

Briefing Paper

AF NGO NETWORK RECOMMENDATIONS

Further strengthening civil society engagement in the
work of the Adaptation Fund Board



Supporting the most vulnerable to climate change.

Imprint

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Picture front page: Civil society representatives from developing countries present independent country insights during the 33rd Adaptation Fund Board meeting.

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Brief Summary

This publication articulates a number of recommendations for further strengthening civil society engagement and participation to enhance decision-making of the Adaptation Fund (AF) Board. The recommendations in this paper also draw on the experiences of civil society participation policies and practices of other climate funds to ensure that the AF is informed by the highest internationally accepted standards, while at the same time acknowledging that there is no one-size-fits-all model for all climate funds. The three main needs identified that are crucial for further strengthening civil society engagement in the AF are: 1. The introduction of active CSO observers; 2. Amendments to the AF's Open Information Policy; and 3. Adequate resourcing of the AF Secretariat to ensure transparency and effective CSO engagement.

The positions and recommendations in this paper have been drafted by a number of civil society organisations (CSOs) that are part of the AF NGO Network and are widely supported among a large group of CSOs worldwide that are working on climate finance. This publication is mainly addressed to the members and alternates of the AF Board as well as the Fund's Secretariat and other interested stakeholders.

**List of CSOs that have contributed to this paper
(in alphabetical order):**

1. Association pour la Conservation de la Nature au Rwanda (ACNR) - Rwanda
2. Development Alternatives / Climate Action Network-South Asia - India
3. ForumCC - Tanzania
4. ENDA Energie - Senegal
5. Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano (FFLA) - Ecuador
6. Fundación Hondureña de Ambiente y Desarrollo (Fundación Vida) - Honduras
7. Germanwatch - Germany
8. Green Alternative - Georgia
9. Indigo Development and Change - South Africa

10. Jeunes Volontaires pour l'Environnement (JVE) - Benin
11. Panos Caribbean - Jamaica/Haiti/Caribbean
12. The Royal Marine Conservation Society of Jordan (JREDS) - Jordan

List of CSOs supporting the positions and recommendations in this paper (in alphabetical order):

- (This paper is currently being circulated among several CSO groups working on climate finance issues for sign-on. Before the 35th meeting of the Adaptation Fund Board a complete list of CSOs supporting the positions and recommendations in this paper will be circulated.)

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1. About the AF NGO Network

The Adaptation Fund (AF) NGO Network is a coalition of civil society organisations (CSOs) engaging in discussions and debates on the AF's policies and closely following the planning and implementation of the Fund's projects. The Network's aim is to support those most vulnerable to climate change and ensure their benefit from the AF. This is why it works on strengthening transparent and participative processes within the Fund, aiming for the effective engagement of civil society not only at the Fund's Board level, but also at the local level throughout the whole project cycle.

Making the AF work for the most vulnerable communities will greatly benefit from the input and engagement of global civil society. While the AF NGO Network does not claim to represent all of global civil society, the Network does represent a growing membership of CSOs who have expressed an interest in engaging on AF policies and processes.

AF NGO Network membership is open to all CSOs from both developing and developed countries that support the overall vision of the Network. However, with the Fund's projects being implemented in developing countries, the Network relies particularly on the engagement of its CSO members from the global South. Consequently, the Network specifically aims to actively strengthen the knowledge on the AF of CSOs in developing countries. Network membership is free of charge and organisations' contributions are on a voluntary basis.

Currently the AF NGO Network has more than 250 CSO members worldwide - mainly from the global South - engaging in the Network's activities and acting as the voice of the Network in their country and region. CSO members include non-governmental organisations (NGOs), foundations, indigenous people's organisations, community-based organisations, social enterprises and associations, academic or research institutions, as well as other types of CSOs. The geographic scope of the Network's member CSOs varies as well. While some focus on subnational adaptation activities in the field, others focus on national, regional and in some

cases international adaptation policy processes. This large number and variety of CSOs helps to ensure the global and bottom-up legitimacy of the Network's policy inputs.

The AF NGO Network's governing body is composed of eleven CSOs from the global South. The Network aims to reflect the AF's project portfolio in the composition of its governing body, ensuring gender balance, regional balance and diversity as well as the representation of CSOs from least developed countries (LDC) and small island developing states (SIDS). Those eleven organisations represent the voices and interests of the people most vulnerable to climate change in their region through ongoing engagement with the Network's more than 250 CSO members.

