



**POLICY: SD/PL/02**  
May 1, 2012

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## **Policy on Gender Mainstreaming**

**Summary:** This Policy expresses the Global Environment Facility’s commitment to enhancing the degree to which the GEF and its Partner Agencies promote the goal of gender equality through GEF operations. The policy calls on the GEF and its Partner Agencies to mainstream gender into GEF operations, including efforts to analyze and address in GEF projects the specific needs and role of both women and men, as appropriate to each intervention. The Policy includes several requirements for the GEF Secretariat and GEF Partner Agencies, including the following:

- (a) In order to be eligible to receive GEF financing for GEF projects, all GEF Partner Agencies will be required to have established either (a) policies, (b) strategies, or (c) action plans that promote gender equality; \
- (b) The policies, strategies, or action plans of each GEF Partner Agency will need to satisfy the minimum criteria on gender mainstreaming that are included in the policy for the Agency’s systems to be assessed as adequate;
- (c) To support the application of the gender policy, the GEF Secretariat will coordinate the development of corporate-wide guidance for use by the GEF Agencies and GEF Secretariat program managers on the inclusion of gender aspects in the design of projects and on the monitoring and evaluation of gender dimensions in the context of its projects. Such guidance will take into account that not all GEF projects involve gender aspects in equal measure, depending on the focal area and scope of the project.
- (d) The GEF Agencies shall incorporate such guidance into their project and program proposals submitted to the Secretariat for review.

**Background:** The Council approved this policy in the context of its review of Council Document GEF/C.40/10/Rev.1, *GEF Policies on Environmental and Social Safeguards and Gender Mainstreaming*. The GEF Secretariat formatted the policy in line with its Policy Document Format and has clarified parts of the Policy to reflect Council deliberations, reduce duplication, and make it consistent with paragraphs 23 – 30 of Council Document GEF/C.40/10/Rev.1.

**Applicability:** This policy is applicable to GEF Partner Agencies and the GEF Secretariat.

**Dates of Effectiveness and Revision:** This policy entered into effect when it was adopted by the GEF Council on May 26, 2011. As decided by the GEF Council, this policy will be reviewed in 2015.

**Sponsors:** GEF Gender Focal Point, GEF Secretariat

**Key Terms:** Gender, Accreditation, GEF Project Agencies, Environmental and Social Safeguards.

## Definitions

The following terms apply to this document.

1. **Accreditation Panel:** The panel to be constituted by the GEF Council that will review Stage 2 Applications for accreditation of GEF Project Agencies.
2. **Accreditation Panel Review:** A criteria-based review to be performed by the Accreditation Panel, which will include assessment of project performance capacity, agencies' governance framework, and environmental and social safeguards.
3. **GEF Agency:** Any one of the 10 institutions that were entitled to receive GEF Trust Fund resources directly as of June 2011. They include the following organizations: the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Inter-American Development Bank, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the United Nations Development Program, United Nations Environment Program, and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization.
4. **GEF Partner Agencies:** Those agencies eligible to request and receive GEF resources directly for the design, implementation, and execution of GEF Projects. This category includes both GEF Agencies and GEF Project Agencies.
5. **GEF Project Agency:** Any of the institutions that the GEF has accredited after June 2011 to receive GEF resources to implement and execute GEF-financed projects apart from the ten GEF Agencies.
6. **GEF Resources:** Resources from any GEF-managed trust fund, including the GEF Trust Fund, the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF).

## I. Introduction

1. This Policy expresses the Global Environment Facility's commitment to enhancing the degree to which the GEF and its Partner Agencies promote the goal of gender equality through GEF operations. It commits the GEF to address the link between gender equality and environmental sustainability and towards gender mainstreaming in its policies, programs, and operations. It has been developed to assist the GEF and its Partner Agencies in ensuring that GEF operations promote gender equality and equity.
2. The GEF recognizes that gender equality is an important goal in the context of the projects that it finances because it advances both the GEF's goals for attaining global environmental benefits and the goal of gender equity and social inclusion.
3. While the degree of relevance of gender dimensions to may vary depending on the GEF focal area or type of engagement,<sup>1</sup> accounting for gender equity and equality is an important consideration when financing projects that address global environmental issues, because gender relations, roles and responsibilities exercise important influence on women and men's access to and control over environmental resources and the goods and services they provide.
4. The GEF acknowledges that project results can often be superior when gender considerations are integrated into the design and implementation of projects, where relevant. It is important, in many instances for programme and project interventions to take into account differences in ways men and women perceive incentives linked to the sustainable use of resources and how these perceptions can influence the achievement of the results specified in project objectives.
5. The GEF has adopted, since its early days, a Public Involvement Policy that aims to ensure both women's and men's involvement in GEF projects.<sup>2</sup> This policy is a key GEF policy that relates specifically to social issues, including gender, and provides the basis for public involvement in the design, implementation, and evaluation of GEF-financed projects. It applies to all GEF focal areas programs and projects; spells out the rationale, terms, and principles for public involvement; and solidifies the operational requirement for stakeholder involvement and partnership in the design, implementation, and evaluation of GEF-financed activities.
6. All GEF Agencies have their own policies and strategies on gender mainstreaming and on promoting gender equality in the context of project interventions. The Agencies apply these policies to GEF projects as well. In recent years, following the UN's mandate on gender equality and other international agreements, many of the GEF Agencies have revised and strengthened their approach to gender issues in their operations, by developing Gender Plans of Action and gender related strategies.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, gender integration is essential for some issues and GEF Focal Areas, such as sustainable forest management and biodiversity conservation, while for other issues, such as energy efficiency and the phase-out of persistent organic pollutants, it is less essential. Guidance should reflect this and should focus on gender analysis for a specific project to determine adequate measures.

