

# CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT WITH THE GREEN CLIMATE FUND

## A FACTSHEET FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

### A clear mandate for civil society participation

The **Governing Instrument** of the **Green Climate Fund (GCF)** recognizes the importance of stakeholder input and participation. It requests the Fund's Board to "develop mechanisms to promote the input and participation of stakeholders, including private-sector actors, civil society organizations, vulnerable groups, women and indigenous peoples in the design, development and implementation of the strategies and activities to be financed by the Fund"<sup>1</sup>.

Despite some existing challenges, **civil society organizations (CSOs)**

have a number of opportunities to engage in the GCF at various levels (national, regional and international), enabling interactions with the Fund's Board, its Secretariat, and other stakeholders active in the GCF.



### National engagement opportunities



#### Dialogue – voicing CSO's demands locally

Through its Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme<sup>2</sup>, the GCF supports the development of country programmes that strengthen engagement of stakeholders, including governments, sub-national institutions, civil society and the private sector.

Civil society actors can take part in the identification of national priorities in relation with the GCF or support the development of a country programme that identifies strategic priorities for engagement with the Fund. CSOs can engage and interact with a variety of national authorities and institutions implementing GCF financed projects. That engagement can occur at the level of the GCF's **National Focal Points** and **National Designated Authorities (NDAs)**<sup>3</sup> as well as with **Accredited Entities (AEs)**<sup>4</sup>, **Executing Entities (EEs)**, and Delivery Partners.

CSOs can influence the selection of these various actors responsible for GCF activities. They can advocate for direct access to AEs, contribute to annual reviews of the GCF portfolio in countries, and participate in consultative processes with other actors.

#### Advocacy – requesting quality in GCF projects

Preparing concept notes or full project or programme proposals to be considered for GCF funding is a key step within countries and regions where civil society can play a significant role. CSOs can advocate for the quality of proposals by voicing their concerns vis-à-vis AEs, thereby influencing the way GCF funding is used. They can critically assess whether or not the projects, once developed, can truly contribute to reducing or avoiding emissions or improving the resilience of the most vulnerable communities. AEs are encouraged to involve all relevant stakeholders in meaningful consultations and dialogues while designing and implementing GCF financed projects or programmes. Where national platforms exist to enable such a possibility, CSOs can propose ideas for projects or programmes to AEs.



1 Governing Instrument for the GCF, paragraph 71.

2 Germanwatch published a factsheet on the GCF's Readiness Programme available at: [www.germanwatch.org/en/15945](http://www.germanwatch.org/en/15945)

3 Focal Points and NDAs are national institutions representing the GCF in their countries. See their list at: [www.greenclimate.fund/countries](http://www.greenclimate.fund/countries)

4 AEs are organizations receiving GCF resources to implement projects and programmes. See their list at: <https://tinyurl.com/y8e8fz2x>

## Implementation – becoming a key GCF player

AEs can cooperate with CSOs on implementing GCF projects or programmes. In such a scenario, CSOs can be selected by AEs as EEs. Given the specific expertise, skills, knowledge or on-the-ground experience, aligned with GCF standards and procedures, they can contribute to the implementation phase. In other cases, CSOs can be recruited as Delivery Partners to provide specific services in a project or programme. Moreover, CSOs can apply for GCF accreditation to become AEs themselves, if they meet the necessary GCF's fiduciary, environmental and social standards. They, however, need to be aware of the potential conflict of interest that may limit their ability to also play other pertinent roles as civil society.

## Watchdog – monitoring and tracking results

When CSOs are engaged in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating GCF financed activities, projects and programmes, it is more likely that expected results, local needs and the Fund's objectives will be met. In addition, civil society in its "watchdog" role can contribute to enhancing transparency and accountability



## Regional and international engagement

### GCF Regional Structured Dialogues

The GCF holds [Structured Dialogues](#) annually in different regions across the globe. Attended by ministers, representatives from governments and other stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector, the dialogues build on practical knowledge and regional on-the-ground experiences. They serve as a strategic space to share knowledge about how to access and use GCF resources to address climate change across the regions. The GCF Secretariat, through the Active Observers, invites a number of CSO representatives to attend the dialogues. This offers CSO representatives an opportunity to meet and interact with GCF stakeholders from their regions and to enhance their understanding of the Fund's procedures.

of national GCF authorities, such as the NDAs or AEs, for higher credibility of results. CSOs are able to raise concerns in open letters and coordinated joint actions. They may prepare shadow reports, organize citizen-led monitoring and host consultations to criticize results of projects and programmes.

## Capacity-building and awareness raising

CSOs can use diverse communication channels to raise awareness and various tools to build capacities. Through their work, they can serve as advocates for multilateral climate finance in their countries, regions or even globally. This could help raising the GCF's profile and be critical in shaping positive public opinion of and national support for the Fund while also reaching out to new stakeholders and donor countries. By conducting capacity-building activities to strengthen stakeholders' understanding of the modalities of the GCF, CSOs can place themselves as a key player within national, regional and global communities engaged in the Fund's activities.



