



ADAPTATION FUND

AFB/B.37/8  
12 October 2021

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Adaptation Fund Board  
Thirty-seventh meeting  
Bonn, Germany (Virtually held), 19-21 October 2021

Agenda item 12 b)

**OPTIONS TO FURTHER ENHANCE CIVIL SOCIETY  
PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT IN THE WORK OF  
THE BOARD**

## Background

1. The Adaptation Fund (the Fund) has recognized the importance of its engagement with civil society as well as contributions of civil society to the Fund's work. While several aspects of the Fund's engagement with civil society have been considered best practice, the Board acknowledged, at its thirty-third meeting, the importance of further enhancing the participation of civil society in the work of the Board.

2. The Board, at its thirty-third meeting, decided to request the secretariat:

- a) *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 Board; and*
- b) *To prepare a document and submit it to the Board for consideration at the thirty-fourth meeting.*

### **(Decision B.33/54)**

3. Pursuant to Decision B.33/54, the secretariat presented document AFB/B.34/11 to the Board at its thirty-fourth meeting, which contains potential options for the Board to enhance civil society participation and engagement in the work of the Board considering the current practices of the Board, the practices of other climate funds, the observations and recommendations that had been received from the *Adaptation Fund NGO Network* and their financial, operational and legal implications of the potential options.

4. The Board had a limited time to discuss the information presented in document AFB/B.34/11 and decided:

- a) *To provide the secretariat with comments on the options provided in document AFB/B.34/11 during the intersessional period between its thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth meetings; and*
- b) *To request the secretariat to present a document which compiles comments and input received from the Board to the thirty-fifth meeting of the Board for consideration.*

### **(Decision B.34/51)**

5. Pursuant to Decision B.34/51, the secretariat prepared and circulated a survey on the subject matter to the Board during the intersessional period between its thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth meetings. The secretariat presented a document containing a compilation of responses and comments collected by the survey.

6. Due to the limited time and opportunities to exchange on complex topics in Board meetings organized virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic, this agenda item was not taken up at the first

and second sessions of the thirty-fifth meetings of the Board and was presented at the thirty-sixth meeting instead.

7. At its thirty-sixth meeting, the Board discussed the initial survey results presented in document AFB/B.36/7 and decided to request the secretariat:

- a) *To resubmit the initial survey including the updated questions among the Board members and alternates, during the intersessional period between its thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh meetings, which reflect the Board's discussions held at its thirty-sixth meeting, including on the need of defining civil society organizations;*
- b) *To conduct a study on the need for a policy for civil society engagement with the Adaptation Fund, taking into account the practices and policies of other climate funds;*
- c) *To present a document containing the outcome of the work as referred to in subparagraphs (a) and (b) above for the Board's consideration at its thirty-seventh meeting.*

*(Decision B.36/44)*

8. Pursuant to Decision B.36/44, the secretariat prepared and circulated the second round of the survey on the subject matter to the Board during the intersessional period between its thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh meetings. The secretariat also conducted the study on the need for a policy for civil society engagement with the Fund. This document presents the results and analysis of the second round of the Board survey and a study on the need for a policy for civil society engagement with the Fund, taking into account the practices and policies of other climate funds.

### **The second round of the Board survey**

9. As for the first round of the Board survey, recommendations for the Fund's civil society engagement made by the AF NGO Network served as a basis for six grouped items contained in the Board survey. While many of the questions in the second round of the survey remained the same from its first round, some of the questions and supporting information provided in the survey were updated or newly added to reflect the Board discussion held at its thirty-sixth meeting and the feedback received from the Adaptation Fund NGO Network on the first round of the survey questions. Based on the Board discussions, a new section on the definition of civil society and a policy for civil society engagement was added as a new item 7.

10. The modality of the second round of the Board survey was the same as the first round. It comprised closed questions with optional answers "Yes", "No" or "Neither" with an option to provide comments in each section. The survey was circulated to the Board members and alternates by e-mail for a period from 21 June to 21 July 2021 with a disclaimer that responses would be handled anonymously and would not be connected to their presenters, and that they would not prejudice later Board discussion and decision-making on these matters.

11. Out of 31 Board members and alternates with active terms at the time of the survey, 18 responded. It surpassed the 11 responses of the first round and accounted for more than half (58%) of the Board members and alternates this time. However, the aggregate results may not necessarily represent the overall Board's views.

12. The second round of the Board survey and its detailed results are contained in Annex I of this document. An overview of the results and the relevant existing policies and practices by the Fund is presented in **Table 1**.

**Table 1: Overview of survey results and relevant AF policies and practices**

Recommendation	Survey number	Survey results	Relevant existing policies and practices of the Adaptation Fund
<b>1. Enhanced collaboration with civil society</b>			
a) Creating a dedicated section related to the Fund's engagement with civil society on the Fund's website	1.1	Yes: 16, No: 1, Neither: 1 [Majority support]	The secretariat estimates that little cost incurs when the participation of civil society members in the readiness events is online. Travel costs would incur for the Fund, however, if they would participate in the workshops in person and the Board decides to bear the costs. Having reviewed the existing Fund's policies and guidelines, none of them restricts the implementation of the listed three items.
b) Allowing more active contribution of civil society and other stakeholders to the process of reviewing the existing and emerging policies and procedures of the Fund	1.3	Yes: 15, No: 2, Neither: 1 [Majority support]	
c) Inviting a civil society member to the Fund's readiness workshop and including a session dedicated to civil society engagement in the Fund's readiness workshops and webinars	1.5 and 1.6	Yes: 17, No: 0, Neither: 1 [Majority support]	
<b>2. Recording and archiving of the Board meetings on the Fund's website</b>	2.1	Yes: 7, No: 8, Neither: 2 [Divided opinion]	The Fund has no policy or guidelines that restricts the publication of the recordings and archiving of the Board meetings. The GEF posts recordings of its council meetings online as its practice and there is no governing policy for that. On the other hand, the GCF makes available recordings of the board meetings online according to the rules that set out in the Information Disclosure Policy of the Green Climate Fund. The Board may wish to implement this recommended item as a new practice for the Fund. There might be cost implications.

Recommendation	Survey number	Survey results	Relevant existing policies and practices of the Adaptation Fund
<b>3. More explicit disclosure of reasons for closed sessions</b>	3.1	Yes: 10, No: 6, Neither: 2 [Majority support]	<p><a href="#">The Rules of Procedure of the Board (RoP)</a> and the <a href="#">Open Information Policy</a> of the Fund allows the Board not to disclose information on an exceptional basis when there is a compelling reason for confidentiality. The RoP indicates that information obtained from Adaptation Fund project participants marked as proprietary and/or confidential shall not be disclosed without the written consent of the provider of the information, except as required by national law. The Open Information policy defines five main criteria for such exceptions. However, the policy does not specifically require nor prohibit the Board to disclose reasons for closed sessions to observers (paragraphs 2 and 3).</p> <p>As it is mentioned in the Board survey, “AF NGO Network shared their concerns that recent board meetings have held the increasing number of closed sessions which would impair the transparency of the Fund.” Although the Board has disclosed reasons for closed session, more explicit or clear disclosure of reasons for closed sessions to observers would help the participants of the meeting understand the rationale behind and the need of the closed session while it helps the Board to reaffirm the need of the closed sessions possibly increasing the legitimacy of the closed sessions.</p>
<b>4. Active civil society observers and observer accreditation process</b>			
a) Elected active civil society observers to intervene on agenda item of the meetings and to attend closed meetings - Establishing the status of the elected active civil society observers	4.1	Yes: 7, No: 9, Neither: 2 [Divided opinion]	The Fund’s Open Information Policy sets out the following for deliberative information (paragraph 9): “ <i>Therefore, while the Fund makes publicly available the decisions, results, and agreements that result from its deliberative processes, the proceedings are held in closed sessions for the following</i>

Recommendation	Survey number	Survey results	Relevant existing policies and practices of the Adaptation Fund
- Allowing the active civil society observers to attend closed meetings	4.2	Yes: 2, No: 10, Neither: 3 [Majority opposition]	<i>bodies: <u>the Accreditation Panel, Ethics and Finance Committee, and Project and Programme Review Committee.</u></i>
- Allocation of travel budgets for the active civil society observers to participate in the Board meetings	4.3	Yes: 3, No: 9, Neither: 2 [Majority opposition]	<p>The Board's <a href="#">Rules of procedure</a> include rules concerning the participation of observers in the proceedings of the Board in paragraphs 33 and 34.</p> <p><i>“33. Observers may, upon the invitation of the Chair and if there is no objection from any of the members present, participate without the right to vote in the proceedings of any meeting <u>in matters of direct concern to the body or agency, which they represent.</u></i></p> <p><i>34. Observers may, upon invitation of the Chair and if there is no objection from the members present, make presentations relating to matters under consideration by the Board.”</i></p> <p><i>“XVIII. AMENDMENTS TO RULES OF PROCEDURE</i>  <i>64. These rules of procedure may be amended according to paragraphs 44–51 above and, to be effective, must be formally approved by the CMP.”</i></p> <p>If the Board would like to invite active civil society observers to all the meetings including closed sessions, the Board would need to amend the Open Information Policy and the Rules of Procedure which requires a formal approval of the Conference of Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP) and/or Conference of Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA).</p>

Recommendation	Survey number	Survey results	Relevant existing policies and practices of the Adaptation Fund
b) Establishing the Fund's own observer accreditation process	4.5	Yes: 4, No: 5, Neither: 8 [Divided opinion]	According to the Rules of Procedure, paragraph 31, observers are, in principle, representatives of UNFCCC Parties, the UNFCCC secretariat and UNFCCC accredited observers. Under this rule, the Fund has allowed observers only from organizations in the list of the UNFCCC accredited observers. However, as paragraph 31 reads "Except where otherwise decided by the Board", it leaves the Board discretion to change or expand the composition of the observers for its meetings, however, this requires further analysis on whether and how this can be implemented.
<b>5. Summary of project proposals in the respective countries' official languages and country-specific project information</b>			
a) Summary of project proposals in the respective countries' official languages	5.1	Yes: 9, No: 6, Neither 2 [Majority support]	The Fund has been instructing implementing entities to use <a href="#">templates</a> for project proposals and project concepts amended in October 2017 for their submissions, and amendments to the templates require Board approval. The Board may wish to add a section for the summary of the proposal in the respective countries' official languages to the templates when amending the project proposal template(s).
b) Provision of country-specific information on the Fund's website	5.3	Yes: 13, No: 4, Neither: 1 [Majority support]	There is no prescription related to the structure of the Fund's public website, under the Fund's existing policies including the Rules of Procedure and the Open Information Policy. The secretariat has designed and developed it by its own initiative. To make available country-specific information on the Fund's website, a drastic change in its structure would be required, which is a relatively big project for the Fund. If the Board deems this change beneficial and necessary, it may wish to request the secretariat to implement this item.



