



*“ Stories are
a communal
currency of
humanity. ”*

Tahir Shah

OBSERVER STORIES

ANECDOTES AND LESSONS IN STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT
FROM NON-STATE ACTORS IN CLIMATE FUNDS

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Stakeholder
Advisory Network
on Climate Finance



"Stories are a communal currency of humanity."

— Tahir Shah

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Foreword

Climate change is a defining issue of our time and requires immediate, ambition from the global to the local scale. Climate finance must be effective and equitable. The move from polluting to renewable energy must be a just transition, involving local governments, civil society, the private sector, and Indigenous Peoples to support affected, vulnerable communities and create green jobs.

All major multilateral climate funds (CFs)¹ have embraced principles of multi-stakeholder partnership as tenets of their governance and operations. These principles express a belief that local stakeholder engagement will lead to transparency and accountability, as well as improved outcomes and impact. Observers from civil society organizations (CSOs), private sector entities (PSE), and Indigenous Peoples' (IP) groups serve on climate fund committees. Observers are independent of the funds and are generally selected by their peers to represent their constituencies at the various climate funds.

Observers' roles vary greatly. Generally, they must understand the fund's governance and the country context of various funding proposals; have technical expertise; and understand climate finance flows. This is a big task for anyone serving in a voluntary capacity, and observers tend to have well-established networks within their constituencies in order to be effective in their roles.

The Stakeholder Advisory Network on Climate Finance (SAN) is a first-of-its kind model pulling together CSO, PSE, and IP stakeholders to address the constraints faced by observers; strengthen partnerships; amplify their voices; and better meet the needs of those most vulnerable to climate change. This study documents the stories, challenges, and experiences of SAN members. We hope it is a useful resource to climate funds as we progress towards more inclusive climate finance.

— SAN Coordinating Committee

¹ The primary multilateral CFs are the Adaptation Fund (AF), the Climate Investment Funds (CIF), the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

List of Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AF	Adaptation Fund
CIF	Climate Investment Funds
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CTF	Clean Technology Fund (CIF)
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
FIP	Forest Investment Program (CIF)
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IP	Indigenous Peoples
LC	Local Communities
MDB	Multilateral Development Bank
PS	Private Sector
PSE	Private Sector Enterprise
PPCR	Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (CIF)
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation and foster conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.
SAN	Stakeholder Advisory Network on Climate Finance
SAN CC	Stakeholder Advisory Network on Climate Finance Coordinating Committee
SREP	Scaling up Renewable Energy Program in Low Income Countries (CIF)
UNFCCC COP	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Conference of the Parties
WB	World Bank

Executive Summary

The inclusion of non-state actors as observers is one of the most pivotal underpinnings of accountability and transparency in climate finance. Over the years, observers representing civil society, the private sector, and Indigenous Peoples have provided indispensable oversight to climate funds' programs, giving voice to those who are not at the table, but are affected on the ground. This model of engaging non-state actors is a cornerstone of inclusive climate finance, and it we need to continuously explore ways to strengthen it and better support observers in carrying out their role. When we empower an observer, we empower not one person, but the many people they speak for. Recognizing that representation matters, we believe it matters even more when the impacts of climate change fall disproportionately on communities that are often voiceless.

This initiative, launched in August 2020, is an effort by the Stakeholder Engagement team at the Climate Investment Funds (CIF) to collect stories from observers of various climate funds who are members of the Stakeholder Advisory Network on Climate Finance (SAN). The SAN was formed in 2016 as a network of current and former observers of climate funds, to strengthen the governance and implementation of climate finance through enhanced stakeholder engagement and knowledge-sharing.² Partially responding to recommendations from an independent evaluation of CIF's local stakeholder engagement (LSE), this study focuses mainly on the experiences of observers for CIF programs, primarily in clean technology, which have been found to have weaker LSE. Insights collected through this study will help inform better stakeholder engagement within CIF programs and serve as an onboarding tool for CIF's new observers. This study, and the stories it tells, also holds key lessons for all climate funds on how to better support observers, and may inspire them to undertake similar studies by collecting stories from their own observers.

² See SAN. 2020. "SAN Strategy and Business Plan 2020 – Draft." Washington, DC: Stakeholder Advisory Network on Climate Finance. <https://www.sanclimate.org>.

