

25 April 2024

First meeting of the Board

30 April to 2 May 2024

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

Provisional agenda item 8

Background paper on arrangements for observer participation in the Board meetings

Expected actions by the Board

The Board will be invited to:

- (a) Take note of document FLD/B.1/6, which provides an overview of a benchmarking analysis and an outline of potential elements for the arrangements for observer participation in the Board meetings;
 - (b) Discuss next steps and timeline, as necessary, regarding the arrangements for observer participation in the Board meetings.
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I. Background and mandate

1. In accordance with paragraph 27 of the Governing Instrument of the Fund referred to in decisions 1/CP.28 and 5/CMA.5, the Fund will make arrangements to allow for the effective participation of observers in its meetings, including developing and carrying out an observer accreditation process.¹ Further, paragraph 20 of the Governing Instrument states that the Board will enhance the engagement of stakeholders by inviting active observers, including youth, women, Indigenous Peoples and environmental non-governmental organizations, to participate in its meetings and related proceedings.
2. To assist the Board in its consideration of this matter, the interim secretariat has conducted a comprehensive benchmarking analysis of comparable funds and organizations, examining their respective approaches to observer engagement. The findings are summarized in the table in annex I.
3. In addition, and based on initial findings from the benchmarking analysis, the interim secretariat has prepared an outline of potential elements for the arrangements for observer participation in the Board meetings, as included for Board consideration in annex II.

¹ Annex I to decisions 1/CP.8 and 5/CMA/5.

Annex I

Overview of arrangements for observer participation in five comparator organizations

UNFCCC	Green Climate Fund	Climate Investment Funds	Global Environment Facility	Adaptation Fund
Accreditation				
Process and eligibility				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are three categories of participants at meetings and conferences in the UNFCCC process: representatives of Parties to the Convention and observer States, members of the press and media, and representatives of observer organizations. Observer organizations are further categorized into three types: the United Nations system and its specialized agencies, intergovernmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). • The NGOs represent a broad spectrum of interests, and include representatives from business and industry, environmental groups, farming and agriculture, Indigenous populations, local governments and municipal authorities, research and academic institutes, labour unions, women and gender, and youth groups. • Admission as an observer organization to the UNFCCC is a one-off process and does not need to be repeated once observer status has been granted. For additional details on the procedure to obtain observer status, please refer to How to obtain observer status. • For-profit entities and individuals are not eligible for admission in the UNFCCC process. 	<p>Observer organizations that wish to participate in the activities of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) need to apply for observer status. Applications for accreditation are submitted to the secretariat. Observer status is granted through a Board decision upon the successful completion of the accreditation process. See the Observers Guideline.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Climate Investment Funds (CIF) apply a self-selection process which is carried out by an NGO called RESOLVE. Civil society observer organizations are elected for the Clean Technology Fund (CTF), the three Strategic Climate Fund (SCF) technical committees, and the Global Sub-Committee. • There are four observer seats per committee and subcommittee for civil society organizations (CSOs), one for each of four regions: Africa and Middle East region; Eastern Europe, Central Asia and Asia-Pacific region; Latin America and the Caribbean, and donor countries. • Private sector observer organizations are selected for the CTF, the three SCF technical committees, and Global Sub-Committee, with two private sector organization (PSO) observer seats per committee and subcommittee. • There are two observer seats for Indigenous Peoples organizations (IPOs) per committee and subcommittee. • The World Business Council for Sustainable Development should be invited to assist in selecting representatives from business associations. • The following eligibility criteria apply to CSOs, PSOs and IPOs observer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) CSO Network is carried out by the Network itself (Updated Vision, para. 22, p.4). • The GEF secretariat is responsible for the selection of sponsored CSOs for Council consultations and meetings to ensure that CSO representatives reflect the views of CSOs from the field, while maintaining robust engagement on policy issues. • The selection is carried out in a transparent manner, based on clear criteria and in consultation with the CSO Network, Operational Focal Points, the Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group and the GEF Small Grants Program. • The working group that carried out an evaluation of the CSO Network recommended that two groups of CSOs should be sponsored to attend the biannual Council meetings. In addition, other CSOs, including international NGOs whose work is of relevance to the GEF, are invited to attend the meetings as self-sponsored participants. • The GEF encourages CSOs to engage by commenting on project proposals and policies, supporting project implementation, etc. For detailed information see the GEF website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Adaptation Fund (AF) CSO Network is open to all interested CSOs and they are invited to take an active part in the activities of the Network. • The AF does not have an accreditation system of its own. The AF Board, at its fortieth meeting, generally agreed not to establish its own observer accreditation process and decided to maintain the status quo by accepting only observers from UNFCCC-accredited entities, taking into account the cost efficiency and the relative size of the AF compared with other climate funds.

