Joint Comments on the GCF's Information Disclosure Policy

I. Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the start of the review of the Green Climate Fund's (GCF's) Information Disclosure Policy (IDP). As civil society and Indigenous Peoples organizations active in the GCF we are committed to ensuring the GCF be a leader in its practices. The IDP is a critical GCF policy as it helps to ensure that all stakeholders, and importantly local communities and Indigenous Peoples who are most likely to be impacted by a GCF project or programme, have access to the information about the GCF and its activities including its policies, how they are developed, and its projects and programmes as well as proposed ones. Freedom of and access to information is a human right[1] as well as being fundamental to ensuring the right to meaningful participation,[2] which is essential for effective and sustainable climate action. Further, the imperative of access to information as well as public participation in environmental decision-making, including in climate action, has long been recognized.[3]

We welcome this review of the existing policy and its implementation, especially as there has not been one since the IDP's adoption in 2016, and paragraph 41 of the existing policy specifies that the Ethics and Audit Committee (EAC) will present a report on the implementation of the IDP to the Board every three years. We hope that this review will be conducted rigorously and that in undertaking it, the GCF strives to aim for and set new best practices for transparency and

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[1] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, arts. 19(2)(3) (Dec. 16, 1966), https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx [hereinafter ICCPR]; UN Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 34, U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/GC/34, paras. 18-19 (Sept. 12, 2011), https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/docs/gc34.pdf.

[2] Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decisionmaking and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters art. 1, June 25, 1998, 2161 U.N.T.S. 447, http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/documents/cep43e.pdf [hereinafter Aarhus Convention]; Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean art. 1, *opened for signature* Sept. 27, 2018, C.N. 195.2018, http://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/43583/1/S1800428_en.pdf [hereinafter Escazú Agreement].

[3] *See* Aarhus Convention, *supra* note 2, at arts. 1, 4, 6; Escazú Agreement, *supra* note 2, at arts. 1, 5, 7; Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, 31 I.L.M. 874, principle 10 (June 13, 1992) (stating "Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided."); *see also* United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) art. 6, May 9, 1992, 1771 U.N.T.S. 107 (stating "... the Parties shall: (a) Promote and facilitate at the national and, as appropriate, subregional and regional levels, and in accordance with national laws and regulations, and within their respective capacities … (ii) Public access to information on climate change and its effects; (iii) Public participation in addressing climate change and its effects and developing adequate responses..."); Paris Agreement art. 12, Dec. 15, 2015, T.I.A.S. No. 16-1104 (stating "Parties shall cooperate in taking measures, as appropriate, to enhance … public awareness, public participation and public access to information, recognizing the importance of these steps with respect to enhancing actions under this Agreement.").

accountability so as to fulfil its mandate to be a game-changer. This review and potential upgrade is important to bring both the policy and its implementation in line with international best practice and to deal with some significant shortcomings of the current IDP, most specifically the inconsistencies within the policy that contradict its ambition to be a progressive information disclosure policy that adheres to the principle of maximum disclosure of information both proactively and in response to requests as well as the shortcomings that we have seen in its application. We are confident that addressing these issues will allow the Fund to live up to its mandate in the Governing Instrument to operate in a transparent and accountable manner with efficiency and effectiveness.[4]

As this review is being undertaken with a view toward an update of the policy in 2021, we also look forward to an opportunity to comment on a new draft of the policy and to integrate any additional insights from our work reviewing and requesting documents in 2020. To close the door to inputs into a new policy at least six months prior to the new policy's consideration could prevent integration of the most timely and relevant experiences. As the GCF has done in the past, and in line with practices at other international organizations, we would welcome a public consultation concerning the draft new or amended policy. Other international organisations have benefited significantly from these processes.

In addition to these comments, we do note with concern that many of the comments submitted by civil society organizations (CSOs) in 2015 on the draft of the IDP prior to its adoption in 2016 remain relevant as they were not addressed in the adoption of the IDP or in its application. Those comments can be accessed here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1af0_3KvS_z4jUDTKu0lLorm9l4H6TXDI/view?usp=sharing.

II. Best Practices and Critical Elements

As the largest climate fund, the GCF has the ability and should strive to meet and set best practices through all its policies. This effort should be guided by taking a rights-based approach and grounding the IDP in international treaties, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR),[5] and regional agreements such as the Aarhus Convention and Escazú Agreement[6] and well-known best practices. Unfortunately, the current IDP leaves significant room for improvement in both its drafting and implementation. As written, the current IDP is not in line with international best practice and the practice of countries at national level for right to information or "right-to-information" (RTI) laws.[7]

As currently written, the IDP is problematic as it is largely aspirational and does not use language with enough specificity. For example, it often uses "will" instead of "shall" or states the GCF will "endeavor to," and this approach to information disclosure, as something to be done if and where

[4] Governing Instrument for the Green Climate Fund, para. 3 (Dec. 11, 2011) (contained in UNFCCC Decision 3/CP.17, UNFCCC doc. FCCC/CP/2011/9/Add.1).
[5] ICCPR, *supra* note 1.
[6] Aarhus Convention, *supra* note 2; Escazú Agreement, *supra* note 2.
[7] *See* The RTI Rating, https://www.rti-rating.org/ (last visited on May 30, 2020).

possible, if not otherwise prohibited, is found throughout the policy and its implementation. This approach, however, is not in line with proactive and maximum disclosure of information, where access to information is not aspirational, but the default. To bring clarity for the GCF as well as all of its stakeholders and to ensure that it is complying with international law and best practice, the IDP should instead commit to fulfilling each information disclosure activity wholly and without qualification.

While it is laudable that the current IDP states that there is a presumption to disclose, and therefore be a proactive information disclosure policy (para.7), it actually enshrines an overbroad regime of exceptions rather than the "limited exceptions" it claims in Principle 2. To be in line with best practice, exceptions should be extremely limited. Additionally, its reference to not disclosing in cases where third parties have indicated something is confidential (para. 6(b)), effectively gives third parties veto power over the disclosure of information, and thus substantially undermines the potential of the policy. The GCF has also often identified information as "proprietary" or "confidential" business information (para. 11) as a reason for restriction, conflating the idea of items associated with private sector projects/programmes with the notion of proprietary.

