

**Principles of the GCF
Observer Network of
Civil Society Organizations,
Indigenous Peoples, and
Local Communities**

ABOUT THE NETWORK

The GCF observer network (“the network”) brings together civil society organizations (CSO), Indigenous Peoples (IP), and local communities’ organizations from both developing and developed countries observing the [Green Climate Fund](#) (GCF). Via both virtual and in-person discussions and meetings, the network facilitates collaboration among observers to inform and influence the GCF’s policy and decision-making processes so that the voices of communities impacted by climate change and of CSO, IP, and local communities’ rights-holders in developing countries are integrated into the operational modalities of the Fund. The network works to strengthen CSO, IP, and local communities’ engagement and input through a variety of means including sharing of information and collaboration on analyses, positions, and advocacy. Additionally, there is a broad South-South listserv that facilitates coordination and collaboration among Southern-based observers; as well as an Indigenous Peoples’ advocacy team that collaborates.

The network is the broadest mechanism for the engagement of CSOs, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities in the GCF. A number of diverse monitoring and information-sharing platforms from member groups of the network, including a collective effort via [GCFWatch](#), an online platform that serves as a repository of observer-generated materials on the GCF, exist to support integrating local level climate justice perspectives in country and global GCF work. GCFWatch also encourages

country and regional level coordination through its regional nodes for Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

The objectives of the network are to monitor the GCF and advocate for the GCF to be a better climate fund in accordance with our shared values rooted in climate justice, equity (including intergenerational equity), human rights, gender equality, anti-racism, anti-colonialism, and mutual respect. Our values direct that we advocate for a GCF that is transparent; inclusive of civil society’s, Indigenous Peoples’, and local communities’ participation; places people and their human rights at the center of its activities; reaches the most vulnerable and marginalized peoples; and addresses priority needs with funds that flow in an equitable manner.

The provision of finance from developed countries to support climate action in developing countries is a core obligation of developed countries under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which specifies that countries should act in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. As the main operating entity of the financial mechanism of both the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, the GCF is bound by the principles and mandates of the Convention and reports to the Conference of the Parties.

While the network operates on a principle of inclusiveness, we define civil society organizations as non-State (and non-State affiliated), not-for-profit, and/or voluntary entities that are separate

from and independent of the State, and can include both community-based organizations as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Additionally, our network includes Indigenous Peoples and local communities. We acknowledge that CSOs, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities represent a wide range of

interests and ties; however, all members of the network agree on common principles and values. In our understanding, CSOs do not include not-for-profit business sector advocacy groups or for-profit associations, which may differ from how the GCF Secretariat applies the label of “CSO” for the purpose of accrediting its observer organizations.

THE PRINCIPLES

The GCF observer network operates according to the following principles:



SOLIDARITY



ELEVATING VOICES



TRANSPARENCY



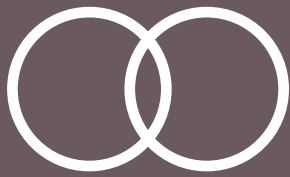
INCLUSIVITY



INDEPENDENCE



EGALITARIANISM



SOLIDARITY

The GCF observer network operationalizes solidarity through a collaborative work process.

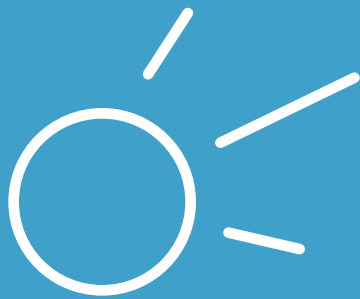
Solidarity is the appropriate approach to work rooted in climate justice, recognizing the shared planetary challenge, the pervasiveness of practices and institutional arrangements that drive the crisis, and the inequitable impacts on those most affected. Mutual respect for our shared humanity and human rights, various efforts to dismantle unjust systems, and diverse perspectives and insights guide work that is stronger for its collective approach.