Recommendation	Survey number	Survey results	Relevant existing policies and practices of the Adaptation Fund
<b>6. Solicitation of stakeholder input on (re-)accreditation and intersessional decision-making</b>			
a) (Re-)accreditation	6.1	Yes: 9, No: 4, Neither: 5 <a href="#">[Divided opinion]</a>	The Open Information Policy in its paragraph 8 under the section of the Exclusions from Disclosure prescribes that the name of the entity as well as all applications and corresponding supporting documentation are kept strictly confidential, as they relate to entities applying for accreditation to the Fund, and these are kept anonymous until an entity has been accredited by the Board". Therefore, the solicitation of stakeholder input to entities on the (re-)accreditation process is not implementable under the current policy.
b) Intersessional decision-making	6.3	Yes: 4, No: 9, Neither: 4 <a href="#">[Majority opposition]</a>	<p>The Rules of Procedure sets out rules on intersessional decisions in paragraphs 56 to 59. The RoP itself does not restrict the solicitation of stakeholder input on intersessional decision-making.</p> <p>All previous <a href="#">intersessional decisions</a> have been posted on the public website, including approvals of projects, concepts and grants for the intersessional review cycles. Submitted proposals have been published on the website for public comments during project review cycles. Other intersessional decisions include the approval of project extension and changes as well as (re-)accreditation of implementing entities, all of which are processed according to the standard criteria approved by the Board.</p>

Recommendation	Survey number	Survey results	Relevant existing policies and practices of the Adaptation Fund
<b>7. Definition of civil society and Policy on civil society engagement</b>			
a) Definition of civil society			The Fund does not have a formal policy and/or definition of civil society that could be applied when considering options to enhance civil society participation and engagement in the work of the Board.
- Developing a definition of civil society	7.1	Yes: 5, No: 8, Neither: 5 [Divided opinion]	
- Engaging with other stakeholders such as private sector	7.3	Yes: 10, No: 2, Neither: 6 [Majority support]	
b) Policy on civil society engagement			Relevant provisions for civil society engagement in the work of the Board are included in the Rules of Procedure and the Open Information Policy. Regarding “observers”, the Rules of Procedure state that “[e]xcept where otherwise decided by the Board, meetings shall be open for attendance, as observers, to representatives of UNFCCC Parties, the UNFCCC secretariat and UNFCCC accredited observers” (paragraph 31).  On the project/programme level, the Fund’s Environmental and Social Policy (amended in March 2016) and Gender Policy and Action Plan (amended in March 2021) apply the broader term “stakeholders” requiring informed participation and consultation of stakeholders in project formulation and implementation (ESP paragraph 10 and GP paragraph 17).  Both the GEF and GCF define certain terms such as “civil society” or “civil society organizations” for the purpose of their engagement policies and procedures.  The Board may wish to consider further clarifying and defining civil society and possibly other relevant stakeholders to be engaged in work of the Board and the Fund and/ or further clarify arrangements in a dedicated policy or guidelines.
- Developing a policy or guidelines on its engagement with civil society	7.6	Yes: 8, No: 4, Neither: 5 [Divided opinion]	
- Taking a decision on individual recommendations from civil society without developing a dedicated policy or guidelines on its engagement with civil society	7.7	Yes: 12, No:1, Neither: 4 [Majority support]	

## Study on the need for a policy for civil society engagement with the Fund

13. The current practice of the Adaptation Fund is similar to other multilateral climate funds in the sense that civil society can be engaged in an observer role in the work of the Board, as well as on the project/programme level as relevant stakeholders for project development and implementation.

14. The Fund's *Medium-Term Strategy for 2018-2022* explicitly recognizes civil society's contribution to the Adaptation Fund and a need to explore modalities for greater collaboration between the Fund and civil society. The *Adaptation Fund NGO Network* has also recommended that the Board enhance collaboration with civil society in the work of the Board.

15. As **Table 2** shows, the Fund does not have a formal policy nor definition of civil society that could be applied when considering options to enhance civil society participation and engagement in the work of the Board. However, civil society engagement is an important feature of the Fund as recognized by the Fund's Medium-Term Strategy, and the Fund's existing practices are set out in its several policies and rules:

- a) The *Rules of Procedure* include provisions on observers (paragraphs 31 – 34) of Board meetings and procedures for public communication (paragraphs 35 – 37). According to the *Rules of Procedure*, observers are defined as “representatives of UNFCCC Parties, the UNFCCC secretariat and UNFCCC accredited observers” (paragraph 31).
- b) The *Open Information Policy* reaffirms the Fund's commitment to open access to information and transparency guiding the Fund's overall approach to disclose information unless there is a compelling reason for confidentiality.
- c) The *Operational Policies and Guidelines (OPG)* mandates the engagement of stakeholders on the level of projects and programmes in compliance with the Fund's Environmental and Social Policy (ESP) and Gender Policy (GP) throughout all the project/programme implementation phases (paragraphs 34 and 35). In addition, the OPG mandates the secretariat to “provide facilities that will enable interested stakeholders to publicly submit comments about proposals” (paragraph 89).

16. In addition, the Adaptation Fund is the only climate fund that organizes a *Dialogue with Civil Society* as a standing agenda at each Board meeting. The Dialogue has enabled the civil society observers to engage the Board in issues of interest and priority to the civil society. This practice of the Board is currently not captured in any of the existing policies and guidelines of the Fund.

17. The Board may wish to consider two options with a view to enhance civil society engagement in the work of the Board through a) developing a dedicated and comprehensive policy on civil society engagement and b) adopting new features of civil society engagement without a dedicated policy. The secretariat's preliminary review found the following considerations for each option:

*Option 1: Developing a comprehensive policy for civil society engagement*

13. In this option, the Fund would develop a dedicated policy on civil society engagement, which compiles a set of rules, guidelines, principles and plans related to civil society participation and engagement in the work of the Board, and potentially, if deemed necessary, overall civil society and/or stakeholder engagement in the work of the Fund as a whole. As part of the policy, the Board could consider further clarifying and defining civil society and possibly other relevant stakeholders for the work of the Board and/or the Fund as a whole.

14. Having such a policy, the Fund could set a clearer vision and reinforce its continued commitment to civil society engagement and update it when needs arise, as the document would evolve over time. It may also serve as an opportunity for the Fund to streamline the existing practices and new elements of civil society engagement in a coherent manner and codify them into a policy.

15. On the other hand, developing a policy may take a considerable amount of time and other resources until the Board reaches an agreement on the multiple features that had better be integrated into a policy at its development, rather than incremental integration through several times of revision of the policy.

*Option 2: Identify new elements to enhance civil society engagement and integrate them into existing policies (without developing a dedicated policy for civil society engagement)*

16. In this option, rather than developing a separate policy for civil society engagement, the Board could adopt new features through individual decisions by the Board.

17. This option means maintaining the status quo where relevant practices would remain scattered in several policy documents and/or respective decisions. This might be viewed as improvement of accessibility by the Fund's stakeholders who particularly look for comprehensive information related to civil society engagement. Also, a more thorough crosscheck may be necessary whenever the decided items are updated in the future, and the update needs to be reflected in other related policies and single decisions.

18. An important consideration for both options is that in cases where new features would require to be incorporated into or a revision of existing policies and procedures of the Fund, while some policies such as Operational Policies and Guidelines (OPG) and Open Information Policy can be amended by the Board decisions, the amendment of the Rules of Procedure of the Board<sup>1</sup> requires a decision by the CMP/CMA which could be a relatively lengthy process.

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<sup>1</sup> Amendment of the Rules of Procedure requires the decision of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP).

## Practices and policies of other climate funds

19. This section presents the relevant practices and policies on civil society engagement of other climate funds namely the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Climate Investment Funds (CIFs) and compares them with the equivalent policies set up of the Adaptation Fund. The detailed findings of the secretariat on the relevant practices and policies of these other climate funds can be found in Annex II to this document.

20. Having looked at the cases of the GEF, the GCF and the CIFs, civil society engagement of those climate funds is governed by a similar set of policies and guidelines with some differences.

- a) In the case of the GEF, the “*Updated Vision to Enhance Civil Society Engagement with the GEF*” appears to be the main policy on civil society engagement capturing relevant policies and guidelines related to the level of the GEF Council as well as on the national and regional level.
- b) The GCF’s *Governing Instrument and Rules of Procedure* set out the general mandate for civil society engagement in the work of the Board through active observers and other observers, which is operationalized in the dedicated “*Guidelines relating to the Observer participation, accreditation of Observer organizations and participation of active Observers*” in the work of the GCF Board, and other related policies, such as the *Information Disclosure Policy* and the *Policy on Ethics and Conflicts of Interest for Active Observers of the GCF*. Overall stakeholder engagement is defined in the GCF’s Environmental and Social Policy, Gender Policy, and Indigenous Peoples Policy.
- c) Similarly, the CIFs also include civil society engagement in their *Governance Frameworks and Rules of Procedure for Meetings of the Trust Fund Committees*, in addition to dedicated *Guidelines for Inviting Representatives of Civil Society to Observe Meetings of the CIF Trust Fund Committees* as supplemented by the *Information Disclosure Policy*.

21. What all the climate funds have in common is that their approach on civil society engagement is multi-dimensional, and that no single policy covers all the aspects of civil society engagement. Whereas the Adaptation Fund does not have a dedicated policy or guidelines that govern civil society engagement, the other three organizations do have one main document on civil society engagement that is either primarily focused on the rules and guidelines regarding the participation of civil society in the work of their governing bodies, or as in one case on civil society engagement in the work on all levels of the fund.

22. **Table 2** below summarizes and compares the relevant policies and guidelines related to civil society engagement for those other climate funds and the Adaptation Fund.

23. If the Adaptation Fund would follow a similar model of those other climate funds, it could develop a policy or guidelines that further define civil society in the work of the Fund and set out

rules for the participation of civil society in the work of the Board based on the existing policies and practices taking into account some of the recommendations contained in this document, originally proposed by the AF NGO Network.

**Table 2. Overview of multilateral climate funds' policies and guidelines related to civil society engagement**

	GEF	GCF	CIFs	Adaptation Fund
Main policy on civil society engagement (GEF) or guidelines setting out rules for observer participation in the meetings (GCF and CIFs)	<p><a href="#">Updated Vision to Enhance Civil Society Engagement with the GEF</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the updated vision statement, and principles and objectives</li> <li>- engagement at national and regional levels, Council Meeting participation, consultations in preparation for Council Meetings, participation in GEF Assembly and Replenishment meetings, and activities to strengthen their capacity (rules around CSO representatives)</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Guidelines relating to the Observer participation, accreditation of Observer organizations and participation of active Observers</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- registration and participation of observers, accreditation of observer organizations, and process and guidelines for participation of active observers</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Guidelines for Inviting Representatives of Civil Society to Observe Meetings of the CIF Trust Fund Committees</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rules around the active observers in the committee meetings</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Overview of the CIF – Information for Observers: CIF Governance and Programming Information</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>Compilation</u> of the rules and information that are useful for the active observers but are scattered in the different policy documents.</li> </ul>	None
Other instruments setting out or citing rules for civil society or observer participation	<p><a href="#">Rules of Procedure for the GEF Council</a></p> <p>(including)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attendance of <b>CSO representatives</b> to the proceedings of the Board</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Rules of Procedure</a></p> <p>(including)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attendance of <b>active observers</b> to meetings of the Board, other than executive sessions</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Governance Frameworks for SCF / CTF; and Rules of Procedure for Meetings of the Trust Fund Committee of SCF /CTF</a></p> <p>(including)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attendance of civil society representatives to the committee meetings and the partnership forum</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Rules of Procedure</a></p> <p>(including)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Observer participation in the Board meetings</li> </ul>