This approach, particularly as captured in para 11(e), reflects a misunderstanding about the proper relationship between a public authority such as the GCF and the third parties with which it interacts. If entities want to interact with the GCF, they should have to meet certain obligations and standards. As currently written, and as practiced, the GCF is defaulting to an unsubstantiated presumption of third-parties' rights to withhold, rather than enacting the right to information.

Thus, in many instances, despite having adopted an IDP that commits to both proactive and maximum disclosure, over the past four years, the GCF has been deficient in creating a culture of proactive disclosure with routinely produced information and documents in its possession and is still missing proper guidelines on the proactive disclosure of information, including on a minimum but comprehensive baseline of information available on a proactive basis.

This lack of proactive disclosure is somewhat reflected in the fact that in the first five months of 2020 there have been approximately 40 requests for information, many of which seem to be for information that should be easily accessible on the GCF website, though the lack of details about these requests makes it difficult to tell.[8] Proactive disclosure entails designing an accessible website with documents available to the public and easily locatable through navigation and searches.

In reviewing and updating the IDP, it is critically important that the GCF strives for improvement in both its policy and practices to ensure it is adhering to the principle of maximum disclosure and upholding the right of access to information. Importantly this must include more transparency and earlier disclosure of information related to proposed projects and programmes and potential accredited entities, as well as better practices on public consultation that ensure the GCF provides for consultation and responds to and incorporates comments received. In all activities there should

[8] List of IDP requests and responses, https://www.greenclimate.fund/about/disclosure/requests (last visited on May 30, 2020).

be improved proactive disclosure of documents and maximization of documents disclosed rather than searching for exceptions to use. Lastly, a strengthened Information Appeals Panel, whose recommendations must be taken up, will contribute to ensuring the integrity of these practices.

III. Specific Recommendations

There is room for significant improvement in both the text and implementation of the IDP to ensure that the GCF is living up to the four principles laid out in its current IDP (para. 6) as well as respecting the right to information. These improvements will help ensure that GCF projects and programmes contribute to implementing the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement, as well as striving, at a minimum, to meet international best practice, and to be a standard bearer.

In general, instead of adhering to the principle of maximum disclosure (Principle 1 of the IDP) and applying the IDP proactively as intended, the Secretariat has instead approached information disclosure with a presumption to restrict (not disclose) unless the case can be made to disclose. This upends the fundamental principles of the IDP.

A. Disclosure Prior to Board Meetings

As Board meetings serve a critical governance function for the GCF, ensuring they are effective spaces where participants can fully discuss the merits of items is essential. Information disclosure well in advance of meetings enables not only Board members and their advisors to be cognizant of the complexities of certain agenda items, but enables constituents and other stakeholders, including not only civil society and Indigenous Peoples organizations, but also local communities who may be impacted by the decisions the Board makes, the time also to review and analyze the documents and to discuss the with and petition Board members as appropriate.

It is unfortunate that the first Information Appeals Panel (IAP) case surrounded the late disclosure of information prior to a Board meeting, thus endangering this important dynamic of review, analysis, due diligence, and constructive exchange. The appeal stemmed from the fact that for two category A projects, the GCF had failed to disclose critical environmental and social information the requisite 120 days prior to the Board meeting and then subsequently claimed that it was exempt from that IDP requirement due to exemptions in the Accredited Entities' (AEs') respective Accreditation Master Agreements (AMAs). Both projects remained on the agenda for B.21, and the failure to disclose did not prevent overall decision-making on these projects, as it should have.

Though this was not the traditional denial of a request for information, the IAP found it had jurisdiction and made several critical recommendations. These recommendations included that the GCF should ensure that Board members and Active Observers receive environmental and social safeguard (ESS) documents for the requisite time specified in the IDP and that this duty is in addition to the duty of the AEs for public disclosure and what para. 17 of the current IDP states; that the Board directs the GCF to ensure ESS documents are disclosed and announced to the Active Observers in the requisite time specified in the IDP and that if they are not, then those

projects/programmes should not be presented to the Board at that time; and that all of the documents associated with the appeal should be uploaded to the GCF website.[9] These recommendations and the reasoning of the IAP in this case should be considered and acted on as the GCF reviews and revises the current IDP and strives to improve and be a standard-bearer for international best practice.

Relatedly, the current IDP does not state what happens if the GCF does not comply with the number of days specified for disclosure in the IDP. For example, should funding proposals not be considered for adoption if they are not disclosed on time (i.e. 120 days for category A/I-1, 30 days for category B/I-2)? In the only IAP case so far, the IAP recommended that the Board should direct the Secretariat to ensure that the ESS documents are announced and disclosed within these time requirements and that if they are not, then the project or programme proposal should not be presented to the Board for a funding decision.[10]

Similarly, should the Board consider entities for accreditation if information is not disclosed 21 days prior to a Board Meeting? There have been instances when this type of information was not shared in compliance with the time requirements, including disclosure only a couple of days before board meetings, and then the Board proceeds to consider them anyway.

Decisions to move forward in these instances compromise the ability of Board members and stakeholders to undertake necessary due diligence and in turn jeopardizes the accountability and reputation of the Fund. The IDP should specify that if disclosure requirements are not met, certain items, in particular projects/programmes and entities for accreditation, should not be presented for consideration by the Board.

Indeed, for all participants in Board meetings to be prepared to engage effectively with the agenda items and each other at Board meetings, all agenda-related documents should be released at least 21 days prior to each Board meeting. This is a current disclosure standard in the IDP, but it is one that is not always adhered to, leaving participants scrambling to fully review and analyze the documents on which decisions are being made. Even a failure to disclose Inf. documents 21 days prior to a Board meeting limits the effectiveness of any Board conversations, both formal and informal.

B. Routine Documentation to be Automatically Disclosed

Additionally, the GCF should develop proactive disclosure guidelines with an extensive positive list of routine documentation that needs to be disclosed automatically (and not just at request) and with longer advance times. Paragraph 3 of the current IDP says that it lays out "the Policy of the GCF regarding the information that it makes available to the public either as a routine matter or upon

[9] *See* Green Climate Fund, Information Appeals Panel, Decision and recommendations on appeal no IDP/2018/C001 (Nov. 28, 2018), https://www.greenclimate.fund/document/decision-and-recommendations-appeal-no-idp-2018-c001 (last visited May 30, 2020) [hereinafter IAP Decision].
[10] *See id.*

request." This should be amended to use "proactive" rather than "a routine matter" and acknowledge that information should be disclosed proactively and that responding to requests for information should be routine and not seen as an undue burden.

