



## **ECW for Asia Region 16-19 March 2015, Colombo, Sri Lanka**

### **CSO Consultation Meeting 16<sup>th</sup> March 2015**

#### **Conclusions and recommendations**

A meeting of 18 Civil Society Organisation (CSO) representatives from 11 countries from Asia was held on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2015 prior to the ECW meeting in Sri Lanka. The meeting was organized by the GEF CSO Network and the GEF Secretariat. The meeting reviewed experiences and lessons learned from CSO engagement in GEF projects as well as identified options to enhance engagement in GEF programs in the future. The conclusions and recommendations of the meeting were as follows:

#### **Conclusions**

1. We believe full, effective and meaningful engagement of civil society, indigenous peoples and local communities is essential to ensure the success and sustainability of GEF programs.
2. We recognize that CSOs, Indigenous peoples and Local Communities can play an important and constructive role in safeguarding the global environment through mobilizing mass movements to address the drivers of environmental degradation as well as take specific measures at local level such as through establishment of Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas and Territories (ICCAs), adoption of sustainable land and forest management practices, sustainable consumption or low emission development options.
3. We welcome the Guidelines for the Implementation of the Public Involvement policy and proposed working group to oversee their further development and implementation as well as the Gender Equality Action Plan.
4. We recognize that SGP is an important mechanism for engagement of CSOs and local and indigenous communities and should be maintained, enhanced and expanded to all countries in the region and successful SGP initiatives should be promoted and scaled up through larger GEF projects and programs.
5. We note that while SGP is very important, it only represents 5% of GEF expenditure. CSO engagement must be integrated fully into the remaining 95% of GEF operations represented by the GEF MSP and full-sized programmes. In this regard we are concerned on the serious decline in funds for CSO- led MSPs and FSPs

## Recommendations

1. Clear guidance is needed from GEF/GEF Secretariat to GEF recipients and Agencies on the requirements to effectively include CSOs and other stakeholders in ALL GEF projects and programs.
2. Support should be provided to enhance ability of the OFPs to expand engagement and coordination with multiple stakeholders including civil society as well as organizing annual meetings with CSOs.
3. GEF/GEF OFPs should work together with CSOs to build trust and understanding on the value-added of CSO engagement and potential positive contributions to GEF program development and implementation
4. Countries should adopt an inclusive multi-stakeholder partnership approach to develop a common vision for sustainable solutions and integrated projects and programs;
5. Each MSPs, FSPs and program should allocate resources (at least 15% of the budget) for component(s) for focused engagement of public and indigenous peoples and local communities to secure project targets and sustainability in partnership with CSOs.
6. The resources allocated for SGP should be increased as it is proven to be one of the most successful, cost effective and participatory GEF programs.
7. Building on the recent Guidelines, the GEF Public Involvement Policy should be updated and practical “best practice” manuals developed to guide governments, GEF agencies and CSOs to work better in partnership to implement the policy.
8. In line with the Gender Equality Action Plan, proactive efforts should be made to enhance meaningful participation of women in all GEF projects programs and operations including equitable benefit sharing.
9. The capacity of CSOs including IPOs should be enhanced to enable their effective and meaningful engagement in GEF operations and programmes including on needs assessment, project identification, design, implementation and monitoring. Such support can be facilitated by the GEF CSO Network, SGP, OFPs or GEF agencies.
10. Dedicated resources should be allocated for Indigenous Peoples<sup>1</sup> and local communities – to ensure effective engagement in GEF projects and programmes as well as address priorities of such communities.
11. GEF National Steering Committees should include representatives of Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples to facilitate engagement in GEF Funded Projects and programmes.
12. The access and transparency of information on GEF Projects under development (pipeline) should be enhanced and clear information on opportunities and progress of CSO engagement made available; consultation with CSOs and Indigenous Peoples, and local communities should be mandatory during the project design period and supported with PPG funds.
13. GEF Monitoring and Evaluation needs to be undertaken in a participatory manner/process with adequate and effective engagement of CSOs (in both internal monitoring and external evaluation); the GEF Independent Evaluation office should establish standards for participatory monitoring and evaluation as well as effective systems to enable tracking of CSO participation from design to implementation stage.
14. CSOs at the country and regional level should enhance their cooperation through joint activities, establishment or strengthening of national (or thematic) networks, enhancing experience sharing between countries and south-south collaboration.

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<sup>1</sup>(including ethnic , tribal and aboriginal communities)