1. Background

This study builds on work conducted in February 2020 by the Consensus Building Institute to evaluate local stakeholder engagement (LSE) in the CIF.³ One of that study's key findings was that there was substantial variation across the four CIF programs⁴ in the depth, breadth, and influence of LSE during investment planning. The Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR) was found to be most consistently effective in LSE, followed by the Forest Investment Program (FIP). **The lowest effectiveness in the breadth, depth and influence of LSE was found in the Clean Technology Fund (CTF) and the Scaling-Up Renewable Energy Program for Low Income Countries (SREP).**

This is especially relevant when read with the finding that strong LSE during investment planning usually laid the groundwork for effective LSE during project design and implementation. The 2020 study also found that while there has been consistent observer engagement on local stakeholder issues in CIF committee meetings, more could be done to ensure that observers are able to sustain engagement with their constituencies at the regional, national, and local levels.

In delving deeper, this study also explores an oft-raised concern about the role of the private sector in observer networks. Climate fund observers tend to be heterogeneous group, most commonly representing three types of constituencies: civil society, Indigenous Peoples, and the private sector. However, due to the varying interests of these constituencies, **the idea of “cooperation” between civil society and the private sector in a shared “stakeholder network” space is often challenged.** This study collects observers' views on the possibility, scope, and nature of collaboration between civil society and the private sector, in this case on governance platforms in climate finance.

Finally, the study interviews members of the SAN because of **SAN's ability to act as a bridge, both between former and current observers of individual climate funds, and among observers of**

³ CIF. 2020. “Local Stakeholder Engagement in the Climate Investment Funds: Evaluation Report.” Prepared by the Consensus Building Institute. Washington, DC: Climate Investment Funds. https://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/sites/cif_enc/files/knowledge-documents/evaluation_of_local_stakeholder_engagement_in_the_cif.pdf.

⁴ For more information about CIF's programs, see <https://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org>.

different climate funds. In this sense, the SAN serves as a repository of the experiences and insights in stakeholder engagement held by its members, who have served as observers across years and funds. Continued engagement among SAN members also helps build their knowledge and understanding of their shared experiences in stakeholder engagement, deepening their insights. Thus, through the SAN, the study goes beyond current, individual observers of a single climate fund, to collect deeper insights from a more diverse and integrated network of observers.

2. Objectives

Through anecdotal evidence collected over interviews with SAN members, this study aims to collate lessons and experiences from observers on what they consider to be effective for stakeholder engagement. Observers play critical roles in shaping policies and operations around climate finance that are necessary for delivering timely solutions to climate-induced vulnerabilities. These insights will inform stakeholder practices within CIF current programs, with a focus on the CTF and SREP, as well as efforts to enhance the role of observers on the CIF's governance platform and beyond.

The study has four specific objectives:

1. **Derive insights on better local stakeholder engagement in CIF programs, with a special emphasis on CTF and SREP,** where LSE had been found to be least effective.
2. **Generate insights for the scope, possibility, and nature of collaboration between the civil society and private sector** within observer networks.
3. **Generate lessons about the ways observers can be better supported in carrying out their role** and fulfilling their mandate.
4. **Generate material that can be used in onboarding for new observers to climate funds,** so they can apply these insights to their role.

3. Relevance to Climate Funds

In addition to the CIF, the lessons from this study are relevant to other climate and environment funds, particularly the Adaptation Fund (AF), Global Environment Facility (GEF), Green Climate Fund (GCF), and Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), which have the largest climate portfolios.

While climate funds differ in the exact role that observers play in their governance, all the major climate funds recognize and engage observers. The GCF, for example, recognizes four active observers who can attend board meetings, and it has accredited 296 CSOs and 83 private sector organizations as its wider observer network. AF observers are supported by a growing, 250-strong, AF CSO Network, an independent coalition. The GEF supports a 500-member GEF CSO Network, which is involved in consultations and other constituency engagement workshops. The FCPF recognizes “Participant Committee” members as official observers and acknowledges wider observer participation.⁵

Stories from observers of climate funds hold relevance for any climate fund that engages non-state actors as observers. Ultimately, the lessons we derive from these stories should promote knowledge-sharing among observers across the climate funds and among the funds themselves.