The list of documents to be routinely released should include, for example: accreditation applications made public when filed; readiness support proposals before approval; timely disclosure of GCF Board decisions (such as within one week); information on key transparency, accountability, and integrity policies and procedures of Accredited Entities; project loan and grant contracts (such as disclosed the by World Bank, for example); and a comprehensive set of procurement procedures and documentations.

Project/programme and policy documents with implications for the rights and interests of stakeholders in recipient countries should be disclosed earlier and with more time to allow for comments and effective public participation. For example, the GCF should disclose information about substantial risk (category B/I-2) projects more than 30 days in advance of a Board meeting to allow for effective public participation. Additionally, the IDP currently does not require any additional advance information disclosure of funding proposals relating to projects and programmes that the GCF does not consider to have any significant environmental or social impact (i.e. Category C/I-3 projects and programmes) (para. 17). This is problematic. In the past, there have been funding proposals that the GCF categorized as category C, but did so incorrectly as they were deemed high risk by CSOs and other stakeholders.[11] However, by the time CSOs and stakeholders can read the project/programme proposal (approximately 21 days in advance of a Board meeting), it is already too late to reach out to in-country partners (who often do not know about the proposed project or programme) as the proposals are set and ready for adoption by the Board.

All disclosure requirements should also apply to all sub-projects of a programme that are not known at the time of Board approval.

C. Project/Programme Pipeline

One of the most critical areas where the failure to maximally disclose has hindered the efficacy and effectiveness of the Fund is the project/programme pipeline, into which the public has little to no insight. Making the pipeline accessible, for instance by listing the projects in the pipeline (and project specific information such as location, accredited entity involved, etc.) on the GCF website, would help increase transparency, which would in turn help stakeholders, including those at the local level, engage earlier in the development of the project or programme. The posting could also include when the projects entered the pipeline and whether there is an anticipated Board meeting at which they will be presented, as comments during B.25 indicated that a list for B.27 was already in existence. This transparency would increase opportunities for effective stakeholder engagement

[11] *See, e.g.*, Independent Redress Mechanism, IRM Initiated Proceedings: C-0002-Peru, paras.33, 35 (May 8, 2019), https://irm.greenclimate.fund/documents/1061332/1198301/IRM_initiated_proceedings_C-0002_-_Peru.pdf/4e333fd6-22b5-4fbe-a28d-0513b57a3eb4.

earlier in the project/programme cycle, thus contributing to better designed projects and programmes and more sustainable implementation.

In current practice, the GCF is doing nothing in terms of additional information disclosure with regard to projects and programmes, as the public is not informed about the projects and programmes in the pipeline other than how many there are, with no update on which concept notes are being actively pursued and no indication of what projects and programmes are being submitted to ITAP prior to a Board meeting. An improved IDP requires not only extending the currently short timelines for Category B and C project disclosure, but shifting practice to provide as much transparency as possible into the pipeline, facilitating public participation and stakeholder engagement early in the project development process.

D. Responsibilities of the GCF Secretariat

The GCF Secretariat is responsible for providing accessible information, disclosing information, and making aspects of these processes transparent.

In several cases, the GCF has tried to shift the responsibility for disclosure compliance to Accredited Entities or third parties rather than comply themselves. This approach was particularly seen in the only IAP case so far.[12] In that instance, the IAP found that the GCF had not complied with the IDP when it failed to disclose critical environmental and social information the relevant 120 day in advance for that type of project (category A) for two projects and where the Secretariat falsely claimed that it was in compliance because the AEs had disclosed the information on their own websites and had an exemption from compliance with the GCF's IDP requirements due to their respective AMAs. The IAP did not substantiate the GCF's interpretation and the IAP's findings were endorsed by the EAC and then the Board. In reviewing the IDP, the GCF should learn lessons from this case to ensure that it is, by default, proactively disclosing information and not seeking ways to outsource it or find ways around complying with the IDP.

On the website, the current title-based display of information requests often hinders discernment of the exact nature of what is being asked for. There should be more transparency on these requests for information as well as related to appeals. If the party approves, the request or appeal should include complete information, and if there is a request for confidentiality then the information should be provided in anonymized form. The outcomes of all information requests and appeals should be disclosed, providing a link in the table of requests to the information provided so that the public has access to that information. If information is requested confidentially, for example by a journalist, that confidentiality should not last indefinitely, but should be time-bound.

Correspondingly, as a list of information requests is maintained, so should a list of non-disclosed documents, either through request or ones that would be "subject to posting on GCF's website" (para. 10), which then should be publicly posted, thus operationalizing para. 10 of the current IDP.

[12] IAP decision, *supra* note 9.

E. Information Requests Process

The IDP should be facilitating access to information through its information request procedures as well. Currently, the IDP specifies that requests for information will be submitted in English, which is the working language of the GCF, and that the response will be in English (para. 23). The burden should not be on the requester to translate their request or the documents received into English or their native language. At a minimum, the GCF should accept information requests in any language and in any format to ensure that a wide-range of stakeholders can access information. The GCF should look to its own Independent Redress Mechanism (IRM), which does not have any such language or format requirements, as a model for ensuring that reaching out to the GCF for information is accessible. Additionally, the GCF should strive to provide the information requested in a language and format accessible to the requestor, who likely does not have the same resources as the GCF for translation.

The current approach to the requests process on the website is also not in line with best practice and the current IDP. The online and paper forms on the website include a line for "intended use," thus indicating that a requester should include information about how they will use the information they receive. Even though it is not a required field in the online form, this question is listed prior to the description of information; and on the paper form, it is included with no indication that the information is not required. Regardless of whether required or not, the inclusion and prominence of this question could have a chilling effect on information requests, and specifying intended use is not a requirement based on the IDP nor in line with best practice at other institutions. Whether an information request is granted should not be based on the "intended use" of the information. Including it in the form implies that it is up to the Secretariat to decide whether they think the intended use is acceptable or sanctioned and that is not a determination they can make. Including this request on the form might speak to a bias within the Secretariat about how to interpret the IDP disclosure requirements.

