

CONTRIBUTIONS BY STAKEHOLDER ORGANISATIONS IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES TO THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY'S 7TH REPLENISHMENT PROCESS

Introduction

As a consolidated effort to contribute to the visions, design and impact of the future programmatic and policy directions of the Global Environment Facility, this paper provides a set of recommendations and considerations provided by developed country stakeholders. Overall, this contribution underscores stakeholders' support for proposed impact and policy programmes proposed from 2018 -2022. Recognising the changing realities affecting the global commons, environmental governance and finance, it welcomes the GEF's resolve to embrace a refreshed approach to address the growing and increasingly interrelated environmental challenges that our planet faces. The ambition proposed by the GEF will rely on the amount of public finance which will be committed to the GEF and other sources of financing available to match priority areas for action. The years of experience that the GEF has accumulated through its work should guide a highly positive and agreeable outcomes of the replenishment process.

The recommendations provided herein were compiled from eleven civil society and international organisation following an open multi-stakeholder consultation organised which took place on 13th March in London. As the developed country representatives to the GEF replenishment process, Climate Action Network Europe and Transparency International organised the meeting in cooperation with the host European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Aside from these organisations, contributors include (alphabetical order) the Forest Stewardship Council, Humana Spain, International Fund for Agricultural Development, International POPs Elimination Network, International Tree Foundation, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), The Nature Conservancy, and World Wildlife Fund for Nature. Given the short time frame to provide inputs, other organisations were unable to respond. However, the outreach for inputs included all North American and European GEF CSO Network Members, the Green Climate Fund CSO Network, the Adaptation Fund CSO network, the Climate Investment Funds' Observers, the GEF Agencies based in Europe and private sector partners of the GEF based in developed countries. For future consultations, an approach which helps keep stakeholder informed, enables them to provide input in a timely way and eases the compilation of feedback will be necessary. Consideration should be given as to how this process can be assisted given the limits of stakeholders' time capacity stakeholders have to contribute in light of other commitments.

As far as possible, this submission responds to most of the subjects, programs and policies reflected in the programming directions document. It follows the same order and sequencing to facilitate uptake. Finally, this contribution should be treated as a living document which will be updated regularly overtime to increasingly include the voice of stakeholders across developed countries.

Specific inputs

Opportunities for the GEF

GEF stakeholders appreciate:

- the importance of the GEF as a financial mechanism serving a number of conventions that seek to address the interrelated challenges faced by our world and its people
- the added value of ensuring that environmental funding should be managed, dispersed and implemented in a holistic way
- that the GEF has gained over 25 years of valuable experience, picking up on what works and what doesn't work in relation to policy, programming and implementation
- that the reorientation of GEF programs are likely to have medium and long term strategic impacts in line with the newly identified approaches and the proposed reprogramming and that whilst this is ambitious and responds to the urgent environmental challenges that the earth faces, the current proposals in the programming document are complicated and it is difficult to understand how the reprogramming will operate
- that the GEF remains the only multilateral financing mechanism that directly supports biodiversity conservation
- that the chemicals agenda remains severely underfunded noting that the COP7 of the Stockholm Convention needs assessment demonstrated a five-fold difference between a very conservative estimate of needs and available GEF funding
- the on-going debates regarding climate financing and the leading role of the Green Climate Fund in providing climate finance support: This role has brought into deeper consideration how the GEF should prioritise its funding, bearing in mind that the Paris Agreement confirmed the GEF as an operating entity of the Financial Mechanism of the Convention.

In light of the above, the GEF is encouraged to:

- *provide* necessary financial and other support that encourages national portfolio formulation exercises, which include civil society, indigenous groups, community-based organisations and others
- *build on* its experience and support and strengthen communication with the Green Climate Fund to generate greater impact for climate change action: While the GEF can support efforts in a number of cross-cutting areas such as biodiversity, disaster risk reduction water and desertification, it will be increasingly important to guarantee resilience to climate change impacts across all those areas

- *ensure* that the financing for biodiversity is maintained, particularly for Protected Areas in GEF-7 and beyond to achieve long term strategic impacts and enable the network of GEF-supported actors to deal with the short term, more immediate goals
- *make use* of impact programs in GEF-7 to provide an opportunity to balance GEF priorities so that chemicals and wastes can be more adequately funded. This is particularly important since chemical safety plays such a broad cross-cutting role in fulfilment of Agenda 2030.