Civil society, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities from both developing and developed country constituencies work together so that any intervention delivered to the Board by either of the Active Observers is a joint statement that also articulates and integrates local level concerns and priorities. To this end, the network facilitates written comments or inputs, both during the Board meetings and in responses to calls for comments, to the GCF in a coordinated manner that is reflective of a shared position. All positions are arrived at through a process of analysis that uses climate justice, equity (including intergenerational equity), human rights, gender equality, anti-racism, anti-colonialism, and mutual

respect as guiding values. We value and respect the diversity of experience and expertise within the various organizations and communities represented within the network, and we believe we benefit from these diverse characteristics and experiences. In the course of analyzing an issue, divergence of opinion is accommodated without compromising the positions and priorities of vulnerable communities in the global South. The Southern CSOs have an additional listserv and organize meetings to coordinate their advocacy and positions.

While the GCF structure formally recognizes only one active CSO observer for developing countries and one CSO Active Observer for developed countries, in practice, the GCF observer network is led by an Active Observer Team of six (including two alternate members from both developed and developing countries). This structure recognizes and responds to the lack of formal separate representation for Indigenous Peoples' organizations and local communities' organizations, and reflects both the diversity of the network as well as the reality of coordination demands and responsibilities.





ELEVATING VOICES

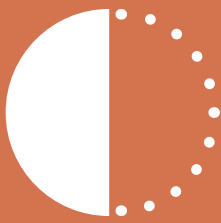
The GCF observer network is a collaborative group that seeks to elevate the voices of those most likely to be impacted by not only climate change but also GCF activities and all the communities and peoples who should be benefitting from GCF funds.

Climate finance mechanisms should incorporate and prioritize the voices of those on the frontlines of the climate crisis as well as the voices and concerns of communities and peoples who are the rightful recipients of climate finance. It is critical that the GCF hears from and learns from these people as well as improves its ability to provide funds directly to these communities.

In developing our interventions and advocacy positions, we intentionally reach out to local groups and communities who are likely to be impacted (i.e. by a project) or who have specific knowledge of a country or region (i.e. of a potential accredited entity). The concerns of and information shared by these local groups and communities directly influence our advocacy positions and interventions.

This collaborative approach applies both to advocacy concerning GCF projects and accredited entities as well as to policies and all GCF activities to ensure that the GCF not only does no harm, but also is proactive in doing good and living up to its mandate to deliver climate finance to those who need it most. This includes advocating for good projects developed through meaningful stakeholder consultation, projects designed by local communities or to scale-up community-based solutions, as well as advocating for direct access to GCF funds so that it is more accessible to community organizations and local/subnational organizations. Through our available tools, the network continually strives to enhance and improve our engagement at country and regional levels.





TRANSPARENCY

GCF observer network interventions, comments, and general positions are arrived at and shared through transparent procedures.

Transparency is a shared responsibility of both the GCF as an institution and of the network. To facilitate the engagement of all in the network and to ensure that our advocacy is collective, it is essential that the network operates with transparency. Transparently sharing information about the Fund, including documents, both from the GCF and developed by the network, is critical for all members to have the opportunity to engage in the work collectively, ensure record-keeping, and facilitate accountability.

Prior to each Board meeting, lists of each agenda item and related documents are circulated to ensure that observers are an informed and empowered constituency to engage in joint advocacy efforts. Observers volunteer to analyze specific documents. Such engagement is irrespective of whether an observer is able to attend a specific GCF Board meeting or commits to work consistently on monitoring the GCF. We welcome any observer contribution, including one-time, that might be specific to a funding proposal or policy. During in-person or virtual preparatory meetings prior to the Board meeting, one or more persons who volunteered

to analyze an item then present their summary, analysis, and suggested approach to facilitate a discussion to reach an agreement prior to drafting the comments. Those not in attendance, but who have signed up to review documents, have already contributed their analysis on the circulated and shared documents. Small teams are formed to capture everything discussed in a written intervention. The final intervention is then shared with the entire GCF observer network list with a period for additional comments or edits so that any intervention delivered is on behalf of all civil society, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities collaborating in our network.

Similarly, the network collaborates on joint advocacy outside of Board meetings, for example in response to calls for comments or other processes. When drafting joint comments or submissions, the request for input is shared on the network's listserv, and the drafting of comments is open to the entire network. Additionally, drafts are shared on the network for further input and then later for sign-on. Organizations may also draft their own submissions, and then, as best practice, typically share them with the entire listserv.





