



**Extended Constituency Workshop**  
**Report of the Civil Society Organizations to the GEF**

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- Extended Constituency Meeting: GEF ECW, Dushanbe, Tajikistan
- Location: Dushanbe, Tajikistan
- Dates: April 30 – May 2, 2013



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## **1. Main expectations and objectives of the CSOs participation in the meeting**

CSOs attended the Extended Constituency Workshop in Dushanbe with the following expectations:

- To understand more about the GEF;
- To get to know the colleagues working in their sphere;
- Understand the GEF strategy according to different conventions;
- Get information about the opportunities for cooperation within GEF/SGP projects;
- Understand how the GEF projects are initiated and formulated;
- Get to know the decision-makers at GEF;
- Present their own organization and conducted projects;
- Understand their place in GEF policy and vision;
- Receive information about GEF plans and strategies;
- Expected something new in regards to CSOs compared to previous ECWs and other GEF meetings, where CSOs have been largely disregarded;
- Get information about the CSO projects and involvement of CSOs.

## **2. Agenda (usefulness; relevance to Rio and other conventions implementation concerns and issues in the region/country; other comments and suggestions if any):**

According to the attending CSOs, the agenda of the ECW was rather dry and not as informative as expected and hoped for. Below are the main comments from CSO representatives regarding the ECW agenda and contents:

- The program was dry and the agenda did not include the names of the presenters. Furthermore, some of the initial presenters did not introduce themselves, therefore the participants did not know their name, their position, whether he is a decision-maker at GEF, etc.;
- The discussion focused on procedures, while the core issues were obscured. The questions were also only about procedural issues;
- There was no lively discussion and CSOs were ignored. A session about CSOs on Day 2 of the ECW was cut short due to leftover presentation from the previous session;
- The session on Day 3 was only for CSOs and while it was interesting to share the ideas and presentations with the colleagues, CSOs would have preferred if all ECW participants heard their opinions and suggestions. Additionally, separating the participants of the ECW for Day 3 felt like segregation. A shorter field trip to a project implemented by a local CSO was promptly organized for CSO representatives by CENN (RFP of the GEF NGO Network), however the CSOs would have preferred to spend more time with other participants of the ECW;
- For the CSO session on Day 2, some representatives of the GEF secretariat did not even put the headphones on to listen to the translation, it seemed like they were not interested in the issues regarding the CSOs;



- From other sessions, most of the issues discussed were not memorable and do not come to mind, with some exceptions;
- The representatives from the conventions did not attend the ECW to explain the conventions and how GEF relates to them in greater detail.

The attending CSOs came up with certain recommendations on how to improve the agenda, which can potentially be quite informative and engaging:

- While procedural issues are important, the agenda should devote more time to core issues regarding the GEF, the project and conventions;
- Ensure that the representatives of all conventions are present so that they can explain their priorities and answer the questions;
- Increase the time devoted to a session about the CSOs during the ECW, which is attended by all ECW participants. It is important that CSOs receive the opportunity to express their opinions and concerns to representatives of the GEF, governmental agencies, international organizations and representatives of the conventions;
- On the last day of the ECW, arrange a site visit for all participants of the ECW together, without segregating the CSO representatives, as the site visit is viewed as an interesting activity, which at the same time allows for further networking opportunities
- Include a practical exercise in the agenda, which would be a simulation of the project proposal to GEF. This would allow for productive feedback to all the participants regarding the steps in the project proposal development process.

### **3. Summary of CSO interventions and suggestions:**

Representatives of CSOs were actively involved throughout the ECW. They posed relevant questions and comments. During the CSO session on Day 2, despite the shortened time allocated to this session, CSOs presented themselves, presented successful projects with their participation and identified the ways about how CSO involvement can be made more effective in GEF-funded projects.

At the CSO-only session on Day 3, all CSOs made a presentation about their organization and relevant projects. CSO representatives then visited a local GEF-funded project, where they explored and commented on the methodology of the Project.

At the end of the CSO session on Day 3 of the ECW, the attending CSOs developed a statement addressing GEF regarding several issues related to the agenda of the ECW. The text of the statement is presented in the **Annex 1** of this report.

### **4. Additional comments and/or suggestions: (how can these ECW be improved)**

At the CSO session on Day 3, the attending CSOs discussed various issues pertinent to the CSOs. These issues related to:

- The procedures related to mandatory financial contribution from NGOs during grants provision;



- Recognition of NGOs/CSOs as binding partners that can be involved in the GEF projects at different stages;
- The procedures related to registering as a member of GEF NGO Network.

Related to the abovementioned points, representatives of the CSOs developed recommendations based on the CSO/NGO discussions on Day 3 of the ECW. The text of the recommendations is presented in Annex 2 of this report.