The Network's governing body formulates joint positions and policy recommendations, based on the inputs and contributions from the Network's CSO members.

Some of the AF NGO Network's main activities include:

- Drafting joint policy recommendations for consideration by the AF Board;
- Hosting the "Civil Society Dialogue" during the Fund's Board meetings;
- Providing feedback on AF project proposals and concept notes;
- Conducting independent assessments of AF projects under implementation;
- Engaging with decision-makers on the AF at country level;
- Strengthening the knowledge on the AF of civil society in the global South; and
- Sharing AF experiences and lessons learnt with other CSO.

2. Context and background of this paper

As of January 1st 2019, the AF serves the Paris Agreement. The AF Board was tasked at COP24 in Katowice to consider any related matters to ensure that the Fund can smoothly serve the Paris Agreement. This also implies that the Fund's Board must ensure that the AF complies with international best practices of stakeholder engagement applied by other climate funds serving the Paris Agreement and take corresponding action if considered necessary. Therefore, the AF NGO Network raised this issue at the Fund's 33rd Board meeting in March 2019 and suggested that the AF Board add the topic of "Further enhancing civil society¹ participation and engagement in the work of the Board" on its meeting agenda.

Consequently, the AF Board added the topic to its meeting agenda and decided to request the AF Secretariat to explore, in consultation with civil society and drawing lessons from other climate funds, options to further enhance civil society participation and engagement in the work of the Fund's Board.² In addition, the Secretariat was tasked with preparing a document on this issue and submitting it to the Fund's Board for consideration at its 34th meeting. The Secretariat duly prepared the paper "Options to further enhance civil society participation and engagement in the work of the Board"³ for the 34th AF Board meeting, which

included some feedback from previous consultations with civil society on this matter.

At the margins of the 34th AF Board meeting, the AF NGO Network invited AF Board members and the AF Secretariat to an informal discussion on the issue of enhancing civil society participation and engagement in the work of the Fund's Board. During the event there was general agreement on the importance of this issue and the feasibility and relevance of the recommendations and suggestions drafted by the AF NGO Network were discussed with the Board members and AF Secretariat staff present.

The AF NGO Network has taken the AF Board's and Secretariat feedback received during these discussions, as well as discussions from the 34th Board meeting, into consideration when further developing the following recommendations and suggestions this paper.

Due to lack of time available at the 34th Board meeting to discuss the recommendations provided in the Secretariat's paper⁴, the Board decided to provide its feedback on the matter on an intersessional basis. Hence, the present paper aims to assist AF Board members to reflect on the recommendations at issue.

It is important to note that the present paper does not look at overall stakeholder engagement policies and practices, but focusses on civil society engagement in particular. The private sector is not part of the accepted definition of civil society but forms a separate entity of stakeholders. The AF NGO Network maintains that, as the World Health Organisation defines it, "Civil society refers to the space for collective action around shared interests, purposes and values, generally distinct from government and commercial for-profit actors."⁵

Given the AF's concrete role and mandate, it might not be as necessary to include business representatives in AF board meetings as it is for other climate funds. In many cases responding

¹ The United Nations defines "civil society" as follows: "Civil society is the "third sector" of society, along with government and business. It comprises civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations. The UN recognizes the importance of partnering with civil society, because it advances the Organization's ideals, and helps support its work."

Consulted at <https://www.un.org/en/sections/resources-different-audiences/civil-society/index.html>

² Adaptation Fund. Report of the 33rd Adaptation Fund Board Meeting. https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/AFB.B.33.15_Report_of_the_33rd_meeting.pdf

³ Adaptation Fund. Options to Further Enhance Civil Society Participation and Engagement in the Work of the Board. https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/AFB.B.34.11_CS-participation-and-engagement_final.pdf

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Definition of civil society applied by the United Nations World Health Organisation.

to local adaptation needs, particularly of the most vulnerable communities, does not involve potentially profitable, revenue-generating activities, which therefore makes private sector involvement unlikely.⁶ However, should the Board consider such representation necessary; it may consider having additional private sector representatives separate to the civil society observers.

Social enterprises such as local cooperatives are generally considered part of civil society and AF NGO Network membership is also open to them.