	GEF	GCF	CIFs	Adaptation Fund
Other instruments setting out or citing stakeholder engagement	<p><a href="#">Policy on Stakeholder Engagement</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>mandatory requirements for overall stakeholder engagement throughout the GEF project cycle, knowledge sharing with stakeholders, and stakeholder engagement in GEF policies, guidelines and strategy</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Governing Instrument</a></p> <p><a href="#">Sustainability guidance note: Designing and ensuring meaningful stakeholder engagement on GCF-financed projects</a></p> <p><a href="#">Guidelines for enhanced country ownership and country drivenness</a></p> <p>(including)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholder input and participation</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Governance Frameworks for SCF/CTF</a></p> <p>(including)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Making recommendations in consultation with key stakeholders, on the scope and objectives of SCF Programs proposed to be established</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Rules of Procedure for Meetings of the Trust Fund Committee of SCF/CTF</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance of stakeholders to the partnership forum</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Operational Policy and Guidelines</a></p> <p>(including)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provision of facilities that will enable interested stakeholders to publicly submit comments about proposals<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
Information access and disclosure	<p><a href="#">Policy on Access to Information</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>principles and mandatory requirements for the public accessibility of Council Information</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Information Disclosure Policy of the Green Climate Fund</a></p> <p>(including)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>video recordings of meetings of the Board</li> <li>soliciting public input for certain policies and strategies under discussion by the Board</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Note on Disclosure of Documents Prepared for Purposes of the Climate Investment Funds</a></p> <p>(including)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documents to be disclosed</li> <li>Application of World Bank Policy on Disclosure of Information to the draft investment plan/strategy</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Open Information Policy (Adopted in July 2013)</a></p> <p>(including)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fund's commitment to open access to information and transparency</li> <li>Exclusion from disclosure (Five compelling reasons for confidentiality)</li> </ul>
Gender	<a href="#">Policy on Gender Equality</a>	<a href="#">Gender Policy</a>	<a href="#">Gender Policy</a>	<a href="#">Gender Policy and Action Plan of the Adaptation Fund (amended in March 2021)</a>
Environmental and social safeguards	<a href="#">Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards and Principles</a>	<a href="#">Environmental and social policy</a>	None	<a href="#">Environmental and Social Policy (Amended in March 2016, approved in November 2013)</a>

<sup>2</sup> Operational Policy and Guidelines, para. 89, p.16



	GEF	GCF	CIFs	Adaptation Fund
Indigenous peoples	<a href="#">Guidelines for Engagement with Indigenous Peoples</a>	<a href="#">Indigenous Peoples policy</a>	None (The Funds have the Dedicated Grant Mechanism for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities)	None

## Observations by the secretariat

24. Based on the secretariat's analysis, the Board may wish to consider and take a decision on the recommended items that received majority support from the survey respondents, namely 1. a), b) and c). These are implementable immediately without amending the existing policies and rules of the Fund.

- a) Creating a dedicated section related to the Fund's engagement with civil society on the Fund's website
- b) Allowing more active contribution of civil society and other stakeholders to the process of reviewing the existing and emerging policies and procedures of the Fund
- c) Inviting a civil society member to the Fund's readiness workshop and including a session dedicated to civil society engagement in the Fund's readiness workshops and webinars

25. As **Table 2** illustrates, among those other climate funds, the Adaptation Fund is the only fund which does not have a main policy or guidelines that compile the associated rules and practices on civil society engagement, in spite of the fact that the Fund has demonstrated its strong commitment to civil society engagement and has multiple practices in place. Although these may still work well operationally, their limited visibility may not be advantageous to the Fund's reputation in this field.

26. The secretariat recommends that the Board consider developing a policy or guidelines that compiles the relevant information and existing practices related to civil society engagement as well as those new features recommended by the AF NGO Network, which the Board agrees to.

## Recommendations

27. Having considered the information contained in document AFB/B.37/8, the Adaptation Fund Board (the Board) decides:

- a) To request the secretariat, with a view to enhancing the Adaptation Fund's collaboration with civil society;
  - (i) To continue engaging with civil society and other stakeholders for their active contribution to the process of reviewing the existing and emerging policies and procedures of the Adaptation Fund (the Fund);
  - (ii) To create a dedicated section related to the Fund's engagement with stakeholders including civil society on the Fund's website and update it as the discussions on the stakeholder engagement evolves;

(iii) To invite civil society members to the Fund's readiness workshops and webinars and consider organizing a session dedicated to civil society engagement as appropriate and within budget;

b) To request the secretariat to prepare a draft outline of a policy or guidelines on civil society engagement, taking into account the findings of the survey results and the study on the need for the policy as contained in document AFB/B.37/8, as well as the Board's discussions held at the thirty-seventh meeting, and to present it for the Board's consideration at its thirty-eighth meeting.

## Annex I: Results of the survey on “options to further enhance civil society participation and engagement in the work of the Board” (the second round, June – July 2021)

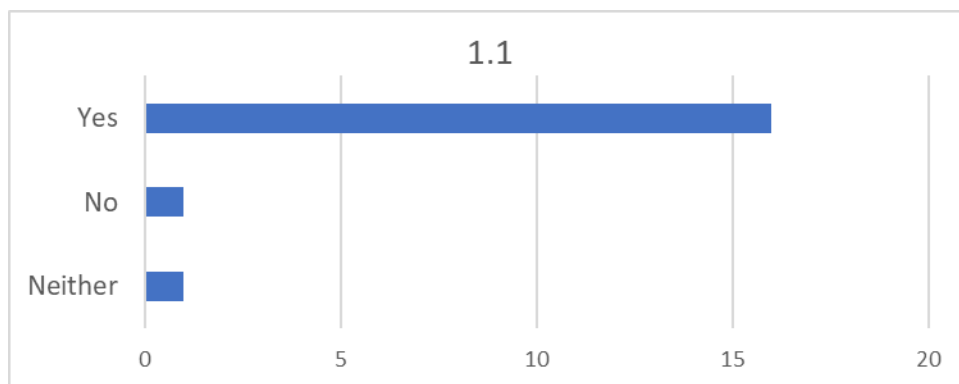
### 1. Enhanced collaboration with civil society

*The Fund’s medium-term strategy for 2018-2022 explicitly recognizes civil society’s contribution to the Adaptation Fund and a need explore modalities for greater collaboration between the Fund and civil society. The Adaptation Fund NGO Network has also recommended that the Board enhance collaboration with civil society. In this regard, the secretariat identified the following areas for consideration.*

a) Creating a dedicated section related to the Fund’s engagement with civil society on the Fund’s website to contribute to further enhancement of the Fund’s collaboration with civil society currently led by the AF NGO Network which provides an independent platform that promotes CSO engagement with the Fund: The secretariat’s preliminary analysis finds that as long as contents are developed in-house in consultation with civil society including the AF NGO Network, financial implication is minimal. A disclaimer would need to be included on such web section to prevent any misunderstanding and confusion.

1.1 I support a creation of the section on the Fund’s website dedicated to the Fund’s engagement with civil society including the Adaptation Fund NGO Network.

YES       No       Neither



1.2 Any comments for a).

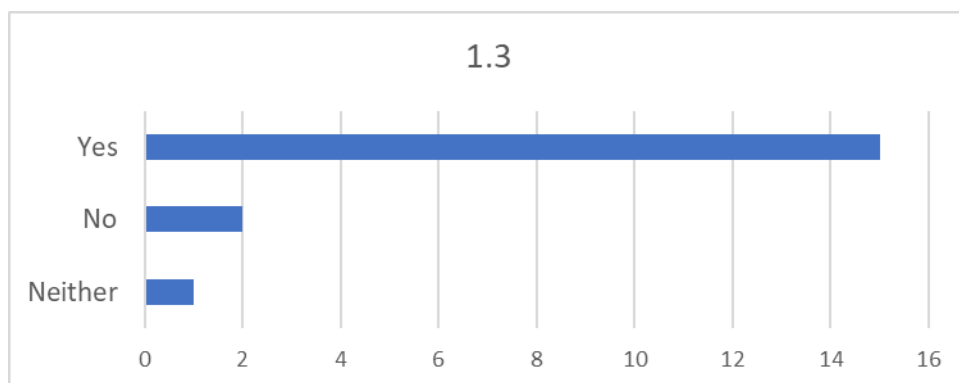
- To make sure that the CS is strongly engaged, the AF NGO Network has to be open and flexible to/ with all other CSO with particular interest to the fund.
- I think the fund already engages civil society and I believe they have access to the website for comments on proposals and or ongoing projects/programmes
- It is not clear to me that the NGO Network has a monopoly on contacts with civil societies in developing countries with which the FA works.

b) Allowing more active contribution of civil society and other stakeholders to the process of reviewing the existing and emerging policies and procedures of the Fund: The Fund has

consistently launched call for public comments on its existing and emerging policies and procedure such as the Medium-term strategy and gender policy. This allowed the Fund to accommodate a wide range of views and perspectives of different stakeholders, contributing to the Board making an informed decision on the concerned matter, while it had increased sense of 'ownership' of the relevant policies and procedures among the stakeholders. The Fund could further enhance this practice.

1.3 I support increasing the number of opportunities that civil society could engage in the Board process and procedures.

YES       No       Neither



1.4 Any comments for b).

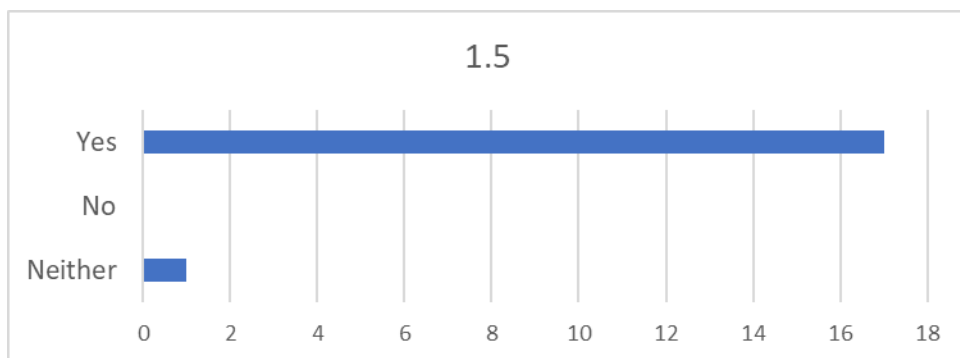
- Prior to making such as decisions further analysis is needs on the better engagement of civil society and which areas they could be contributed more. Similarly, it's also important to explore means to enhance support and equal opportunity to civil society groups of LDCs and SIDS
- Widening the scope of the CS engagement in the Board process should in principle benefit the work of the AF, however, a certain level of cautiousness is required to make sure that the inputs are relevant and have pertinent sense.
- I may not quite understand what added value it could have, although I have read both documents recommended before filling this form. Other funds under the UNFCCC where observers interact with board or supervisory committee members is a very good process, it could be best practice.
- Could we should evaluate why NGO do not formulated positions on the projects documents submitted to the PPRC, although this opportunity was decided by the Board?

c) Inviting a civil society member to the Fund's readiness workshop and including a session dedicated to civil society engagement in the Fund's readiness workshops and webinars: The Fund could consider inviting a member of civil society to the Fund's readiness workshops, and including a session for civil society engagement as part of the Fund's readiness workshops such as webinars and/or the annual NIE seminars (webinars and annual NIE seminars have been organized primarily for the National Implementing Entities) when possible and appropriate. The rationale behind the suggestion is that the session would contribute to: (i) learning and sharing

experiences and best practices on civil society engagement with the Fund (e.g., during project cycle); (ii) enhancing awareness on the civil society engagement among the Fund’s stakeholders including implementing entities; and (ii) strengthening capacity building of civil society in engaging with the Fund’s stakeholders. Financial implication needs to be further considered, and organization of such session will be coordinated by the secretariat staff in consultation with the participating civil society.