Country Priorities

While appreciating the country priorities approach, stakeholders stressed two key concerns:

- the importance of civil society, local authorities and indigenous and local communities to be taken into consideration. Community-led initiatives can successfully address challenges in programme areas such as restoring landscapes and improving livelihoods
- the importance of ensuring that the overarching 'social and economic' systems addressed in the policy and programming paper also properly reflect the country priorities and commitments made in relation to multilateral environmental agreements.

GEF-7 Programming Structure and High-Level Results Framework

Some stakeholders welcomed the integrated generation of multiple global environmental benefits – across GEF focal areas – which can benefit from the emphasis on Impact Programs by strengthening country responses to national challenges under the Rio Conventions and by leveraging multi-partnerships and maximizing the impact from scarce GEF resources available at the country, regional and global levels. However, some voices also noted that the Impact Programmes (IP) were presented inconsistently making it difficult to understand them all in the same way: The programmes are designed differently having varied or unclear objectives, key interventions, theories of change and targets.

Landscape Restoration Impact Program

This Impact Program is largely welcomed. Stakeholders requested clarifications and made some overarching and detailed suggestions including the needs to:

- *clarify* whether the proposal on land tenure refers to restoration across the whole spectrum of land tenures from public (protected areas) to private and others. For example,
 - para 42 should be more explicit regarding protected areas
 - Annex 4 notes 48mha and 32mha of production landscapes under improved management - but has 'n/a' for the protected area categories
 - It is unclear whether the 'high conservation value forests loss avoided' figure (currently tbd) is protected areas and/or production landscapes

- *scope in* integrated landscape planning including protecting and restoring protected areas as critical stepping stones for biodiversity and genetic diversity
- *focus* more on the root causes of unsustainable commodity production and support smallholder farmers in sustainable commodities production and trade
- *promote* integrated and participatory land use planning approaches that fosters a more holistic use of landscapes and improves the use of soils, water and forest ecosystems while promoting productive activities to tackle rural poverty and food insecurity
- *expand* innovative catalytic financing through climate finance and invest in improved land and tenure rights systems for indigenous peoples and forest communities
- *strengthen* forest governance to increase multiple benefits for rural communities through communities co-management and greening value chains
- *manage* more effectively trade-offs that undermine progress and equity gains for women and marginalized groups especially in small scale agriculture
- *recognise and include* assurances regarding the Indigenous and community participation in management of gazetted forests, community food forests, sustainable bee keeping and non-timber forest product harvesting within forests, enhanced agroforestry in buffer zones around forests to ensure that communities are less reliant on unsustainably harvested forest products
- *take into consideration* that in addition to the drivers of deforestation mentioned - palm oil, soybeans and beef, paper and pulp should be added as is observed in the zero-deforestation initiatives (see e.g. Tropical Forest Alliance)
- *reflect* also that in addition to the projected food supply increases, growth for demand of timber, wood (for construction), fibres (replacing oil to produce chemicals), charcoal as a cooking fuel and other products including biomass for energy) will aggravate deforestation and therefore e.g. sustainable woodlots will be needed to feed this demand
- *recognise* that sustainable forest management and policies including certification schemes and the use of timber within the circular economy are important for land restoration and to promote environmentally and socially performing agriculture practices. Some of these schemes cover already considerable shares of production in their sectors, and they are unique in that they link primary producers with the processing industries, retailers, public procurers and individual consumers. In this way they also contribute to the promotion of sustainable production and consumption (SDG 12). In that context and in compliment to its substantial investments to support the certification schemes for Cocoa (Greening Cocoa –UNEP with Rain Forest Alliance), for Forests (UNEP FSC) and tea (UNEP-Rain Forest Alliance already), the GEF may wish to *explore*
 - how it can work with such schemes, in particular those with a proven track-record, with transparent, third party verification practices. A reference could be the membership of ISEAL, the global organisation that is setting standards, codes of conduct etc. for certification schemes
 - whether certification schemes can better reach community-led initiatives in for example sub-Saharan Africa, which are currently not in place.

