



## **GEF CSO Network**

### **Statement on Agenda 07 : [The Eighth Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF & Management Response](#)**

**70th GEF Council Meeting, December 2025**

The GEF CSO Network welcomes the Report of the Eighth Overall Performance Study of the GEF. The assessments have been very comprehensive, resulting in key findings. While the overall conclusions are very positive, the Study highlights some remaining challenges with regard to social inclusion and stakeholder engagement. The Study highlights the importance of a community-based approach, with projects using this approach demonstrating stronger performance and environmental and socio-economic outcomes. Despite this, it seems only a minority of recent projects fully applied good practices around accountability, participation and resource devolution. This needs to be addressed.

We welcome the comprehensive consideration of social inclusion in Chapter 7 of OPS8. We note that the findings highlight the importance of a Whole of Society Approach and indicate that, for example, gender integration has been significantly improved across project design, but inclusion beyond gender remains inconsistent and many barriers to inclusion remain. There are significant gaps in effective engagement of different target groups. While more than 90% of PIFs indicate there will be engagement of civil society and related stakeholders; and consultation levels were high (especially with women's groups) - but the actual level of active collaboration in project implementation remained low especially for IPLC and youth.

We note strong calls to enhance social inclusion are buried in the sub-text of other recommendations such as the need to:

- a) enhance opportunities for inclusive stakeholder engagement during the preparation of Integrated programmes. (Recommendation 1)
- b) Pay greater attention to enhancing linkages with national stakeholders including civil society, that can uphold and scale outcomes. (Recommendation 2)
- c) Institutionalise engagement through early and inclusive dialogues that involve civil society and other stakeholders ( Recommendation 6)

We believe that with the rich findings and concerns raised about social inclusion - there should be additional specific recommendations and guidance on enhancing the Whole of Society and addressing gaps in social inclusion.

The GEF CSO Network calls for GEF to build on the findings of OPS8 and enhance the level of Civil Society and IPLC engagement in design and implementation and monitoring of medium and full-sized projects.