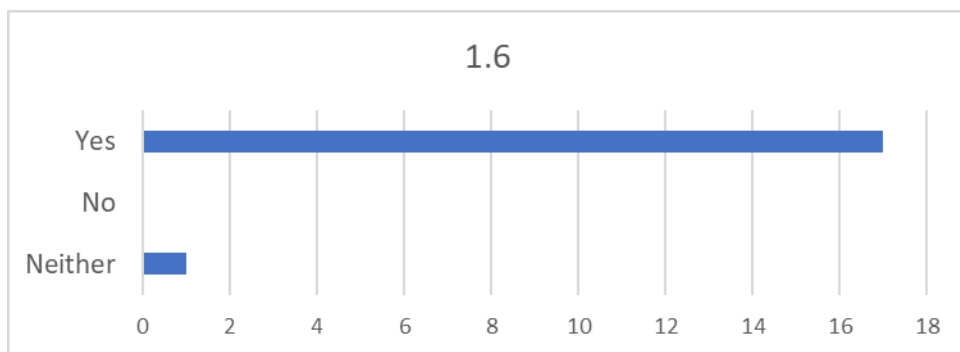
1.5 I support the suggestion of inviting a civil society member to the Fund’s readiness workshops and webinars as possible and appropriate.

YES       No       Neither



1.6 I support the suggestion of organizing a session on civil society engagement as part of the Fund’s readiness workshops and webinars, which may potentially enhance the engagement with civil society on a project level?

YES       No       Neither



1.7 Any comments for c).

- But we need to make sure a transparent and fair process is develop for such an engagement and country focal points are also on the loop if such an invent are held or planned.
- The AF should consider involving, as appropriate, the maximum possible of members from the CS, especially those who are local and for which the participation doesn't require any additional funding.

- Please check the financial implications
- Concerns on the financial implications
- Provided it does not have financial implications that would otherwise be used for financing fundable projects/programmes
- This question should focus on the choice of relevant member (s) of civil society who could participate in these workshops and webinars and the costs to the AF.
- It is not clear to me the process to identify the member or members of the civil society to be invited.
- Providing the financial implications are not beyond the means of the Board.

1.8 Please share your suggestion on any other areas that the Board could potentially enhance its collaboration with civil society in general.

- It's important to assess how the civil society groups from developing countries and SDS could be engaged on fund's activities especially on capacity support programs.
- What also could be envisaged is organizing some field visits to ensure SC members are exchanging and learning from each others' experiences.
- After board meetings NGO observers could be called upon to have face to face meeting with the board assuming they are participating in the observer rooms. Time allocated may be decided by the chair and or board members

## 2. Recording and archiving of the Board meetings on the Fund's website

*The Adaptation Fund NGO Network has recommended that the Board make the recording and archiving of the Board meeting live webcast video temporarily (e.g., two weeks after the meeting) available to the public on the website.*

Live webcasting of the Board meetings has been available during the meetings, but its recordings have generally not been available on the website. The secretariat does record the Board meetings solely for internal purposes such as recollecting statements in the process of finalizing the meeting reports. The publication and archiving of the recorded Board meetings are technically possible but entails financial implications. This would allow audiences who could not observe the Board meeting, for instance, due to different time zones to follow the discussions and processes that the Board had during the meetings.

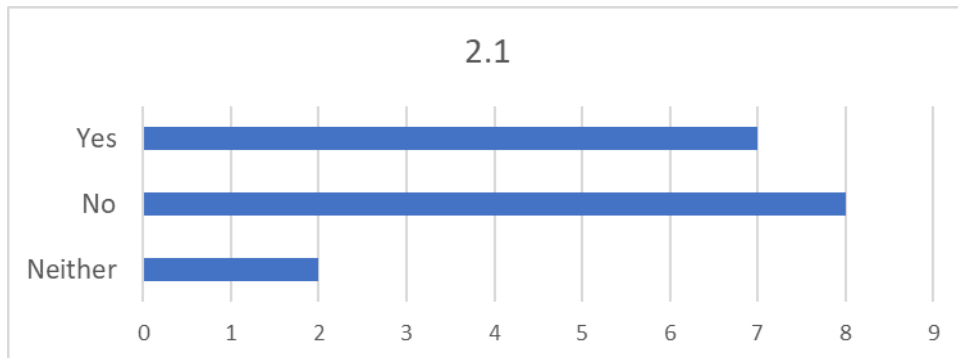
Other climate funds' practices are: GCF makes available both live webcast and the recordings of the board meetings online. It appears that GCF uses its own server to post the videos. GEF posts recordings of its council meetings online, and those recordings are posted on its YouTube channel. CIF does not post recordings of its committee meetings nor stream them online.

Considering this recommendation, the Board may want to consider whether making 'temporarily' available recordings of the Board meetings would affect the discussions and interventions of the Board members and alternates during the meetings: for instance, the Board members might consider themselves being 'strictly on the record,' which may affect their ability to speak freely in the meetings, compared to the current proceedings. In terms of the technical arrangements, to post video recordings, the secretariat would need to make the enhancement of the website infrastructure that could accommodate a large audio-visual data, or to post them on commercial

file sharing platforms such as YouTube. The technical editing of the recorded videos at a required standard of quality would likely have high cost implications. The Board may want to consider the benefits of implementing this option against the associated costs (e.g. how many users of the recorded Board meetings do we expect?) and implications on the proceedings of the meeting.

2.1 I support the suggestion of making available the recording and archiving of the Board meeting videos (live webcasted meeting) for a short period of time (e.g., 1-2 weeks) after the meetings on the website.

YES       No       Neither



2.2 Any comments.

- Meetings are always live on webcast so if there is cost implication then I do not support this
- In general open sessions could be made available and for the closed sessions this needs to be further studied.
- This will also benefit members and other interested people in the work of the AF.
- We have to bear in mind the amount of these cost implications
- Meetings are always live on webcast so if there is cost implication then I do not support this
- Board members and Alternates may not want to be very cautious about what they are obliged to say
- Can we have an estimate of the additional cost of this provision?
- I agree that "The Board may want to consider the benefits of implementing this option against the associated costs (e.g. how many users of the recorded Board meetings do we expect?) and implications on the proceedings of the meeting."
- The AF is considerably smaller than the GCF and GEF.
- The GEF makes the information available to persons allowed on their website

### 3. Disclosure of reasons for closed sessions

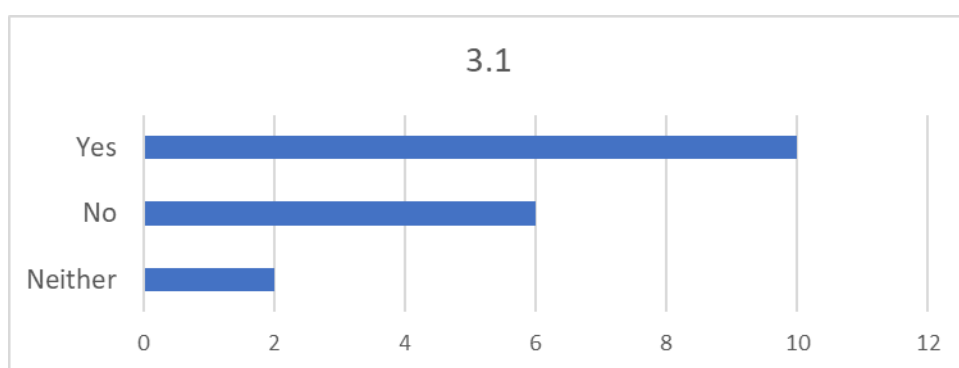
*The Adaptation Fund NGO Network has recommended that the Board specify reasons for meetings being closed and reasons for not disclosing information to the public.*



The Board closes sessions according to its open information policy<sup>3</sup> adopted in July 2013. The Board's overall approach is to disclose information unless there is a compelling reason for confidentiality. The policy identifies five main criteria for exclusion from the open information policy. Within the existing policy, the Board can continue exercising the closure of sessions with valid reasons. However, AF NGO Network shared their concerns that recent board meetings have held the increasing number of closed sessions which would impair the transparency of the Fund. The Board could improve the practice by providing reasons for closure in more explicit way to the observers before closing the session, for example, referring to the specific criteria listed in the open information policy.

3.1 I support that the Board could improve the current practice in providing explicit reasons for closure to the observers before closing the sessions.

YES       No       Neither



3.2 Any comments.

- It's good to have an improved policy developed and adopted by the board regarding the matter especially on which items could be disclosed and which are not.
- For the sake of transparency, providing explicit reasons for closure is a way to maintain trust of the Fund's observers.
- This could be done in advance. And for the sake of transparency this ought to be done.
- Yes, but not beyond rationale details to protect the very reason for the closed sessions
- A priori, (i) the first provision would be to recall the reasons and criteria already in force for these closed sessions (ii) then also to ensure that they have been received by the recipients (iii) then to ask them if they are satisfied and (iv) if not satisfied what additional information do they want ?

**4. Elected active civil society observers to intervene on agenda item of the meetings and to attend closed meetings**

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Open%20Information%20Policy.pdf>

*The Adaptation Fund NGO Network has recommended that the Board establish a seat(s) for active civil society observers who would actively participate in the Board discussions and intervene on any agenda item in an official setting.*

Practices of other climate funds are as follows (excerpted from doc. [AFB/B.34/11](#)<sup>4</sup>).

GEF: The Rules of Procedures for the GEF Council provide that the GEF “CEO may, in consultation with the Council, invite representatives of other organizations and entities, including non-governmental organizations, to attend or observe the Council meetings.” According to current practice, CSOs are invited to speak at the end of each agenda item, once the Council members have spoken.

GCF: The GCF’s Governing Instrument<sup>5</sup> stipulates that ‘The Board will invite, to participate as active observers: two civil society representatives, one each from developing and developed countries, and two private sector representatives, one each from developing and developed countries.’ “The active observers may intervene upon invitation of the Co-Chairs in open segments of the meetings of the [GCF] Board. They may attend as observers the meetings of a Board committee or working group in special circumstances and if expressly authorized by the Board” (paragraph 14)<sup>6</sup>. “

CIF: CIF arrangements include active observer status for private sector, civil society, and indigenous peoples’ representatives. Pursuant to the Rules of Procedures<sup>7</sup>, the Head of the Administrative Unit, in consultation with the CTF/SCF Trust Fund Committee, may also invite representatives of civil society selected through a consultation among themselves, or of any international or governmental agencies, or other organizations with a relevant mandate to observe any Meeting except Executive Sessions (paragraph 15).

4.1 I support more active participation of civil society in the Board discussions (e.g., by a regular invitation of member(s) of civil society to share their views during the Board discussion or a creation of a seat(s) for the representative of civil society observer) and exploring different options and scenarios for active civil society observers for the Fund.