The following section reflects on the status quo and current good practices of the Fund's engagement with civil society, while section 4 provides concrete recommendations for enhancing civil society engagement in the work of the AF Board that require action and decisions from the Board itself.

3. Current status of civil society engagement in the work of the AF Board

The AF recognises in its Medium-Term Strategy that civil society contributes to the Fund's work in a number of ways. Civil society representatives provide input from the Fund's intended beneficiaries and give real-time updates on, and assessments of, supported projects as well as support for resource mobilisation. The AF also decided in the Fund's Medium-Term Strategy to closely collaborate with the AF NGO Network to explore options for even greater collaboration during 2018-2020.⁷ The AF NGO Network considers the current discussions initiated by the Board on further strengthening the Fund's civil society engagement and participation policies an excellent opportunity to explore such options.

While there is still room for further improvement, several practices of the AF regarding civil society engagement, participation and transparency can generally be considered international best practice among climate finance mechanisms.

Such best practices, which other climate funds could seek to align with, include:

- **The AF policies require and recommend engagement with a wide range of stakeholders throughout the full project cycle.**⁸
- The AF uploads all **project proposals** (fully developed ones as well as concept and pre-concept notes) and applications for AF readiness grants to its website and provides an **opportunity for the public to send comments** on those documents to the AF Secretariat. Those documents are usually uploaded by the AF Secretariat directly after the submission deadline for those documents. This means that there is an opportunity for stakeholders to provide feedback even before the AF Secretariat and the Project and Programme Review Committee assess those documents. By doing so, the AF Secretariat ensures that stakeholder feedback is already considered in the assessments which they forward to the implementing entities and the Fund's Board. The AF NGO Network has experienced in the past that the AF Secretariat considers the feedback received from stakeholders on those documents very carefully, which can be directly observed in the Secretariat's assessments published.
- The **"Dialogue with Civil Society Organisations"** is a standing agenda item at AF Board meetings and a unique feature that other international climate finance mechanisms could learn from. The AF NGO Network initiated this dialogue, held between CSOs and the Fund's Board, in 2014. The Network has since held more than 15 such exchanges, during which

⁶ Germanwatch(2018). The future role of the Adaptation Fund in the international climate finance architecture.

⁷ Adaptation Fund, Implementation Plan for Medium-Term Strategy, (2018).

⁸ Transparency International, A Tale of Four-Funds, (2017).

lessons learnt and experiences with the Fund have been shared. The AF NGO Network is responsible for organising the agenda of the “CSO Dialogue” in consultation with the Fund's Secretariat. Board members of the Fund have repeatedly highlighted the importance and added value of this dialogue. The main aim of the “CSO Dialogue” is to provide concrete and independent feedback from the national level on the Fund's processes and projects. In the past, Network member organisations from Bangladesh, Benin, Ecuador, Georgia, Honduras, India, Ruanda and several other countries have shared their independent assessments and recommendations with the Fund's Board. International CSOs such as the World Resources Institute (WRI), Transparency International (TI) and Germanwatch have also shared their assessments on the Fund during past “CSO Dialogues”. In addition to the feedback from the national level, there is usually one Network representative participating in the “CSO Dialogue” that provides concrete recommendations and suggestions on behalf of civil society for ongoing policy discussions in the Fund's Board. Those recommendations and suggestions reflect the joint position of the AF NGO Network. Network member organisations can directly or indirectly (through the Network's regional hubs) contribute to the recommendations and suggestions voiced during the “CSO Dialogue”.

- The AF's monitoring missions provide valuable insights into the Fund's projects and generate important lessons learnt for the Fund. On several recent occasions, the Secretariat has extended an **invitation to members of the AF NGO Network to participate in the Fund's monitoring missions**, such as the 2018 Portfolio Monitoring mission to South Africa. The inclusion of civil society representatives provides an opportunity to obtain alternative perspectives on local AF projects under implementation. In the case of the mission to South Africa, the AF NGO Network was invited to contribute a report

and recommendations as an addendum to the Secretariat's report on the mission.

- The AF Secretariat conducts **regular surveys** to collect feedback and comments from stakeholders, including civil society, on important policy documents such as the AF Medium-Term Strategy and Gender Policy.

4. Suggestions for improving civil society engagement and participation in AF Board meetings

This section raises a number of key recommendations to further strengthen civil society participation and engagement in the work of the AF Board. The consideration of these suggestions is important to ensure that the AF is informed by international best practices applied by other climate funds.