Additionally, replying to an information request in a timely manner and with the full information requested should be routine practice at the GCF and not seen as a burden. The IDP should have clear overall time-limits for providing information; more clarity on the allowed reasons for the Secretariat to refuse information requests (and those should be extremely limited); and a clear expectation that the Secretariat must make efforts to compile information from different documents. A current example where timeliness has not been adhered to is the GCF's failure to comply with an information request for the annual performance reports of projects under implementation submitted July 15, 2019. While the GCF has indicated its willingness to comply, the Secretariat has delayed compliance on the claims that it is difficult to compile these documents, despite the fact the GCF must have used some compilation of these documents to write their annual aggregate reports on project implementation. While the effort to create an access portal to these documents is appreciated, timelinessness should dictate such documents should be released (via file transfer) as soon as available, rather than waiting for a software project to first be completed. Over 10 months--at the time of the submission of these comments-- to process a request is an unacceptably long timeline.

Furthermore, there must be a clear commitment that it is free to make requests and that fees where applied for excessive material costs can be waived based on need. There needs to be more information on these potential fees, and in no circumstance should the fees be higher than the actual cost or reproduction of information on any medium specified by the requestor. This clarity can help both the Secretariat and the stakeholders seeking information.

F. Means of Disclosure

The standard of disclosure provides that "[a]ll documents in the GCF's possession subject to disclosure as per this Policy, will be released on the GCF's website or through other appropriate means, or will be provided upon request" (para. 7). However, the policy does not elaborate further on other appropriate means of disclosure, for example, at a minimum, to the Board and Active Observers directly or in local communities. Instead, the IDP mainly relies on disclosure through the GCF website, which is not easy to navigate even for civil society and Indigenous Peoples organizations who have been following the GCF for a substantial amount of time. Further, the IDP should be modified to specify that in addition to disclosing information on the website, the Secretariat should provide it directly to the Board and Active Observers via email.

Additionally, there are parts of the website that are password protected and it should be specified that if information in those sections does not meet an exception, it should be disclosed on the main site. The GCF should publish a publicly available list with the titles and dates of creation of even exempted documents so that the public can know that these documents exist.

G. Disclosure in Multiple Languages and Formats

Relatedly, the principle of broad and simple access to information (Principle 3 of the current IDP) remains unfulfilled as the GCF's lingua franca of working remains English only and countries and stakeholders have to translate documents at their own cost. We note that increasingly some funding proposal annexes are also available in the languages of respective countries where they are going to be implemented, which is welcome. However, GCF policies, which are equally important, remain in English only. To ensure the right to access to information, as well as to participation, the IDP should facilitate access to documents in multiple languages and multiple formats to ensure that documents are accessible by a broad range of stakeholders, including people and communities most likely to be impacted by GCF projects and programmes.

H. Public Consultation

The provision of information via email to Active Observers is important not only for documents related directly to Board Meetings, but also when there are public consultation periods. The public consultation requirements should be stronger than in the current IDP and be in line with the Aarhus Convention (article 6) and the Escazú Agreement (article 7). Paragraph 19 of the current IDP specifies that "The Board shall continue its practice of soliciting public input for certain policies

and strategies … for at least 30 days through the Fund's website." First, this call for inputs should apply to all policies and strategies. Second, it should be made explicit in the IDP that "calls for inputs" are communicated through the website and to all accredited Observers, and to the Active Observers at a minimum. In the past, there have been calls for inputs or public consultation periods that observers were unaware of because they had only been posted on the website, which as previously stated is hard to navigate, and our awareness came from random searches or through individual Secretariat members reaching out.

With further regard to call for inputs, all submitted comments should be publicly available and identified by their submitter. This is standard practice with UNFCCC calls for submissions, and such transparency ensures that stakeholders can see the range of information presented for the GCF's consideration. As with the unnecessary protection on "sensitive information" with regard to internal processes, the current practice of not de facto presenting submissions further obscures insight into the GCF's decision-making processes, which should be transparent given the GCF's role as a public institution. The preference of parties to hide their positions is not a valid one given the influence they are seeking to have over the GCF. The IDP should prohibit practices reflected in statements such as the following, which the Secretariat made regarding a call for inputs on the REDD+ RBP program, "Given that some of the presenters of inputs preferred not to make their submissions publicly available, we decided not to make any submission publicly available in order to give equal treatment to all inputs."[13]

Additionally, the GCF should publish information responding to the comments it has received including how it has addressed those comments in later versions of the document. This is best practice at the GCF, for example by the IRM, as well as other institutions.

I. Exceptions to Disclosure

In an overly broad number of instances, the GCF has allowed private sector or specified interests to override a broad public interest mandate, often with these interests being presumed on behalf of the private sector, rather than even expressed. Power has been shifted to a blanket exception, with the word "private" apparently applying to information, not just sector, instead of vesting power in the right of access to information. At the moment, as current practice almost all annexes of proposals for private sector projects/programmes are de facto withheld because of the assumption they have proprietary information and the mistaken belief that if they did, this is a valid and broad-reaching exception to information disclosure that should merit the restriction of an entire class of documents.

Exceptions are often vaguely worded, which make them prone to arbitrary interpretation. For example, there is no definition of "sensitive information," (para. 11 (f)(iii)), which leaves it open to interpretation, and it is wholly unacceptable to withhold factual information on which decisions are based. Further, it appears instead that numerous exceptions are in place to serve only to conceal bureaucratic mistakes, inefficiency, or to prevent embarrassment to GCF bodies and officials, which

[13] Email from GCF Secretariat in response to CSOs, Sept. 17, 2019 (on file with CSOs).

also seemed evident in the GCF's response to the submitted information appeal and subsequent findings from the IAP. Additionally, many of the exceptions lack any limitation in time. As noted, article 19 of the ICCPR provides for the right to information as a human right, and the GCF has to respect this right by making freedom of information a core part of its functioning. No human right shall be restricted indefinitely.

To meet Principle 1 (maximizing access to information), the policy should apply to all information held by the GCF regardless of who produced it. The current policy addresses this in paragraphs 4 and 8, but should seek to clarify that it does apply to information the GCF possesses as currently the coverage is unclear.