Transforming Energy Systems Impact Program

Stakeholders widely support this Impact Programme and recommend that the GEF:

- Act as convener for the exchange lessons learned and experiences of countries and regions undergoing large-scale energy transition with a view to improving access to safe, modern, reliable and renewable energy without negatively impacting the local environment and biodiversity and to enhancing smaller scale and community renewable energy as identified by partner country actors as an essential pathway to providing energy access to communities in most need.
- Support the phase out of funding to fossil fuels through government support, multilateral development banks and private finance and investments and address the negative environmental and human impacts of inefficient use of wood, biomass and charcoal for cooking - in order to effectively transform energy systems. This will allow speedier and wide-scale deployment of energy efficiency and renewable energy
- Promote renewable energy sources such as solar, wind and wave energy as a part of GEF-7 support for implementation of the Minamata Convention as coal-fired power plants and coal-fired industrial boilers are major sources of mercury emissions covered by the treaty. Shifting to combustion-free energy sources such as solar, wind and wave energy would also implement many elements of SAICM's Overarching Policy Strategy, including the promotion of "*cleaner production, informed substitution of chemicals of concern and non-chemical alternatives*" and undertaking research to develop, "*safer chemicals and cleaner technologies and non-chemical alternatives and technologies.*"¹

Food Systems Impact Program

Stakeholders support that the GEF has an important role to play in promoting and supporting environmentally sustainable food production. Enhancing food production based on agroecology and organic agriculture can deliver not only environmental but also economic and health benefits. Still, some were not clear on the delineation between food systems and land degradation one as they are complementary - suggesting that the latter could be "the unifying global umbrella" and then have sub-themes for different geographic regions on forests and food. To this end, stakeholders recommend that the GEF:

- *explore and utilise* synergies and define differences between the Food systems and Landscape restoration programmes: The link between food systems (growth in the demand for food) and land degradation (including loss of biodiversity as noted in Table 2.2) are inextricable and need to be addressed conjointly. Also, clear and sometimes restrictive definitions regarding the scope of the programs are needed
- *proposes* a generic theory of change, which can be modified according to each country or regional project in order to allow them to be comparable - just as the integrated approach pilot on Food Security has common components which are then translated into locally relevant versions by each country project.

¹ Guidelines exist under international agreements on the sustainable deployment of renewable energy and associated infrastructure (notably power lines), such as: AEWAs Conservation Guidelines No. 14 (2014): Guidelines on How to Avoid or Mitigate Impact of Electricity Power Grids on Migratory Birds in the African-Eurasian Region. See Section 3.3 and available [here](#). CMS, AEWAs, International Renewable Energy Agency and Birdlife International (2014): Renewable Energy Technologies and Migratory Species: Guidelines for sustainable deployment at S.3.3.

- *scope in* the elimination of the use of highly/severely hazardous pesticides in agriculture as an expected SAICM outcome in the chemicals and wastes focal area as a primary contribution to the Food Systems Impact Programme
- *support* community level initiatives to unlock the potential in agroforestry and analogue forestry — to utilise trees in a sustainable way to produce healthy, nutritious and low cost food as well as other products including medicine and to demonstrate how such approaches (specifically practicable for smallholder farming) contribute to sustainable and resilient food systems by raising productivity and higher overall yields than those achieved by conventional large scale farming
- *leverage and provide* support through grant and non-grant instruments by drawing on lessons learned from certification work (see above on land degradation and below on stronger partnerships). This could involve:
 - mapping out key aspects of food systems which affect land degradation
 - mapping out activities of the UNCCD which support food system sustainability
 - circulating for comment (if not already done) a graphical theory of change for the Food Systems IP which shows the links to the MEA themes
 - providing lessons learned from GEFs certification and private sector and NCI instrument experience which could help focus the types of actions eligible for funding under the Food Systems IP and the relationship between them
- *support* increasing agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers while at the same time achieving significant measurable reductions in human and environmental exposures to Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHPs) through implementation of agroecology. The GEF-7 programming document focuses efforts on large agribusiness organizations. However, smallholders are far more relevant in developing countries. As noted by FAO, “80% of the farmland in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia is managed by smallholders...and that when sustainable agriculture was adopted, average crop yields increased by 79%.”² To be relevant to vast regions of the world, the GEF should emphasize and target smallholders in this impact program.

Sustainable Cities Impact Program

A wide range of stakeholders also support this Impact Programme. At present, however, it would be helpful to further clarify and define the key interventions and targets regarding the need for ‘nature based solutions’ and ‘conservation of globally important biodiversity in urban landscapes’ (para 68).

In addition, one stakeholder specifically recommended including waste management under this programme area. This is especially relevant for consumer products that contain mercury (e.g. fluorescent bulbs) and POPs (e.g. flame retardants in e-waste). Including waste management would link this IP directly to obligations under the Minamata and Stockholm Conventions. Waste management is also a key part of SAICM’s risk reduction objectives and activities. It would be most appropriate for waste management interventions in GEF-7 to include zero waste² as this approach is most consistent with fulfilment of sustainable waste management objectives because it addresses sustainable resource management.

