

**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE COUNCIL'S DISCUSSIONS  
65<sup>TH</sup> GEF COUNCIL MEETING  
OCTOBER 10, 2023, VIRTUAL MEETING**

The following is a record prepared by the GEF Secretariat of comments, understandings, and clarifications made by Council Members. These points are supplemental to the Joint Summary of the Chair, which records the decisions agreed by the Council. The full video of the Council Meeting can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/user/GEFSecretariat>; <https://www.thegef.org/events/65th-gef-council-meeting>

***Agenda Item 1      Opening of the Meeting***

1. The CEO and Chairperson of the GEF, Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, and Mr. Tom Bui of Canada, Elected Chairperson, opened the 65<sup>th</sup> GEF Council meeting.
2. In His opening remarks, the Chairperson recalled that this meeting had been called to address the three issues not taken up at the 64<sup>th</sup> meeting due to lack of time.

***Agenda Item 2      Adoption of the Agenda***

3. The Secretariat indicated that the date and format of the Council meetings for 2024 for the Council meetings and the potential composition of the Advisory Group on risk appetite would be addressed under Other Business.
4. The Agenda was adopted.

***Agenda Item 3      Global Environment Facility Strategy for Knowledge Management and learning***

5. The Secretariat presented the Strategy for Knowledge Management and Learning. It states that the strategy is anchored on a Theory of Change which outlines “a simple set of necessary and sufficient causal pathways that interact with and reinforce one another” to deliver desired KM&L impacts in the context of GEF operations. The strategy is framed around three

main objectives: 1) Embedding cutting-edge knowledge into investments to generate public goods in line with GEF mandate and enhance the role of knowledge management in projects and programs. 2) Increase knowledge flows through platforms through partnership and communities of practice; and 3) Create and enable the environment for learning and capacity building for greater exchange of knowledge and collaboration across the partnership.

6. Council welcomed and supported the proposal. Comments included that there should be a part of every project and there should be a national platform to disseminate knowledge. Let the knowledge and learning be promoted by CSOs at the national level. Agencies should follow a standard template where GEF is highlighted and more visible. OFPs should benefit from this activity to support them in preparing better projects. Since this strategy is based on people, processes and systems how will it be incorporated to the reorganization of the Secretariat?

7. Some questions posed were who is going to lead? How are the different activities going to be rolled out? How can we assess progress? Since this strategy is based on people, processes and systems how will it be incorporated to the reorganization of the Secretariat? How can this be harmonized with GCF similar projects? What new tools will be created to disseminate the information? How will women and youth contribute?

8. Some Council members stated that the information must be available to all, and it should include scientific and traditional knowledge. It should also mention a reference to developing countries with areas of particular importance for biodiversity.

9. The Secretariat replied that it would be designing an implementation plan that would answer many of the questions. This strategy aims to have a more systematic approach as many of the activities have been taking place with Agencies, STAP, and other funds. The restructuring process includes a dedicated position for KM&L. Indigenous knowledge will be captured in a coherent manner and be combined with scientific knowledge.

10. Two Council members worked on specific compromise drafting for paragraph 40 of the document. This was accepted by the Council and the decision was adopted as proposed.

#### ***Agenda Item 4      Enhancing Policy Coherence through GEF Operations.***

11. The Secretariat introduced the document on this topic. It states that current international, political, and scientific conversations are converging around the conclusion that the world's environmental and sustainable development goals to 2030 can only be realized if the funding gap to nature is narrowed. The way to reduce the funds needed for nature is through the systematic promotion of mutually reinforcing policy actions across government departments and agencies, creating synergies towards achieving the agreed objectives.

12. The Council welcomed and supported the policy. They stressed the need to increase communications with the Governments to promote these ideas. The goal will be to augment the sustainability and results of the projects and programs. Some questions were how this will be reflected in NBSAPs and how will GEF address the sovereignty of nations as they are responsible

for taking policy decisions in all areas. How will the lessons learned from the competitive window be extended to all other activities and how will it be measured in the mid-term and terminal evaluations. Another question was how the STAR allocation would be affected by incorporating coherence as part of the equation as countries may have good policies but lack the capacity to fully enforce them. How would such a coherence index be designed; on the basis of what information; and how will it relate to the current formula, how will countries be selected for the pilot on coherence, were other questions posed by Council.

13. The Secretariat replied that the CES would address interaction goals. GEF-8 projects and programs already address policy coherence and work program cover notes will have a section on this topic. Secretariat is developing a road map. Sovereignty is a risk, but the GEF is country driven and GEF will act accordingly even if influence is limited. GEF will work closely with countries. Discussions are ongoing on how to measure coherence. Further work will be done in preparation of GEF-9 replenishment. Top five STAR recipients will be the first to pilot the coherence policy.

14. The Council agreed that decisions taken will not prejudice GEF-9 replenishment negotiations in any way.

#### ***Agenda Item 5            Relations with Conventions & Other International Institutions***

15. As agreed, the document was not introduced nor was there a special session with the Executive Secretaries of the Conventions.

16. Council members praised the role of the GEF in relation to the various Conventions that the GEF serves. They stressed and encouraged the synergies and collaboration with other financial mechanisms.

#### ***Agenda Item 6            Other Business***

17. The Council agreed that the 66<sup>th</sup> Council meeting will take place the week of February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024; and the 67<sup>th</sup> meeting will take place the week of June 17, 2024, in hybrid manner. The 68<sup>th</sup> meeting will take place the week of 16 December 2024, in virtual format.

18. The Council agreed that the WG on Risk Appetite will be composed of Ben Green from the UK; Richard Bontjer from Australia; Gabriela Blatter from Switzerland; Tom Bui from Canada and Parameswaran Iyer of India.