<sup>2</sup> This policy was adopted in April 1996. See Council document GEF/C.6/Inf.5, *Policy Paper on Public Involvement in GEF-Financed Projects*.

7. Given these changes and new approaches to gender mainstreaming, the GEF is renewing and expanding its commitment towards gender mainstreaming, and building on its Public Involvement Policy by adopting a new Policy on Gender Mainstreaming.

## **II. Objectives**

8. The GEF Secretariat and GEF Partner Agencies shall strive to attain the goal of gender equality, the equal treatment of women and men, including the equal access to resources and services through its operations.

9. To accomplish this goal, the GEF Secretariat and GEF Partner Agencies shall mainstream gender into their operations, including efforts to analyze systematically and address the specific needs of both women and men in GEF projects.

## **III. Policy Requirements for GEF Partner Agencies**

10. In order to implement GEF-financed projects, GEF Partner Agencies are required to have established either a policy or policies (this may include relevant laws, regulations, and guidelines), a strategy, or an action plan that requires the Agency to design and implement projects in such a way that both women and men (a) receive culturally compatible social and economic benefits; (b) do not suffer adverse effects during the development process; and that (c) fosters full respect for their dignity and human rights;

11. The policies, strategy, or action plan of each Partner Agency must satisfy the minimum requirements listed in paragraphs 13 – 19 below.

12. The Agency must demonstrate sufficient institutional capability to implement their policies, strategy, or action plan and apply the provisions of each to GEF financed projects.

### **Minimum Requirements:**

13. The Agency has instituted measures to strengthen its institutional framework for gender mainstreaming, for example, by having a focal point for gender, or other staff, to support the development, implementation, monitoring, and provision of guidance on gender mainstreaming.

14. The Agency's criteria for project review and project design require it to pay attention to socio-economic aspects in its projects, including gender elements. (In the context of GEF projects, since gender elements are important drivers and incentives for achieving global environmental benefits.)

15. The Agency is required to undertake social assessment, including gender analysis, or to use similar methods to assess the potential roles, benefits, impacts and risks for women and men of different ages, ethnicities, and social structure and status. These studies may be used, along with other types of studies to inform project formulation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

16. The Agency is required to identify measures to avoid, minimize and/or mitigate adverse gender impacts.

17. The Agency's policies, strategy, or action plan address gender sensitive activities while recognizing and respecting the different roles that women and men play in resource management and in society.

18. The Agency has a system for monitoring and evaluating progress in gender mainstreaming, including the use of gender disaggregated monitoring indicators.

19. The Agency monitors and provides necessary support for implementation of its policies, strategy, or action plan by experienced social/gender experts on gender mainstreaming in projects.

#### **IV. Requirements for the GEF Secretariat**

20. The GEF Secretariat will strengthen gender-mainstreaming capacities among the GEF Secretariat staff to increase their understanding of gender mainstreaming, as well as socio-economic aspects in general.

21. The GEF Secretariat shall designate a focal point for gender issues to support developing, implementing, and monitoring guidance and strategy on gender mainstreaming and coordinating internally and externally on such issues.

22. Recognizing that each GEF Partner Agency has a different gender policy, strategy, or action plan, with varying application to GEF projects, the GEF Secretariat will work with its Partner Agencies and other partners to strengthen gender mainstreaming, including, as feasible, a more systematic approach to programming that incorporates this issue.

23. The GEF Secretariat will establish and strengthen networks with partners that have substantive experience working on gender issues, and utilize their expertise to develop and implement GEF projects.

#### **V. Application of the Policy**

24. This policy will apply equally to the ten GEF Agencies as well as to accredited GEF Project Agencies. The GEF Secretariat will hire consultants to assess whether the existing ten GEF Agencies comply with this Policy. The assessment will be implemented in a transparent way. The consultants will consolidate the results of their assessment in a report to the Secretariat, which will clearly indicate those areas in which the Agency meets minimum requirements of the Policy and where the Agencies do not. The Secretariat shall convey this report to the Council together with a Council paper containing recommendations. The Council may grant GEF Agencies a time bound waiver to enable the Agency to meet the criteria within a specific phase-in period.

25. With regard to entities that apply for accreditation as a GEF Project Agency, the GEF Accreditation panel will assess whether each applicant meets the minimum requirements of this policy. The GEF Accreditation Panel will require that all applicants demonstrate compliance with the minimum requirements mentioned above.

## **VI. Revision of the Policy**

26. The GEF understands that gender mainstreaming at the corporate and the project level is a long-term undertaking and a sustained commitment, which includes tracking its progress. It also acknowledges that approaches to gender mainstreaming evolve. In light of this, the GEF Council will review its Policy on Gender Mainstreaming in 2015.