² Zero waste is defined as, “a goal that is ethical, economical, efficient and visionary, to guide people in changing their lifestyles and practices to emulate sustainable natural cycles, where all discarded materials are designed to become resources for others to use. Zero Waste means designing and managing products and processes to systematically avoid and eliminate the volume and toxicity of waste and materials, conserve and recover all resources, and not burn or bury them. Implementing Zero Waste will eliminate all discharges to land, water or air that are a threat to planetary, human, animal or plant health.”

Environmental Security Impact Program

In relation to this program area, stakeholders requested more information on what is intended in terms of scope, impact, objectives and targets (see paras 75 and 76). Specifically, while Table 2.2 (p36) notes that the program will have no impact on the Biodiversity global environmental benefits (GEBs), para 75 states that it will *'maintain, enhance and restore GEBs (biodiversity, land, transboundary waters)'* and elsewhere the importance of Natural Resources (and by inference Biodiversity) is implicit in the IP description. One stakeholder emphasised that key GEF-7 interventions should include monitoring of air, land, and water pollution along with remediation of prioritized sites as, in particular, conflict-affected countries often suffer severe health impacts, inter alia, from pollution, chemical contamination of water, and unsound waste management.

Healthy Oceans for Sustainable Fisheries Impact Program

Stakeholders have welcomed the ambition to establish more Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in line with the Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) standard. In addition, a number of concrete recommendations are suggested. Accordingly, the GEF should:

- Promote sustainable fisheries benefiting women and men with a focus on small scale fisheries and strengthening national fisheries management organizations and cooperatives
- Preserve coastal biodiversity and strengthen livelihoods through climate resilient and community-based actions especially mangrove forests and coral reefs
- Support countries to ratify and implement multilateral environment agreements (MEAs) and protect oceans
- Support more mitigation programs (agricultural/ livestock especially in middle income countries) and in turn reverse ocean acidification
- Establish the link between this IP and the chemicals and waste focal area as the GEF-7 programming document noting the importance of ecosystems that sustain fisheries, and that *"improved governance mechanisms need to be put in place to facilitate pollution reduction"*
- Address plastics as a key marine pollutant of concern: The UN Environment Programme has identified plastic marine pollution (and particularly microplastics) as a major global environmental threat. For example, plastics in the marine environment concentrate toxic pesticides and other industrial chemicals at much higher levels than in surrounding waters. The global human health and environmental impacts of this problem are acutely and disproportionately felt in the Asia Pacific region, making a compelling and urgent argument for toxics elimination in plastic production and a ban on plastic waste burning technologies. Some interventions in this IP could include:
 - plastics audits in municipal and industrial wastes
 - private sector funding of recycling infrastructure
 - prohibitions on multi-layered, single use plastic packaging and products, particularly sachets
 - monitoring for chemicals in microplastics in the world's oceans as an effectiveness evaluation measure for SAICM and the chemical conventions.

Green Finance Impact Program

Stakeholders agree that the GEF is well positioned to support financial sector reform and green finance in an integrated fashion. The GEF can help to ensure that environmental and sustainable development considerations are reflected in national initiatives, specifically ensuring financial investments are guided by environmental, ecological best practice such as developments being guided by the Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) Standard as reflected above. Some also support the effort to internalise environmental externalities as well as coordinate and exchange lessons with existing and emerging initiatives.

We recommend that the GEF build on this by

- contributing to efforts to align international and national financial regulations with the objectives of Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement
- further developing transparency and accountability measures for green finance and financing measures that set out to mobilize green financing in coordination with state and non-state actors
- ensuring that effective national environmental impact assessment systems and accountability measures are in place and that the KBA standards is followed as a prerequisite for GEF country level support
- further ensuring that GEF Agencies follow best practice in Environmental and Social Safeguards
- supporting development and implementation of economic instruments that effectively internalize health and environmental damage costs resulting from pollution and climate change. Presently, cost externalization remains a wide-scale problem in many of the sectors addressed by GEF funding. Externalization is especially severe in the chemical industry where the magnitude of the externalized costs is enormous. Some conservative estimates include: USD\$90 billion for health-related pesticide costs in Sub-Saharan Africa from 2005 – 2020; €157 billion as a median annual health cost for diseases associated with endocrine disrupting chemicals in the European Union; and USD\$236 billion annual costs for pollution associated with the production and use of volatile organic compounds
- Taking into account SDG 17 as an integral part of this Program as financial considerations are a key part of ensuring that developing and transition countries can meet their obligations under all international agreements, including chemicals agreements.