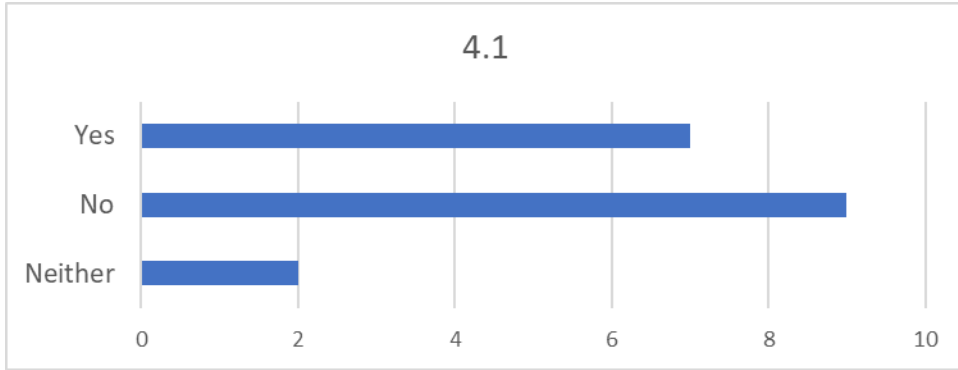
YES       No       Neither

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/AFB.B.34.11\\_CS0-participation-and-engagement\\_final.pdf](https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/AFB.B.34.11_CS0-participation-and-engagement_final.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.greenclimate.fund/document/governing-instrument>

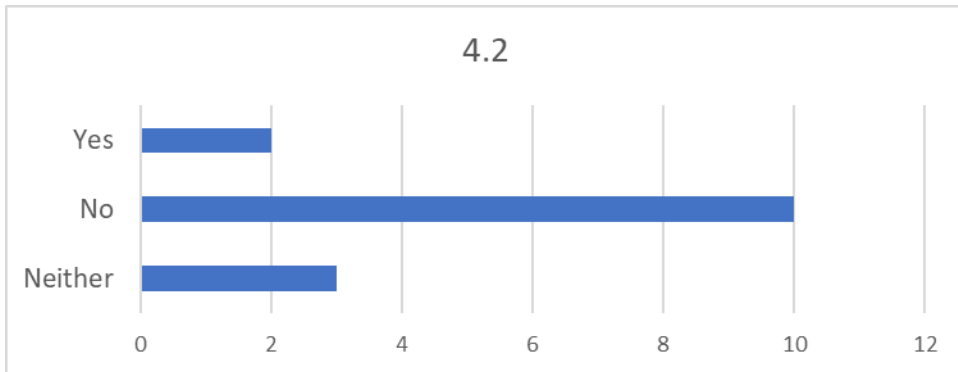
<sup>6</sup> <https://www.greenclimate.fund/document/guidelines-relating-observer-participation-accreditation-observer-organizations-and>

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/sites/cif\\_enc/files/meeting-documents/ctf\\_rules\\_of\\_procedure\\_for\\_tfc\\_revised\\_2014\\_0\\_0.pdf](https://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/sites/cif_enc/files/meeting-documents/ctf_rules_of_procedure_for_tfc_revised_2014_0_0.pdf)



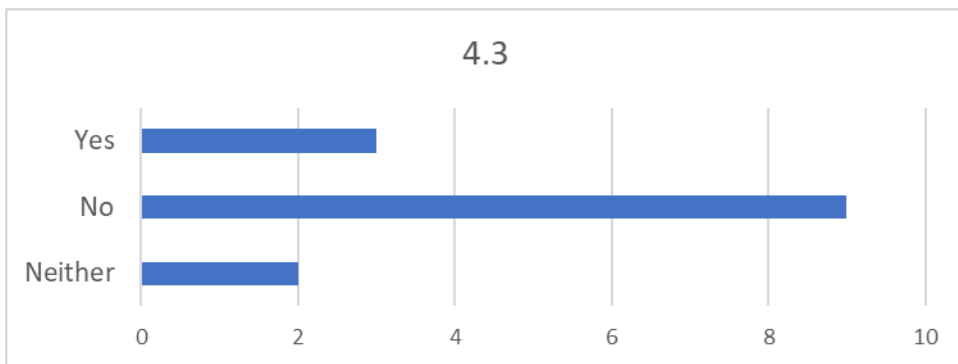
4.2 If your answer for 4.1 is YES, I support that the Board allow them to attend the closed sessions of the Board and committee meetings that are currently closed for public?

YES       No       Neither



4.3 If your answer for 4.1 is YES, I support the allocation of travel budgets for the active civil society observers to participate in the Board meetings.

YES       No       Neither



4.4 Any comments.

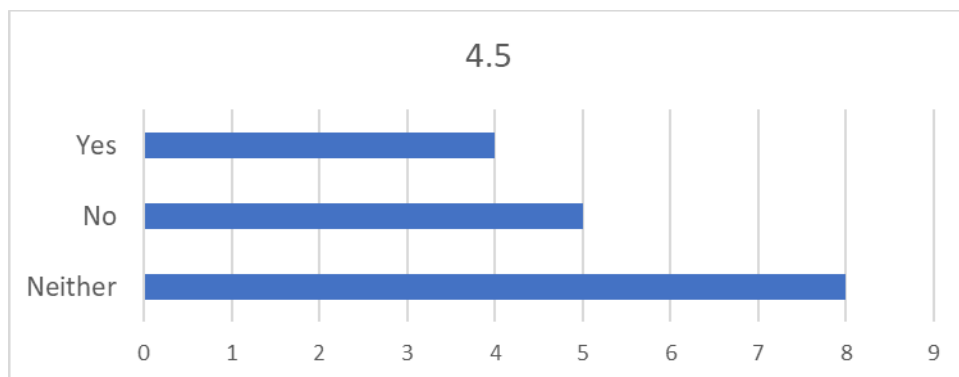
- Support to CSOs representative is to be tailored to specific situation, each time considering the need of implication in a specific meeting.
- I find interesting the GCF practice
- Prior to making such a decisions, it's important to have assessments and policies developed for better engagement of civil society groups especially maintaining inclusiveness and vulnerable countries' s civil societies involvement.
- Financial assistance is provided only to observers from developing countries!
- On the question 4.2, it will be interesting to know if any member of Board has an opposition to the participation in the closed session of members of civil society. If so, the session should be a closed one.
- We could consider the GCF practice
- Consider the practices of other financing mechanisms or create some hybrid approach.
- Attendance of CSOs should be decided on case by case basis. In addition, I would like to ask AF Secretariat to explore practices of other organizations regarding the allocation of travel budget for CSOs.
- I do not support any civil society seat on the AF Board unless the choice of the relevant and legitimized representative for this purpose has been clarified / appointed and also if confidential matters are discussed requiring a closed
- Maximum number of travel budgets should be two.
- If we allow more participation, they will become more like members, and not observers.

*The Adaptation Fund NGO Network has recommended that the Fund establishes its own observer accreditation process as, in their view, the observer accreditation process of the UNFCCC is complex especially for CSOs from developing countries.*

Implementation of this option would require financial and human resources to develop its screening criteria and process, administer the observer applications throughout year and develop an online system to automate part of the process. Currently, the Board accepts observers only from the UNFCCC accredited parties and entities which have been screened by the UNFCCC's own criteria.

4.5 I support the Fund revisits the current observer registration process using the UNFCCC system including an option of creating the Fund's own observer accreditation process.

- YES       No       Neither



#### 4.6 Any comments.

- Not very clear at the movement, most probably the clarity of the process will come when discussing the accreditation process.
- Further studies are necessary to understand the merits and demerits of such a change and its implications.
- At this stage, given the work load of the Fund, this later could continue using its usual channel/ system to provide accreditation to observers. Maybe in the future this system could be revisited!
- It is difficult to undertake, perhaps we might need more details
- I would like to ask AF Secretariat to explain the outcomes of the new registration process.
- Give consideration to the financial implications

### 5. Summary of project proposals and country-specific project information

*The Adaptation Fund NGO Network has recommended that a brief summary of project proposals submitted by an implementing entity (IE) (=project proponent) in the respective countries' official languages be published on the Fund's website, which will help local stakeholders understand about the project proposals and provide comments on the project proposals during the project review cycle and project implementation.*

The current template for project proposals does not have a section for the IE to provide a summary of the project proposal. To implement this recommendation, the project proposal template would need to be revised first, which is implementable.

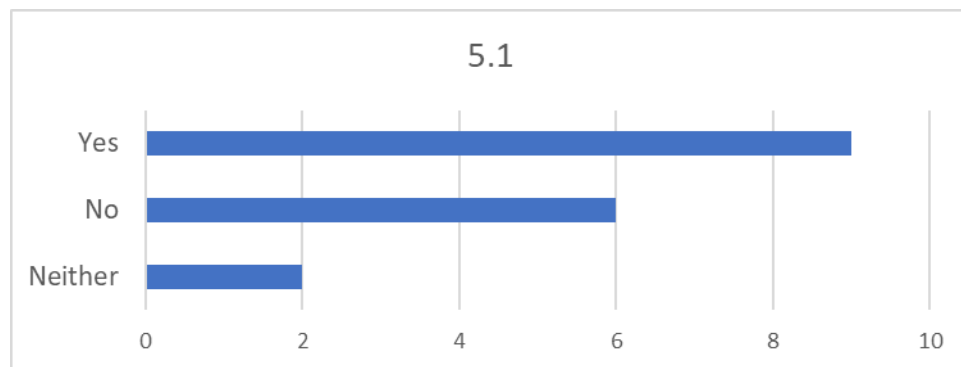
In terms of cost efficiency, the most functioning way might be that the implementing entities be required to provide summaries in the official language(s) of the country(ies) (hereinafter "local language(s)"). During the CSO dialogue at AFB36, the AF NGO Network recommended that the IEs be responsible for the translated project summary (e.g., max. 2 pages) and for providing the project summary in English and in local language(s) in the project proposal template, so that

Aspects to be considered related to this suggestion are: whether all the implementing entities have the capacity to produce and verify contents of the project summary in local languages; whether potential benefits of enhanced understanding on the project among the local stakeholders would outweigh additional cost and efforts for an IE in preparing a project summary in local language as part of project proposal preparation; and how to apply this suggestion to regional project proposals that involve multiple countries and their official languages.

5.1 I support that the Board requires that a brief summary of project proposal in the respective countries' official languages be provided by the IE (project proponent) in each project proposal, to be published on the Fund's website, with an understanding that the secretariat

may not be able to verify the contents in the country's language, and that the IE is responsible for such contents.

YES       No       Neither



## 5.2 Any comments.

- The Summary of Project proposal is to be bilingual (UN language and national language) I and the IE to take responsibility on the translation in the national language.
- A summary on native language will help the public and stakeholders to understand the project and its possible interventions
- IEs are indeed responsible for producing the summary and its translation into the local language (s). I trust this is also an interesting way to inform and to involve local stakeholders.
- Yes, as long as the IE is responsible for the accuracy of the content.
- This is important for all the national stakeholders of the Project.
- For transparency purposes, verification is key
- The question could be clarified. There can be several local languages for a country. It would therefore be necessary to replace "local language" by "a national official language" (some countries have two or more official national languages ...). If the Secretariat is unable to verify the translation, a statement specifying this non-verification should be added to the translated documents. If so, I could approve the proposal; otherwise I don't approve
- So that the county better understand the project, allowing for buy-in and participation. But then, why should the Fund publish something it may not be able to verify?

