

# GEF Women and Gender Caucus' Priorities for GEF-9 and all GEF Funds

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The transformative ambitions of GEF-9 and all GEF-related Funds cannot be achieved without adequate, predictable, accessible and rights-based public environmental finance capable of addressing interconnected biodiversity, climate, land degradation, natural resources governance, and pollution challenges. Persistent funding gaps and insufficient financial contributions undermine not only environmental effectiveness, but also efforts to address structural inequalities and support locally led environmental action.

Environmental finance is not only a question of volume, but also of justice, governance and power. Adequate financing is essential, but so is transforming how resources are governed, allocated and accessed.

1. Environmental finance must transform structural inequalities, not reproduce them

2. Direct access to finance must become a core principle of transformative environmental funding

3. Governance of environmental finance must be equitable, representative and democratic

4. Gender justice must shape environmental policy, programming and reporting frameworks across all GEF-related processes and Funds

5. Effective environmental finance requires transparency, accountability and long-term evaluation systems

## 1. Environmental finance must transform structural inequalities, not reproduce them

GEF-9 and all GEF Funds must ensure that environmental finance actively contributes to transforming structural inequalities. Gender justice, human rights and environmental effectiveness are mutually reinforcing and essential for achieving lasting global environmental benefits.

### Recommendations

- All contributors should fulfil and scale up their financial commitments to the GEF and all its Funds in a manner consistent with the scale and urgency of global environmental decline.
- GEF-9 replenishment processes should prioritise adequate, predictable and grant-based public funding capable of supporting long-term, rights-based and gender-responsive environmental action.
- Prioritise support for initiatives that respect, protect and strengthen women's rights and safety, including through legal reforms, implementation measures, prevention of gender-based violence, secure land tenure especially for women, and the elimination of discriminatory social norms and barriers.
- Require GEF-related processes, programmes and initiatives to strengthen the knowledge, leadership and contributions of women, including those from Indigenous Peoples, people of African descent and local communities.

## 2. Direct access to finance must become a core principle of transformative environmental funding

Direct, flexible and culturally appropriate access to funding is essential to ensure that environmental funding reaches those working on the frontlines of biodiversity conservation, climate resilience and sustainable resource management. Current access modalities, accreditation procedures and due diligence requirements continue to create disproportionate barriers for women-led organisations, grassroots groups and community-based actors.

### Recommendations

- Establish dedicated direct-access financing windows and simplified access modalities for women and youth-led organisations, and Indigenous Peoples, people of African descent and local communities across GEF and all its Funds, including the GBFF.
- Allocate dedicated resources to support proposal development, readiness and compliance processes for such organisations seeking access to GEF financing.
- Regularly assess the effectiveness, transparency and inclusiveness of GEF access modalities and Focal Point systems, including their role in enabling equitable access to environmental finance by women-led and community-led organisations.
- Resource mobilisation efforts should ensure that increased financing does not reinforce existing concentration of financial flows among large intermediaries.
- Establish transparent monitoring and public reporting on the extent to which GEF resources directly reach women-led, Indigenous-led and community-led initiatives across all GEF-related Funds and financing mechanisms.

### 3. Governance of environmental finance must be equitable, representative and democratic

Transformative environmental funding requires structural shifts in who shapes priorities, governs financial flows and contributes to decision-making processes. Governance systems across the GEF and the GBFF must become more equitable, representative and transparent in order to strengthen legitimacy, effectiveness and accountability.

#### Recommendations

- Formally recognise the Women and Gender Caucus within the GEF architecture as a dedicated mechanism contributing to discussions on environmental funding, governance, policy coherence, access to information and justice.
- Ensure that governance reforms under GEF-9 strengthen democratic decision-making and equitable representation within environmental funding systems rather than reinforcing highly centralised financing approaches.
- Strengthen transparency and inclusiveness within governance and consultation processes, including the Working Group of Council and other relevant governance mechanisms related to GEF reform and resource allocation.
- Regularly assess the transparency, inclusiveness and effectiveness of GEF governance structures, consultation mechanisms and decision-making processes, including the role of GEF Focal Point systems.

### 4. Gender justice must shape environmental policy, programming and reporting frameworks across all GEF-related processes and Funds

Gender justice cannot remain a cross-cutting aspiration. It must shape the policy frameworks, programming directions, operational modalities and reporting systems of GEF-9, the GBFF and all GEF-related processes and initiatives. Transformative environmental funding requires institutional frameworks that actively address structural inequalities and support rights-based and gender-responsive implementation.

#### Recommendations

- Review and update the GEF Gender Policy (2017) to align with recently adopted COP decisions on gender, including the CBD Gender Plan of Action (2022) and the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan (2025).
- Establish dedicated funding and targeted budget lines under GEF-9 consistent with Objective 3.6 of the CBD Gender Plan of Action (Decision 15/11).
- Strengthen gender expertise across technical assessment, including through the integration of dedicated gender expertise within the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel and other relevant advisory and technical bodies.
- Integrate gender-responsive budgeting approaches throughout GEF operational frameworks to ensure that dedicated financial resources address structural barriers and support women-led organisations.
- Require gender-responsive and disaggregated indicators across GEF reporting systems to capture outcomes related to rights, governance, access and control over land and resources and long-term environmental stewardship.

## 5. Effective environmental finance requires transparency, accountability and long-term evaluation systems

Environmental finance cannot be considered effective if transparency, accountability and long-term impacts are sacrificed in favour of short-term, output-driven or purely technocratic approaches. Lasting global environmental benefits require evaluation systems capable of measuring transformational environmental, social, governance and institutional change over time.

### Recommendations

- Publish regularly, transparent and accessible reporting on allocation decisions, project outcomes and implementation impacts, in formats that are understandable, accessible and usable by local actors, including women led organisations.
- Require Implementing Agencies and executing partners to systematically apply existing GEF gender guidance across project implementation, monitoring and evaluation, including reporting on long-term environmental, social and governance outcomes.
- Request the GEF Independent Evaluation Office to strengthen evaluation and performance assessments to include long-term social and institutional transformation, and rights-based approaches as core dimensions of environmental finance effectiveness.
- Require GEF evaluation frameworks to integrate qualitative and participatory methodologies, including citizen data, capable of measuring behavioural, institutional and community-level change beyond short project cycles.

**The GEF Women and Gender Caucus is a self-organised coalition of women constituencies across the Conventions that GEF serves, as well as women networks, organisations, and gender allies united under GEF's diverse agendas, fostering a human rights based approach and social and gender justice. It works in close collaboration with the GEF Gender Partnership.**

For more information visit: <https://cbd womenscaucus.org/initiatives/gef-women-and-gender-caucus> or contact [coordination@cbd womenscaucus.org](mailto:coordination@cbd womenscaucus.org)