Green Infrastructure Impact Program

Numerous stakeholders support this program. Welcomed in particular are the proposals around ensuring effective procurement processes and building capacity for regulatory engagement. This was praised specifically with regard to chemicals and waste and the need to address the elimination of mercury and POPs at the project design phase.

Stakeholders also draw attention to [The New Climate Economy Report: The Sustainable Infrastructure Report 2016](#) (referred to in the IP description) which states that “investing in sustainable infrastructure development is key to tackling three simultaneous challenges: reigniting global growth, delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and reducing climate risk”. Having similar concerns regarding the impact of large-scale renewable energy and green infrastructure on biodiversity, stakeholders emphasize that this will only be possible if the major infrastructure sectors adopt transparent and inclusive early planning processes and consistently integrate conservation best practices in project selection, siting, design and implementation. Accordingly, the statement is

welcomed regarding the GEF's intention to build a broad coalition to go beyond project-by-project engagement and enable pro-active advanced sustainability planning for major infrastructure (para 119).

The GEF is well positioned to support the development of capacity and enabling environments to incentivize and institutionalize such practices through the interventions proposed in this Program. Thereto, a number of stakeholders suggest that the GEF consider the use of revolving funds, which would be an effective and sustainable tool for supporting the costs of early planning for sustainability. Some stakeholders also recommend that the GEF should

- *build and work* with a broad coalition of partners, including national governments, multilateral development banks and the private sector to advance green infrastructure and to guarantee that stringent environmental, social and governance (ESG) criteria are adequately applied to green infrastructure planning and implementation
- *support* systems for investments in the energy transformation in developing countries, including for small-scale stand-alone infrastructure in isolated areas and larger utility scale renewables
- *contribute* to efforts that improve access and affordability of green infrastructure services prioritizing financing for clean, pro-poor infrastructure development, and ensure robust, fit-for-purpose evaluation of infrastructure investments through stakeholder engagement for transparency provisions
- *ensure* that public procurement standards favour products without harmful materials or chemicals and zero waste products including reusable shipping containers, reduced packaging, recycled and compostable products, remanufactured equipment; and leased, rented, or shared equipment.

Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program

Stakeholders support the proposed Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program in light of the region's innumerable global environmental values and the many linkages between its health as a biome and the social and economic well-being of its inhabitants and people around the world. In an ecological system encompassing eight countries that face many common threats and opportunities, a regional approach to conservation and sustainable land use can optimize the use of available resources and best preserve the system's integrity and environmental values. In that context, it is suggested that the GEF

- *strengthen and implement* conservation strategies which include regional planning and management, information and learning exchanges, and synergistic investments that reflect ecological, social and economic linkages across borders. This is important because although there are sub-regional differences, Amazonian countries encounter similar technical, scientific, policy, governance and funding challenges; they also interact with many of the same regional and global actors (regional and international development banks, multinational corporations, foreign countries that represent important markets and investors, donors, partner NGOs and civil society organizations. This program can amplify the work of the GEF-6 program, and may also provide a model for other regional cooperation efforts
- *scope in* mercury in artisanal small-scale gold mining (ASGM) as a key GEF-7 intervention for this impact program. Specifically, the GEF should support efforts to replicate Indonesia's recent Minamata Convention actions which include: 1) improve ASGM management; 2) ban use of mercury in ASGM; 3) monitoring; 4) evaluation of mercury supply and distribution; 5) education; 6) support of alternative livelihoods; and 7) medical assistance for those exposed and harmed by mercury.

Inclusive Conservation: Engaging Indigenous Peoples Impact Program

Stakeholders are enthusiastic about this proposed Impact Program which recognises indigenous peoples as among the most important leaders and partners in conservation and sustainable development, and commits to support the implementation of UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. To strengthen the text, some language edits are suggested:

- para 169 which reads: “The program will leverage GEF’s indigenous peoples’ knowledge and experience to pursue long-term conservation initiatives that deliver impacts at scale” should rather be written as: “The program will leverage GEF’s experience in *working in partnership with* indigenous peoples to pursue long-term conservation initiatives that deliver impacts at scale”
- para 173 should include at the end of the last sentence the phrase “and will be rooted in equity and inclusion”
- paras 175 and 176 should spell out the “IPLC” which refers to “indigenous peoples and local communities.” This term should be defined and/or made consistent with the rest of the Program description, which refers to “indigenous peoples.”