Working conjointly with Principles 1 and 3, Principle 2 of the current IDP, says that there should be "limited exceptions" to disclosure. However, many elements of this paragraph (para. 6(b)), including "that the GCF is legally obligated to non-disclosure or has received information from third parties clearly marked as confidential…" are extremely problematic and should be fully revised as it is overly broad and grants exceptions to the proactive information disclosure principle due to legal obligations that the GCF itself has negotiated with partners, for example through AMAs or FAAs (see below). Additionally, it gives third parties the right to undermine the IDP though phrases such as "has received information from third parties clearly marked as confidential," (para. 6(b)) which allows third parties to impose their own standards on the GCF rather than the other way around. Similarly, paragraph 11(e)(ii) even claims an exception that requires third party permission for "financial, business or proprietary and non-public information" that the GCF does not possess. The idea that the GCF will determine what is proprietary is problematic--and as detailed below--has been used as a vague exception to IDP compliance, and "non-public information" is the broadest category, without any justification even attempted. To meet the principles of the current IDP and to have "limited exceptions," this should be amended to ensure that the GCF is able to set requirements for those doing business with it that reflect international law and best practice as well as the best practice at the national level.

The requirement that the GCF shall make reference to the documents or information removed because of exceptions (para. 10), has also not been applied by the Secretariat in many cases. The GCF should provide information about what it is not disclosing. For example, we have seen references to "limited distribution documents," but they are often not listed under the general list of documents and so only known if referenced elsewhere. It is impossible for stakeholders to know if there is information that could be relevant for them to know, but to which they are being denied access, if they do not know what information is being withheld. As a matter of accountability and transparency, as well as adherence to its own policy, the Secretariat should publicly disclose what it is not disclosing and the reason why (for example with respect to project/programme and policy documentation listed on the GCF website).

Additionally, the current IDP should be revised to clarify and limit the reasons for such non-disclosure. As mentioned, the presumption should be that information is disclosed publicly by default and few exceptions should exist. For example, the GCF should not allow for exceptions in or interpret that a clause in an AMA allows for an exception to the time limits for information

disclosure.[14] The GCF should search for ways to disclose all information, not for reasons to avoid doing so.

J. Severability

Further, the GCF has never or rarely applied the rule of severability (para. 10), which allows the partial disclosure of information where only a portion of the document falls under an exception and the rest of the information is segregable. This can be seen, for example, with respect to private sector activities and the categorical non-disclosure of annexes when projects are proposed. While some of that information will fall under an exception, large parts do not, and by default the GCF should disclose this information. Information should not automatically be exempt from disclosure because it comes from a private rather than public sector accredited entity. Another key example of this principle failing to be applied was with submissions on the REDD+ process; CSOs asked that their submission be made public on the website, but a reason of "equal treatment," not present in any GCF policies, was given to deny that level of transparency.[15]

Withholding this information places restrictions on the right to information. It should not be incumbent upon stakeholders such as civil society organizations, Indigenous Peoples, or local communities to reach out to the Accredited Entities for information in annexes, and often, the Accredited Entities are surprised that they have not been disclosed already.

K. Right to Review and the Information Appeals Panel

When information is not disclosed, there should be clear explanations of decisions and the right to review as stated in Principle 4 of the IDP. Further, when information is not disclosed, the public should be able to request it and the request should be granted, but for limited exceptions. Paragraph 6(d), which lays out Principle 4, or elsewhere in the IDP, should better specify the grounds for refusing a request. Further, the GCF should remove the overbroad restrictions on repeated information requests that are present in the current IDP, and remove the GCF's ability to refuse requests due to "excessive demand on the GCF's resources" (para. 26(b)) as that allows for arbitrary denials.

To help ensure that this does not happen, the GCF should strengthen its information appeal procedure. Requesters should be able to lodge an appeal for any breach of the policy relating to the processing of a request (for example, exceeding a time limit for responding to a disclosure request, especially given that there is no limit on the extensions the GCF can have for fulfilling requests) and not just for the denial of a request. This is also in line with the findings of the IAP where an appeal was accepted based on the lack of timely disclosure of information as it went against the spirit and letter of the policy though was not an official "denial" of an information request.

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[14] *See, e.g.*, IAP Decision, *supra* note 9 (including documentation around that case).

[15] Email from GCF Secretariat in response to CSOs, *supra* note 13 (stating "Given that some of the presenters of inputs preferred not to make their submissions publicly available, we decided not to make any submission publicly available in order to give equal treatment to all inputs.").

Lastly, under the current IDP, the IAP lacks significant power as it can only make recommendations and it should be strengthened. The IAP's recommendations should not be subject to refusal by the Board (including through the EAC) or the Executive Director, but instead accepted and acted on.

IV. Textual Comments on the Current IDP

The following section provides detailed textual comments on how the current IDP could be improved. While some of these ideas have been introduced and discussed above, these suggestions build on them by providing detailed textual suggestions. It is also not a full redline of the IDP as it is unclear what the next steps are in the process for revising this policy.

Section I: Objective and Scope

Para. 3: Instead of "a routine matter," use "proactively." Also, answering requests for information can be routine as well.

Para. 4: The language "all information produced by or in the possession of the GCF" is problematic and unclear. To be clearer, it should simply say that it covers all information held by the GCF irrespective of who produced it.

Section III: Principles

Para. 6(a): The phrase describing the Maximum Access to Information Principle stating that ".. the GCF is not legally obligated to confidentiality, information on the list of exceptions will be disclosed in accordance with timelines and procedures specified for that purpose," is difficult to understand and should be rewritten and clarified.

Para. 6(b): As this Limited Exceptions Principle suggests, the "list of exceptions" should be significantly limited. The exception, "or has received information from third parties clearly marked as confidential…" should be stricken from the updated principles, and any exceptions should be clearly specified and based on GCF, not third party, standards of what types of information have a legitimate reason to be restricted.

Section IV: Standard of Disclosure

The entire text under this heading is not clear and should be clarified for understanding. These paragraphs appear to be trying to set standards and obligations, but fail to do so in particular by using "will" instead of "shall."

Para. 7: The sentence "The GCF seeks to maximize access to information that it produces and/or possesses and will therefore disclose any information not contained in the list of exceptions set out in Chapter V of this Policy" is not a norm as it contains no obligation or right, but instead should be included among the principles. Moreover, any provision that contains the word "seeks" should be among the principles.

