



GEF CSO Network

Statement on Agenda 10 : [FY27 Work Program and Budget of the Independent Evaluation Office](#)

71st GEF Council Meeting, May-June 2026

The GEF CSO Network supports the FY27 Work Program and the budget request of 8.233 million dollars, and we thank the IEO for its contribution to accountability and learning across the Partnership.

We welcome the priorities running through the program: transformational change, gender, knowledge management, data science, AI, and whole-of-society approaches. These reflect what evaluation needs to capture beyond project performance.

As the Partnership moves into GEF-9, we offer one suggestion for the work ahead. As the IEO designs its four-year strategy, we encourage it to deepen its engagement with civil society, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities as partners in evaluation and learning, under clear safeguards that protect evaluative independence. This does not weaken independence. It strengthens the evidence by drawing on knowledge systems that conventional methods often miss, particularly in evaluations of Indigenous territories, community conservation, and integrated landscapes. The Network and our Regional Civil Society Focal Points are ready to serve as a bridge between global evaluation processes and country realities.

We further recommend that the IEO explore innovative models of participatory evidence generation that integrate scientific, technical, and local knowledge systems.

We have a longer statement, which we will share in writing.



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The GEF CSO Network welcomes the FY27 Work Program and Budget of the Independent Evaluation Office and recognizes the important contributions that the IEO has made in strengthening accountability, learning, and evidence-based decision making across the GEF Partnership.

We particularly appreciate the Office's growing emphasis on transformational change, policy coherence, gender equality, marginalized groups, knowledge management, data science, artificial intelligence, and whole-of-society approaches. These priorities reflect the increasing complexity of global environmental challenges and the need for evaluation systems capable of capturing not only project performance, but also the social, institutional, and territorial conditions that enable lasting impact.

As the GEF prepares for the transition toward GEF-9, the Network encourages the IEO to deepen its engagement with civil society, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities as strategic partners in evaluation, learning, and knowledge generation. Such engagement should not compromise the independence of evaluation. On the contrary, it can strengthen the quality, legitimacy, and relevance of evaluative evidence by incorporating perspectives, experiences, and knowledge systems that are often inaccessible through conventional evaluation methodologies.

The Network therefore proposes the development of structured and transparent mechanisms that allow the IEO to engage with a broad range of civil society actors under clear safeguards that preserve evaluative independence and avoid conflicts of interest. These mechanisms could include advisory knowledge platforms, thematic learning communities, regional dialogue spaces, and independent stakeholder reference groups that contribute contextual information, territorial perspectives, and lessons learned without influencing evaluative judgments or findings.

Particular attention should be given to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), whose territories host a significant share of the world's remaining biodiversity and whose knowledge systems represent a critical source of environmental stewardship and resilience. In evaluations concerning Indigenous territories, community conservation, biodiversity governance, climate adaptation, and integrated landscape approaches, territorial actors should be



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considered not merely as respondents or beneficiaries, but as contributors to monitoring, learning, and knowledge management processes.

The GEF CSO Network further recommends that the IEO explore innovative models of participatory evidence generation that integrate scientific, technical, and local knowledge systems. Such approaches can enhance understanding of long-term environmental and social outcomes while strengthening ownership and utilization of evaluation findings at the territorial level.

We also encourage stronger collaboration between the IEO and regional civil society networks in the production, dissemination, and interpretation of knowledge products, including country evidence series, thematic evaluations, and lessons on transformational change. Regional Focal Points of the GEF CSO Network can serve as valuable bridges between global evaluation processes and local realities, helping translate evidence into actionable learning while expanding the reach of evaluation findings.

On technology and learning. As the IEO advances knowledge management, digital innovation, and AI, we ask the Office to pair these with investment in social learning architectures that connect evaluators, communities, Indigenous organizations, civil society networks, and policy actors. Transformational change is a governance and learning challenge, not only a technical one.

The GEF CSO Network stands ready to collaborate with the Independent Evaluation Office in advancing a more inclusive, territorially grounded, and knowledge-rich evaluation ecosystem that strengthens both accountability and learning across the GEF Partnership.