*The Adaptation Fund NGO Network has recommended that the Board provides country-specific information on the Fund's website.*

The information of the approved projects is currently published by project and there is no country-specific information on the Fund's website<sup>8</sup>. Implementing the way of presentation to capture

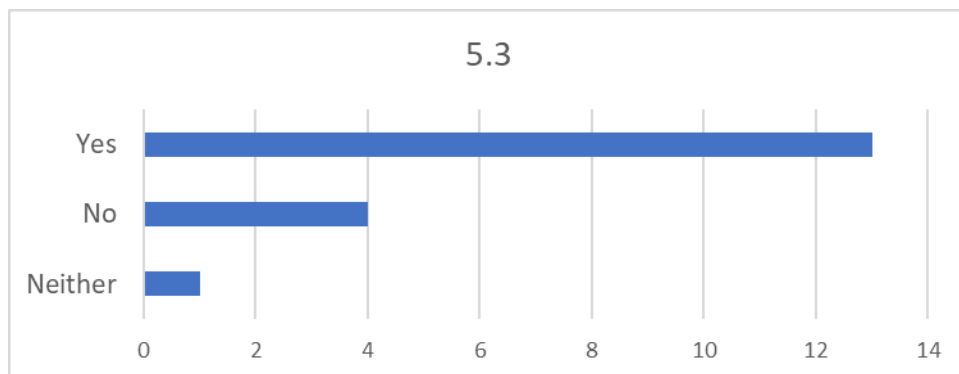
<sup>8</sup> <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/projects-programmes/>

information by country would require changes in the website structure and creation of an additional layer to present the projects by country.

During the CSO dialogue at AFB36, the AF NGO Network clarified further its recommendation on the provision of country-specific information on the Fund's website, which are currently available in the respective thematic pages: A country specific page would contain not only the approved projects for the country but also a contact of the designated authority, names of accredited entity(ies) for the country and lists of approved projects, submitted proposals, pipeline proposals and small grants for the country so that the Fund's stakeholders can easily access the country-specific information at one sight. This recommendation would require a revamping of the website structure and would be a major project requiring an investment cost to be allocated outside the normal maintenance cost for the website. But this would be particularly helpful for those who are not familiar with the structure of the current Fund's website.

- 5.3 I support that the country-specific pages on the website contain not only the approved projects for the country but also a contact of the designated authority, names of accredited entity(ies) for the country and lists of approved projects, submitted proposals, pipeline proposals and small grants for the country and support that the required revamping cost to be allocated to the administrative budget of the Board and secretariat.

YES       No       Neither



- 5.4 Any comments.

- This will bring more transparency, but will require a continuous monitoring process with many updates on the websites.
- A number of funds including GCF already follow this country specific information approach.
- AF may learn from other such a funds and bodies. It's important to maintain country profiles in the website with all necessary information and updates
- The Required information is relevant to be posted on the website. To somehow reduce the burden on the AF Secretariat, this sort of information specific to the country should be provided by the National Designated Authority.
- Difficult to implement, it has to be inclusive...

- We would need an estimate before to take the decision
- Not very clear about this. Are we referring to UN languages or local languages?
- I think this would help at the country level and for DNAs to effectively engage stakeholders
- OK for this proposal subject to verification of compliance with confidentiality rules

## 6. Solicitation of stakeholder input on (re-)accreditation and intersessional decision-making

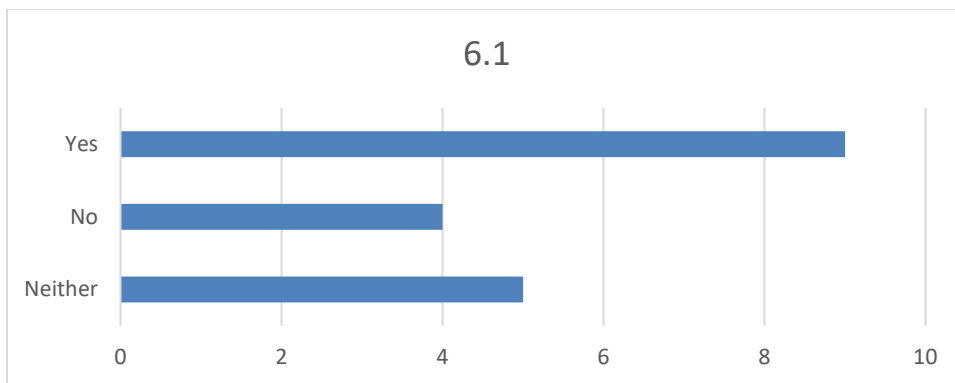
*The Adaptation Fund NGO Network has recommended that the Fund solicit inputs from the entities' stakeholders related to the review of the accreditation applications themselves.*

The accreditation or re-accreditation processes involve strictly confidential information in their entirety, as indicated in the Fund's Open Information Policy. Given its implications on the international relations, the entities applying for accreditation shall be kept anonymous until an entity has been accredited by the Board as the disclosure of the name of entities could potentially harm the reputation of the entities, for instance if the application is not successful. As such, the name of the entity as well as all applications and corresponding supporting documentation provided by the entity 'in confidence' must be kept strictly confidential. The Accreditation Panel produces a report of every Panel meeting, including an assessment of the analysis of applications by applicant entities. Since the assessments contain sensitive and/or confidential information on an institution's fiduciary standards, and institutions provide the Panel with confidential information such as internal audit reports, the information shall remain confidential. Nevertheless, some stakeholder groups viewed the accreditation process untransparent, and the AF NGO Network provided suggestions to provide civil society to contribute to the accreditation process.

6.1 I support that the Board revisit the current accreditation process and discover options to improve the transparency of the process (e.g., making available the information on whether certain country has first NIE, and the second NIE candidate is pursuing accreditation process (not revealing entity name) which will allow the stakeholders to understand additional NIE candidate could pursue the accreditation or not; and call for public comments (e.g., for two weeks) on entities of which (re)accreditation have been recommended by the Accreditation Panel before the Board's consideration, similar to public comments on project proposal).

YES       No       Neither





## 6.2 Any comments.

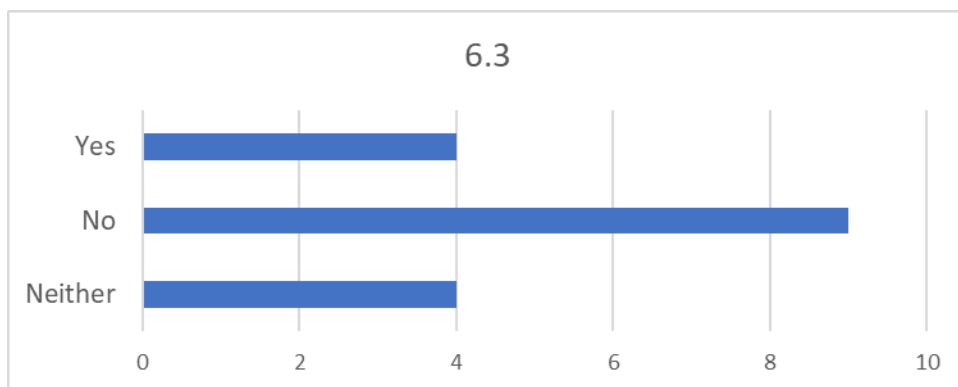
- This could be further studied and recommendations made based on the experience of the previous projects and also similar works of other funds.
- This requirement might be treated in conjunction with the previous one related to information specific to countries, where the Secretariat can envisage adding information as appropriate about the accreditation of national entities!
- Yes if it helps to improve transparency
- Very important for the image of the AF Board and its Secretariat.
- We need to be careful about confidential information of countries and entities
- I have no comments because I am not very certain about the legal implications
- The question as it is posed is complex with several questions. It is confused and therefore it is difficult to make a choice.
- Difficult to ascertain.

*The Adaptation Fund NGO Network has recommended that the Board solicit inputs from the civil society for intersessional agenda items.*

The secretariat posts both intersessional documents and decisions on the Fund's public website. The intersessional decisions typically deal with intersessional project review and requests of project extension from implementing entities. The Board has already enabled civil society engagement by calling for public comments on intersessional project proposals. If the Board would solicit inputs for other agenda items, it would have implications on the length of the decision-making process, to accommodate civil society inputs for relatively straight-forward agenda items that require to take the formal intersessional procedure for the Board approval.

6.3 I support that the Board solicit inputs from the civil society for intersessional agenda items more actively than in the current practice, after considering that this means that decision-making times become longer.

YES       No       Neither



6.4 If your answer for 6.3 is YES, with what options do you think the civil society could engage in intersessional agenda items further?

- It is good to have new ideas, however the AFB is responsible for the final decision to consider this inputs or not.
- I think soliciting public comments could cover a reasonable area
- At this stage, I suggest letting motivated civil society express itself freely to comment
- Through comments, recommendations, suggestions, etc.

6.5 Any comments.

- A recommendation could be prepared to explore the possible options that could be taken to address this issue.
- I think that, with regards to inter-sessional agenda items, the CS only needs to be informed!
- I would like to ask AF Secretariat to provide more info on how to solicit inputs and how much delay this will incur.

## 7. Definition of civil society and Policy on civil society engagement

Currently the Fund does not have a formal policy and definition of civil society that could be applied by the Board in the context of considering options to enhance civil society participation and engagement in the work of the Board. The [Rules of Procedure of the Adaptation Fund Board](#) contain a section on “observers” that states that “[e]xcept where otherwise decided by the Board, meetings shall be open for attendance, as observers, to representatives of UNFCCC Parties, the UNFCCC secretariat and UNFCCC accredited observers” (paragraph 31).

In the context of projects/programmes supported by the Fund, the Fund’s [Environmental and Social Policy](#) (amended in March 2016) uses the broader term “stakeholders” and requires that there “shall be adequate opportunities for the informed participation of all stakeholders in the

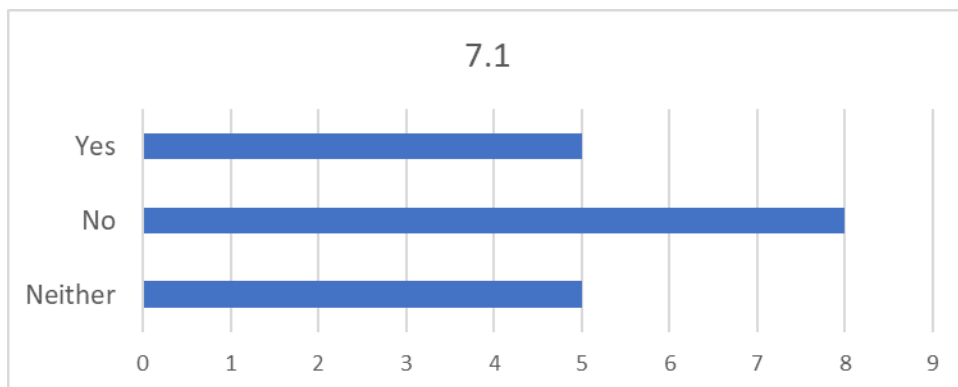
formulation and implementation of projects/programmes supported by the Fund” (paragraph 10). The [Gender Policy and Action Plan](#) (amended in March 2021) further stipulates that “[s]takeholders should be meaningfully and comprehensively consulted in a gender-responsive way throughout the project/programme life cycle” (paragraph 17).

While there is no fixed definition of civil society, most definitions appear to consider civil society distinct from government and business (or profit organizations). The United Nations defines that “a civil society organization (CSO) or non-governmental organization (NGO) is any non-profit, voluntary citizens’ group which is organized on a local, national or international level”<sup>9</sup>.

Both the GEF and GCF define certain terms such as “civil society” or “civil society organizations” for the purpose of their engagement policies and procedures. The Board may wish to consider further clarifying and defining civil society and possibly other relevant stakeholders to be engaged on the Fund’s governance levels and/ or further clarify arrangements in a dedicated policy.

7.1 I support that the Adaptation Fund develops a definition of civil society for the purpose of considering options for enhancing civil society engagement and participation in the work of the Board.

YES       No       Neither



7.2 If your answer for 7.1 is Yes, please list relevant elements of a definition, such as characteristics and/or groups to be included.

