

GEF Expanded Constituency Workshop CSO Meeting

2nd November 2015, Cotonou, Benin

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) was established in Oct 1991 and it is the largest independent operating financial organization with a partnership for international cooperation where 183 countries work together with international institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector to address environmental issues. GEF classified the environmental issues of focus to include Biodiversity, Climate Change, Chemicals and Wastes, Land Degradation, International Waters and Sustainable Management of Forest REDD+.

In order to address the issues collectively within the GEF regions of interests, government of the countries were encouraged to involve Civil Society Organizations (CSO) in the effort to curb the environmental problems plaguing the world today. The role of CSOs in GEF activities was key and thus resulted into an annual event known as the Expanded Constituency Workshops (ECW). The annual workshops aim at keeping the GEF national focal points, convention focal points and other key stakeholders, including civil society, abreast of GEF strategies, policies and procedures and to encourage coordination. It also provides opportunity for the GEF Regional Focal Point (RFP) to meet with CSOs intermittently. At such forums members share experiences and discuss matters that will improve the furtherance and sustainability of the network and the operations of the CSO.

This report covers a one-day workshop that took place in Benin on the 2nd Nov. 2015.

2.0 WORKSHOP DURATION

The workshop lasted for one day and was attended by CSOs from member countries in the West Coastal 8 West African Region consisting of Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Benin, Togo and Guinea.

3.0 PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS

Participating organisations included GEF CSOs members and non GEF CSO members from the West Coastal African Region (the Reptile and Amphibian Program – Sierra Leone (RAP-SL), Groupement des Exploitants Agricoles du Benin (GEA-BENIN), Nature Tropical ONG, Neighbourhoods Environment Watch (NEW) Foundation, ProEnvironment, Women Environmental Programme, Defence Against Aids, Poverty and Underdevelopment (DAAPU), Conservatoire des Espaces de Mangrove de Guinée, Credi Togo government representatives from the host country (Ministry of Environment) and representatives from international organization (UNDP).

4.0 ORGANISERS/FACILITATORS

- GEF Secretariat through Susan Waithaka, Country Relations for Africa.

- Council Member, Mr. Clement EDAH, Directeur de la Programmation et de la Prospective Cotonou, Benin Republic

LOGISTICS

- Oreste Pedro Maia Andrade , GEF Secretariat

FACILITATORS

- GEF Secretariat
- GEF CSO Network

RAPPORTEURS

- Priscilla M Achakpa
- Edward Aruna
- Eric Agboza

5.0 APPROACH

- Paper presentations
- Visual presentations through PowerPoint and Charts
- Plenary Session and Demonstration

6.0 ORDER OF EVENTS

6.1 Arrival and Registration of participants: 2nd November 2015

6.2 Overview of Benin - Host Country of the Expanded Constituency Workshop

Benin, over the years has invested so much in the environment and Biodiversity Conservation in particular. The government's sector on environment has produced and is currently producing many documents that target the protection and conservation of Benin's natural resources including biodiversity.

International partner organizations such as the United Nation Development Program (UNDP) Global Environment Facility (GEF), the private sector and civil society engagements and commitments have contributed to the accomplishment of some major outputs set out in the country's Environment and Biodiversity conservation programs.

Support from GEF has guided investments and priority actions in GEF Focal areas, and is making significant contributions to global environmental management. Benin is significantly benefitting from the support of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through either country programs or the Small Grant Program.

The Ministry of Environment who is part of the steering committee of SGP co manages the small grant. The SGP's steering committee comprises of 5 NGOS, 7 are from other institutions including the ministry of environment.

There has been advancement of CSO and CBOs participating in GEF small grants over the years. Such success stories include the mainstreaming of environmental concerns into other sectors and related processes and instruments. It has been clearly recognized that CSOs and CBOs play a vital role in protecting the environment because of their capacity in linking local communities and increasing social capital through experience sharing and capacity building efforts, which has been largely supported by the Small Grant.

Hosting of the GEF ECW in Benin is considered as an opportunity for both Benin and GEF CSOs to meet and share, once more, valuable ideas that have yielded so much result within the region, and not also forgetting lessons learned from those that have negatively impacted the GEF Small Grant funded projects.

