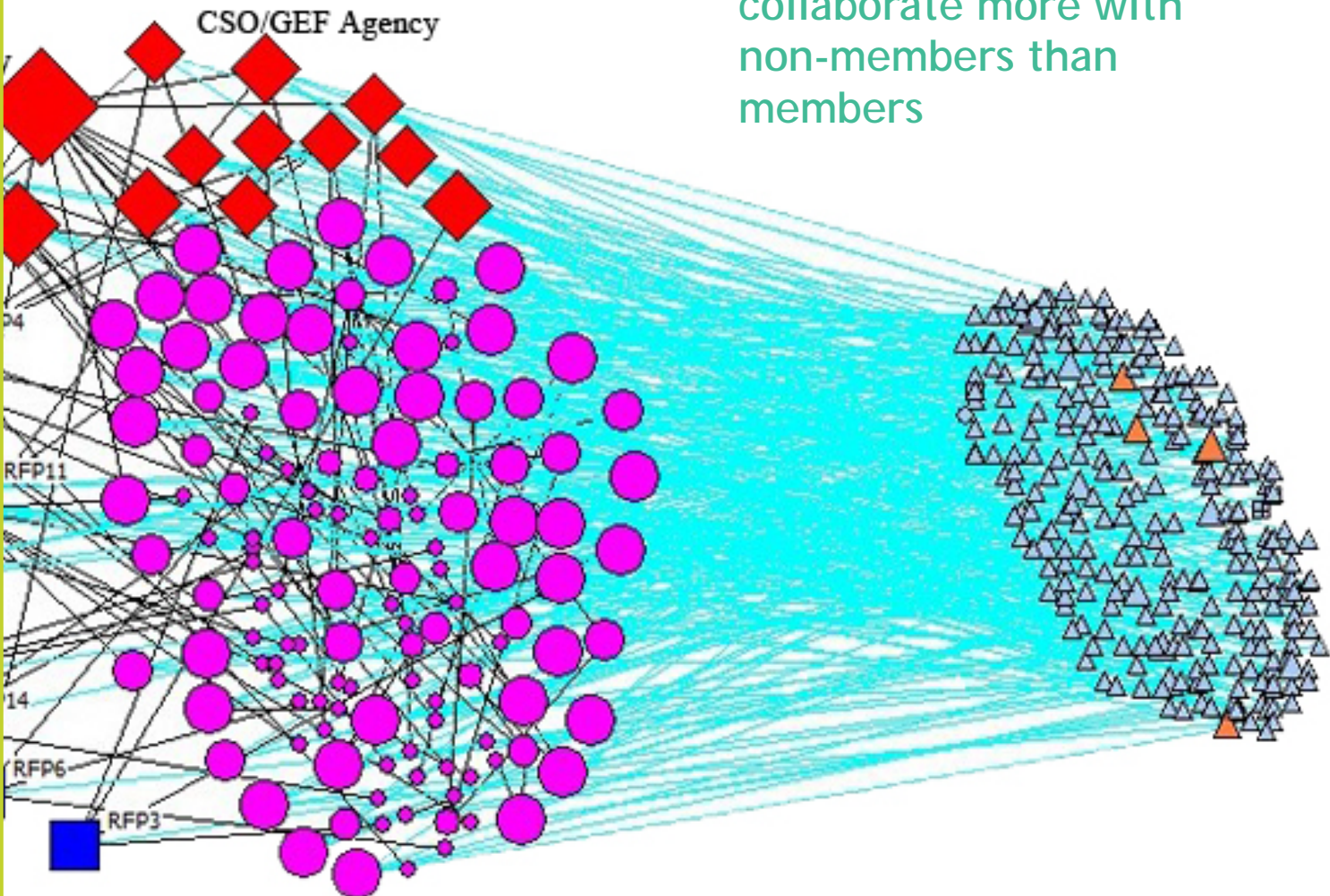
- Conclusion 1: Network remains relevant and is delivering results
- Conclusion 2: Network is distant from the country level. As such, the Network's is compromised in its ability to bring forward country perspectives.
- Conclusion 3: The CSO Network operating in an expanding GEF Partnership without a shared contemporary vision of its role.
- Conclusion 4: Within an increasingly complex operating environment, the Network has strengthened, organizationally but governance challenges remain.