Consequently, this section will draw on the civil society participation policies and practices of other climate funds. While all climate funds should comply with the highest standards of CSO engagement, it is important to acknowledge that there is no one-size-fits-all model for effective CSO participation policies and practices. A fund's CSO engagement policies need to be fit for purpose and tailored to its individual structures and needs, while complying with generally accepted standards.

One of the primary benefits of meaningful and effective CSO engagement is to enhance the decision-making of the AF Board through exposure to a broader range of stakeholder inputs, especially from developing country CSOs.

After assessing current AF CSO engagement policies and practices, as well as CSO engagement policies and practices of other climate funds, the AF NGO Network has identified the following three areas for further improvement:

1. The introduction of active CSO observers;
2. Amending the AF's Open Information Policy; and

3. Adequate resourcing of the AF Secretariat to ensure transparency and effective CSO engagement.

4.1. Active civil society observers

The concept of electing 'active CSO observers' is a common practice applied by most major climate funds such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Climate Investment Funds (CIFs). While the composition of and election mechanisms for observer organisations differ between funds, their overall purpose is the same: Observers enrich the discussions of the funds' governing body meetings. Observers not only share voices from CSOs in the field, but also maintain a robust engagement on the policies of the respective climate funds. A common format for this CSO representation is that observers have a seat at the table during meetings of the climate funds' governing bodies and they may be given the floor by the chair to intervene at any agenda item. While observers are allowed to take the floor to make inputs, they are usually not included in Board decision-making. The introduction of active civil society observers is generally considered an effective practice to meaningfully enhance opportunities for civil society engagement.

The GCF has two active civil society observers (one representing developing countries CSOs and one representing developed countries CSOs).⁹ Each CSO observer also has three elected alternates that are allowed to be given the floor if the active observer is not able to be in the room. Experience from the GCF CSO community shows that having elected alternates to the active CSO observer is helpful for ensuring that observers are able to make full use of this opportunity. Active CSO observers are also allowed in closed sessions after they have signed a confidentiality agreement, and must only leave the room for executive sessions.

The GEF decided to have four sponsored CSOs representatives at its Council meetings. Out of those four CSOs, two are regional CSO representatives and two are local CSOs.

The CIFs also include four civil society representatives in each of their two Trust Fund committees, as well as four representatives in each of the respective sub-committees. They do not include any criteria for those representatives, such as whether they are from developing or developed country CSOs or regional or national CSOs.

Currently the AF is the only one of these major climate funds which does not provide the opportunity of active CSO observers.

- The AF NGO Network thus suggests the AF Board to introduce **active CSO observers who have a seat at the table at AF Board and committee meetings, who are empowered to provide statements or inputs on all agenda items.**

These active CSO observers should also be given the opportunity to attend closed sessions of the AF Board, after signing a confidentiality agreement, as is the practice in the GCF. This would allow for meaningful and important input from civil society during sessions that are not open to public scrutiny.

The AF NGO Network considers the election of a minimum of two active civil society observers (as well as an alternate for each observer) necessary for the AF, as the Fund's two committees (the PPRC¹⁰ and EFC¹¹) currently meet simultaneously. Having at least one alternate for each active CSO observer is crucial to ensure that civil society can effectively make use of this position. If an elected CSO observer is unable to attend a Board meeting, the alternate would be able to step in, as is the case with elected AF Board alternates.

In order to maintain the independence of civil society representatives, a **self-organised and**

⁹ GCF. Governing Instrument for the Green Climate Fund. https://www.greenclimate.fund/documents/20182/1246728/Governing_Instrument.pdf/caa6ce45-cd54-4ab0-9e37-fb637a9c6235

¹⁰ Project and Programme Review Committee

¹¹ Ethics and Finance Committee

transparent election process, facilitated by the CSO community themselves, is essential. At the GCF, the CSO community has developed such a self-election process including a set of standards that potential candidates for election are required to fulfil. The GCF CSO group's experience shows that such a self-organised selection process amongst CSOs works well. The rules of procedure for the CIFs two trust funds also indicate that representatives of civil society attending the Trust Funds' committee meetings are selected through a consultation amongst CSOs.¹² The CIFs Administrative Unit has a focal point for civil society relations who is responsible for identifying a credible organisation to run the self-selection process. The GEF Secretariat, by contrast, selects the four CSO representatives by consulting with the GEF CSO Network.

