

**Report – Key Highlights from the Eastern Africa Region Global Environment Facility (GEF) Expanded Constituency Workshop held in Kigali, Rwanda - 12-15<sup>th</sup> February 2019. By Dr. Joshua Zake (PhD), Executive Director, Environmental Alert. Email: ed@envalert.org or joszake@gmail.com.**



**1.0 Introduction**

This is a briefing report with key highlights from the recently concluded **Eastern Africa Region GEF Expanded Constituency Workshop held in Kigali, Rwanda during the period 12-15<sup>th</sup> February 2019 (See Table 1)**. This platform keeps GEF National Focal Points, Convention Focal points (including: *Convention on Biological Diversity - CBD, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change - UNFCCC, Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants - POPs, UN Convention to Combat Desertification - UNCCD, and Minamata Convention on Mercury*); and other key stakeholders – such as the Civil Society Organizations up to step in respect to the GEF strategies, policies and procedures.

This helps in promoting coordination and networking among the stakeholders. Besides, it’s an opportunity for National Focal Points to meet with their counterparts from other countries. Thus, as part of the process and interaction, other GEF Partners (including: *Member Countries, GEF Agencies, Conventions, Civil Society Organizations and Private Sector*) discuss and review policies and procedures and share experiences and lessons from GEF projects and their integration in respective National Policies and Programmes Frameworks. The accredited GEF Agencies operating in Uganda are: *United Nations Development Program; United Nations Environment Programme; African Development Bank; Conservation International; Food and Agriculture Organization; United Nations Industrial Development Organization*. It draw participation of **over 50 GEF Partner representatives** (of *respective country multi-lateral Government focal points, national operational focal points, GEF-CSO network regional representatives, the GEF Secretariat, GEF Small Grants Programme and GEF Agencies*) from the following countries in the East African Region: Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia, Djibouti, Sudan, Madagascar, Eritrea, South Sudan, Seychelles. I attended the workshop with other Ugandans from **Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development; National Environment Management Authority and Civil Society Organizations**. The participation was facilitated by the GEF/World Bank.

**Table 1.** Key highlights from Eastern Africa Region Global Environment Facility Expanded Constituency Workshop held in Kigali, Rwanda - 12-15<sup>th</sup> February 2019.

<b>Days</b>	<b>What was done</b>	<b>Outstanding issues</b>
<b>Day 1</b>	The engagements for Day 1 during the workshop brought participants on board for better understanding and articulation of who the GEF is; the overview of GEF 7 in respect to the strategy, Focal Programming strategies and climate change adaptation (i.e. LDCF-SCCF); GEF policies & operations; and GEF approaches (including: <i>stakeholder engagement, Gender equality, Environment &amp; Social Safeguards</i> ).	The very insightful and information for participants in respect to the GEF 7 and the several opportunities it presents towards contributing addressing the global environment challenges. It was very clear that moving forward the participants through their various stakeholder groups at the respective countries level had to take appropriate actions through leadership of the country multi-lateral Government focal points, national operational focal points and the members of the GEF CSO Networks to tap into these opportunities.

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	<p>Participants had the opportunity to present good-practice narratives based on their own experiences and discuss them with colleagues. Thus it provided a great opportunity for learning through interaction and information exchange. The key presentations for Day 1 sessions are here attached for more information and details. They are also available on the GEF website at:</p>	
<p><b>Day 2</b></p>	<p>On Day 2, the participants were actively engaged on specific topical sessions and related interactive discussions. The sessions were: <i>monitoring and evaluation for Country GEF supported projects/programs; the GEF – 7 – Results Architecture; Civil Society engagement with the GEF; the GEF small grants programme; Reflection on the roles and responsibilities of the GEF operational focal points; Exercise on GEF project cycle; and Knowledge and Learning – particularly reflecting on the practical application of GEF policies and approaches in GEF programs and projects cycles.</i></p>	<p>The meeting reflected on the roles of the Country GEF operational focal points. This aimed at checking whether the roles as stipulated in the regulations/guidelines are adequate and whether these should be reviewed to address any emerging issues to ensure that the focal points effectively information and updates about the GEF initiatives. Furthermore, to ensure that there is related effective involvement of stakeholders in country project design and implementation.</p> <p>Participants were updated with information in respect to the initiatives and frameworks by the GEF in respect to monitoring and evaluation and related targets and measurements of results, outcomes and impacts from the overall program interventions and investments by the GEF Globally.</p> <p>Participants obtained a better understanding of the GEF Small Grants Programs priorities and focus in respect to the GEF – 7 strategy. Thus, the available grants include: <b>Planning Grants:</b> up to \$5000; <b>Regular Grants:</b> up to \$50,000; <b>Strategic Grants:</b> up to \$150,000; <b>Global/Regional Grants:</b> \$250k to 500k</p> <p>Participants reflected on the key considerations as part of the process of project design and related process for approval by GEF. Thus, the project should clearly articulate the country priorities and linkage to the conventions. Besides, also equally important is the selection of the appropriate GEF Agency and the executing agency for the project.</p>

