

Observer participation in the proceedings of the Board of the Green Climate Fund

Preliminary responses for initial consultation

Our initial response to the questionnaire from the interim secretariat is based on the understanding that arrangements will be made by the GCF Board, including developing and operating accreditation processes in accordance with paragraph 16, section 7, "Observers", Chapter C "Rules of Procedure of the Board", of the GCF Governing Instrument.

We believe that the GCF will benefit from civil society participation/input in a number of ways including increasing transparency, effectiveness and credibility. Thus we invite the Board of the GCF, at its first meeting, to view these recommendations as the initial step in an inclusive, in-depth process for broad consultation and engagement on observer issues and we look forward to further opportunities in the near future to share additional and further developed views with the Board on these important issues.

Active observers according to the GCF Governing Instrument

- Active CSO board observers (1 North, 1 South)
- Active private sector board observers (1 North, 1 South)

Proposed structures for observers

- Alternate CSO board observers (1 North, 1 South)
- Alternate private sector board observers (1 North, 1 South)
- Advisory Committee (helps vet selections for CSO and private sector seats, and helps advise observers once they are nominated, including preparing pre-board meeting materials and consultations; 1 North, 1 South from each of the UNFCCC 9 constituencies = 18 people total)
- Third party facilitator for selection process
- Civil society liaison staff person in the GCF interim secretariat (supports observers)

1. Guidelines for accreditation of observers

What are the key elements of the processes and guidelines for accreditation of observers for the GCF?

- Members of observer organisations accredited by the UNFCCC should automatically be allowed full access to GCF board meetings.
- Accreditation to the GCF should not be limited to those CSOs affiliated with the UNFCCC. Any representative of a CSO (defined as think tanks, advocacy groups, community-based organizations, and not-for-profit organizations such as development, trade unions, environment, gender, youth or aid organizations) that has a stake in climate change, adaptation, mitigation and/or sustainable development should be eligible for accreditation.
- The rights of observers to access all GCF board meetings and to receive prior information on the issues discussed in such meetings must not be superseded by the selection of active civil society and private sector observers.

2. Active observers

a) What should be the modalities of participation of active observers in the Board meetings?

- The GCF will provide seats in the meeting room for all interested civil society observers during all board meetings, and will webcast and archive them to allow for broader public engagement.
- Until active observers are selected, board chairs should allow interventions by observers on

specific agenda items as the board discusses those items. If necessary, those interventions could be limited to a specific number for each agenda item (e.g. two per agenda item).

- Once active observers are put in place, Board chairs should recognize interventions by board members and active observers on equal footing and in the order that requests are received.
- Active observers should be allowed to participate in all Board working arrangements, including *ad hoc* and formal working groups, drafting groups and impromptu chair consultations with Board members, even in cases where the Board decides to close proceedings to non-active observers.
- Active observers should receive all written materials on the same basis as other Board members, and be given adequate opportunity to make substantive inputs to be distributed in advance of meetings to all Board members.
- The GCF should budget sufficient resources to support the full participation of selected CSO and private sector active observers in all meetings involving some or all Board members (including workshops, committees etc.).
- In addition, active observers should reflect balance and diversity in terms of gender and regional representation.

b) What should be the roles and responsibilities of the CSO and private sector active observers toward constituencies and the advisory committee?

Active observers should have the following roles and responsibilities (as supported by the advisory committee and GCF staff)

- Actively raise points in the agenda on matters of interest to members of civil society at the board and related working groups and processes.
- Represent the broad range of political, substantive and process views of groups from throughout civil society to the Board in their discussions and deliberations.
- Solicit, collect and communicate information from civil society to the Board on issues relating to matters under discussion and deliberation by Board members, including specific written or oral interventions at and between meetings as a main, but not the sole, interaction of civil society organizations with the Board. Civil society groups are free to contact other Board members and the secretariat independently, and the Board chair and secretariat should respond to these in a timely manner.
- Facilitate the process of individual organizations participating in the GCF (providing information, support on how to interact with the GCF, etc.)
- Collect and disseminate information from the Board and related bodies and processes – including documents, announcements, and opportunities for input – to members of civil society.
- Maintain open communication with UNFCCC constituency focal points, key civil society networks, and members of a global GCF-focused email list.