Further, it states that the information disclosed is to "... provide the public with a clear picture of the GCF's work and the way it administers financial resources received from public, private and other sources." While this may be the purpose from the GCF's point of view, it is not the purpose of information disclosure. Access to information is a human right, as set out in article 19 of the ICCPR and the GCF has to respect this right by making freedom of and access to information integral parts of their functioning. Moreover access to information is core to the right to participation in environmental decision-making.[16] As such, this sentence should be modified to reflect this respect for and adherence to human rights.

Additionally, it states that information "…will be released on the GCF's website or through other appropriate means." This language is very vague and presents the danger that the website of an AE is considered "appropriate means" and thus information is NOT disclosed by the GCF (as happened in the IAP case discussed above). The GCF cannot outsource its obligations to disclose to the AEs or other partners. Thus, this sentence should be modified to say that it will be released on the GCF's website as well as directly to the Active Observers.

Para. 8: "... As a matter of principle…" should be deleted. If it is a principle, this should be moved up to the previous section. Further, the IDP should define the phrase "...majority of the information…". This could mean that only 51 percent of its information would be shared as that would be a majority. Thus, the inclusion of this phrase leaves considerable ambiguity and undermines the principles of the current IDP.

Section V: Exceptions to Presumed Disclosure

Para. 10: This paragraph should be modified to include that information will be disclosed after a certain time period, which can be determined in a manner similar to the suggestions below for paras. 20-21, including establishing general archival rules, considering changes that impact whose individual right is being protected, or considering changes in a specific public interest.

Additionally, the term "citing" implies quoting its exact content and this should be changed to say "a reference to".

Further, as noted above the rule on severability, whereby if only part of a document is sensitive, the rest of the document, if segregable, will be disclosed, is welcome. However, in practice, the Secretariat has ignored this responsibility. It should be clarified and a clause added to this paragraph stating that the Secretariat must provide information in cases on non-disclosed documents about why no partial disclosure was possible.

Para. 11(a): "Personal information" should be replaced with "private information."

Para. 11(a)(ii): The selection of staff and its processes involved does not necessarily involve privacy. The process does not require names of private individuals. Having no transparency in the

[16] *See, e.g.* Aarhus Convention, *supra* note 2; Escazú Agreement, *supra* note 2; Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, *supra* note 3, at principle 10.

selection process creates a sense of a lack of integrity as it could involve unfair practices in hiring, such as selecting close relatives or friends of high-ranking GCF officials or Board members, among others.

Para. 11(b)(ii): This paragraph references information that would "…violate applicable law or contractual obligations…." This provision would function properly only if the GCF had a policy that prohibits secrecy clauses in its contracts. Since it is not clear if the GCF has one, the IDP should rule all contracts signed or amended. No contract should trump the right of access to information. The GCF uses public funds and should not hide any detail of the use of these funds in contracts. The only exception may be a narrowly phrased protection of information with the legitimate commercial interest of either contracting party (trade secret). In its present form, this exception is unacceptable.

Para. 11(b)(iii): If the privacy of any individual has to be protected, it is already exempt under para. 11(a). Beyond that, there is no conceivable reason why such information about the outcomes of the proceedings referenced in this paragraph should be withheld. At a minimum, this information should be disclosed in properly anonymized form, and, if the aggrieved party approves, then it may be disclosed with his or her name.

Para. 11(c): This appears to be a blanket exclusion of all internal Board communications. The IDP should be modified to indicate when this information can be disclosed, for example, after one year or five years.

Para. 11(e)(ii): This exception is overbroad and should be defined. For example, if there is a tender and the GCF requests information on the capacity of the bidders to provide a service, then at least the winning bidder's information relevant to the contract should be accessible. If this is the text, then more public procurement rules which applied to GCF would contradict this provision. Further, the formulation here that "Financial, business or proprietary and non-public information in possession of the GCF and belonging to a party outside of the GCF will not be disclosed" without consent is deeply problematic as it grants a "proactive" veto to third parties over the disclosure of information. It also places a shroud of secrecy over all business information, even if a third party has not indicated that the information is sensitive or must be kept secret. Third parties should be informed that doing business with the GCF, an international public entity committed to best governance practices, entails certain minimum transparency obligations that will be followed. An exception to disclosing this information should have to be requested by the third party entity, and the request itself and the reason for granting it should be publicly disclosed to be in line with the proactive information disclosure this policy seeks to promote.

Para. 11(e)(iii): The integrity investigations results should include not only numbers of types of integrity violations, but also descriptions of the numbers of cases closed.

Para. 11(f): This paragraph is overbroad. As currently written, the IDP has overbroad exceptions in this area, which cover an enormous amount of information of which probably only a small part is sensitive in any proper sense. Having access to information, including deliberative documents,

studies, etc. that are mentioned in this paragraph, can help Accredited Entities, as well as civil society and Indigenous Peoples organizations and local communities to be involved in the decision-making process. These groups are critical stakeholders and partners for the GCF and providing them with deliberative information allows them better opportunities to offer their expertise and resources based on accumulated knowledge and experiences.[17] It is also important, and the IDP policy does not account for it at all, for the public to have access to key policy and project documents in draft form in a timely and accessible manner so as to enable effective and meaningful public consultations. This paragraph could significantly restrict para. 19 on public consultations.

Para. 11(f)(iii): "Sensitive information" should be defined. It is unacceptable to withhold factual information on which the Secretariat based their decisions. This information should be disclosed proactively. Opinions, as referenced in paras. (i) and (ii) may be withheld while the decision-making process is ongoing, but facts should be in the public domain before decisions are taken, and accessible to all.

Para. 11(g): It should be clarified if the Fund has any commercial interests or involvement in any commerce or not. For the sake of transparency, it should define what or which financial information will not be disclosed due to the fact that if "certain" information is not disclosed could be an act of not being transparent and the possibility that the undisclosed information will be abused.

Para. 11(h): Please, see the previous comment on para. 11(f)(iii). Further, this should be modified to specify that justifications for the non-disclosure of Board documents, including pre-meeting documents, should be provided. If such documents are not publicly accessible, at a minimum, they should be shared with AEs, NDAs, and Active Observers so that they can better prepare and gather resources to provide relevant inputs during Board meetings and other relevant activities.