6.3 Welcome Remarks

In her opening remarks, the GEF CSO Network RFP, West Africa, Priscilla M. Achakpa, welcomed the participants to the workshop. She wished all participants a happy deliberation and stay in Benin till the 5th Nov 2015. The ECW, she said, was an opportunity for her to meet with members of new and old CSOs, and hoped that members will continue in the spirit of maintaining the network, promoting and working towards the goals of the GEF Small Grant Program. She informed the gathering that mainstreaming CSOs in GEF is key and for that reason the GEF secretariat appreciate CSOs.

She was particularly impressed with the turn-out of CSOs from Benin because previous meetings have only had one person but today, more representatives attended from both CSOs and government offices.

Her experience over the period she has served as RFP, she said was that there seems to be some CSOs that do not physically exist, therefore, she said she was going to embark on CSO verification soon. This she said was important for the continuation of the program's sustainability. Transparency and accountability, she said was key in her task as there are so many questions about the implementing CSOs. Therefore she encouraged members to try hard to shame those that have doubts about the credibility of CSOs and promised to visit countries during her on-the-spot inspection exercise, which she hopes would commence soon.

6.4 Member Introduction

For the smooth running of the workshop and familiarity, members were asked to introduce themselves and their organizations. This was done throughout the first session since some participants from Benin and other countries came in slightly late. Lastly, during the introduction session, the Minister of Environment from Benin Republic visited the hall and expressed his sincere gratitude to the participants. He assured members that the ECW was welcome and that the gathering has his fullest support. He shook hands with everyone and lastly took photos with participants upon the request of the RFP.

7.0 THE AGENDA

Key issues discussed include:

- CSO engagement in GEF 6
- Strengthening CSO engagement at country/regional level
- Enhancing CSO Participation in GEF activities through GEF Small Grants Program
- Independent Evaluation of the GEF

8.0 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSIONS

8.1 CSO ENGAGEMENT IN GEF 6

Under this, the following issues were presented and discussed. The discussions included questions, answers and suggestions.

8.1.1 Overview of GEF CSO Network: Jasper Kelechukwu presented this as follows:

CSO Network

- ▶ Was established in 1995 to link civil society organizations to GEF and facilitates input to GEF policy-making and implementation
- ▶ Is an independent/autonomous network with nearly 500 member organizations from all regions around the world.
- ▶ Is governed by a Coordination Committee comprising 16 Regional Focal points and three Indigenous Peoples' Focal points and a Central Focal Point (Revised Chair & Vice Chair)
- ▶ Is recognized by the GEF Council and GEF Secretariat as a key entity in the work of the GEF.
- ▶ Organize Civil Society consultations prior to GEF Council and CSO Forum during GEF Assembly
- ▶ Monitor and build capacity at regional and national level for CSO engagement in GEF activities
- ▶ Open to all nonprofit CSOs working in the focal areas of GEF
- ▶ Application web based with submission of basic information through www.gefcso.org
- ▶ 58 members in 16 West Africa Countries
- ▶ Membership is equivalent to accreditation to GEF – for participation in GEF related meetings

Current RFPs/IPFP in West Africa include:

Priscilla M Achakpa

Legborsi Saro Pyagbara

8.1.2 Public Involvement Policy and Options for CSOs: Mr. Eric Agbozo presented this as follow:

- ▶ Effective public involvement is critical to the success of GEF- financed projects, with emphasis on local participation.
- ▶ Public involvement comprises three related and often overlapping processes: (a) information dissemination; (b) consultation; and (c) stakeholder participation.
- ▶ It has principles that cannot be overlooked
- ▶ Principles include:
 - Social, Environmental and Financial Sustainability
 - Country Responsibility (government and GEF Agencies)
 - Flexibility
 - Broad-based and sustainable
 - Transparency

Rational

- ▶ Enhancing recipient country ownership of, and accountability for, project outcomes
- ▶ Addressing the social and economic needs of affected people

- ▶ Building partnerships among project executing agencies and stakeholders
- ▶ Making use of skills, experiences, and knowledge in the design, implementation and evaluation of project activities.