Thus, active observers must have the following skill sets and knowledge

- Understanding of substantive issues related to all matters to be considered by the Board;
- Ability to synthesize and communicate key information to civil society organizations;
- Be an effective networker and multiplier; must have familiarity with, trust of, and access to key networks in multiple constituencies;
- Ability and commitment to work as an effective advocate for civil society priorities within the Board;
- Ability to recognize and work with the realities constraining civil society's ability to respond quickly to inquiries for input (language barriers, internet connection, internal consultative processes, etc)

- Keen understanding of and strategies for global communication, dissemination of information widely and quickly, and collection of information/recommendations/demands from a broad variety of constituencies and organizations;
- Ability to work across constituencies and global networks, and to identify priorities and facilitate common positions among them.

c) Would a “self-selection process” be a preferred mechanism for the selection of active observers?

Yes, we believe that a facilitated self-selection process – as described below – should be the mechanism used for the selection of active observers.

d) What should be the selection procedure for active observers, both for civil society and private sector?

The self-selection process should be designed and managed with the active partnership of civil society organizations, including self-nomination by civil society organizations, vetting of potential candidates by civil society organizations, and a vote to determine the active observers. Civil society organizations should be involved in both the civil society organization and private sector organization active observer selection processes, though in different ways for each. The GCF interim secretariat, in consultation with the UNFCCC constituencies, should contract a qualified independent organization to facilitate the active observer outreach and selection process. Key steps in the self-selection process include:

1. Establish a civil society advisory committee

- The independent facilitator will recruit members of a civil society advisory committee. Each of the 9 UNFCCC civil society constituencies (environmental, trade union, youth, gender, business, farmer, Indigenous, municipalities, research institutions) will nominate two representatives to the advisory committee, totalling 18 members. The two representatives – one from the North, one from the South – can be nominated from groups that are not officially accredited to the UNFCCC. The independent facilitator should work with the constituencies to help ensure that the advisory board has gender and geographic balance.
- The initial task of advisory committee members will be to help design the eligibility criteria for CSO and private sector active observers, and screen initial applications (more below).
- The on going work of the advisory committee will be to support the selection process of new CSO and private sector active observers and to support active observers in their roles and responsibilities, in particular preparing for Board meetings (more below).
- The composition of the advisory committee could potentially change over time as more of their focus shifts from this initial design phase to an on going support role.
- Term limits and a process for selecting new members will be developed for the civil society advisory committee.

2. Develop eligibility criteria

- The independent facilitator will work with the advisory committee to develop clear roles and responsibilities of the CSO and private sector active observers.
- The independent facilitator will work with the advisory committee to develop eligibility criteria by which to evaluate and screen applicants for the CSO and private sector active observer seats.

3. Solicit nominations

- The independent facilitator will request expressions of interest and manage the application process, including through active outreach and candidate recruitment. The recruitment and outreach processes should promote a variety of civil society and private sector voices, gender and regional balance, and the participation of marginalized communities, taking into account prior service as well as participation as observers in other climate finance mechanisms.

- For the private sector active observers, the recruitment and outreach process should ensure the inclusion of small and medium-sized enterprise and producer cooperatives as potential private sector active observers.
- The independent facilitator will use a variety of outreach tools including the UNFCCC and GCF websites, appropriate list-serves, and outreach through UNFCCC constituency focal points.
- Nominations will be open to any organization that meets the criteria, not only organizations accredited through UNFCCC constituencies.

4. Submission of applications

- Applications will be provided on-line, in English, for submission electronically.
- Organizations are invited to submit one nomination per organization.
- All applications will be archived and publicly available on the GCF website.

5. Winnow nominees

- The independent facilitator will develop a process for working with members of the advisory committee to review all applications based on the agreed-upon eligibility criteria.
- Using the evaluation scores, the advisory board and the facilitator will review the top 5 ranked nominees for each CSO and private sector position, north and south, for geographic and gender balance, and put those forward as the slate of candidates for all seats.
- The review/evaluation of applications will be archived and made publicly available on the GCF website.

6. Majority global vote

The voting process should be transparent and broadly participatory (involving both UNFCCC-accredited organizations as well as non-UNFCCC-accredited organizations).

