



GEF CSO Network

Statement on Agenda 13 : [Evaluation of GEF Support to Marginalized Groups](#)

71th GEF Council Meeting, May 2026

Thank you, Chair. We welcome the evaluation and the management response. We have three points.

First, the evidence. The evaluation shows that meaningful engagement is linked to stronger project performance. Paragraph 12 of the evaluation highlights that this engagement can even offset the negative effects of fragility on project outcomes. This is the empirical case for the GEF-9 ambition on civil society and IPLCs. We ask the GEF to use this evidence to drive engagement requirements in GEF-9, not just to record it.

Second, the design-to-implementation gap. Paragraph 15 of the management response calls this the most consequential gap: strong compliance at design, weak tracking during implementation. Paragraph 14 relies on qualitative narratives "rather than indicators alone." Narratives alone are not accountable, we need to pair them with indicators. The response also notes that Portal self-tags apply only to women and IPLCs. We recommend extending the tags to youth and persons with disabilities, so all four primary groups are tracked from approval through implementation. The Results Management Framework is already in place, so this should be a straightforward ask, not a new reporting layer. This applies the same principle we raised under agendas 2 and 9, now to engagement.

Third, policy and knowledge. Paragraphs 10 and 11 of the management response commit to elevate the 2012 Principles and Guidelines for Engagement with Indigenous Peoples to a formal policy, and to present a GEF Policy on Indigenous Peoples by end 2027. We welcome both and ask the GEF to hold that timeline. The policy work covers Indigenous Peoples. We recommend keeping local communities, women, and youth in the engagement guidance alongside it.

Paragraph 21 names the GEF CSO Network as a partner in knowledge and learning. We welcome that and we will engage. Paragraph 27 of the evaluation notes the history of our partnership. Over the last two years the Network has gone through a major leadership renewal, and it runs on an inclusive, democratic process. We are confident in our capacity to deliver the partner role set out in paragraph 21.