Conclusion 1: Network plays a relevant role in the GEF Partnership and delivers results



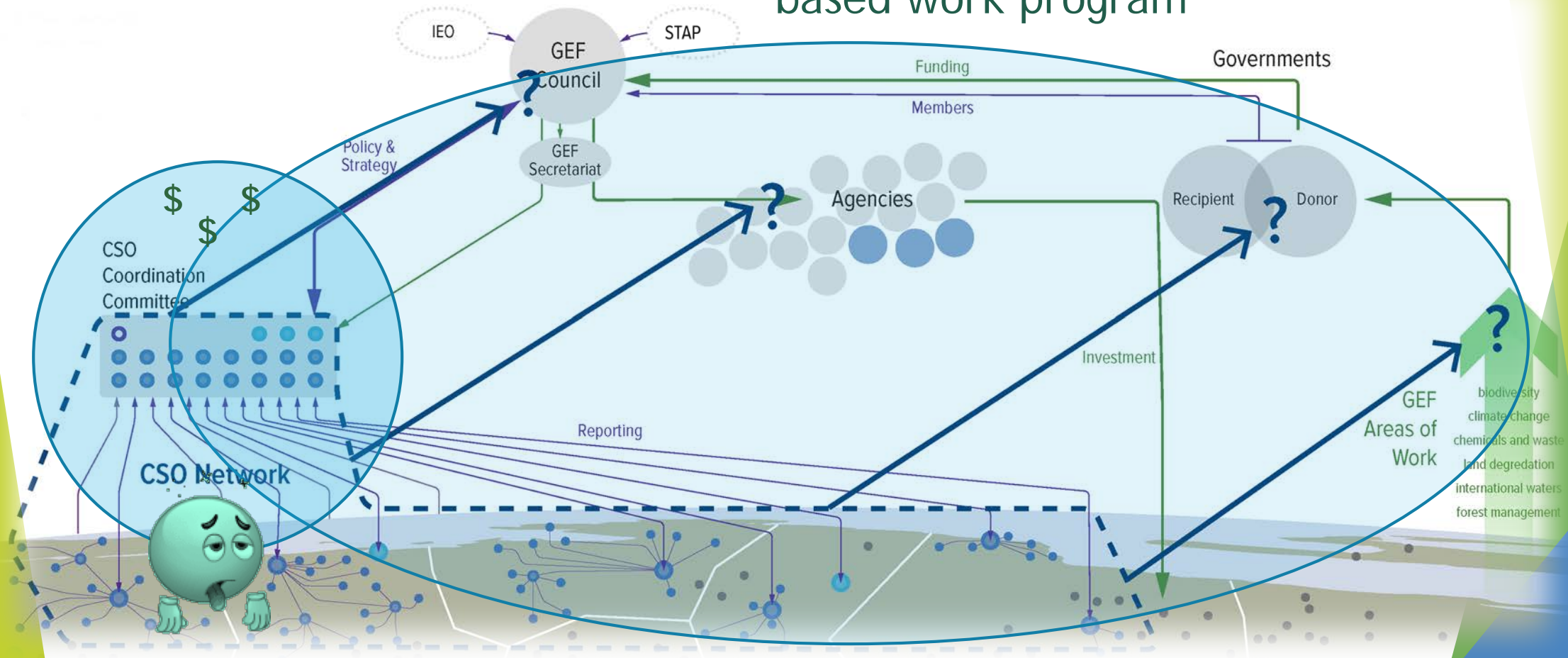
Conclusion 2: Network activities are distant from country level

