

# **Compilation of NGO Interventions**

## **GEF Council Meetings**

**June, 2006**

▪ **Resource Allocation Framework (RAF)**  
By German Rocha, Corporacion Pais Solidario (Colombia)

The NGO Network celebrates the successful Replenishment of the GEF, so long as in the RAF it is something we have worked on with the Council political constituencies and the GEF Secretariat over the past months and years.

However all of our alarm signals are on:

- RAF and Replenishment juxtapose impacted severely on the NGO community, CBOs and Indigenous people, and particularly the Small Grants Program which is currently working in almost 100 countries of the world
- RAF and Replenishment means a reduction of 32 million annually in the needed budget allocation to the SGP. As it stands now 25 countries will be excluded from the SGP immediately and 15 countries in the next two years
- SGP is one of the most successful programs implemented by the GEF, as echoed in several of the GEF meetings, benefiting not only the Global Environment but poor communities at the global level. The message received is that the program is in the intensive care unit and will undoubtedly affect adversely the participation of the world civil society in the GEF activities

Our Proposal:

- Request the Council to allocate additional funds to make up the budget deficit of the SGP
- Request Council members to provide alternative founding sources within the GEF financial structure not subject to the RAF
- Urge the countries to share their indicative RAF allocations with the SGP
- Call for the continued and increased support of the GEF Secretariat to enhance partnerships among governmental focal points and the NGO community and better bilateral communication means, for feedback on challenges faced during the implementation of RAF
- Appeal for space to allow NGOs participation in the mid term (2 year) review of the RAF implementation, for identifying gaps and using GEF 3 for benchmarking NGO involvement before and after the RAF implementation
- With our international NGOs colleagues we share the opinion that it is important to prioritize the use of the remaining resources of GEF 3 for those MSPs that have already been technically approved by the GEF Secretariat and which are awaiting for funding. Also for the approval of those projects that were postponed from the last Council and those in the Work Program having significant involvement of NGOs, CBOs and Indigenous People

▪ **GEF Support to Biosafety and GEF Strategy for Financing Biosafety Activities.**

By Khadija Razavi, CENESTA (Iran) and Rajen Awotar, Maudesco (Mauritius)

By Khadija Razavi, CENESTA (Iran) and Rajen Awotar, Maudesco (Mauritius). First of all the GEF NGO Network would wish to record its appreciation that several of our comments made on the issue (Doc GEF/C.27/12) during the November council meeting have been duly considered. Hence our comments will be based on the council documents (Doc GEF/C.28/5) and (Doc GEF/ME/C.28/Inf.1) in front of the council while referring to the November council meeting document (Doc GEF/C.27/12)

The November Council document on the issue (Doc GEF/C.27/12) highlighted the GEF Strategy on Bio-safety. To save time we will as a reminder highlight those strategies that we consider pertinent at today's discussions. The document among others mentioned that the strategy was to:

- (a.) assist countries to prepare for the entry into force of the Cartagena Protocol through the establishment of National Bio-safety Framework including strengthening of capacity, with a wide degree of stakeholder participation.
- (b.) promoting information sharing/collaboration among countries of the region.

Under the Initial Bio-safety strategy the following projects were approved by council:

- (a.) A global project on the "Development of National Bio-safety Framework"(NBF) covering 120 countries.
- (b.) A global project on "Building Capacity" covering 139 countries.
- (c.) 12 demonstration projects.
- (d.) 2/3 Regional Centers of Excellence.

At the November Council meeting it was decided to request the office of the Monitoring and Evaluation (OME) to undertake an evaluation of the activities financed under the Initial Strategy. The evaluation was to focus on capacity development, including stakeholder involvement and regional collaboration, on progress achieved and whether the GEF support had been effective. The report of the OME office showed among others that:

- (a.) Increase in awareness of bio-safety issues has been created among key project participants namely Governments, private sectors and civil society.
- (b.) Dialogue & interaction have been instituted among Government institutions, academia and civil society.

However, in conclusion No4 (Ref Page 14) of document (GEF/C.28/5) it is written in black & white that "Awareness raising, participation efforts by different stakeholders have not been as broad as required by the Cartagena Protocol and as advised in the GEF project document.

Our comments:

- We maintained that hardly any awareness raising and effective participation of civil society/NGOs took place in almost all countries which benefited GEF fundings for the projects. Besides, in the same conclusion (conclusion No4) that “Stakeholder participation/representation and involvement were highly variable” at the National Coordination Committees(NCC).
- As per our information in the majority of countries concerned genuine, independent NGO/civil society groups were never made aware about the existence of the NCCs nor their participation and involvement requested. It might be that only certain so called NGOs- the Government NGOs (GONGOS) were invited to form part of the NCCs. We view this shortcoming as extremely serious as it undermines the very basis of the Protocol which clearly call for inclusive participation of all stakeholders in a spirit of transparency and democracy. We need not re-emphasize the importance of civil society, NGOs, consumer groups for such a vital activity which concerns the whole population. We therefore request council and the secretariat to ensure that such is not the case in future.
- We call for the council and the secretariat to ensure that in future Institutions/Governments given GEF funds scrupulously abide by the terms and conditionalities of GEF.
- We therefore fully support and approve the contents of the proposed “Evaluation format matrix” at page 7 of the document under consideration.
- We further call for the quick implementation of the key Elements as mentioned at Annex:A (Existing guidance from the COP) page 8/9 and the Decision VIII/18 on “Guidance to the financial mechanism”(Ref page 9/10).
- We also fully agree with the conclusion No8 (Page 16) and recommendation No3 (Page 17) i.e “The GEF should continue to emphasize awareness raising and public participation issues, including support to the Bio-safety Clearing House”.

Conclusion:

- We would wish to get more information about the 12 Demonstration Projects & the Regional Centers of Excellence, their location, contact address etc and their accessibility to civil society/NGOs.
- That all capacity building initiatives include civil society, NGOs, consumer reps. A one sided approach will serve no purpose.
- That the proposed Monitoring evaluation matrix be fully integrated within project concepts and their full compliance ensured.

We thank you for giving us the opportunity to share our concerns & hope they will be entertained.