



GEF CSO Network

Statement on Agenda 03 : [Work Program for GEF Trust Fund](#)

70th GEF Council Meeting, December 2025

The GEF CSO Network welcomes the proposed Work Program for the GEF Trust Fund. The Work Program requests \$266 million of project financing, representing 5.8% of the total GEF 8 amount and bringing utilisation to 83% of GEF 8 target.

We support the engagement of 12 Pacific SIDs through the *Unlocking Blue Pacific Prosperity (UBPP) Initiative* to expand the sustainable use of Pacific Ocean waters, enhance establishment of Marine Protected Areas, and build healthy, resilient communities with robust food systems.

We strongly welcome the *Integrated Management of Permafrost Peatland in Northern China for Biodiversity Conservation and Climate Actions*. Peatlands globally store 30% of soil carbon on 3% of the land area and Permafrost peatlands store almost half of this total. This project will support measures to enhance management of permafrost peatlands in China by modifying land use and landscape management. It will provide important lessons for management of other montane and circumpolar permafrost peatlands. We would like to see more details on CSO and IPLC engagement in the implementation.

We support the project in South Africa: *Securing Nature's Contribution to People: Advancing Indigenous and Local Community Livelihoods, Cultural Practices, and Sustainable Land Management*. This project aims to foster inclusive socio-economic growth and environmental sustainability in rural South African communities by formalizing and transforming key natural resource industries through sustainable management and utilization.

Finally, we note that 17% of the GEF 8 budget remains to be programmed with only six months remaining. We urge all GEF donors with outstanding contributions to expedite their payments and for GEF recipients and agencies to finalise and submit proposals for the remaining funds.

We urge that emphasis is given to projects that address the Whole of Society and Whole of Government Approach. As we reflect on this GEF 8 Work program, we need to also think of the GEF 9 replenishment. We need all the GEF donors to meet their commitments to scale-up their funding which have been made under CBD and UNFCCC. In addition, we need more recipient countries to also become GEF donors and contribute to the common vision to safeguard our planet.

Following the meeting, we will submit additional written comments on selected projects in the Work Program.