4. Methodology

Seventeen SAN members were interviewed for this study. All are, or used to be, observers to a climate fund. Fourteen were observers for one of CIF’s programs, one was an observer at the FCPF, one at the GCF, and one at the GEF. Three represented the private sector, two represented Indigenous Peoples, and 12 represented civil society. Two-thirds of the CIF observers serve(d) on the CTF (five) or SREP (four) Committees. The selection of interviewees was based on members’ availability and interest to participate, as well as on the relevance of their role to this study.

⁵ Source: SAN Elections Implementation Note (2020). [Unpublished during release of the study, but can be found at sanclimate.org in the future]

The next section presents the findings of the analysis of the interviews, ending with proposed solutions to the barriers. Transcripts of the interviews are provided in the Annex.

5. Findings

The interviews revealed certain bright spots within the CIF's stakeholder engagement practices, but also several barriers in current stakeholder engagement practices that inhibit in-depth and meaningful engagement. They are presented in turn, along with a synthesis of potential solutions.

BRIGHT SPOTS

1. Across the board, respondents applauded CIF's model for providing a safe and inclusive space in its governance that enables non-state actors to engage in committee meetings. In particular, they expressed appreciation for the lack of time limits or hierarchies for observers, which allowed them to engage fully in trust fund committee and subcommittee meetings. There was also appreciation for the constant flow of information on CIF activities, which kept observers in the loop as much as voting members of the committees. One noted that the CIF meeting *"was so unlike the UNFCCC COP meetings, where we are only given two minutes—which, too, has to be divided amongst civil society groups. In CIF meetings you really have the opportunity to take the floor and present your opinion. CIF meetings are unlike many other forums for climate action where most non-state actors watch the negotiations from a TV because not all of them fit into the space. But in the CIF, you have your space—you can speak out in your capacity as active primary observer for that particular Trust Fund Committee"*.

2. Many observers said they were able to make even bigger impacts in their own countries after their observer experience. One mechanism through which this happened was giving non-state actors a voice during discussions on projects that affected their home country. For observers, this was a valuable experience in their advocacy work. One said: *"The opportunity I had to give feedback to a proposal for my country, Nicaragua, in the CIF meeting was a very positive experience—one I would never have had, and that is the safe space CIF gives its observers. I remember when the Nicaraguan representative presented the proposal, and I asked questions and they responded, and then I could even ask follow-up questions in detail, which*

was very valuable. I had more information to ask than others in the meeting, because it was my country. I had read the proposal and identified the issues—for example, in an autonomous region, you could not do the project, because you had to pass through regional governments. These issues I knew because I had the cultural information on the country context. For me, that was a very good experience as an observer, to give feedback directly to the government from my country, and you felt at the same level as them—such that the observers weren't just there to listen, but they also had power.”

Observers' access to government and MDB representatives also enabled the exchange of ideas, which could culminate in reforms or even new policies. The tea breaks and informal gatherings during committee meetings provide a space for observers to interact with the voting members. One observer seized the opportunity to advocate for a new solar policy for his country: *“I remember when I raised the issue of solar energy plan for Rajasthan in my first CTF committee, as we have bright sunlight during 300–330 days of the year. Even in rainy months of July and August we have 8–9 sunshine days in the western Rajasthan. [I was asked a] number of questions... and I had to explain the geographical background and situation of desertification and long-spread sand dunes in the Rajasthan state of India. Later, many delegates discussed with me the history and geography of Rajasthan during the lunch and tea breaks. It was [a] very memorable meeting for me, as after that, a big proposal [for the] climate investment fund was presented by a lady officer from the Ministry of Energy, Government of India, and I am happy that it was approved during my tenure.”*

3. Learning about new climate finance concepts and tools from their observer colleagues amplified observers' ability to create impact for their own constituencies and country. The CIF has launched multiple efforts to enable observers to network and hold workshops, panel discussions, and briefings—all of which are opportunities to learn from one another. This learning builds their capacity for advocacy. One said: *“The role of Global North's CSOs was significant to developing the capacity of Global South observers. The first meeting I participated in, I had no idea what carbon trading or carbon markets meant—neither did my Indigenous People colleagues. So I was very lost during the first workshop. But the next day, I met a CSO observer from the Global North during breakfast, and I said to him: ‘I am from Nepal, and all of this probably affects me, but I don't know what we are talking about in our workshop.’ So then*

as a teacher he drew pictures and explained to me over breakfast these concepts. For the next 4–5 days then, I actively participated and got ideas about how this discourse impacts my community. I collected materials from that workshop and came back to Nepal. I made a 4–5 page document in the local language and shared what I had learned with many CSOs working in forestry in Nepal. They were very interested to know about it. I wrote many articles on this and met with many government officials to inform them about these concepts, too. Ultimately this led to the first REDD+ proposal being developed for Nepal.”