member CSOs
collaborate more with
non-members than
members

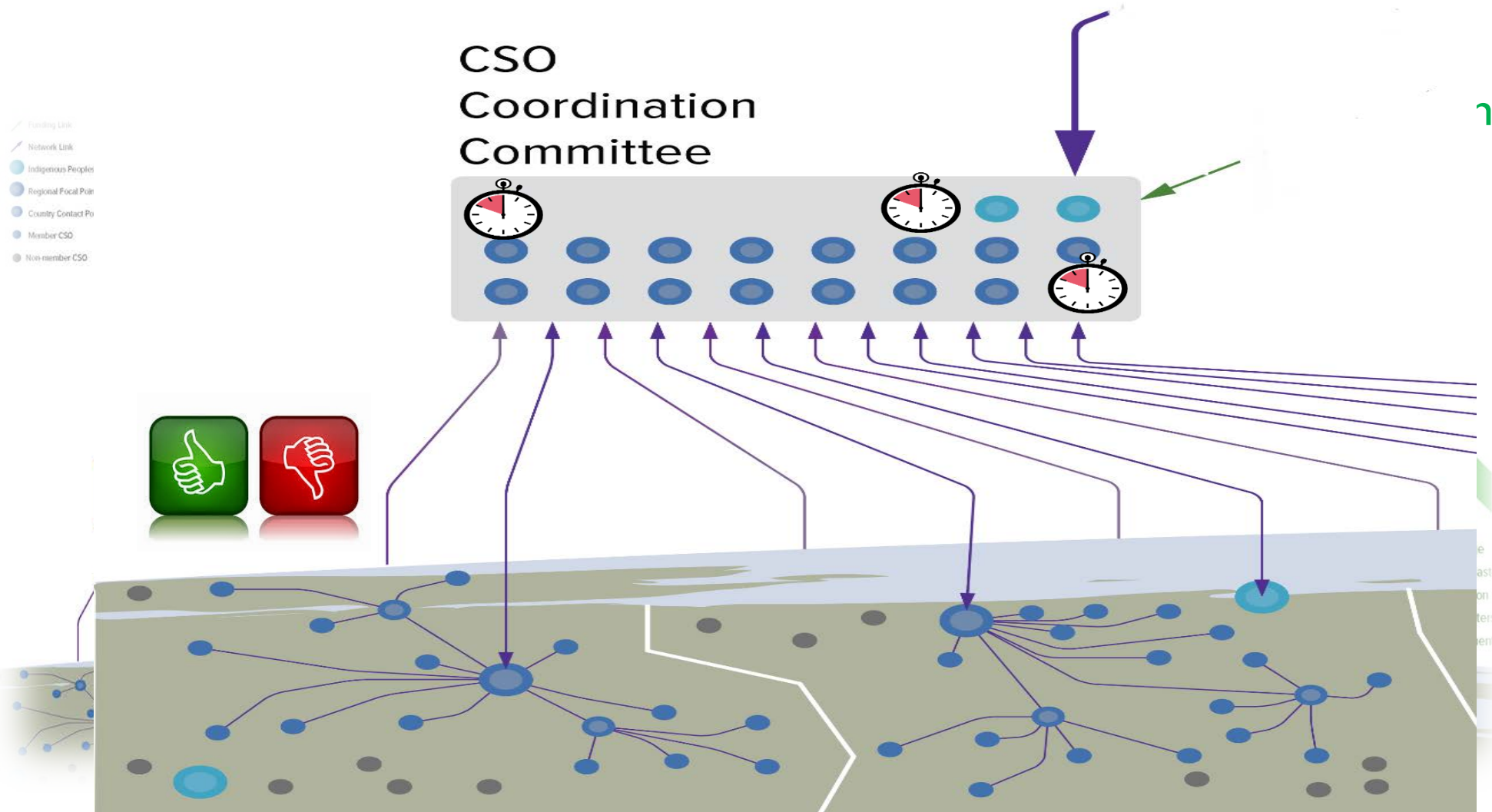


Conclusion 3: Lacking contemporary vision for the CSO Network in a changing partnership

Network role in the Partnership is not articulated in the context of a results based work program



Conclusion 4: Network has strengthened organizationally but governance challenges remain



rsive

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Create a contemporary vision

Recommendation 2: The GEFSEC and CSO Network should develop clear rules of engagement which guides cooperation and communications.

Recommendation 3: The CSO Network should continue to build itself as a mechanism for strengthening civil society participation in the GEF

Recommendation 4: The CSO Network should strengthen its governance

Recommendation 1: Create a Contemporary Vision for the Network within the new GEF Architecture