INCLUSIVITY

The GCF observer network strives to be inclusive of all civil society, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities' organizations.

Having an inclusive network that brings together a cross-section of actors is fundamental to ensuring that the network is representing the views of many and holding itself accountable to its professed values: climate justice, equity (including intergenerational equity), human rights, gender equality, anti-racism, anti-colonialism, and mutual respect.

First, the network listserv and South-South listserv are not limited to only representatives of approved GCF CSO observer organizations. In line with our agreed definitions, any interested civil society, Indigenous Peoples, or local communities individuals can be added to the list, recognizing that the approval process for GCF CSO observer organizations is bureaucratic, burdensome, and not designed for all civil society, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities' organizations. Approved GCF CSO observer organizations also work to register partners from other organizations for the GCF Board meetings. Within the network, groups that have stronger capacities support and facilitate the participation and engagement

of other CSO, Indigenous Peoples', and local communities' representatives as a matter of solidarity and autonomy.

The network preparatory meeting prior to each Board meeting begins with an introduction that gives any new participants background to better understand the GCF and its procedures. Network information and coordination calls are also scheduled regularly, including separate South-South coordination calls for colleagues from developing countries, with information shared in a transparent manner and with the open participation of all civil society, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities' participants interested in actively engaging in the network. Additionally, one of our key areas of advocacy is pushing for more inclusive GCF practices and processes, such as translating more GCF documents into other languages. In the absence of the GCF offering documents in multiple languages, when possible, members of the network proactively translate GCF documents into other languages to facilitate the participation of local stakeholders.





INDEPENDENCE

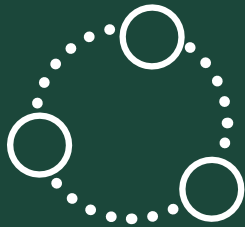
The GCF observer network is an independent network to monitor, inform, and influence the GCF.

Independent monitoring and watchdog initiatives have played and continue to play vital roles in shaping finance institutions' policies and practices and in holding them to account with the authority of the public and the communities they should be serving. Independent organizing efforts can highlight and prioritize challenges and solutions in ways that orient focus toward the reasons for the funds' operations, as well as provide expert, detailed analyses of those operations without undue influence of the funds themselves.

The network is completely independent of the GCF structure as a peer-organized, self-administered, and self-regulated network. The broad network and the specific South-South listserv coordinate the election, by their peers, of the two Active Observers and their two alternates

per constituency and then inform the GCF of the results of the selection process. The network is not dependent on any financial support from the GCF Secretariat for its functioning, thus avoiding potential conflicts of interest with respect to our critical watchdog function and advocacy positions. Further, situations may arise in which members of the network are currently receiving or have within the past 12 months received funding from the GCF, working with organizations applying for accreditation, acting as advisors, or are otherwise in situations that present a potential conflict of interest. In those cases, individuals should disclose this information and, should a conflict of interest exist, the network member should abstain from network decision-making related to the matter which involves the conflict of interest.





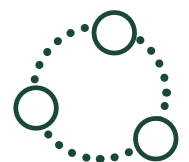
EGALITARIANISM

The GCF observer network is a collaborative, non-hierarchical network to which anyone can actively contribute.

Non-hierarchical organizational structures provide benefits when work relies on and values multiple forms of expertise and input, as well as when the community of volunteers seeks to enable leadership development of members. As work arises on a wide-range of topics and at various times, opportunities constantly arise for different members to participate and engage.

The network works in a non-hierarchical manner that values everyone's contributions. Our strength is our diverse membership and in having a space in which all are able to engage and lead.

While the Active Observer Team often takes on more coordination of the joint work, anyone can contribute, and all are encouraged to do so. For example, the Active Observer Team often takes the lead on drafting agendas for coordination calls and the pre-Board meeting preparatory meetings, but invites everyone to input into those agendas. Additionally, anyone can volunteer to lead a small group on a topic (e.g., replenishment, gender) and anyone can write to the entire listserv to begin a discussion on a topic. For those that want to engage and lead, willingness is the only requirement.



21ST MEETING OF THE BOARD

17 - 20 October 2018 | Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain



These principles are reflected in and align with our operational procedures as a network.

For more information, email the two Active Observers for 2020-2021:

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