The election process for active CSO observers at the AF could be facilitated by the AF NGO Network, but open to all eligible CSOs, based on clearly defined terms of reference and selection criteria. This would guarantee the independence and legitimacy of the observers elected. The AF NGO Network already has positive experience in playing such a facilitating role as it co-ordinates the inputs for the "CSO Dialogue" conducted at AF Board meetings.

We propose that **observer nominations be based on the development of agreed selection criteria**, as is the case in other climate funds. At the GEF, the GEF Secretariat developed the basic selection criteria, whereas at the GCF the relevant criteria were developed by the CSO community itself. Criteria for the selection of CSO representatives in the AF should also be developed by the CSO community itself in consultation with the AF Secretariat.

To reflect the specific institutional needs and characteristics of the AF (such as the developing

country majority in its Board), the AF NGO Network does not recommend dividing active CSO observers into developing versus developed country observers (as in the GCF) or regional versus local CSO representatives (as in the GEF). We rather suggest that of the two active CSO observers and their alternates, **a minimum three out of the four elected representatives should be from developing country CSOs**. They should represent at least two Southern regions and strive for gender balance, including at least one woman representative. Active observers should serve for a period of two years, with the possibility of re-election for one further term.

However, as mentioned above, well-defined terms of reference for active and alternate CSO observers would need to be developed by (or in consultation with) civil society before the election process.

Having elected CSO observers would create a meaningful opportunity for civil society representatives to **provide input on the discussions held in the AFs two committees**, the Project and Programme Review Committee (PPRC) and the Ethics and Finance Committee (EFC), without the need to open those meetings to the public. The PPRC and the EFC currently meet in closed sessions prior to each Board meeting. If active CSO observers sign a confidentiality agreement before attending the committee meetings, the Board could still benefit from the reflections of civil society without losing the necessary confidential basis for discussions. This is already common practice for closed sessions at the GCF. AF active CSO observers could learn from GCF active CSO observers about how to provide meaningful input during such closed sessions without disclosing confidential information to their constituencies.

AF Board members have previously highlighted that the feedback and recommendations of civil society are very helpful for their discussions at Board meetings, but that those recommendations often come too late in the proceedings, after important decisions have already been taken in the Fund's committee meetings. Having active CSO observers in AF Board meetings would thus help the Board members to obtain timely feedback from civil

¹² Rules of Procedure for Meetings of the CTF/SCF Trust Fund Committee (amended June 2014) Consulted at https://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/sites/cif_enc/files/meeting-documents/scf_rules_of_procedure_for_tfc_meetings_revised_2014_0.pdf and https://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/sites/default/files/meeting-documents/ctf_rules_of_procedure_for_tfc_revised_2014_0_0.pdf

society. This would enrich discussions in the AF committee meetings.

Providing **financial support to enable active civil society observers from developing countries to participate in AF Board meetings** would be in line with the practices of other funds serving the Paris Agreement and the Fund's focus on taking action in developing countries. The GCF covers the travel costs for the developing country active CSO observer to attend its Board meetings, while the GEF covers the travel costs of all four CSO representatives to its council meetings. The GEF started to provide this support as early as 1995, when it annually set aside USD 50,000 of its administrative budget for this purpose. Since then, resources for this support have increased significantly. The GEF CSO Network also receives financial support for its work by a GEF CSO Voluntary (Trust) Fund. The GEF Secretariat further invites and sponsors two CSOs representatives per country to participate in the GEF Expanded Constituency Workshops. The GEF Secretariat has developed a procedure and criteria to elect those CSO representatives for the Expanded Constituency Workshops.¹³

The CIF Administrative Unit also covers travel costs for observers from developing countries attending the Trust Fund Committee meetings on request. In addition to travel costs, they also cover reasonable costs for the organizations managing the self-selection process.¹⁴

However, it is considered crucial that financial support provided to active CSO observers does not undermine their independence. Such independence would not be undermined if only travel costs are covered by the AF's administrative budget and active CSO observers

are elected in a self-organised process based on established criteria.

- To ensure the AF is aligned with international best practice applied by climate finance mechanisms, it should cover **travel costs for developing countries' active civil society observers** and their alternates from the Fund's administrative budget.