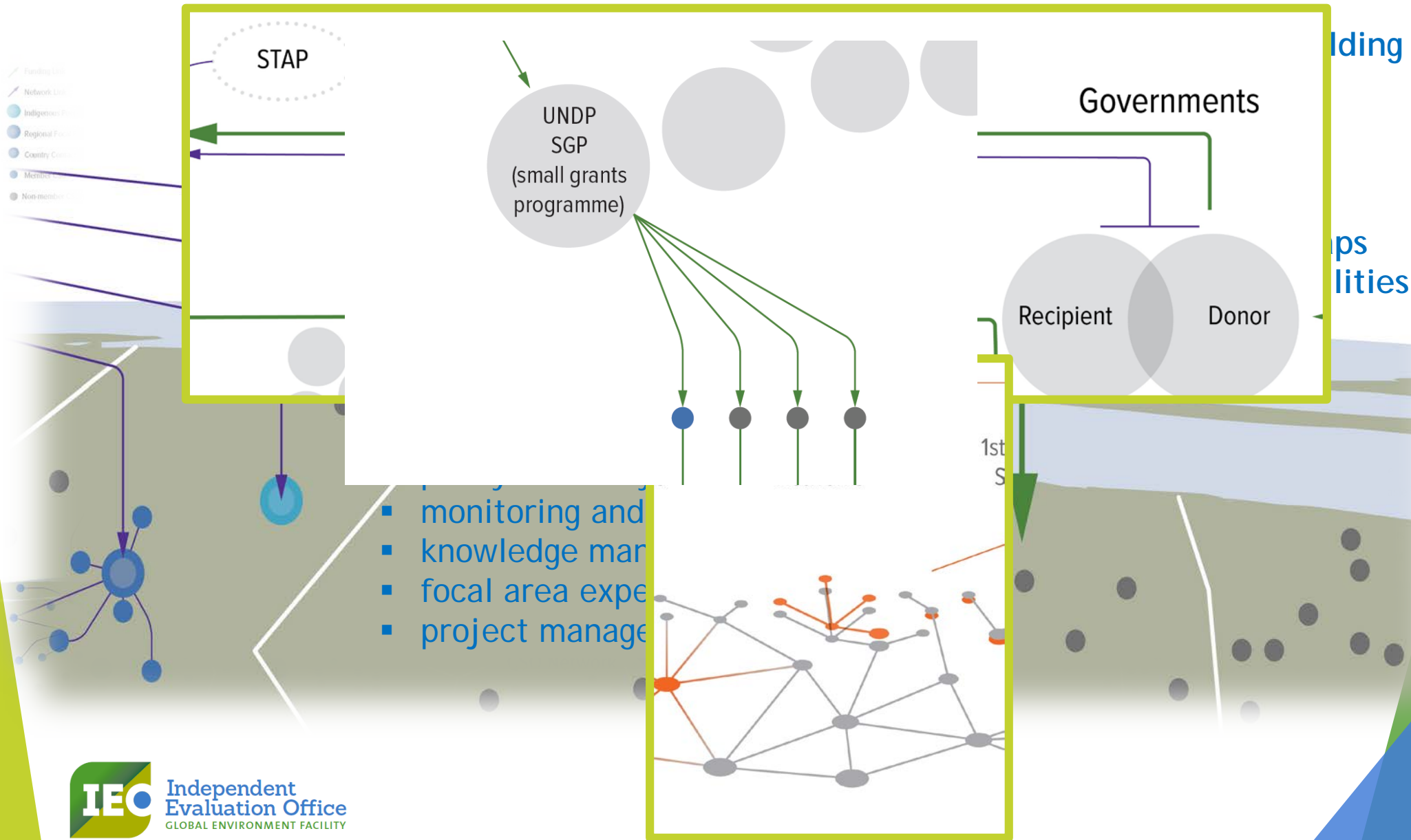
Consider:

engagement with the Network is not through the
encourage activities/resources to be pushed more
Share local understanding of the Network's contribution to
toward regional and country level activities without
Partnership based on a supply-demand dynamic
compromising global level encounters who are also
Identify modality to finance activities
network member CSOs

guide cooperation
adjusted as needed
with a means to review
against expectations



Recommendation 3: Continue to strengthen the Network as a mechanism for strengthening civil society participation in the GEF