		<p>organizations as well as the individuals identified to serve as primary and alternate representatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization type • Country membership • Institutional track record • Representational capacity • Technical knowledge • Conflict of interest • Communications capability. 		
Term of membership				
The membership term is indefinite.	The membership term is indefinite.	A fixed membership term of 24 months.	The membership term of organizations is five years, starting from the date they are admitted as members until the end of December in their fifth year of membership.	The term of membership is indefinite. See entry under Process and eligibility above.
Re-accreditation				
There is no re-accreditation process in place.	There is no re-accreditation process in place.	Information is unavailable.	Three months before the end of their membership period, members are requested to submit a membership renewal form confirming their ongoing activities in GEF-related areas. Those that do not respond are considered inactive and after this status is approved by the Coordination Committee, the membership is terminated. If members express interest in rejoining the Network after this period, they must reapply.	Not applicable, as the AF adheres to the UNFCCC admission process.
Registration for participation in meetings				
Admission as an observer organization to the UNFCCC is a one-off process and does not need to be repeated once observer status has been granted. However, for representatives to attend any session or conference of the UNFCCC, the designated contact point of the already admitted organization must register its representatives for that session through the online registration system (ORS).	Via the ORS.	Via the ORS.	Via the ORS.	Development of an ORS under consideration by the Board.
Active observers				

Representation and number				
No active observers. See categories and groupings on entry under Process and eligibility above.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the GCF, the representation of active observers aims to ensure balance among developing and developed countries, gender equity, and a mix of international and local or national organizations. CSOs and PSOs self-select their respective active observers and replacements. The two CSO representatives and two PSO representatives are invited to participate in the Board meetings as active observers. 	The CIF operate through a number of committees. Each of these committees has its own approach regarding the representation and number at their respective meetings. For detailed information see the Guideline on Inviting Representative of Observers .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The GEF has a practice of sponsoring CSOs and does not have the concept of active observers. The GEF Council invites two groups of CSOs to its biannual meetings: regional CSO representatives; and local CSOs with expertise in a technical or geographic area. In addition, other CSOs are welcome to attend the meetings as self-sponsored participants. The GEF secretariat is responsible for the selection of sponsored CSOs for Council consultations and meetings to ensure that CSO representatives reflect the views of CSOs from the field. This selection is done in a transparent manner, based on clear criteria. Information on the basic criteria for selection of regional CSOs and local CSO representatives for participation at Council meetings can be found here. 	<p>The AF Draft Guidelines propose that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two civil society representatives from among the UNFCCC-accredited CSOs should be invited to participate in Board meetings as active civil society observers. Two alternates may be selected to substitute for any active observers who are unable to participate in the meetings. CSOs should select their respective active observers and alternates through a self-organized process.
Roles and responsibilities				
Not applicable.	Active observers may intervene at the invitation of the Co-Chairs during open segments of the meetings of the Board. They may also attend meetings of a Board committee or working group as observers in special circumstances and if expressly authorized by the Board. For detailed information see also the Observers Guideline .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The rules of procedure approved by the CTF and the SCF Trust Fund Committees provide that civil society representatives, selected through a consultation among themselves, may be invited to observe any meeting except for the portions of the meeting that are declared to be Executive Sessions. Civil society representatives are invited to participate in meetings of the Trust Fund Committees as active observers. Their status is similar to that of United Nations agency observers. The CIF governance structure offers a unique model for multi-stakeholder engagement. Stakeholders are invited to participate as Observers in meetings of the Trust Fund Committees and subcommittees to promote sound and transparent decision-making. Observers participate in meetings of the CIF in their capacity as representatives of their constituencies. For details on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO participation at GEF Council meetings is focused on sharing the views of communities and other stakeholders in the field. For this reason, the Council invites two groups of CSOs to its biannual meetings: regional CSO representatives; and local CSOs with expertise in a technical or geographic area. For more information on Roles and responsibilities see Representation and number above. Current practice is that CSOs are invited to speak at the end of each agenda item, once the Council members have spoken. 	Except where the Board decides otherwise, meetings shall be open to representatives of UNFCCC Parties, the UNFCCC secretariat and UNFCCC-accredited observers as attendees without voting rights. Observers may participate without the right to vote in discussions that directly concern the bodies or agencies they represent, upon invitation of the Chair and if no objections arise from the members present.