8.2 ENHANCING CSO PARTICIPATION AND CASE STUDIES: Mathieu Houinato presented this as follow:

Enhancing CSOs participation in GEF activities through GEF Small Grant Program

- Observed to be key for the success of the network
- GEF Programs are developed around its operational areas
- Environmental degradation is linked in complex ways therefore integrated thinking inspires creative and inclusive solutions that deliver environmental benefits

8.2.1 Mechanism to Enhance CSO Engagement at Country/Regional Level: Priscilla M. Achakpa presented this as follow:

- ▶ The GEF-CSO Network has the prerogative to appoint a member organization of the GEF CSO Network as a Country Contact Point (CCP)
- ▶ The role of the CCP is to actively assist the Regional Focal Point (RFP) in the development of the GEF-CSO Network in a specific country in the Region.
- ▶ Some other responsibilities include: -
 - Promoting the GEF-CSO Network whenever possible
 - Providing, upon request from the GEF-CSO Network CFP or RFP, information pertinent to their activities and country when necessary
 - Assisting the RFP in information gathering and dissemination
 - Ensure partnership with government and GEF IAs
 - Reporting on a 6-monthly basis, etc.

8.3 Strengthening CSO Engagement at Country/Regional Level

8.3.1 GEF CSO Evaluation – IEO: Carlo Carugi presented this as follow:

- ▶ The process is Independent from the GEF Council/Secretariat but findings would be reported to GEF Council

Objectives include:

- ▶ Promoting accountability
- ▶ Promoting learning, feedback and knowledge sharing
- ▶ Mission is to enhance environmental benefits through excellence, independence and partnership in monitoring and evaluation.

This presentation was followed by an exercise, which included answering questions around the following:

- Ideas about the Network, objectives, structure, results/contributions
- Reason for CSOs becoming member
- Reasons for non-CSOs wanting to register
- Comments about membership application process
- Most needed happening that will strengthen organizations' environmental work
- Ways in which the CSO network can help

8.3.2 Ideas about the Network, objectives, structure, results/contributions

- ▶ Creating the appropriate forum for members to meet and share information and be able to interact
- ▶ Create opportunity for the RFP to meet members
- ▶ Discuss issues that needed answers
- ▶ Unique feature noted was attendees are few for the network meeting
- ▶ On familiarity, participants are familiar with the network
- ▶ Focusing on NGOs working of GEF Operational thematic areas
- ▶ Know more about membership requirement
- ▶ Forum for sharing experiences
- ▶ Provides opportunity for members for funding
- ▶ Gives opportunity to participate in GEF Governance

Objective:

- ▶ Creating link between GEF and CSO
- ▶ Creates enabling environment for project design and implementation, monitoring and evaluation

Structure:

- Members, RFP, CC and CFP

Result:

- ▶ Awareness raising is ongoing
- ▶ Providing resources and tools for networking
- ▶ Capacity building for access GEF grants
- ▶ Sharing best practices
- ▶ Creating platform for GEF members to showcase their activities

8.3.3 Reasons for being a member and wanting to become a member:

- Identification with GEF
- Creates avenue for information sharing
- Provides collective action and feasibility
- Strengthen partnership with donors
- Enable participants to become members
- Comments:
- Membership process is cumbersome
- Let the requirement be simplified

8.3.4 Most needed happening that will strengthen organizations' environmental work

- Capacity building
- Funding
- Visibility
- Networking and information sharing
- Building synergies between GEF-CSOs, Government and GEF Secretariat and Partners

8.3.5 How can the CSO Network help?

- Networking
- Visibility
- Access to funding

8.4 The Way Forward

8.4.1 Capacity Strengthening Needs and Opportunities for CSOs

- Training in strategic directions of GEF Operational areas (climate change, biodiversity, sustainable land management, persistent organic pollutants and international waters)
- Fund raising strategy
- Training in Project proposal development for funding
- Accelerated networking with the private sector
- Improve CSOs Communication strategies &
- Monitoring and evaluation

8.4.2 Conclusion and Recommendation from the Workshop

- At the national level, the visibility and participation of CSOs in the National Steering Committee and Small Grants evaluation should be reinforced
- Action should be taken by members of the GEF CSO Network together with the government focal points to help inform civil society stakeholders on opportunities for involvement in the development of full-sized projects.
- GEF should provide support for regular Regional meetings and other knowledge sharing and technical exchange opportunities among CSOs and other stakeholders in the region
- Increase the GEF SGP budget in the region and strengthen SGP outreach and capacity building activities for CSOs.

