

Reference Group Meeting: Gender and Inclusion Evaluation, with Attention to FCV contexts
Meeting Date: April 25, 2024

Attendees¹	
Geeta Batra	GEF IEO
Carl Bruch	ELI
Sara El Choufi	UNEG
Susannah Dibble	ELI
Ian Kissoon	CI
Adriana Moreira	GEF SECRETARIAT
Terence Hay-Edie	UNDP
Kate Steingraber	GEF IEO
Isabel Stack	ELI
Tianyu Wang	FECO

Geeta Batra (GEF IEO):

- Introduced the Gender and Social Inclusion Evaluation, noting that the evaluation will focus particularly on fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCS)
- The evaluation will be undertaken by Carl Bruch and his team at ELI, under the guidance of Kate Steingraber, GEF IEO
- Carl Bruch and ELI previously conducted the [Evaluation of GEF Support in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations](#) for the GEF IEO in 2020

Adriana Moreira (GEF Secretariat):

- Thought that the context of building on the prior FCV evaluation is interesting
- Noted that GEF Secretariat has used the prior study for GEF-8 programming, and that it also has helped the GEF Secretariat realize that the GEF is one of few non-humanitarian institutions that works in FCV countries
- Sees this new evaluation on social inclusion as timely
- Reinforced that it is important to keep in mind that the GEF's focus is delivering global environmental benefits

¹ Stefan Veigl (UNIDO) and Ganna Onysko (UNIDO) joined the reference group after the first meeting.

- Highlighted the need to understand what is doable within the applications of our limited resources within constrained situations. Ultimately, agencies are tasked with actually implementing the projects and the GEF relies heavily on agency policies
- Echoed the point that considering exclusion of marginalized groups in sustainable livelihood projects would be very interesting
- Suggested that the evaluation provide recommendations on how to tailor capacity building to FCV situations (including FCV situations in developed countries)
- Noted that the GEF Sec is concerned with the agencies' needs for capacity building in FCV areas and how to improve work for agency staff
- Noticed a few inconsistencies regarding the application of the policies
 - Encouraged evaluation team to think carefully about when various policies were enacted when assessing project compliance: most of the current policies were not present for most of GEF 5, 6, and some of 7
 - Consider adding a caveat that agencies have policies that may pre-date GEF policies
 - Consider the dates of the inception of the policies when moving forward with the selection of projects for case studies

Ian Kissoon (CI):

- Noted that Approach Paper presents gender as a binary rather than non-binary
- Drew attention to the fact that SOGI persons are affected differently, particularly in conflict-affected situations
- Noted that youth is defined differently by different national legal frameworks; questioned as to how the evaluation team will account for this variation and when the international and domestic definitions do not match
- Suggested the evaluation provides recommendations to address the emerging issues with IP and LC terminology in future projects
- Applying a binary definition of gender excludes sexual and gender minorities; not taking sexual and gender minorities into account reduces the potential to engage and benefit this marginalized group
- Recognized that identifying sexual and gender minorities may put them at risk in places where the national laws or cultural attitudes are inhospitable to SOGI issues
- Suggested that the evaluation could recommend approaches for addressing SOGI in different contexts
- Suggested the evaluation touch on the inclusivity of project grievance redress mechanisms and pose recommendations for addressing these gaps (ex. site visits in Mexico and Madagascar exposed that communities understood "grievance" as requiring one to go to court)
- Noted that the GEF's Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards (2018) (page 11, para 4) applied to GEF projects and programs submitted on or after July 1, 2019. Thus, the Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards (2018) including MS1, MS5 (including FPIC), and MS8 did NOT apply to all the projects in GEF 5-6 and many projects in GEF-7. However, the evaluation matrix includes some ESS policies (MS1,

MS5, and MS8) as inclusion indicators. These are not requirements for all GEF-5-6 projects and programs and many projects and programs in GEF-7.