The AF NGO Network suggests that the AF also covers travel costs for up to two developing country CSO representatives to provide independent local project insights during the "CSO Dialogue" at AF Board meetings. Currently, CSOs have to cover those costs themselves, which limits the ability of many local CSOs to share their independent project insights during the "CSO Dialogue" at Board meetings. The AF NGO Network, which currently facilitates the agenda of the "CSO Dialogue", frequently receives expressions of interest of local CSOs that would like to contribute to the "CSO Dialogue" but have no financial resources to do so. To ensure equal opportunities for all CSOs (including small local CSOs), to participate in the "CSO Dialogue", the AF NGO Network recommends that the Fund also cover **travel costs for up to two developing country CSO representatives contributing to the "CSO Dialogue"**.

Civil society representatives who apply to be observers to AF Board meetings are currently required to be registered UNFCCC observers. This **requirement of UNFCCC observer registration as a pre-condition for AFB observer registration currently presents significant obstacle** for developing country CSOs who wish to register to attend Board meetings, including those who would want to provide an input in the "CSO Dialogue" during Board meetings.

The UNFCCC observer registration process is a complex and tedious process which many local CSOs struggle to comply with. Many local CSOs involved with adaptation have not found UNFCCC registration necessary for their climate-related work. In the past several CSOs that were not accredited UNFCCC observer organisation either could not attend the meetings, or had to be accredited through international CSOs, giving the impression that predominantly developed

¹³ GEF. Procedures and criteria for selection of civil society representatives to attend Expanded Constituency Workshops of the Global Environment Facility in GEF7. <http://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/GEF7-%20Criteria-for-selection-of-CSOs-to-ECWs.pdf>

¹⁴ Climate Investment Funds. April 20, 2009. Guidelines for inviting representatives of civil society to observe meetings of the CIF Trust Fund Committees <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTCC/Resources/GuidelinesforInvitingRepresentativesofCivilSocietytoObserve-final-April20.pdf>

country CSOs contribute to AF policy discussions. This requirement presents a major barrier to developing country CSO participation and discourages such CSOs from contributing to the strengthening of the Fund's operations. Depending what time of the year a CSO decides to apply for UNFCCC observer registration, it might take them up to two years to obtain

accreditation due to the very lengthy UNFCCC registration process.

- In addition to the requirement of UNFCCC observer registration, **the AF should introduce its own accreditation process for observers**, similar to the process applied by other climate funds such as the GCF

1 Overview of CSO engagement in the work of climate funds' governing bodies

	GEF	GCF	CIFs	AF
Active CSO observers	4 CSO representatives (2 regional, 2 local).	2 active CSO observers (1 from developing countries and 1 from developed countries) ¹⁵ For each active CSO observer three alternates are elected.	4 CSO observers in each of the two Trust Fund committees as well as 4 CSO observers for each of the sub-committees.	no active CSO observers.
Election process of those active CSO observers	GEF Secretariat in consultation with the GEC CSO Network ¹⁶ .	Self-organised among the GCF CSO group.	Self-organised among CSOs.	-
Criteria for active CSO observers to be elected	Basic criteria developed by the GEF Secretariat ¹⁷ .	List of criteria established by the GCF CSO community themselves.	The CIFs request equity and balanced representation. ¹⁸	-
Active CSO observers in closed meetings	n/a ¹⁹	The 2 active CSO observers are allowed to attend closed meetings after signing a confidentiality agreement.	n/a	-
Financial support for active CSO observers	All 4 CSOs are sponsored to attend the GEF Council meetings.	Travel costs to Board meetings for the active CSO observers from a developing country are covered by the GCF administrative budget.	The CIFs have been providing financial support to set up the Stakeholder Advisory Network (SAN). ²⁰ Upon request funding for developing country CSO's travel cost.	-

¹⁵ GCF. Governing Instrument for the Green Climate Fund.

¹⁶ GEF. Approved Selection Criteria for Representatives of Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities to Participate in GEF Council Meetings https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/Criteria%20CSOs%20-%20IPLC%20Council_0.pdf

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Climate Investment Funds. April 20, 2009. Guidelines for inviting representatives of civil society to observe meetings of the CIF Trust Fund Committees. <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTCC/Resources/GuidelinesforInvitingRepresentativesofCivilSocietytoObserve-final-April20.pdf>

¹⁹ no information available

²⁰ While the CIFs financial support for the SAN is noteworthy, such financial support by a fund itself may in the long-term compromise the independence of CSO engagement.