Wildlife for Sustainable Development Impact Program

This programme is also welcomed. Some stakeholders urge that that emphasis be placed on promoting improved conservation and building capacity for community based natural resources management (CBNRM) through the various measures mentioned, with support for addressing illegal trade and promoting improved law enforcement as a secondary element.

Circular Economy Impact Program

Many stakeholders also welcome this Program. One stakeholder emphasised that a key GEF-7 intervention to foster a truly sustainable circular economy would be to support elimination of toxic recycling which recycles plastics and other materials containing toxic chemicals. Failing to do so will perpetuate exposure and harm. One example of this results from the Stockholm Convention exemptions for recycling materials containing PentaBDE and OctaBDE. A study of children’s products made of recycled plastic on the market in Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and Sweden found nearly half of the samples contained toxic flame retardants found in e-waste at levels of concern. A previous study found flame retardants from e-waste recycled into plastic food contact materials such as thermos cups and kitchen utensils which are sold in the EU. The circular economy should not become a toxic dumping ground or another convenient externalization pathway for the industry.

Integrated National Planning for MEAs/SDGs Impact Program

Stakeholders stressed that this Program is fundamental to the GEF and should include capacity building to enable national monitoring and joint reporting. Some called for the genuine harmonisation of policy planning and project implementation. It is important the program goals do not undermine one another. It is also critical that certain programmatic concerns and targets are taken into consideration (e.g. ecology and biodiversity) when developing strategies for other programs (e.g. green infrastructure).

Focal Area Complementary Investments Biodiversity Focal Area

In welcoming this Program some stakeholders suggested that the GEF

- support the incorporation of ecosystems and biodiversity management into national, sector and local development plans and build national capacities and institutions to manage biodiversity and ecosystems
- support small-scale solutions for small scale agriculture aligned with national, sector and local plans
- leverage environmental and climate finance for biodiversity and ecosystem management
- unlock the potential of protected areas, including indigenous and community conserved areas through community based natural resource management, rehabilitation and conservation.

In addition, clarifications were requested regarding whether para 214 which notes that 11 Impact Programs are supporting the Biodiversity Focal Area is reflected in the GEF Impact Programs at Table 2.2. Also regarding para 218 (a) which cites “other effective are-based conservation measures,” it would be helpful to clarify that this includes the KBA standard.

Climate Change Focal Area

It is encouraging that the GEF-7 intends to align its support with national climate strategies and plans as established by Parties to the Paris Agreement. Identifying the synergies between current and future needs both across the various IPs and within climate plans will be essential to maximise benefits in partner countries. Some suggestions in that regard would be that the GEF:

- clarify its unique role and limitations and define how the GEF Climate Change focal area complements deeper and more systemic approaches to climate change actions
- strengthen coordination among all funds that support climate related projects. This includes
 - coordinating better with recipient countries and their nationally designated authorities or focal points responsible for endorsing projects and project implementers. This will become increasingly important in the coming years as the GCF begins to fund more programmes and projects
 - working with the Adaptation Fund to support adaptation efforts identified in countries' climate plans and address any gaps in areas such as technology transfer, capacity-building and private sector engagement. This will be particularly necessary in those countries where cross-sectoral adaptation is urgently needed
- focus on key strengths such as the operation of the Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT).
- consider its important role in shaping complementary actions through the IPs that will contribute to a key transformations in affecting energy and economic reforms and innovations.

Land Degradation Focal Area

Stakeholders agree that land degradation from deforestation, climate shocks, unsustainable agricultural practices, and over use of chemical inputs together present an immense challenge to address. In that regard, the GEF may wish to

- Promote a land-degradation neutral model of economic development which benefit to smallholder farmers. In that regard, one stakeholder informs that there is considerable evidence of the significant potential of low-cost methods such as Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration to achieve the restoration of large areas of degraded land in the Sahel region of Africa. The cultivation of nitrogen fixing trees alongside crops can equally play an important role in restoring soil fertility.
- Strengthen capacity at all levels for sustainable land management and rehabilitation especially in countries impacted by climate change
- Leverage with GEF investment other resources to conserve and restore terrestrial ecosystems such as forests, wetlands, drylands and mountains
- Enhance legal empowerment for the land rights of rural women and men in poverty

International Waters Focal Area

No stakeholder inputs were received regarding this program area.

Chemicals and Waste Focal Area

GEF's support of this focal area is fundamental to supporting national obligations under respective multilateral environmental agreements and more broadly the sustainable development goals. One stakeholder pronounced that there is, however, at least a 5-fold difference between those needs and funding availability. To deal with this, it has been proposed to shift government costs of chemicals management to producers and importers that benefit from these services provided by the government. Overall, the key to securing sustainable funding for chemical safety is the internalization of costs within relevant producer industries.