Sara El Choufi (UNEG):

- Echoed Ian's comments
- Suggested integrated discussion of how youth are defined differently in different national contexts
- Noted that the GEF Council has been citing the importance of SOGI inclusion and sees SOGI as critical to include in an evaluation of marginalized groups
- Highlighted academic papers that assessed the economic cost of exclusion of SOGI people and found this cost is higher in FCV contexts (e.g., Lee Batchet articles on cost of exclusion, as well as UN, UNDP, and World Bank resources)
- Suggested particular attention to SOGI issues when evaluating projects that work on sustainable livelihoods, given that LGBTQ persons often excluded from livelihood opportunities provided by projects
- Questioned whether the references to gender in some instances and women in other instances in the evaluation matrix were intentional

Tianyu Wang (FECO):

- Noted that there is no standalone comprehensive GEF policy that addresses persons with disabilities, nor a comprehensive GEF policy addressing FCS.

Terence Hay-Edie (UNDP):

- Echoed emerging concerns about conflation of Indigenous Peoples with local communities, and that this diminishes the collective rights of IPs and can even be detrimental to local communities in some places
- Cautioned that agencies will need to be more careful regarding IP and LC terminology, framing, and issues
- Noted that the evaluation could incorporate a focus on Afro-descendent populations in Latin America
- Noted the possibility that there might be a new declaration adopted (similar to UNDRIP) on Afro-descendant populations
- Noted that displaced populations can have significant consequences, and to consider that the number of internally displaced persons is higher than persons displaced across borders
- Suggested checking out the "Leaving No One Behind" UNDP evaluation, particularly the recommended marker assessing exclusion from an intersectional lens
- Reported on three scenarios that agencies presented regarding the question of the conflation of IPLCs:
 1. Certain conventions have slowly begun to adopt certain language (like the "P" in "IPLC" for peoples)
 2. The "IPLC" terminology can be a way of allowing some rights to be discussed in countries and situations where the UN system and agencies have good intentions where a government doesn't recognize Indigenous Peoples

3. There are gaps in awareness among agencies that need a more basic understanding about IPLC issues
- Called for attention to the issue that some local communities have said they have the same rights as Indigenous Peoples

Geeta Batra (GEF IEO Director):

- Noted that analysis of exclusion of marginalized groups will be hard to address at portfolio level and easier to look at “deep dive” and case study levels
- Noted that the evaluation team will look at past as well as current policies, with recognition that things have changed
- Noted there is variation across agencies in the extent of agency safeguards and policies relate to social inclusion
- Emphasized that the focus of the evaluation is on what the GEF has done and if there are any gaps
- Suggested testing the sensitivity of definitions (such as those related to youth and IPLCs) in case studies and deep dives to assess what differences that the granularity of the definition ultimately makes to results
- Suggested performing a couple of case studies in countries that are non-FCV

GEF IEO and ELI Responses:

- Appreciates comments and will further integrate SOGI into evaluation and portfolio review
- The evaluation team is assessing social inclusion not only through the lens of human rights but also through the lens of global environmental benefits
- Noted that the thinking behind the evaluation is and will be informed by two external reviewers: one providing guidance on IPLC issues and one providing guidance on gender issues
- Shared that in the preliminary analysis of projects, the evaluation team has found that gender is almost always addressed in a substantial way. Project references to both IPLCs and youth are either addressed meaningfully or not included at all
 - The evaluation team is also finding some obvious areas of intersectionality. The evaluation team is also starting to see some appearances of refugees and displaced persons, and the evaluation team is capturing these emerging references to other marginalized groups
- Confirmed that the evaluation team is planning to look at inclusion of persons with disabilities. Thus far, the evaluation team has not found that projects are meaningfully addressing persons with disabilities
- Sees case studies as an opportunity to pull in local characterizations for how youth is being defined
- Welcomed guidance on how to distinguish between IP and LCs and frame the groups given the challenges, particularly when assessing older projects that may use terminology that is now outdated

- Asked whether there are particular aspects regarding SOGI that the evaluation should highlight and what type of findings on SOGI would be most relevant to the GEF given their strategy on inclusion
- Requested citations on the economic cost of SOGI exclusion and reference group to send any projects that speak to costs of exclusion or the benefits of inclusion to the evaluation team
- Discussed next steps and future involvement of reference group