Active CSO Networks	GEF CSO Network (independent bottom-up initiative by CSOs).	GCF CSO Group (loose group of registered GCF CSO observers; self-organised and independent, but no formal Network structure).	Stakeholder Advisory Network (initiated and funded by the CIFs for private sector and CSO stakeholders, no separate CSO Network).	AF NGO Network (independent bottom-up initiative by CSOs).
Official opportunity to share independent country insights on projects' progress with governing body	-	-	-	"CSO Dialogue" as a standing agenda item during AF Board meetings.

4.2. Amending the Fund's Open Information Policy

The Fund's Open Information Policy should require that reasons for meetings to be closed, as well as for not disclosing information, be explained to the public.²¹ This is important for ensuring transparency in the Fund's processes. Closed sessions should also be kept to a minimum. However, the AF NGO Network notes with appreciation the limiting of the number of closed sessions during the recent AF Board meetings.

- The AF should specify in its disclosure policy that reasons for meetings being closed, and **reasons for not disclosing information, will be explained to the public.**

Information must be made available with ample time to allow for meaningful and effective inputs from civil society.²² For active civil society observers to be in a position to jointly agree with a broader group of CSOs on a common

position and recommendations for issues to be discussed during AF Board meetings, it is of utmost importance that documents to be discussed are uploaded well in advance. If not, elected active CSO observers will not be in a position to properly consult with their CSO constituency who they are supposed to represent. The GCF's "Rules of Procedure of the Board", for example, stipulates that Board documents are to be made public at least 21 calendar days before the first meeting day. Documents for deliberation by the GEF Council are posted on the GEF website four weeks prior to a Council meeting.²³

- The AF NGO Network recommends that the AF Board takes a decision to include a reference in the Fund's Open Information Policy making a provision that meeting documents must be uploaded on the Fund's homepage at least 14 days (ideally 21 days) before the first day of the Fund's Board or committee meetings.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Summary documents of project and programme proposals should also be provided in local languages.

²³ GEF. GEF Practices on Disclosure of Information https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/C.41.Inf._03_GEF_Practices_on%20Disclosure_of_Information.pdf

4.3. Adequate resourcing of the Secretariat to ensure transparency and effective engagement with civil society

Effective and efficient CSO engagement and participation is not only a matter of having effective policies in place. In addition to the recommended decisions which need to be taken by the AF Board, it is important to ensure that adequate resources are made available to ensure the effective implementation of those policies.

To be able to prepare and publish documents on time, 14 (or 21) days before Board meetings, the **Secretariat needs to be adequately staffed**. Likewise, the introduction of the Fund's own accreditation process for observers will require additional human resources within the Secretariat. Similar to the practices of other climate funds, the AF Secretariat should elect a CSO focal point among its staff who should receive adequate resources to ensure the effective implementation of CSO engagement in the Fund's work.

However, in addition to adequate human resources it is likewise important that the Board allocates sufficient resources in the Fund's administrative budget for the technical solutions needed to ensure the effective engagement of civil society. Such technical solutions include the publishing of **recordings of Board meetings and providing country-specific information on the Fund's website**.

There is currently a live webcast of open sessions of the AF Board meetings. However, there are no recordings of these meetings that are archived and accessible to stakeholders. For example, the GCF not only has a live webcast of open sessions of its Board meetings, it also records those open sessions and archives them on its homepage. Further, it has individual recordings for each agenda item discussed during Board meetings. This can be considered best practice for international climate funds.

- The AF should align with such best practice and **provide adequate resources in its administrative budget** to ensure that its Board meetings can not only be streamed

live online, but are also recorded and archived for public access thereafter.

This would allow stakeholders from different countries and time zones to follow the various issues discussed and decisions taken by the AF Board.

The Fund's website is an important tool for stakeholders to access information on the Fund. While the quality of relevant information provided to the public on the AF homepage has improved significantly over recent years, interested stakeholders still face difficulties in locating relevant information. Most interested stakeholders are looking for country-specific information about the AF. However, in order to find country-specific information, stakeholders must know the various sections at the AF homepage where to find them (e.g. "Designated Authorities", "Implementing Entities", "Readiness Grants", "Projects Information", "Active Pipeline Projects", or "Proposals under Review"). Stakeholders that are not familiar with the Fund and its homepage, may not be able to access the full range of country-specific information. It is considered best practice among climate funds to provide such country-specific information for stakeholders on their website.