## 5. List of Participants

No	First and Middle Name(s) *	Last Name (Surname) *	Affiliation	Organization	Email Address(es)	Country
1	Kurbonali	Partoev	Director	NGO Cooperation for development	pkurbonali@yahoo.com	Tajikistan
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4	Lidiya	GULUZADA	Leader	Non-governmental association for development of ecological projects "Khazri"	lidagulu@yahoo.com	Azerbaijan
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10	Magomed	saypulaev	Director	English club FRIENDS	journalist-2004@mail.ru	Russian Federation
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## 6. Annexes

### Annex 1 – Statement of CSOs/NGOs Participating in the GEF Extended Constituency Workshop in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, April 30 – May 2, 2013

#### Statement

#### Submitted by Representatives of Non-governmental Organizations Participating in the GEF Extended Constituency Workshop in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, April 30 – May 2, 2013

We, the representatives of non-governmental organizations (CSOs, NGOs) were invited to participate in the Extended Constituency Workshop (ECW) of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, from April 30 to May 2, 2013. Practically, all NGO representatives had prepared presentations and proposals for wide discussion during the workshop. Unfortunately, the agenda of the ECW did not allow us to express our opinion and communicate it to the representatives of the GEF, international agencies of the United Nations and government officials. We took active

participation in joint group discussions, conducted by representatives of the GEF and international agencies. However, the session devoted to the strategy of civil society engagement, planned for the end of the second day of the workshop was reduced to a minimum; instead of an open discussion, two presentations, carried forward from the previous session and not having any relevance to the subject of discussion were conducted (the previous session ran longer than planned, but adequate extension to the CSO session was not permitted). The third day of the workshop divided the participants into two groups. The first, comprising of government officials and representatives of international agencies, conducted a field visit to explore and study the positive experience within a GEF-funded project, implemented in Tajikistan. The second group, consisting only of NGO representatives, remained at a meeting to discuss “Principles of Policy and Procedures for Participation of Civil Society in Programs and Projects” and develop proposals for the engagement of civil society in GEF activities.

The NGO representatives notified the organizers of the ECW that such division of participants was unacceptable and of their interest in participating in the field visit in order to directly observe the results of a GEF-funded project. NGO representatives informed the organizers of the workshop of the possibility to organize a planned discussion and development of relevant recommendations on civil society engagement during an additional session, which would allow the completion of the entire program. However, the organizers of the ECW refused to alter the agenda and conduct the field visit with the participation of all attendees of the workshop.

In connection with the above, we deem it necessary to state the following:

1. Appropriate conditions for expression of opinions and presentation of proposals were not provided for CSO and NGO representatives participating in the ECW.
2. The division of the participants of the ECW into two groups, with the isolation of CSO and NGO representatives demonstrated that the organizers of the workshop and the representatives of international agencies are not concerned with cooperating with civil society, and their attitude towards our participation carried a formal character.
3. The session devoted to the role and mechanisms of civil society engagement in GEF activities also elicited little interest on the part of the representatives of the GEF and international agencies, since initially a discussion only with the participation of CSO/NGO representatives was scheduled without the involvement of government officials and relevant agency representatives. We consider that the organization of such discussions only between CSO/NGO representatives is ineffective, as numerous proposals and recommendations were targeted towards GEF representatives, authorized persons and agency representatives. The absence of these individuals at the aforementioned session nearly led to the failure of the discussion and the development of recommendations, based on the participation and consideration of the views of different parties.
4. Thus, the determination of the position of CSOs/NGOs, as well as the development of recommendations for the new strategy for civil society engagement in GEF activities was under the threat of failure. This situation highlights the continued policy of neglect towards CSOs/NGOs and the lack of interest in expanding cooperation.
5. The situation at hand is concerning, since without wide participation of CSOs/NGOs and other representatives of the civil society the activity of the GEF may not prove fully effective and receive public recognition.
6. It is surprising and alarming that the Outcome Document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, “The Future We Want” (A/CONF.216/L.1) adopted on June 20-22, 2012 in Rio-de-Janeiro, Brazil, has been forgotten. In particular, the Paragraphs 13, 42, 43, and 44 on civil society engagement, and indirectly, Paragraphs 78 and 265 on the necessity to strengthen coordination, ease of access to resources and further simplification of procedures.

7. We are confident that the present situation can be changed with the presence of good will and respect for international law.

## **Annex 2 - Recommendations Developed on the Basis of CSO/NGO Discussions**

### **Recommendations Developed on the Basis of CSO/NGO Discussions GEF Extended Constituency Workshop (ECW) May 2, 2013 Dushanbe, Tajikistan**

After hearing presentations and speeches conducted by CSO/NGO representatives on experience of working in GEF-funded projects, discussing current practices and official strategy for civil society engagement, the participants of the ECW consider the following:

- The current practice of CSO/NGO registration can be quite lengthy and limits wider participation of civil society;
- The procedure of the grant strategy stipulates a mandatory financial contribution from NGOs with the status of non-profit organizations, which largely limits the capacity of civil society organizations and requires co-financing in situations where this is unrealistic, since it is not provided by governments and programs of funds operating in the countries concerned;
- The latter especially concerns support for the conservation of biodiversity and biological resources, vital for humanity, as well as other means of sustainable development.

For effective cooperation and involvement of stakeholders from civil society, we deem it necessary to develop a new strategy on civil society engagement, including the following principal issues and mechanisms:

- Taking into consideration, when developing the strategy, of fundamental provisions and mechanisms of the Aarhus Convention on access to environmental information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice;
- Recognition in the strategy of the right of CSOs/NGOs to full partnership and the inclusion of CSO/NGO representatives in all decision-making mechanisms;
- Reduction of requirements and needed time for registration procedures of NGO stakeholders in the GEF NGO Network;
- Reduction of the required financial contribution on grants in project with CSO/NGO participation (15-20% instead of 50%), or adoption of a provision on intellectual contribution, which numerous CSOs/NGOs make;
- Recognition of CSOs/NGOs as binding partners, providing independent monitoring on all GEF-funded projects implemented by countries and international agencies, and consideration of the possibility to entrust CSOs/NGOs with the implementation of informational and educational components of these projects.