- Criteria for evaluating and ranking observer candidates will be made explicitly clear before voting begins.
- Voting will take place electronically through a language and web-accessible portal (i.e. in multiple languages, and via a web portal that loads easily).
- Outreach for voting will happen, at minimum, through the UNFCCC and GCF websites, through all relevant electronic forums and email lists, and through UNFCCC constituency focal points.
- Each organization will have one vote for each one of the CSO and private sector observer seats – either the Northern or the Southern representatives, based on where its headquarters are located. For international confederations, each organization that is registered as a distinct entity as well as the international network (if it is registered as a distinct entity) will be provided one vote per seat.
- The runner up in each of those 4 categories will serve as the alternate, with the possibility of adjustments made for gender and regional balance.
- Any such adjustments in the slate of active observers and alternates based on voting results will happen in a transparent way, with the participation of the advisory committee, and according to pre-determined criteria.

7. Evaluate the process

- The independent facilitator will work with the advisory board, active observers and the interim secretariat to evaluate the process of CSO and private sector active observer and alternate selection, and propose revisions for the subsequent selection round.
- The GCF should budget sufficient resources to support a rigorous, inclusive process for selecting the CSO and private sector active board observer seats.
- The process for the self-selection of active observers should be adopted at the first Board meeting.

e) What could be the general parameters and criteria for the selection of active observers?

- Observer and alternates should have considerable personal knowledge and experience, be well connected and be a representative of a qualified civil society organization, where ‘qualified’ is defined as think tanks, advocacy groups, community-based organizations, and not-for-profit organizations such as development, trade union, environment, gender, youth or aid organizations, that have a stake in climate change, adaptation, mitigation and/or sustainable development.
- Observers’ and alternates’ organizations must have membership in, or subscribe to information from, at least one networking organization (i.e., an alliance organization that provides services to similarly focused NGOs) that is engaged on issues relevant to the GCF at the local, national and/or international level.
- Candidates will be asked to demonstrate their capacity to establish links with groups and networks outside of their home country, including grassroots-level and community-based organizations.
- Observers and alternates must have an understanding of environmentally sustainable development, social justice, and equity
- Observers and alternates also must be able to demonstrate knowledge of and/or expertise on issues that are central to the GCF.
- The private sector active observers should have experience working with CSO constituencies and local communities on relevant projects.
- In order to avoid conflicts of interest, observers and alternates must disclose the scope of their organizations’ engagement with the multilateral development banks, export credit agencies, existing multilateral and bilateral climate financing instruments, and governments in areas relevant to GCF activities and programming.

f) What should be the terms of active observers?

- Observers should hold their positions for a 2-year term.
- The facilitator working with the advisory committee should develop a process for recalling/removing active observers if they are negligent or ineffective at fulfilling their roles and responsibilities.
- Developed and developing country active observers (for both the CSO and private sector seats) should rotate among regions and strive for gender balance.
- If an observer, alternate, or advisory committee member leaves their organization, the individual may continue to hold their position as long as their new organization meets the basic criteria for ‘qualified’ organizations above. If the individual chooses not to continue, the alternate would serve as the active observer until the end of that term, and could run in the subsequent term for the seat.

g) Should there be a provision for alternates for active observers?

Each active observer should have an alternate that fulfils the provision in the governing instrument for North/South balance.

h) Would Civil Society Organizations (CSO) be in a position to provisionally identify two active observers for the First Board meeting?

Until active observers are selected, civil society should have unrestricted access to Board meetings. Board chairs should allow interventions by observers on specific agenda items as those items are discussed. If necessary, those interventions could be limited to a specific number for each agenda item (e.g. two per agenda item).

i) How can the selected active observers ensure equitable representation of various voices from the diverse CSO community?

Active observers should hold consultations with individual organisations from a range of regions and issues to define goals and modalities of meaningful observer participation drawing on experiences on the ground, and should develop processes to involve small, non-internationally active organisations in all aspects of the GCF. This process should be supported by the GCF secretariat (see second-to-last question).

Some tools to enhance participation by a diversity of organisations include, but are not limited to:

- CSOs not present at the pre-meetings can submit questions beforehand that have to be discussed at pre-meetings.
- Feedback mechanism on the GCF website for submissions to Board members, members of the interim secretariat, active observers and secretariat liaison.
- Information dissemination through the civil society section of the GCF website with an archive of all documents and an electronic list open to all CSOs.

Active observers should convene an international conference call before and after GCF Board meetings for wider civil society (see below).

3. Consultation with the GCF Board

a) Would provisions for consultations with the Board prior to Board meetings be useful?