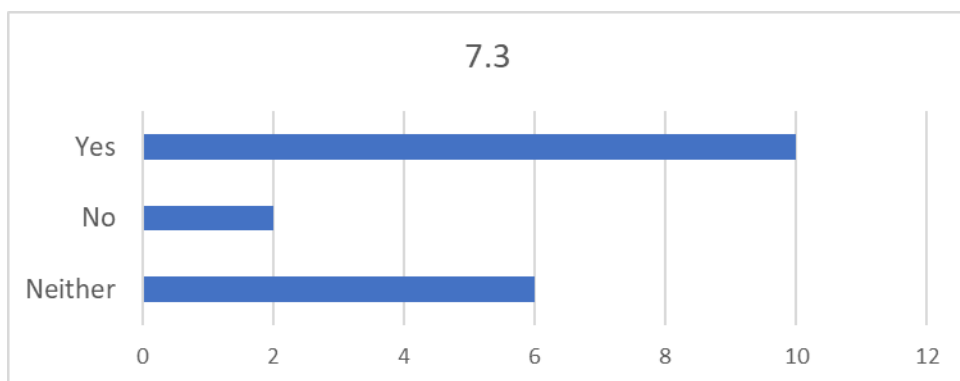
- I would suggest here to keep the reflexion more open and to treat CSO case by case. The idea is to involve every actor that has a special interest/concrete experience in the field, assisting local vulnerable communities. The ultimate objective is to assist those who are the most vulnerable to enhance their resilience and to build their capacities (Besides NGO, it may include, the research community and universities, the private sector, religious institutions, Charity and non philanthropic organizations)
- Too risky to “redefine”

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.thegef.org/partners/csos>

- Formal non-profit association with clear and legal forms, involved in climate and/or environmental issues.
- I do not think we should re-invent the wheel.
- It could include local communities, municipalities and also research public or specific private centers
- Active community engagement, participation, not just names.

7.3 I support that the Board as part of its engagement policy considers engaging other stakeholders in addition to civil society, such as private sector.

YES       No       Neither



7.4 If your answer for 7.1 or 7.3 is Yes, how could the Adaptation Fund engage such other stakeholders such as private sector in the work of the Board?

- The role of the private sector for the country's ownership over the project outputs and their sustainability is crucial.
- As I mentioned, only in the case where this kind of private sector is considering charity and philanthropic action. The AF is not helping doing business!
- In favor of the Private sector. We could explore informal meetings or give them the opportunity to send submissions
- Inviting them to express their will to participate in AF activities and AFB sessions. Define the criteria of their participation.
- Provided they have a role to play in the programmes or projects
- The same manner it is engaging civil society
- As observers in any cases: it can be banks or foundations or enterprises
- Observers

7.5 Any comments.

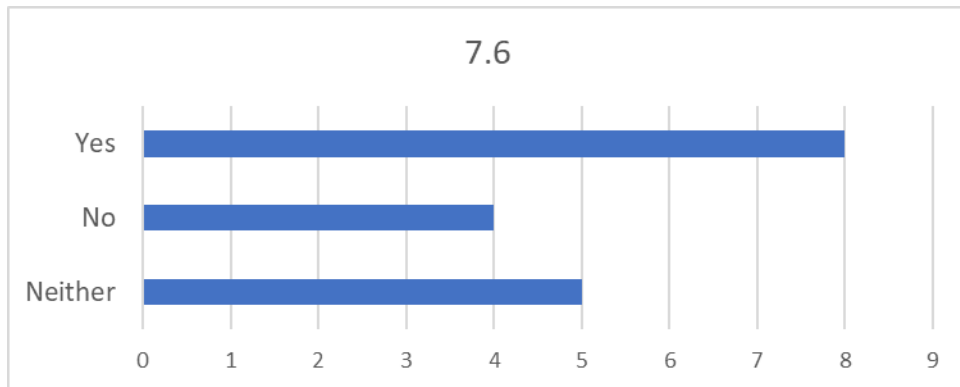
- Further analysis is needed based on the experience of other funds.
- We need to be cautious and ensure including only nonprofit organizations!

- Climate Finance institutions are all dealing with the same stakeholders and re-defining civil society may cause serious misunderstanding of their purpose and who they are
- I would like to ask AF Secretariat for a list of private sector stakeholders who are expected to participate in the meeting.

There seem to be two options for the Board to move this matter forward: 1) to consider and adopt options for enhancing civil society engagement and participation in a stand-alone decision, or 2) to develop a policy or guidelines on civil society engagement for the Adaptation Fund. Such a policy could also include engagement with other relevant stakeholders.

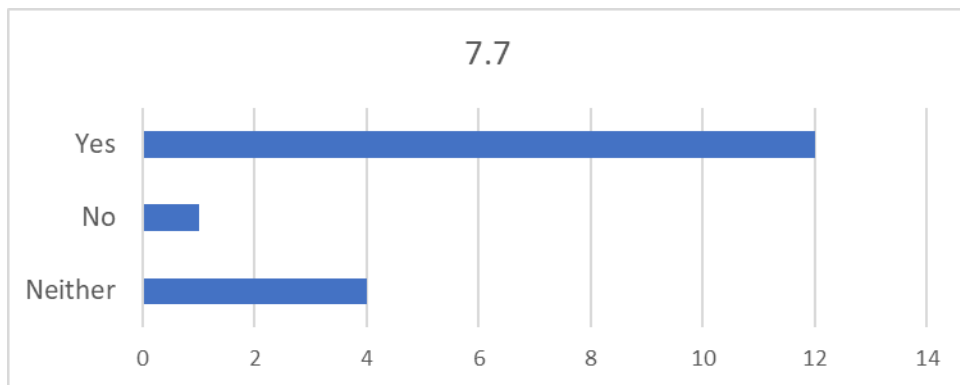
7.6 I support that the Board develops a policy or guidelines on its engagement with civil society.

- YES       No       Neither



7.7 I support that the Board takes a decision on individual recommendations from civil society without developing a dedicated policy or guidelines on its engagement with civil society.

- YES       No       Neither



## 7.8 Any comments.

- The Board should not may exceptions for the recommendations coming from the CSO, they should be addressed with equal consideration as the other
- Individual recommendations from civil society should be taken into consideration case by case. So, each case will necessitate a specific decision. And thus, there is no need to develop any related policy.
- It would be nice to have a policy but I am not sure that it is a priority right now. HR are also a concern...
- We already have engagements with the NGO network
- I would like to ask AF Secretariat to clarify the different outcomes of the two options.
- I suggest starting with recommendation 7.7., then after some time, I suggest evaluating experiences and practices before moving on to recommendation 7.6.

## 8. Others

### 8.1 Please provide any other comments and options that the Board may want to consider at AFB37.

- The focus on CSOs in taking the decision referring to AF Board and Committees decisional process is a little bit overestimated.
- Nothing special for now!
- Once you have check the surveys, there will be more agreement/ consensus in moving forward some of the proposals while others might need more clarity and/ or proper discussion in the AFB
- We need to have a very comprehensive discussion on this matter, before we take any decisions
- The issue needs to be further discussed prior to decision through survey and intersessional.
- After reading both documents before filling in the questionnaire I wonder what the significant difference would be against the present practice. It would be helpful to have it as a matrix on: 1. present situation 2. Recommended option 3. Significant gains. I am not sure if this is helpful
- The preliminary, essential and main issue, which cuts across all the questions of this survey on the relations of the civil society and the AF, concerns the legitimacy of the representatives of this civil society and their democratic designation.
- The Fund has a mandate to manage funding for Adaptation projects. Cannot open up too much to observers.

## Annex II: Detailed findings on the relevant practices and policies of the other climate funds

### **Global Environment Facility (GEF)**

1. The [Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured GEF](#) mandates the GEF Assembly and the GEF Council to “each adopt by consensus regulations as may be necessary or appropriate to perform their respective functions transparently; in particular, they shall determine any aspect of their respective procedures, including the admission of observers and, in the case of the Council, provision for executive sessions” (paragraph 25).

2. The [Rules of Procedures for the GEF Council](#) contain the relevant procedures for civil society engagement. Its paragraph 47 prescribes that the secretariat arranges for and keep the sound recordings of the proceedings. However, this does not require the secretariat for the public release of the proceeding recordings. The GEF makes video recordings of the meeting proceedings available on its website as its practice.

[...]

#### *XIII. RECORD OF THE MEETING*

[...]

*47. The Secretariat will arrange for sound recordings of the proceedings of each meeting. The sound recordings of the meetings of the Council shall be kept by the Secretariat.*

[...]

3. The [Rules of Procedures for the GEF Council](#) defines an observer and prescribes who can attend the Council meetings and executive sessions. In the Rules of Procedures, the Council meetings are not permanently open for representatives of civil society organizations (CSOs). The representatives of CSOs observe or attend the Council meetings upon the Council’s invitation. This arrangement of the GEF is similar to the Adaptation Fund.

[...]

#### *II. DEFINITIONS*

*For the purposes of these rules:*

[...]

o. “Observe” means that a representative shall be permitted to observe the Council proceedings from a viewing room. At the invitation of the Chair, an observer may address the Council.

[...]

#### IV. MEETINGS

[...]

##### **Attendance**

17. Council meetings shall be open to Members, Alternates, and the CEO or his/her representative. Two advisors may accompany each Member.

18. Representatives of each of the Participants shall be invited to observe the Council meetings.

[...]

22. The CEO may, in consultation with the Council, invite representatives of other organizations and entities, including nongovernmental organizations, to attend or observe the Council meetings.

##### **Executive sessions**

23. Executive sessions of Council meetings may be held by decision of the Council. Executive sessions shall be open to Members, Alternates, advisors, and the CEO or his/her representative. The Council may invite representatives of bodies referred to in paragraphs 19 to 21 to attend an executive session. The CEO may designate an official of the Secretariat to serve as the Secretary of an executive session.

[...]

4. “In November 2017, the GEF Council approved an [Updated Vision to Enhance Civil Society Engagement with the GEF](#). This updated vision is designed to complement and reinforce key dimensions of civil society engagement with the GEF, particularly in the design and implementation of GEF projects and programs. These are addressed in more detail in the updated [Policy on Stakeholder Engagement](#), [Policy on Gender Equality](#), [Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards](#) and [Principles and Guidelines for Engagement with Indigenous Peoples](#).”<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.thegef.org/partners/csos>



5. The *Updated Vision to Enhance Civil Society Engagement with the GEF* appears to be a main policy on civil society engagement. The policy contains the updated vision statement, and principles and objectives. It also “*encompasses multiple forms of engagement: engagement at national and regional levels, Council Meeting participation, consultations in preparation for Council Meetings, participation in GEF Assembly and Replenishment meetings, and activities to strengthen their capacity*”<sup>11</sup>. This document identifies forms of civil society engagement as listed below and sets out rules around them.

Forms of engagement for implementation covered by the ‘Updated Vision to Enhance Civil Society Engagement with the GEF’

- Continued support of civil society engagement at the national and regional levels
- CSO Involvement in the Identification, Execution and Evaluation of GEF Programs and Projects at the Country and Local Levels
- Continued Strengthening of capacity of civil society to engage with the GEF
- Selection of CSO representation at Council Consultations and Meetings
- Preparations leading up to Council meetings
- Structure of Council-CSO Consultations before Council Meetings
- Structure of CSO Participation during Council Meetings
- CSO Engagement at the GEF Assembly
- Participation of CSOs in the GEF Replenishment Process
- Council Review of how this Updated Vision is Working

6. In addition, the *Policy on Stakeholder Engagement* and [Guidelines on the Implementation of the Policy on Stakeholder Engagement](#) outline a set of mandatory requirements for overall engagement of stakeholders, including but not limited to civil society, throughout the GEF project cycle, knowledge sharing with stakeholders, and stakeholder engagement in GEF policies, guidelines and strategy.