Appendix I: List of CSO & Government Attendants (CSO Meeting and Main ECW Workshop)

No	Name	Organisation	Contacts	Country	E-mail
1	Franck Cyrille Monkoun	Groupement des Exploitants Agricoles du Benin (GEA-BENIN)		Benin	monkounfranck@yahoo.fr
2	Jasper Kelechukwu Okezie	Neighbourhood Environment Watch (NEW) Foundation		Nigeria	newfoundationngo@gmail.com
3	Edward Aruna	Reptile and Amphibian Program – Sierra Leone		Sierra Leone	edwardaruna@yahoo.com
4	Ibrahima Bangoura	Conservatoire des Espaces de Mangrove de Guinée		Guinea	cemagong10@yahoo.fr
5	Henry Smith	Society for Environmental Conservation		Liberia	societyconservation@yahoo.com
6	Yao Afelete Melesus	Credi Togo		Togo	melesusu@yahoo.fr
7	Mirabelle Diane Kpanou	Ministry of Environment		Benin	mididis2002@gmail.com
8	Bediye Pierre	ProEnviroment		Benin	pisolbe@yahoo.fr
9	Ogou Maixent	ProEnvironment		Benin	pactiong@hotmail.com
10	Houinato Mathieu	UNDP-SGP		Benin	Mathieu.houinato@unep.org
11	Mme Djengue Marie	Nature Tropical ONG		Benin	Danielle.sossou@yahoo.fr
12	Eric Agboza	Defence Against Aids, Poverty and Underdevelopment (DAAPU)		Ghana	agbozoa1@yahoo.co.uk
13	Gnonzan Pascal	Ministry of Environment		Benin	pascalgnonzan@yahoo.fr
14.	Priscilla M Achakpa	Women Environmental Programme		Nigeria	pmachakpa@yahoo.com
GEF SECRETARIAT					
	Susan Waithaka Oreste Pedro Maia Andrade				

Appendix 2: Agenda – GEF Expanded Constituency Workshop (ECW) Monday, 2 November 2015 – Cotonou, Benin Hotel Azalai, Bioguera Room, 1st Floor

Monday, 2 November 2015	
09:00 – 09:15	WELCOME ADDRESS GEF CSO Network Regional Focal Point and GEF Secretariat Representative Group Photo
09:15 – 10:00	SESSION 1: INTRODUCTION GEF CSO Network Regional Focal Point- Priscilla M Achakpa <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-introduction • Agenda of ECW Meeting-GEF Secretariat • Objectives and agenda of meeting • Mode of operation for meetings
10:00 – 10:15	Coffee break
10:15 – 12:30	SESSION 2: GEF 6 and CSO ENGAGEMENTS Moderator: Ibrahima Bangoura Panel Presentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of GEF & GEF-CSO Network -Jasper Kelechukwu- • GEF Public Involvement Policy and options/mechanisms for CSO-Mr Eric Agboza – • Enhancing CSO Participation in GEF activities through GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP-NC) –Mathieu Houinato • Case studies of success/challenges of CSO engagement in GEF projects SGP-NC Benin - • Discussion on mechanism to enhance CSO engagement at the country/regional level- Priscilla M Achakpa - • Discussion-
12:30 –13: 45	Lunch
13:45 – 15:00	SESSION 3: STRENGTHENING CSO ENGAGEMENT AT COUNTRY/ REGIONAL LEVEL Moderator: - Mathieu Houinato Panel Presentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GEF CSO Evaluation- IEO -Carlo Carugi Discussions
15:00 – 15:15	Coffee Break
15:15 – 16:00	SESSION 4: THE WAY FORWARD Moderator: Franck Cyrille -GEF CSO Benin <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity strengthening needs and opportunities for CSOs- Henry Smith • GEF CSO Summary from Regional CSO meeting- Edward Aruna • Development of presentation of meeting outcome to the ECW- Edward Aruna