As described in previous CSO comments on the IDP,[18] this provision overrides basic principles of accountability by essentially giving the Board a free pass by stating that there will be no recording (documentation) of closed executive sessions of the Board. Also it is unclear if this exception applies to informal Board meeting discourses in pre-Board meetings, to which the public has no access and for which there is no public record (or recording). This also raises the specter and issue of accessibility to such information by, at a minimum, the Active Observers who have signed confidentiality agreements.

Para. 11(i): The phrase "may cause prejudice to the GCF" should be clarified as its meaning is not specific and it seems totally arbitrary. It seems to be a cover-all, covering anything not included in the above concrete paragraphs that the GCF does not want to disclose.

[17] *See, e.g.*, Aarhus Convention, *supra* note 2; Escazú Agreement, *supra* note 2.
[18] Previous CSO comments on the draft IDP from September 2015 with relevant points as they were not addressed in the IDP as approved in March 2016, available at https://drive.google.com/file/d/1af0_3KvS_z4jUDTKu0lLorm9l4H6TXDI/view?usp=sharing.

Again, this also undermines the public's right to participate and access to information, including through the regular sharing of information and the potential participation of the Active Observers in the deliberations (as a proxy for the public's right to engage).

Para. 11(j): Again, the phrase "may cause prejudice to the GCF" should be clarified as its meaning is not specific. Without definition, it seems arbitrary and in place as a cover-all for any exceptions not included in the above concrete paragraphs and that the GCF or Trustee does not want to disclose.

Para. 11(k): This paragraph should be amended as information about potential entities seeking accreditation should be disclosed significantly earlier than only in the 21 days preceding the Board meeting at which the entity may be approved for accreditation. Civil society and Indigenous Peoples organizations have held consistently, and again in the above sections, that there needs to be more transparency in the accreditation process and transparency of the accreditation pipeline. Thus, an accreditation applicant's identity should be disclosed when it enters the accreditation pipeline. This would allow for the participation of the public and help the GCF to avoid potential reputational risks. Further, the GCF should NOT be allowed to withhold the identity of an entity until after Board approval; as such this portion of the current sentence "...unless the entity has a reason to keep such information confidential, in which case such information shall be made available once such recommendation has been approved by the Board" should be deleted.

Section VI: Overrides

Para. 12: This paragraph is important to establish that there are reasons to disclose information despite some practices of exceptions; however, treating these cases as "overrides" contravenes the purpose of the IDP, where the presumption should be for disclosure. Detailed processes should exist in the opposite direction, to restrict access to information, rather than the grant it.

The meaning of "otherwise obligated to confidentiality" should be clarified. If there is another way that the GCF can be obligated, it should be defined.

In regards to the statement "…as well as the written consent of any third party that had provided information to the GCF in confidence…", if information is withheld because of third party rights and the third party gives consent, then that is not an override, as the title of the section suggests, but is, in fact, consent.

Para. 13. This paragraph should be deleted entirely. "Negative override" may sound better, but it is a veto right. At a minimum, the veto rights of GCF officials should be clarified.

SECTION VII: Language of Disclosure

Para.14: All project and programme proposals, at a minimum, should be disclosed in English as well as the dominant language(s) of the country where the project or programme is to be implemented. Similarly, as a bare minimum, core policy documents, procedures, and guidelines must be disclosed in the six UN languages.

Section VIII: Implementation aspects of This Policy

Para. 15: The statement ".....without duplicating what is to be published by the accredited entities and/or executing entities on their websites" should be deleted. Duplication is not the problem. The problem is not being able to know that a project or programme is GCF related and not being able to find all relevant information (or links to relevant information) on the GCF website. Thus the wording should be that "The GCF's website shall also provide links to the websites of accredited entities." With respect to access to information and information disclosure doubling and having as many information access avenues as possible is good. To that end, it is not enough to post information on the GCF's website, it should also be disclosed to the Active Observers. The IDP could provide an indicative list of the "Other means of dissemination [that] will be used by the GCF as may be required to reach its intended audiences." This, for example, should include disclosing information directly to local communities who may be impacted by a GCF project or programme.

Para. 16: The last sentence of this paragraph should be modified to add "...and through direct notification to the Active Observers."

Para. 17: This paragraph and the timely and accessible disclosure of environmental and social reports is critical. While this paragraph contains many good elements, it should be modified in the following ways. Subparagraphs (c) and (d) regarding category B and I-2 projects and programmes should be modified to extend the disclosure period for these projects and programmes to a minimum of 45 not 30 days. The 30 day prior to Board meeting disclosure has proven insufficient to conduct due diligence and to solicit input from stakeholders, in particular, people and communities who may be impacted by the projects and programmes. This is especially true given that the volume of projects and programmes seems likely to increase, for example there are 17 potential category B projects or programmes disclosed so far for B.26. Further, the current IDP states that it should be "at least 30 days in advance," which allows for disclosure to occur significantly earlier. Rather than treating the 30 day, or ideally 45 or longer, mark as the day on which projects are disclosed, the GCF should disclose information as early as it has access to it. For example, if the ESS disclosure is disclosed earlier on the AE's website, then the GCF should be informed and should share this information earlier, instead of waiting until it reaches the 30 day deadline. Additionally, the "environmental and social reports" referenced in this paragraph should also include stakeholder engagement plans, gender assessments, etc.

Para. 18: The GCF should maintain the practice of webcasting live proceedings of the meetings of the Board as this is critical for the participation of a broader range of stakeholders. The reference to making the recording of Board meetings available on the website "through registration only" should be stricken as there is no reason to require a prior registration to access Board meeting recordings for public Board meetings.

Para. 19: As referenced in the comments above, this paragraph and the provisions for public consultation should be strengthened as they are weaker than other international standards, such as those in Article 6(2) of the Aarhus Convention[19] and Article 7 of the Escazú Agreement.[20]

Para. 20: The phrase "some stage" is vague and should be clarified. Additionally, the time period of "after 10 years" is too long. Information should be proactively disclosed after 5 years and should be done so automatically without the need for a specific request.