		the responsibilities of self-selected observers see the Note on Roles and Responsibilities .		
Selection process				
No concept of active observers.	CSOs and PSOs self-select their respective active observers and replacements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CIF require that civil society, Indigenous Peoples and the private sector (including private companies and business associations) be represented. • Each constituency should be invited to self-select their representatives through a self-selection process. For detailed information of the self-selection process, see Process and eligibility. • Equity and balanced representation should include consideration of gender representation, balanced representation among regions, and a balance between international and local or national organizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The GEF secretariat is responsible for selecting CSOs sponsored for Council consultations and meetings. The number of CSOs sponsored to attend each Council meeting will be a streamlined group of individuals, determined by the agenda and budget, with potential adjustments based on specific considerations for a particular Council meeting. • For more information on the selection process see Representation and number. • Information on the basic criteria for selecting regional and local CSO representatives for participation at Council meetings is available here. 	The AF Draft Guidelines recommend that civil society representatives be selected by CSOs through a self-organized process.
Terms				
Not applicable.	Active observers are selected for a term of two years, with a maximum of two consecutive terms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CIF recognize that continuity and consistency in representation are beneficial. Therefore, it is recommended that constituencies appoint representatives for a fixed term of one to two years. • CIF constituencies appoint representatives to serve as observers for a fixed period of 24 months. 	The GEF does not apply a definite term for observers since they do not have active observers, and the selection of sponsored CSOs may be different for each meeting.	The AF Draft Guidelines recommend that active observers and their alternates shall serve for a term of two years, with a maximum of two consecutive terms.
Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest				
Information is not available.	See the Policy on Ethics and Conflicts of Interest for Active Observers of the Green Climate Fund .	Information is not available.	The Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Council Members, Alternates and Advisers does not include consideration of observer participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AF Rules of Procedure includes a section on “Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest” and therefore an additional policy on ethics and conflicts of interest is deemed unnecessary. • The AF Draft Guidelines include a provision that active observers must comply with the existing rules set out in the “Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest” section. If the Board decides to open committee meetings to active observers, then these active observers