### Civil society voice in adaptation finance and projects

The [Adaptation Fund NGO Network \(AFN\)](#) initiated by Germanwatch, provides capacity support to a number of CSOs across developing countries, which independently monitor the execution of [Adaptation Fund \(AF\) projects](#). Network partners conduct trainings for citizens and local actors on monitoring and tracking progress of projects to ensure that the critical voice of civil society helps to reach transparency, accountability and successful implementation. The AFN also contributes to policy discussions and decisions on adaptation financing, especially through a CSO Dialogue at AF Board meetings

## Observing GCF Board meetings

To promote the participation of stakeholders in its proceedings, the GCF's Board grants on a regular basis access to its meetings for representatives of accredited CSOs from developed and developing countries which are admitted as observers. Among these observers, two representatives, one each from developed and developing countries, are elected as Active Observers. They represent civil society voices in all Board proceedings for a term of two years. Board members<sup>5</sup> meet at least three times a year to decide new policies or assess existing ones, approve new funding proposals and AEs, and review the work of the Secretariat and its independent units. During the meetings, CSO representatives can engage with Board members to raise their concerns on decisions or make constructive proposals to the Board through the two Active Observers.

## Engaging with the GCF CSO Constituency

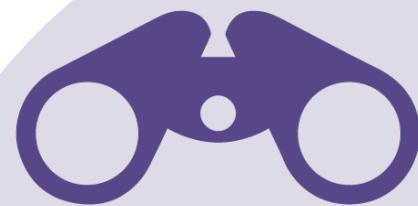
CSOs<sup>6</sup> which are active in the GCF, convene under an independent and self-led CSO Constituency<sup>7</sup> consisting of national, regional and international organizations and networks from all around the world. The assembly exclusively facilitates and coordinates CSO engagement in the Fund at the global level, with a key focus around the preparation of and participation in Board meetings. Representatives from member organizations gather for online calls or preparatory meetings to elaborate their strategies and discuss their expectations for successful meetings and decisions. Active Observers from civil society to the GCF Board are mostly elected from within the CSO Constituency members.

## Interacting with the GCF Secretariat

Interacting with the independent Secretariat of the GCF, which is responsible for executing the daily operations of the Fund, can be very valuable for CSOs. Besides the advantage

of speaking many languages, the Secretariat has diverse expertise on the Fund's procedures. Its staff can help enhance CSOs' understanding of the GCF's modalities and processes, and support their roles through a number of specialized units and divisions, whose work is frequently shared during online webinars. The Division of Country Programming in charge of the GCF

readiness programme supports stakeholder engagement at national and regional levels. Independent units such as the Independent Integrity Unit (IIU), the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) and the Independent Redress Mechanism (IRM) provide official procedures which can be used to report problems or issues arising from GCF's financed activities. Civil society can complain via the GCF's Information Disclosure Appeals if their information disclosure requests were denied. They can support local communities that have been adversely affected by GCF's funded activities or projects to fill in official complaints and address them to the IRM.



### GCFWatch – a CSO-led tool to track GCF activities

GCFWatch is a civil society led online portal for sharing information about GCF projects, programmes and activities. The platform aims to track policies and decisions by the Fund's Board, monitor countries' financial pledges, as well as promote and accelerate civil society's readiness to the GCF.

**More about GCFWatch:** [www.gcfwatch.org/home/](http://www.gcfwatch.org/home/)

<sup>5</sup> The GCF is governed by a **24 members Board** including alternate members.

<sup>6</sup> As early 2019, there are 273 CSOs registered to the GCF as observers.

<sup>7</sup> Request to join the CSO Constituency at: <https://tinyurl.com/y99mo52q>

# Some relevant GCF policies for civil society



## Information Disclosure Policy

The [policy](#) pursues the greatest degree of transparency in GCF activities through the effective dissemination of information to stakeholders and a larger public. As one of the GCF's accountability mechanisms, it recognizes the need to ensure public access to information and makes it available to the public either as a routine matter or upon request in an effective and timely manner.

## Observer Participation Policy

The [policy](#) proposes guidelines for observer participation, accreditation of observer organizations and participation of Active Observers<sup>8</sup> in GCF Board meetings. While the policy is still pending approval by the Board, it is already semi-operational through existing observer participation guidelines which promote stakeholders' input and participation in the Fund's Board proceedings.

## Guidelines for Enhanced Country Ownership

These [guidelines](#) provide clear roles and identify opportunities to all relevant actors involved in the implementation of GCF activities (Focal Points, NDAs and AEs). They also set ground for stakeholders' participation, including civil society, in the GCF's funded activities at the country level, and support the development of country programmes which strengthen that engagement.

## Indigenous Peoples Policy

The [policy](#) assists the GCF in promoting indigenous peoples' access to its financed activities. It incorporates considerations related to indigenous peoples into the GCF decision-making. The policy allows the Fund to examine, control, eliminate and reduce the adverse impacts of its activities on indigenous peoples.

## Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Policy

The [policy](#) would provide the GCF with a gender-responsive approach to effectively promote gender equality and social inclusion. This policy has, however, not yet been approved by the Board as of early 2019. This makes the [Gender Policy and Action Plan](#) from 2015, updated in 2018, the currently applied policy.

Understanding the difference!

## Accreditation as Observer to GCF Board meetings

The GCF Board grants on a regular basis accreditation to civil society and private sector organizations to participate in its meetings as accredited observers. They do not receive funding from the GCF for their participation or their work.

## Accreditation as Accredited Entity (AE) to the GCF

AEs are private or public, non-governmental, sub-national, national, regional or international organizations, which meet the GCF standards, are accredited by the Board, and can receive funding to implement projects or programmes.



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<sup>8</sup> In their role, Active Observers from civil society have to agree to a [policy on ethics and conflicts of interest for active observers of the GCF](#).