Absolutely. This should be established at the first Board meeting as a precedent/best-practise to be followed and should be accounted for in terms of Board Members' travel schedule and time commitment requirements

b) What should be the mode and duration of any pre-meeting consultations?

The secretariat should arrange a pre-Board meeting on each occasion when the GCF Board meets to provide an interactive space for civil society members to exchange views with Board members on the meeting agenda and other pressing issues. The secretariat should also allow for the in-advance, formal submission of questions by civil society members who cannot be present in-person at the meetings. The duration of these meetings should allow enough time to address issues raised by members of civil society, both in advance and in person. The secretariat and Board members should reserve at least 3 hours for pre-meeting consultations.

c) Would an annual forum for consultations be a useful platform for consultations? Any other ideas for the modalities of consultation?

Instead of an annual forum that is distinct from a decision-making or policy setting space, members of the Board and/or the secretariat should commit to regular report-backs and exchanges with civil society groups, possibly on a regional basis.

d) How should the contributions from the broader civil society be channelled to the Board in between its meetings?

We would suggest through two main channels, which would not preclude the right of civil society organizations to contact individual Board members directly:

- Through the respective (North or South) civil society and private sector representative
- Through the secretariat civil society focal point

e) What should be the mechanism for submission of views?

- An online interface on the GCF website.
- The GCF website should also feature a feedback mechanism which allows submissions to be shared with Board members, the interim secretariat, the active observers and the secretariat liaison.
- This does not, of course, preclude the right of civil society members to submit views directly to members of the Board or interim secretariat.

4. Availability of relevant information and documents

- All relevant information and documents need to be put up in a timely and complete manner on the GCF website
- The GCF civil society liaison, working with CSO and private sector active observers and members of the advisory committee, should develop a process and/or set of tools for CSO and private sector active observers to engage the global CSO community in discussions, deliberation and/or decisions that arise at the Board between meetings in order to respond in an effective time-frame.

a) What is the reasonable timeline for receiving documents for effective consultation before each Board meeting?

In order to effectively fulfil their roles, it is critical for the active observers to have all the same documents, at the same time, as Board members

b) What are the useful and equitable modes of dissemination of information?

- Information should be disseminated through electronic means via at least 2 channels. First, all information and documentation should be posted on the GCF website on a civil society page that has all documents archived and important notices of opportunities for input on documents, agendas, work plans, workshops, etc. In addition, the GCF should create an electronic list that is open to participation by all CSOs where they and GCF secretariat staff and Board members can post documents and announcements, and solicit feedback.
- In addition, CSO and private sector active observers should convene an international conference call 3 weeks before and within one week after a meeting of the GCF Board to disseminate information and collect feedback/input.

• Support for observer participation

What kind of institutional and financial support is needed from the GCF for substantive participation and effective representation of observers and how should such funds be raised?

- Establish a part or full time staff position at the GCF secretariat to serve as a civil society liaison (as the GEF has implemented).
- The GCF should budget sufficient resources to support a rigorous, inclusive process for an inclusive CSO consultation to develop goals and guidelines for better participation by community level organisations and for selecting the CSO and private sector active board observer seats.
- All GCF CSO and private sector active observer positions should be provided dedicated funding and support by the GCF secretariat to participate in all meetings, workshops, and inter-sessional meetings (economy class ticket to all board meetings and economy accommodations). Should the private sector active observers wish to opt out of such financial support, they should be allowed to do so.
- Funds should be raised through voluntary contributions, and encouraged from developed country parties, and through a percentage of overall income to the GCF (from national budgets and innovative sources of finance).

• Measuring the level of observer involvement in proceedings of the Board

Should there be specific indicators to measure the level of observer participation in proceedings of the Board? What could these indicators be?

We would like to gain more clarity through dialogue with the interim secretariat and Board members as to the objective of this measurement or possible indicators before answering this question, but would be interested in developing indicators that would evaluate the extent to which civil society recommendations are incorporated into official decisions of the Board.

March 20, 2012

Signed,

Women's Environment & Development Organization (WEDO)

Gender CC

Sierra Club

Sustainable Energy & Economy Network International Policy Institute

Oxfam International

International Council for Adult Education (ICAE GEO)

LIFE e.V.

Heinrich Boell Foundation North America

Youth non-governmental organizations (YOUNGOs)

Earth in Brackets

Friends of the Earth US

Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF)

Trade Union non-governmental organizations (TUNGOs)- International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and Sustainlabour