				should be required to sign a confidentiality agreement. Active observers must not disclose, either during and after their term, any information obtained from the AF and/or project participants that is marked as proprietary and/or confidential without the written consent.
Processes for consultations with observers				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GCF organizes a dialogue between the secretariat and observers prior to each Board meeting • The GCF Board approved the Updated Strategic Plan for the second Replenishment period (2024-2027), through GCF decision B.36/13: it will establish structured forums for stakeholder engagement and expert feedback, learning loops and advice, adopting participatory approaches that draw on insights of affected communities, Indigenous Peoples, civil society, women, youth and academia. 	The CIF has a Partnership Forum to facilitate and promote civil society consultations. This is achieved, in part, by including civil society representatives in the planning and agenda setting for the Partnership Forum. For details on the Partnership Forum, see the Guideline for Inviting Representative of Observers .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular consultation meetings are held between the Council and CSOs. During these meetings, CSOs are invited by the Council to present on specific topics – chosen by the Council, with input from CSOs and the GEF secretariat – intended to highlight the experiences of local CSOs during project implementation while aligning with the Council meeting agenda. • The GEF Secretariat sponsors a civil society forum during sessions of the GEF Assembly. This forum brings together CSOs, the private sector, GEF agencies, Council members, and other stakeholders to discuss issues of special interest to civil society in the context of the global environment and the future of GEF. 	The AF is the only climate fund that includes a dialogue with civil society as a standard agenda item at its Board meetings. These meetings are held biannually and are open to all the UNFCCC-registered observers.
Travel support				
Travel support is not provided for observers.	Travel support is not provided for observers.	Travel costs for representatives from developing countries to attend Trust Fund Committee meetings may be covered upon request.	The GEF provides financial support for the participation of eligible CSO Network representatives at Council meetings. For details see the Updated Vision.	As per the Draft Guidelines, travel support for active observers from developing countries to attend the Board meetings should be provided.
Secretariat support				
Secretariat support is provided, including for the admissions process.	Secretariat support is provided.	Secretariat support is provided, including for outreach and assistance with the self-selection process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Selection process above. • In addition, the GEF Secretariat also provides Country Support Program, Expanded Constituency Workshops, National Dialogues and other relevant workshops and events for regional, national and local CSOs. 	Secretariat support is provided for participation of observers in Board meetings.
Policy review				

Information is not available.	A comprehensive review of observer participation was envisaged after a period of two years after the observers guidelines were adopted through GCF decision B.01-13/03 at its third meeting of the Board.	Information is not available.	The review process for observer engagement in the GEF is outlined in the Updated Vision document.	As per the Draft Guidelines, a review of the observers participation should be conducted two years after the observers guidelines have been adopted by the Board.
Relevant documents and other sources				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. UNFCCC standard admission process for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) 2. Observer organizations 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Guidelines relating to the Observer participation, accreditation of Observer organizations and participation of active Observers 2. Policy on Ethics and Conflicts of Interest for Active Observers of the Green Climate Fund 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Guidelines for inviting representatives of civil society to observe meetings of the CIF Trust Fund Committees 2. Update on the self selection process for representatives of civil society to observe meetings of the CIF Trust Fund Committees 3. Note on roles and responsibilities of climate investment funds co-chairs, members and observers 4. Update on the Process for the Self Selection of Observers 5. Websites: https://www.cif.org/knowledge-exchange/launch-cif-observers-selection-process-2021-2022-term 6. https://www.resolve.ngo/cif-observer-info.htm 	<p>Main documents:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approved Selection Criteria for Representatives of Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities to Participate in GEF Council Meetings 2. Updated Vision to Enhance Civil Society Engagement with the GEF 3. GEF CSO Network Website <p>Other sources:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Policy on ethics and conflict of interest for council members, alternates, and advisers 5. Policy on stakeholder engagement 6. Guidelines on the Implementation of the Policy on Stakeholder Engagement 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rules of procedure of the Adaptation Fund Board 2. Draft guideline for participation of active civil society observers 3. AF CSO Network Website

Annex II

Potential elements for arrangements for observer participation in the Board meetings

Introduction

Mandate and provisions

Accreditation

- (a) Process and eligibility
- (b) Memberships/observers term
- (c) Reaccreditation

Registration to participate in meetings

Active observers

- (d) Representation and number
- (e) Roles and responsibilities
- (f) Selection process
- (g) Terms

Conflict of interest

Confidentiality

Travel support

Secretariat support

Review