



## GEF CSO Network

### Statement on Agenda 16 : [Policy Amendments to Streamline the GEF Project Cycle](#)

69th GEF Council, 2-4 June 2025

On behalf of the GEF CSO Network, I would like to express our appreciation to the GEF Secretariat for its continued efforts to improve efficiency, transparency, and accountability across the project cycle. Let me now share our views on specific aspects of the proposed amendments:

#### 1. **Project and Program Cycle Policy (OP/PL/01)**

We welcome the requirement for Agencies to submit endorsement and approval requests 8 to 12 weeks in advance. This measure enables sufficient time for thorough project review and enhancement and reduces the risk of automatic cancellations.

#### 2. **Project Cancellation Policy (OP/PL/02)**

We appreciate the provision allowing for deadline extensions under exceptional circumstances such as conflict, natural disasters, or epidemics. This is a pragmatic and compassionate step.

We urge that CSOs be formally consulted when extension requests are being considered—especially when they serve as executing partners. This will help strengthen inclusivity and local ownership of project outcomes.

#### 3. **Monitoring Policy (GEF/C.56/03/Rev.01)**

We support the harmonization of reporting requirements and the move to eliminate redundant data submissions. We support the proposed **Reporting (PIR) for programs** which will enable overall monitoring and enhancement when necessary. We encourage PIRs for Programs including integrated programs to be posted Publicly.

We also support the proposal that **the overall Full-sized Small Grant Program (SGP) projects should submit regular PIRs**. We ask that such PIRs are shared publicly or at minimum with the SGP Steering Committee and the GEF CSO Network to enable appropriate review and feedback.

#### 4. **Additional streamlining Elements**

We note that the current proposal does not include many of the streamlining measures presented at the 68th Council Meeting in December 2024. Are these other measures still being considered?

In particular we are concerned that some of the other proposed streamlining measures may significantly reduce the opportunity for Civil society and other stakeholders to be engaged in the formulation of GEF projects and programmes for example:

- i) The proposal to **drop the preparation of PIFs for MSPs** and expedite approvals - may remove the opportunity for input by Civil society.

ii) The proposal to simplify templates and streamline reviews by **removing stakeholder engagement and environmental and social safeguards from the PIF format**. This could undermine the “Whole of Society Approach”

## **5. Cross-Cutting Recommendation**

The GEF CSO Network calls for a dedicated capacity-building strategy to accompany all new policies and amendments. This should be tailored for CSOs and CBOs to ensure that local actors—those closest to environmental challenges—can engage meaningfully and equitably throughout the project cycle.

## **6. GEF 9 Reforms**

We would also like to take the opportunity to mention our support the GEF 9 proposal on accelerated and streamlined delivery: “Enhancing access to financing to vulnerable groups and "exploring options for the Letter of Endorsement and amending guidelines and policies, to enhance access to financing, thereby supporting the rights and knowledge systems of IPLCs.”

**In Conclusion,** we reaffirm our support for streamlining the project cycle and expediting the delivery of funds. However, we need assurance from GEF that these changes will not inadvertently lead to the exclusion of CSOs, Indigenous people and local communities from effective engagement in the project formulation and design.