- The AF Board should ensure that the Fund complies with such best practice and provide adequate resources in the Fund's administrative budget for the Secretariat to **make country-specific information available on the AF website**.

4.4. Regular reviews of the Fund's civil society engagement and participation policies and practices.

The AF NGO Network suggests that the policies to be adopted by the AF Board to further strengthen civil society participation and engagement should be reviewed and assessed after a trial period of three to five years. Such a regular review and assessment would not only ensure that the Fund's policies on civil society engagement and participation policies are aligned with international best practice of

climate finance mechanisms, but also ensure the policies' effectiveness. This would also ensure the effectiveness of the AF NGO Network's efforts to ensure that engagement and participation opportunities of the AF are effectively used by CSOs worldwide, especially of those CSOs in developing countries.

- The AF Board should agree to **review and assess the policies adopted on further enhancing civil society participation and engagement** after a trial period of three to five years.

5. From policy mandate to implementation: the role of the AF NGO Network in ensuring effective implementation of the Fund's CSO engagement policies

While many of the AF's current policies can be considered best practice on paper, it is crucial to regularly review their effectiveness and impact. In the past, the AF NGO Network has played a crucial role in ensuring that the stakeholder engagement and participation policies of the Fund are effectively used by CSOs worldwide, with a special focus on CSOs from the global South.

The AF NGO Network currently conducts a range of concrete awareness-raising and capacity-building activities to show stakeholders from civil society the various engagement and participation opportunities in AF projects and processes at policy and local levels.

One such example is the opportunity for stakeholders to provide feedback on project proposals and concept notes submitted to the AF for approval or endorsement.²⁴ The AF Secretariat has highlighted on several occasions that the feedback provided by civil society is

very helpful and they consider it carefully. The AF's opportunity for stakeholders to provide feedback on project proposals can be considered international best practice for ensuring stakeholder participation and transparency. However, past experiences have shown that stakeholders often did not make use of this opportunity. The AF NGO Network has therefore sought to reach out to stakeholders from civil society and encourage them to provide feedback. By doing so, the AF NGO Network has managed to mobilise feedback among its members for several AF project proposals and concepts submitted to the Fund three times each year.

This is only one out of many examples of existing AF best practice policies on stakeholder engagement whose effective implementation depends on the awareness-raising and mobilisation activities conducted by the AF NGO Network.

- The AF Board should **acknowledge the important past and future role of the AF NGO Network** in ensuring the effective implementation of the Fund's CSO engagement policies.

Such awareness-raising and capacity-building activities that the Network conducts alongside its knowledge sharing activities are the basis for the advocacy work it does on the Fund at international and local levels.

Equitable and independent civil society consultation is a tedious and complex process which requires adequate and sustainable resourcing in addition to strong stakeholder engagement policies. Industrialized countries that provide resources to the Fund should jointly engage in discussions with civil society on how to ensure sustainable funding solutions that ensure that civil society, and the AF NGO Network in particular, will be in a position to continue to play this important role in the future. At the same time, such funding solutions need to be set up without compromising civil society's independence.

²⁴ Recently this opportunity has been extended to include feedback on applications for the Fund's Readiness Grants. This initiative was welcomed by the AF NGO Network.

The Adaptation Fund NGO Network

— Who are we?

We are a **global coalition of more than 250 associate CSOs** focussing on the Adaptation Fund. Our aim is to **support the most vulnerable** to climate change and ensure they benefit from the Adaptation Fund.

To achieve this we work to make the Fund more transparent and participative promoting the effective engagement of civil society and ownership of local stakeholders.

This is why we **monitor the implementation** of the Adaptation Fund's projects; we **draft policy recommendations** for the Fund's Board; and we provide **independent on-the-ground insights** on the Fund's activities in your country.

Our membership is **open to all interested stakeholders** from global civil society. However, with the Fund implementing its adaptation action in developing countries, the Network relies particularly on the input of CSOs from the Global South. That is also why we jointly strive to raise the awareness of CSOs in your country on the Adaptation Fund.

Making the Adaptation Fund work for the most vulnerable communities will need the input and engagement of global civil society!

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Let's get in touch ...

... and talk about how your CSO can benefit from the "AF NGO Network" and share its knowledge and experience with others!

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