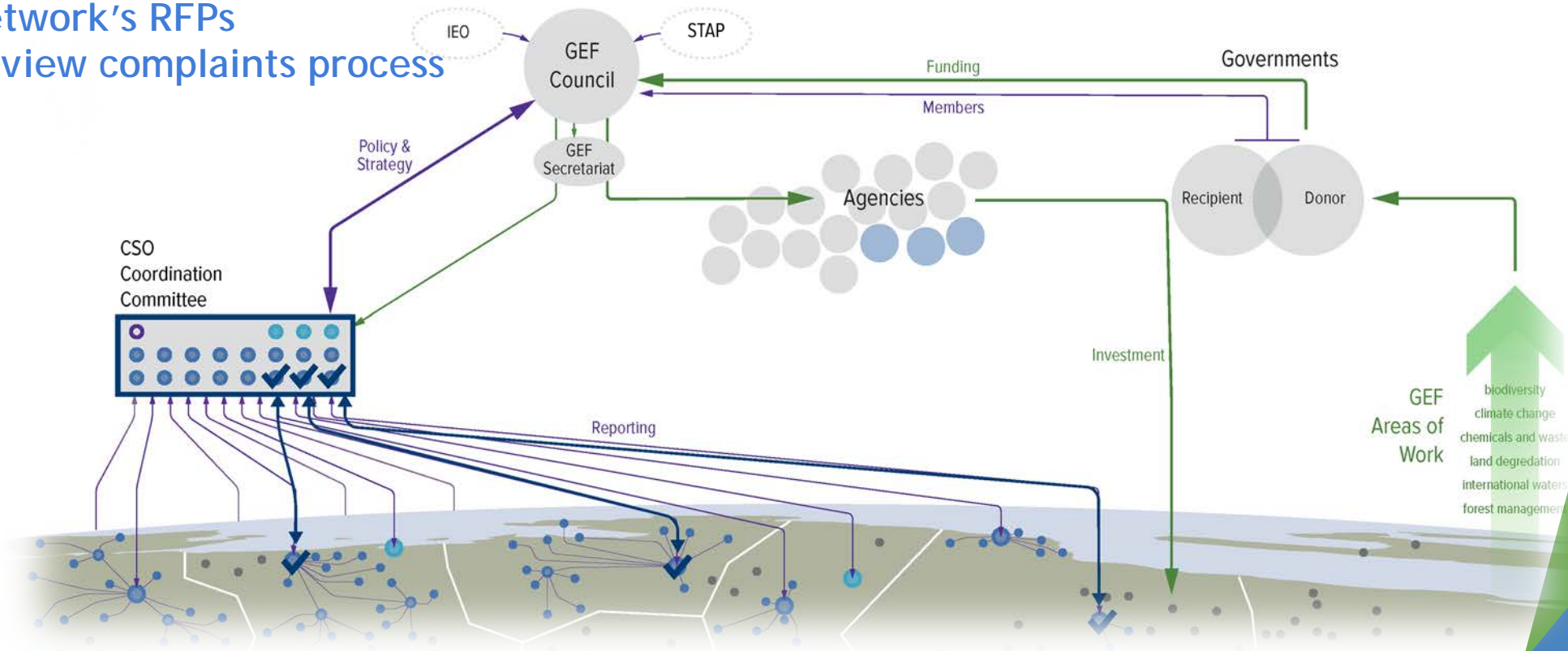


Recommendation 4: The CSO Network should continue to strengthen its governance

- Make progress on annual work plans
- Cooperate more with IPAG to reinforce prominent issues
- Review terms of service for the Network's RFPs
- Review complaints process

Independent arbitrator to consider:

- Membership application grievances
- Veracity of complaints



Assessment of the Appropriateness of the Approach

- Stakeholder involvement in network evaluation begins at design - clarifying lines of inquiry and evaluation uses, and in establishing the terms of engagement and gaining trust. This evaluation established a Peer Review committee (established evaluators) and a Reference Group (made up of network participants, GEF Agencies and GEF Secretariat). These groups were consulted and gave feedback at key points contributing to relevant revisions for the final document.
- In any inquiry process with groups, particularly those likely to harbor divergent opinions, a shared understanding of the subject matter under investigation is an essential starting point.
- This was an extremely consultative process throughout. Participation from some of the newer GEF Agencies was not received and this could also be anticipated for future evaluations, particularly in areas where they perceive they don't yet have adequate experience to provide meaningful feedback.
- Where the evaluation process initiator is located in the network's operating environment, and what they say at its launch, sets an important tone for the exercise

Assessment of the Appropriateness of the Approach

- Network evaluation doesn't necessarily mean lots of completely new techniques. This evaluation deploying standard practices with a network perspective and introduced some tools specific to network analysis.
- Survey design was done very early in the process. For SNA specifically, the data collection was a little challenging considering that the questions were very detailed and included in a fairly long survey. This led to multiple surveys to same stakeholders being rolled out.
- Referencing a normative framework for network operation strengthens the evaluators ability to make merit and worth judgments about the evaluands performance
- In the use of mixed data collection methods there is information value to be gained through sequencing and iteration and in using tools that foster *analysis* (a focus on the parts) and those which *foster* synthesis (a focus on whole).
- Triangulation was crucial and systematically applied against the three key questions and the sub-questions.
- Ecosystem imagery helps convey the complexities of network functions

A scenic landscape featuring a coastal mountain range. The foreground shows a grassy slope with some dry, yellowish grass. The middle ground shows a steep, green mountain slope descending towards a blue body of water. The background shows more distant, rugged mountain peaks under a sky filled with white and grey clouds. The text "Thank you!" is overlaid in the center of the image.

Thank you!

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