In addition, while the GEF-7 programming document lists SDGs 6, 9, 11, and 12 as relevant to the chemicals waste focal area, other SDGs are highly relevant and should be included. These SDGs include the following:

- SDG 2, 2.4 as it links to phasing out of highly hazardous pesticides and implementation of agroecology
- SDG 3, particularly 3.9 which is highly relevant to fulfilling obligations under the Stockholm and Minamata Conventions
- SDG 4, particularly 4.3 noting that the SAICM Overarching Policy Strategy notes the need implement measures to strengthen knowledge and information *“aimed at those who may be exposed to toxic substances at any stage in the life cycle of chemicals...”*
- SDG 5, 5.1, 5.5, 5a, and 5c emphasising that the SAICM's Overarching Policy Strategy indicates the importance of public participation in decision- making, *“featuring in particular a strengthened role for women”*
- SDG 8, particularly 8.8 as workers have an especially important need – often denied– to have full access to information about the chemicals they use and about the hazards those chemicals pose. The SAICM Dubai Declaration states the industry responsibility to provide data to stakeholders regarding health and environmental effects of chemicals

- SDG 13 noting that the 4th Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention mandated a study on climate change which makes recommendations such as clean-up of contaminated sites, improved waste management, and controls on e-waste export and dumping. Sustainable agriculture also has clear links to climate change actions that are relevant to SAICM
- SDG 14, particularly 14.1 as one key aspect of marine pollution addressed by the Minamata Convention and SAICM is mercury pollution
- SDG 15 as contaminated sites and overall chemicals and wastes pollution pose many negative health and environment impacts. Ocean ecosystems are also profoundly impacted by land-based activities that result in pollution. For Pacific SIDS and many other developing countries, poor waste management has resulted in historical dumping of imported goods that are toxic. Persistent toxic substances in these leachates are taken up by the marine life, which provides ready food for subsistence fishermen
- SDG16, particularly 16.7 and 16.10 as the SAICM agreement stresses the need to improve participatory decision-making, particularly for women and indigenous communities. The Stockholm Convention underlines this, with pointed direction at industry actors and manufacturers. It also reiterates the responsibility of Parties to provide available information on organic pollutants
- SDG 17 as the chemicals agenda is underfunded while the Stockholm Convention needs assessment for the 2015 – 2019 period identified in NIPs are \$1.9 billion USD, not including costs associated with the new POPs.

GEF-7 Small Grants Programme

Recommendation of the small grants programme include that the GEF should

- Ensure the accessibility and increase allocations of small grants to a range of civil society and community based organisations
- Open the programme to multi-country projects which enable scaling up and replication of best practice bottom-up grassroots initiatives so that impact can be achieved on a wider and larger scale. There is both a need for and considerable potential for CSOs and smallholder farmer associations to contribute to major initiatives like The Bonn Challenge and AFR100. Aligned to this there is a significant requirement for support for capacity building of and peer-to-peer technical advice between CBOs (in particular) and local NGOs to improve the quality and therefore the long term impact of initiatives
- Consider an enhanced grant scheme which supports projects that demonstrate the the interconnections between landscape restoration, food systems, agricultural commodities, environmental security, wildlife, natural capital and land degradation and that initiatives may deliver impacts across a number of impact areas
- Earmark GEF-7 SGP only for LCDs and SIDs with a grant size between 100K-250 K/ project and established facility to build the capacities of the local NGOs
- Ensure that the funding allocated to various focal areas in the GEF-7 SGP is proportional to the overall GEF-7 programming budget. In doing so, current imbalances can be corrected as, for example, allocations for chemicals and wastes in the overall budget are not reflected in actual GEF SGP funding
- Clarify the meaning and rationale of para 329 (a) to (d) which refers to strategic initiatives without an explanation as to how the initiatives have been chosen and why.

Financial breakdown across Impact Programs and Focal Area Complementary Investments

No stakeholder inputs were received regarding this program area at this time.

Gef-7 Policy Agenda

Adapting the GEF's Delivery Model for Maximum Impact

Welcoming this policy development, some stakeholder recommend that the GEF should

- Develop with stakeholder's strategies to seize rapidly growing opportunities and work together in diverse coalitions
- Explore the possibility of a budget support mechanism for specific countries
- Simplify GEF procedures and reduce the duration of projects design
- Implement the recommendations of the COP22 with the GEF 7

Reviewing the GEF's Resource Allocation Framework

Stakeholders welcome that country allocations has had impact on GEF's ability to engage with private sector and CSO (para 7(13)). Stakeholders also appreciate the need to reduce grant based support for middle income countries. Non-grant instruments would be a preferred modality but this needs to be understood more clearly as to what it entails and what the intended the public subsidy would be.