Para. 21: Similarly to information falling under para. 20, historical information should become available automatically within a period of 5 years and should not require a disclosure request to be released. As stated throughout, the right of access to information is a human right and these exceptions restrict this human right and no human right shall be restricted indefinitely. Therefore, deadlines for disclosure should be added for all documents. These may be general archival rules (historical information). In some cases, when the right to information is restricted to protect other rights, then it depends on the individual whose right is protected. There also should be an expiration deadline for the protection of information falling under the exceptions listed in para. 11(a)–(e). The current text does not have an expiration deadline for documents that fall under these exceptions, thus under the current paras. 20-21, such information is withheld forever, even when it becomes historical information. Such restriction is overly excessive and cannot be proportionate to a necessary restriction of a human right. If it is a specific public interest, then it does not have to be protected forever as these public interests change, and information gets outdated.

Paras. 22-24: The rules contained in paras. 22-24 on "information upon request" overall should be improved and extended.

Para. 22: The phrase "within a reasonable period of time" is extremely vague and gives the Secretariat the option to de-prioritize or delay an information request solely based on its own choosing and without any parameters. There should be an overall time-limit (possibly 40 or 50 working days) by which the Secretariat is required to notify and update when information will be disclosed and why it is taking longer. Further, the Secretariat should not be able to have an indefinite number of extensions on the time limit for disclosure as information delayed is information denied. For example, CSOs submitted a request for Annual Performance Reviews (APRs) on July 15, 2019, and it has currently been more than 10 months without the disclosure of a single APR, including the single APR that was submitted for 2016. In addition to the burden being placed on the requesters in having had to ask for updates on the request, which should be done as a matter of course by the GCF, the most insightful updates have been given in conversation with Secretariat staff, rather than in writing, which is bad practice.

Paras. 22-23: It should be possible to submit requests for information in languages other than English. Requesters should be able to submit requests in any language and any format (i.e. video message, in person request, phone, etc.). Further, it is reasonable to expect a response in the

[19] *See* Aarhus Convention, *supra* note 2, at art. 6(2).
[20] *See* Escazú Agreement, *supra* note 2, at art. 7.

language submitted or, at a minimum, at least one of the six UN languages (and the one most likely to be accessible by the requester(s)).

Para. 24: The policy should make it clear that it is free to submit a request and that information will be provided for free, except in exceptional circumstances. It should also allow for fee waivers based on the need of the requester. Not specifying this might have a chilling effect on asking for information based on fear of possible costs. Further, the potential "fee" should not be higher than the actual cost of reproduction of information on any medium specified by the requester. The GCF staff hours should not be charged to the requester.

Section IX: Timelines for responding to requests

Para. 25: The phrase "shall endeavor to" should be deleted. Thirty (30) working days is a very long time, much longer than found in national laws. As noted above, the "additional time" potentially required should not be unlimited as having unlimited time to fulfil a request may effectively be a denial of information. Further, in addition to posting the list of requests reviewed and the corresponding decisions on the website, the GCF should post details about the requests and, if the request is granted, should post a link to the information disclosed on the table of the lists of requests.

Para. 26(b): This sentence is arbitrary and, therefore, should be clarified. There should be a clear indication of what constitutes an "excessive demand." The fact that information might have to be compiled, for example from different sources/documents, or that it may have parts that have to be redacted, is not sufficient to be deemed "excessive."

Para. 27: There are good reasons that can explain why a request is made after a certain period or that a similar request is made more than once. The GCF shall respond positively to requests since conditions may change, exceptions may be applied differently, or the requester, for good reasons, could have missed the deadline for an appeal to the IAP. This section should be amended accordingly.

Section XI: Appeal mechanism

Para. 28: As the Board has already established the IAP, the first sentence should be modified to say "The Board has established an Information Appeals Panel (IAP) to consider …."

Para. 29: The requirements for filing an appeal are too narrow. It should not be restricted to having been actually denied access to information, but should allow for appeals when a requester feels that his or her request has not been dealt with in accordance with the policy (for example, if a requester has not received a response within a reasonable time or the established time-limit for providing the information is violated). Additionally, appeals should be allowed when information is not disclosed in the time limits specified in this policy as late disclosure in these instances is effectively information denied. The requester having to establish why and how the GCF has violated its IDP policy in denying the access places too high a burden on requesters that might not have legal expertise. Requesters should merely have to state that the information has been denied, which

amounts to their right to access to information being violated, and this should be enough for an appeal to the IAP.

Para. 30: The IAP should have the authority to overturn decisions and order disclosure and this sentence should be amended to reflect that by deleting the word “recommend.”

Para. 31: The phrase "endeavor to" should be deleted. Additionally, the paragraph should specify the maximum amount of time and/or indicate that if additional time is required that the IAP will keep the requester appraised of the timeframe and provide updates in writing at regular intervals.

Para. 33: As this paragraph contains the first reference to the EAC, it should be modified to indicate that EAC means the Ethics and Audit Committee of the Board. In line with the comments on para. 30 above, there should be at least some barrier created to prevent the Board or the Executive Director from rejecting recommendations by the IAP given that such a rejection would be a final decision. For transparency and accountability, either the Board or the Executive Director should be required to provide and publish its reasoning as to why it is refusing to follow the IAP’s recommendations.

Para. 34: The decision should include the IAP's decisions.

V. Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the review of the IDP! Upholding the right of access to information is critically important. We look forward to working with the GCF to improve both the IDP and the ways in which the GCF implements it. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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- Both ENDS, The Netherlands
- Centro para la Autonomía y Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas (CADPI), Nicaragua
- Christian Aid
- Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)
- Heinrich Böll Stiftung Washington, DC
- Tebtebba Foundation, Philippines
- Transparency International
- TI - Korea Chapter
- Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), USA

In addition to those listed above, the following civil society and Indigenous Peoples organizations have signed on in support of this submission (in alphabetical order):

- Accountability Counsel
- Asian Indigenous Women's Network (AIWN)
- Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, Thailand
- Asociación Interamericana para la Defensa del Ambiente (AIDA)
- Bank Information Center, USA
- CARE International
- CARE International in Uganda, Uganda
- Climate Change and Sustainable Development Consortium, Sierra Leone
- EnGEN Collaborative, USA
- Fiji Youth SRHR Alliance, Fiji
- Humana People to People, Zimbabwe
- Lelewal Foundation, Cameroon
- Organización de Mujeres Indígenas Wangki Tangni, Nicaragua
- Oxfam
- PINGO's Forum, Tanzania
- Sukaar Welfare Organization, Pakistan
- Union Pour L'Emancipation de La Femme "UEFA" Autochtone, Democratic Republic of the Congo