### **Green Climate Fund (GCF)**

7. The GCF’s [Governing Instrument](#) includes provisions on civil society engagement in the Board process through observers (paragraph 7) and on stakeholder inputs and participation in GCF-financed activities (paragraph 71).

#### *GCF Governing Instrument*

Paragraph 7: “The Board will make arrangements, including developing and operating accreditation processes, to allow for effective participation by accredited observers in its

<sup>11</sup> [Updated Vision to Enhance Civil Society Engagement with the GEF](#), p.10, para. 41

meetings. The Board will invite, to participate as active observers: two civil society representatives, one each from developing and developed countries, and two private sector representatives, one each from developing and developed countries.”

Paragraph 71: “The Board will develop mechanisms to promote the input and participation of stakeholders, including private-sector actors, civil society organizations, vulnerable groups, women and indigenous peoples, in the design, development and implementation of the strategies and activities to be financed by the Fund.”

8. The [Rules of Procedures of the Board](#) of the GCF further define the arrangements for observer participation based on paragraph 7 of the Governing Instrument. They define “active observers” (paragraph 37) and provide a list of “other observers and/or experts”, which include both civil society organizations (CSOs) and private sector organizations (PSOs) under the umbrella of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (paragraph 38). They also include rules on the notification of the Board meetings and attendance for active observers. Paragraph 37 of the *Rules of Procedures* prescribes that “*Active observers may, upon invitation of the Co-Chairs, participate in the proceedings of the Board*”. The active observers do not have access to the executive sessions nor documents classified as confidential.

*GCF Rules of Procedure*

[..]

**5.2 NOTIFICATION OF MEETINGS**

*18. The Secretariat will notify Board members, alternate members and accredited observer organizations and active observers of the dates and venue of the meetings and circulate a provisional agenda for any meeting at least 30 calendar days before the first day of the meeting. A notification will also be posted on the Fund’s website. In the case of an extraordinary meeting, the Co-Chairs, acting jointly, shall determine the date by which notification to the Board members has to be made, taking into account the urgency of the matter.*

[..]

**5.5 ATTENDANCE**

*25. In addition to Board members and alternate members, meetings of the Board, other than executive sessions, will be open to attendance by designated advisers of Board members and alternate members, Secretariat staff, representatives of the Trustee, active*

observers and other observers who have been accredited for participation in the meeting<sup>12</sup>.

[...]

## VI. Observers

37. The Co-Chairs, acting jointly and in consultation with the Board, will invite to participate as active observers, two civil society representatives, one each from a developing and developed country; and two private sector representatives, one each from a developing and a developed country. Active observers may, upon invitation of the Co-Chairs, participate in the proceedings of the Board.

38. The Co-Chairs, acting jointly, and in consultation with the Board, may invite other observers and/or experts to any Board meeting. Observers may be representatives of:

- (a) States that are Party or observer State to the Convention;
- (b) International entities, including United Nations agencies, multilateral development banks, international financial institutions and regional institutions; and
- (c) Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), comprised of:
  - (i) Civil society organizations (CSOs): any independent non-profit organizations, including international as well as national and community-based organizations; and
  - (ii) Private sector organizations (PSOs): any private companies and business associations with operations that deal with climate change mitigation and/or adaptation activities, including in developing countries.

39. The procedures for the selection of active observers and the accreditation of observer organizations will be contained in the guidelines approved by the Board.

40. Active observers will receive, in accordance with the applicable rules and procedures, all Board meeting documents, except documents classified as confidential or as the Board may provide.

[...]

9. In March 2013, the GCF Board further adopted the [Guidelines relating to the Observer participation, accreditation of Observer organizations and participation of active Observers](#). These guidelines focus on rules on registration and participation of observers, accreditation of observer organizations, and process and guidelines for participation of active observers. The guidelines do not highlight a vision, principles and objectives like the *Updated Vision to Enhance Civil Society*

<sup>12</sup> The observer accreditation process is set out in the ["Invitation for the Twenty-fifth Round of Application for Accreditation as an Observer Organization to the Green Climate Fund"](#).

*Engagement with the GEF* does but what is common is that both of the documents set out the rules around representatives of CSOs or active observers.

10. As it is mentioned within the guidelines, “*Information and access to documents will be addressed in a separate disclosure policy to enhance participation of stakeholders.*”<sup>13</sup> The [Information Disclosure Policy of the GCF](#) adopted by the GCF Board in March 2016 is not specific to civil society but sets out disclosure standards to key GCF documents and procedures and exceptions to disclosure, stating that “[a]s a matter of principle, the GCF will share the majority of the information in its possession with stakeholders and the public at large, either proactively or upon request, subject to specified exceptions to presumed disclosure” (paragraph 8). The policy also defines procedures for accessing information by the public, including project and programme funding proposals, environmental and social reports, Board proceedings, and public consultation period for policies. This includes rules around video recordings of the Board meetings and soliciting public input for certain policies and strategies, which the AF NGO Network has recommended to the Adaptation Fund Board to consider the implementation or enhanced implementation for the Adaptation Fund.

[...]

**“18. Board proceedings.** *Board documents<sup>14</sup> and Board proceedings will be available on the GCF’s website, unless such information is not subject to disclosure under paragraph 11. The GCF will also webcast live proceedings of the meetings of the Board. The GCF will make video recordings of meetings of the Board, excluding any executive sessions, available on its website, through registration only<sup>15</sup>, within three weeks of each Board meeting.”<sup>16</sup>*

**“19. Public consultation period.** *The Board shall continue its practice of soliciting public input for certain policies and strategies under discussion by the Board for at least 30 days through the Fund’s website.*”<sup>17</sup>

[...]

11. In addition, the GCF has adopted the “[Policy on Ethics and Conflicts of Interest for Active Observers of the Green Climate Fund](#)” in July 2019. The policy does not grant active observers access to all confidential information. However, in the situation where active observers have

<sup>13</sup> [Guidelines relating to the Observer participation, accreditation of Observer organizations and participation of active Observers](#), p.1, para. 3

<sup>14</sup> The standard time of disclosure for the Board meeting documents is set out as 21 days before Board action in [Information Disclosure Policy of the Green Climate Fund](#), P.8, Section X. Summary of disclosure standards for key GCF documents.

<sup>15</sup> In the practice, the video recordings (both live and on demand) excluding executive sessions are made available publicly without need for registration.

<sup>16</sup> Information Disclosure Policy of the Green Climate Fund, P.6, Para. 18

<sup>17</sup> Information Disclosure Policy of the Green Climate Fund, P.7, Para. 19

access to confidential information of the GCF and its operations that is deemed confidential according to the GCF's *Information Disclosure Policy*, those observers are required to sign the "Declaration of Confidentiality and Conflicts of Interest for Active Observers of the Green Climate Fund" in appendix I.

12. In addition to the engagement of observers and active observers, similar to the GEF, stakeholder engagement is established as a component of all GCF- funded activities in the GCF's [Gender Policy](#), [Revised Environmental and Social Policy](#), [Indigenous Peoples Policy](#), [Sustainability guidance note: Designing and ensuring meaningful stakeholder engagement on GCF-financed projects](#), and [Guidelines for enhanced country ownership and country drivenness](#).

### **Climate Investment Funds (CIFs)**

13. The CIFs comprises the two trust funds, the Clean Technology Fund (CTF) and Strategic Climate Fund (SCF), and each trust funds are managed by the respective committees. Both committees have the *Governance Framework* and the *Rules of Procedures for meetings* respectively, which prescribe general rules on the attendance in the committee meetings for observers including civil society.

- [Governance Framework for the Strategic Climate Fund \(SCF\)](#)<sup>18</sup>
- [Governance Framework for the Clean Technology Fund \(CTF\)](#)
- [Rules of Procedure for Meetings of the Trust Fund Committee of the Strategic Climate Fund \(SCF\)](#)
- [Rules of Procedure for Meetings of the Trust Fund Committee of the Clean Technology Fund \(CTF\)](#)

#### *Rules of Procedure for Meetings of the Trust Fund Committee of the Strategic Climate Fund*

[...]

#### *IV. ATTENDANCE*

[...]

*16. Pursuant to paragraph 25 of the SCF Governance Framework Document, representatives of: (i) the Global Environment Facility; (ii) the United Nations Development Programme; (iii) the United Nations Environment Programme; (iv) the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change; (v) contributor countries (other than Member countries); and (vi) recipient countries, for which any SCF Sub-Committee has approved any investment plan, program or project (other than Member countries), shall be invited*

<sup>18</sup> In November 2019, after reviewing the options presented by the CIF Administrative Unit (AU) in the document entitled, "[Options to Improve the efficiency of SCF Governance](#)", the SCF Trust Fund Committee approved a series of changes that would streamline the governance of the SCF programs as outlined in Option 2 of the document.

*to observe any Meeting except for the portions of the Meeting that are declared to be Executive Sessions. The Head of the Administrative Unit, in consultation with the SCF Trust Fund Committee, may also invite representatives of civil society selected through a consultation among themselves, or of any international or governmental agencies, or other organizations with a mandate to address climate change, to observe any Meeting except for the portions of the Meeting that are declared to be Executive Sessions.*

[...]

#### X. CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

[...]

33. *Recognizing their special areas of competence, the Co-Chairs may invite Observers to engage in an active dialogue during strategic discussions.*

[...]

14. The [Guidelines for Inviting Representatives of Civil Society to Observe Meetings of the CIF Trust Fund Committees](#) issued in April 2009 set out rules on civil society observers in detail such as the scope of participation at the meetings, the constituencies to be represented, the number of observers in Trust Fund Committee meetings.

15. In its paragraph 4, the guidelines prescribes that the private sector (including private companies and business associations) is one of the constituencies to represent stakeholders other than civil society and indigenous people, and active observer seats for the private sector are assigned for the SCF Trust Fund Committee and PPCR Sub-Committee meetings respectively.

16. Additional documents such as the [Update on the Self Selection Process for Representatives of Civil Society to Observe Meetings of the CIF Trust Fund Committees](#) (April 2009) and the [Note on Roles and Responsibilities of Climate Investment Funds Co-Chairs, Members and Observers](#) (May 2016) have been issued to supplement the above-mentioned Guidelines.

17. The [Note on Disclosure of Documents Prepared for Purposes of the Climate Investment Funds](#) is also relevant to the stakeholder engagement of the CIF. This document sets out the requirement for “*making publicly available information on CIF investment plans and strategies and on programs and projects to be financed by the CIF*”<sup>19</sup> on the website. Unlike the practice of the Adaptation Fund that receives and reviews public comments prior to the committee meeting, the said note focuses on the advance disclosure of the information prior to the committee meeting and does not refer to the treatment of public comments in the note. The stakeholders of the CIF

<sup>19</sup> [Note on Disclosure of Documents Prepared for Purposes of the Climate Investment Funds](#), p. 2, paragraph. 1

have an opportunity to make their comments to the disclosed information during the committee meetings since they can request the floor for verbal interventions as required.

Further, [\*An overview of the CIF – Information for Observers: CIF Governance and Programming Information\*](#) was particularly prepared for the active observers for their reference. The document compiles the above-mentioned rules and information that are useful for the active observers but are scattered in the different policy documents.