Seeking Stronger Partnerships for Systems Change

Stakeholders overwhelmingly welcome this policy area. They acknowledge and appreciate the long term commitment of the GEF in supporting public involvement and are keen to develop new ways of engaging to achieve optimum impacts. Some recommendations offered in with regard to civil society engagement include that the GEF consider

- Developing ways for civil society to contribute to GEF Council meetings well in advance to ensure that inputs are received and considered more readily. This may include but is not limited to a mechanism to facilitate inputs on project proposals, implementation and evaluation. In practice, many European and developing country CSOs struggle to engage with county level projects, despite the acknowledgement under para 16 that CSO executed projects perform better than non-CSO executed projects. Fleshing out what is described in para 27 ad 28 would be an important first step in this direction
- Facilitating ways for civil society work and experiences on the ground can better inform and contribute to Council decisions, the work of GEF partner and project agencies, the work of other stakeholders and overall the quality, effectiveness and impact of GEF programmes and projects

- Reorganising current engagement practices and frameworks to ensure that a dedicated number of civil society representatives are engaged with competencies and expertise in thematic areas corresponding to the proposed multi-stakeholder platforms such as land degradation, climate, water, desertification, biodiversity and conservation. This rethinking and reframing engagement could facilitate a better exchange of key lessons learned and policy recommendations in general. Such a model might be more effective than the current approach which seeks regional, sub-regional and national representation.

With regard to private sector engagement, stakeholders recognise the growing role of the private sector in the GEF's current and future work. Some stakeholder stressed that cooperation with private sector is welcomed when:

- this contributes additionally to national and/or global ambitions, such as the decisions of the relevant conventions and the SDGs
- such initiatives are transparent, based on multi-stakeholder engagement and make a real difference, so stay away from greenwashing initiatives.

Building on the points addressed in the policy and programming paper, the GEF should

- *further identify and clarify* private sector actors, both in terms of size, scale and potential to contribute to the objectives of the GEF. The private sector is not a homogenous entity and various private sector actors have varying roles in the realisation of social, environmental and economic objectives.
- *assess* how it sees the role of different private sector actors, either as potential contributors or eventual implementers of GEF projects.
- *ensure* the necessary safeguards and oversight of private sector activities in project planning and implementation in efforts to build multi-stakeholder coalitions and platforms

Reinforcing the GEF's focus on results, Exploring Opportunities for Greater Efficiency and Effectiveness in Other Priority Areas, Improving Operational Efficiency and Monitoring

No stakeholder inputs were received regarding this program area at this time.

Enhancing Transparency in Governance and Operations

The GEF's policies and practices with regards to transparency and accountability are comprehensive and maintain high standards. Future priorities may be on

- *Communicating and ensuring* sufficient public outreach of key environmental, social, gender and fiduciary policies, procedures and practices (such as financial reporting, procurement, access to information, complaint handling or grievance mechanisms, whistle blower protection and stakeholder engagement) required of GEF Agencies and their executing entities (subcontractors)
- *Demonstrating* better how such policies are implemented effectively at the recipient country level and through the GEF partner and project agencies

- *Supporting* peer learning and capacity building exchanges through multi-stakeholder processes to strengthen country ownership and contribute to strengthening governance at national and local levels. The lessons learning and experience of the GEF agencies should be useful for enabling improved transparency and accountability amongst relevant stakeholders.

Bolstering the GEF's Efforts to Address Gender Equality

No stakeholder inputs were received regarding this program area at this time.

Enhancing the GEF's Knowledge Management Systems

Some stakeholders suggest that the GEF

- *provide* more focus on a triangular approach - linking strongly monitoring and evaluation to knowledge management to communications. One without the other can fall short of reaching institutional goals.
- *provide* a clear list of products that are vehicles managed by GEF for knowledge management and communications, with a better understanding of the audience these are trying to reach would assist partner agencies in supplying relevant information, case studies, stories

Mainstreaming Climate and Disaster Risk Screening Across all GEF Investments

Some stakeholders suggest that the GEF

- *support* national institutions, GEF agencies to develop, implement and monitor their environmental, social and climate safeguards policy
- *support* the mainstreaming into national planning, budgeting & investments and national monitoring processes.

-----ends-----