		<p>Participants were taken through the steps in the application process and related application of knowledge management in project design and implementation. Thus, further details are available in the presentation at: <a href="https://www.thegef.org/events/ecw-rwanda-2019">https://www.thegef.org/events/ecw-rwanda-2019</a></p> <p>Besides, they were also made aware about the opportunities within the GEF framework for learning and application of knowledge management. Some of these are the e-learning course about the GEF through the GEF website and knowledge and learning page i.e. at: <a href="http://www.thegef.org">http://www.thegef.org</a></p> <p>They were also introduced to application of several web based knowledge management tools such as: <i>e-learning program for gender mainstreaming</i></p>
<p><b>Day 3</b></p>	<p>On Day 3, participants interacted through a field visit to appreciate the lessons and learnings from the GEF Small Grants funded Programs in Rwanda. These included: <i>the Aquaponics and Aquaponics Green house; Ecosan composting and fertilizer.</i></p> <p>Further information about each of the projects is attached for further information.</p>	<p>The field visits enabled the participants to appreciate the practices and innovations which would build into improved livelihood (i.e. incomes, food security) while sustainably using the environment and natural resources. The respective projects demonstrated several good practices and lessons that can be up scaled and out scaled within urban and peri-urban communities.</p>
<p><b>Day 4</b></p>	<p>Interaction and reflections in respect to the GEF-CSO Network. These were based on 2 presentations made by the GEF Secretariat and the GEF CSO Network regional Focal point. The presentations are available at:</p>	<p>The following are some of the key observations for further reflections to further strengthen the role of the GEF CSO Network at the national and regional level:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>Reflecting on the roles and responsibilities for network for instance strengthening the role and governance the GEF Network. For instance, reporting on key emerging issues (challenges and opportunities) and lessons learnt on various themes and aspects at national and sub-regional levels and based on this suggest some alternative recommendations both at the practice and policy levels – with the GEF framework and outside within National governments;</i></li> <li>b. <i>Need for development of performance targets for the GEF Network regional secretariats in respect to the roles/responsibilities of the network in terms of facilitating stakeholder dialogues at the national and regional levels; Information sharing and dissemination; and</i></li> </ol>



		<p><i>Membership servicing;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>c. Adequate facilitation (in terms of finance, human resources and tools) to the GEF CSO Network focal points/Secretariats to effectively deliver on their roles and responsibilities;</i></li> <li><i>d. Advancing participation of the CSOs in the design and implementation of the GEF funded development initiatives in the respective countries.</i></li> <li><i>e. Bridging the gap between the sub-regional and global GEF CSO Networks</i></li> <li><i>f. Strengthening the interaction and information sharing between the GEF-CSO Network at the national, regional and global levels. The network website is one strategy for achieving this. However, it requires further development and related updating of information and content to share/disseminate key GEF information and key cases and or related lessons learnt from project implementation by the CSOs at national and sub-regional levels.</i></li> </ul>
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### **1.2 Other key observations and suggestions**

The Eastern Africa Region GEF Expanded Constituency Workshop brought together key GEF Partners in the region. It provided a great opportunity for the partners to know more about the GEF plans and processes especially the *GEF 7 Strategy, Small Grants Program and other related frameworks* to support its implementation across the various regions and countries. The outcomes from the reflections need to be followed through for further discussions at different decision making structures within the GEF. The GEF partners from the respective countries in the East Africa region needs to follow up with required proactive actions to tap into the several opportunities available within the GEF portfolio and framework. The GEF-CSO Network regional focal points should pass on the information and outcomes from this meeting among the member CSOs in their respective countries. Further reflections should be advanced on how the GEF-CSO Network’s governance and engagements can be strengthened at the national and sub-regional levels through responsive technical and financial support to effectively deliver on their roles and responsibilities within the GEF framework.

### **3.0 Key websites for further information:**

The Global Environment facility: <https://www.thegef.org/>

The Multi-lateral agreement conventions: <https://www.thegef.org/partners/conventions>

The Expanded Constituency Workshop (ECW) in Rwanda – 12-15<sup>th</sup> February 2019 (**attached**).

The Photos from the opening session of the ECW: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/98168367@N06/sets/72157678600550478>