4. There was evidence, albeit limited, of observers’ interventions ensuring the accountability of state actors and achieving revisions of project proposals. This highlights a bright spot not only in the inclusion of observers’ voices, but also in the power of regional networks to contribute at committee meetings through the voices of observers. One quote illustrates this well: *“A few years ago I was preparing to participate in the committee meeting. I got an email from an Indigenous People colleague from Bangkok, and he informed me that the Government of Thailand was going to submit their proposal [to] FCPF, but the proposal is not respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples. When I got the project document, I read it and developed a few points of intervention. During the discussion on the project in the committee meeting, I raised the concern with the project and showed them the press release from Bangkok CSOs. There was a hot debate during the committee meeting, and the chair decided to form a separate subcommittee to discuss the proposal, and I was selected to be part of it. I asked them to update the proposal in a participatory manner with the marginalized communities. I also requested the committee to allot a separate grant to educate and empower Thai civil society members who would be affected by the project, so they could engage effectively. The Swiss government in that meeting declared a US\$500,000 grant for this purpose, and asked the Thai government to resubmit their proposal in the next meeting. The grant went to a regional NGO that trained the civil society and redeveloped the proposal, which was subsequently submitted by the Thailand government in the next meeting.”*

BARRIERS

1. The majority of observers noted challenges in reviewing long program documents, which are often sent with very little time to review before committee meetings. Observers continue

to work full-time with their own organization, and they described time constraints and competing priorities that made it difficult to adequately review lengthy program documents. As one said: *“One of the limitations I had was the very limited amount of time I would get to prepare for the meetings. I remember that we were getting a lot of emails and documents on the projects, but one simply did not have time to go through all this information in time and detail.”*

There was a gap between the expertise of observers and the expertise required in reviewing technocratic reports. This issue was particularly pronounced for CTF and SREP observers, since these programs tended to have more technical documents and relatively less in-depth LSE during investment planning. Observers are experienced and well-networked advocates, and they know how issues affect their community. However, none of this necessarily prepares them to analyze program documents, which requires issue expertise and familiarity with technical terms within the MDB system. One interviewee, an energy access expert, described speaking up frequently in the SREP committee meetings, but noted of fellow observers: *“our Indigenous People colleagues, who were more focused on remote communities and political issues around rights and justice, did not know the technical context of the topics well enough. This meant there was often a huge mismatch in the skill sets. [...] It is not that I was better than those observers—it is that they have a different skill set which does not necessarily align with raising issues with project technical documents. That skill and the world of energy access is familiar to me, but may not be to them, leaving a gap in ability to intervene. So there is a fundamental flaw in the gap between issue expertise and stakeholder constituency expertise.”*

Lack of familiarity with the country context and lack of information on the ground further limited some observers’ capacity to thoroughly review program documents. Observers often represent a large region, and while their networks might extend to the entire region, they are often not familiar with the local stakeholders or issues of the entire region. This limitation also makes it difficult to know what did or would happen on the ground with a project. As one observer noted: *“During meetings in Washington, the challenge was there was rarely enough time for us to go through these technical project documents and review them in time. We were given big lumps of books upon arrival and maybe a summary at the last moment, and we did not have the documents in advance to be able to consult and confirm things on the ground. We*

had no information on the ground, only documents on the table.” Another observer noted: “The documents are long, and if you are not from the community where the projects are implemented, then it is hard to have interest or knowledge about them.”

Non-native English speakers faced even greater challenges in reviewing project documents.

Many observers are conversant in English, but do most of their advocacy or issue-specific work in their native languages. This makes it even harder to actively engage and provide feedback on long program documents. As one observer said: *“We would also regularly get 300 pages of documents to read within 14 days, and no advanced notice to schedule our time to review them. There was also a huge gap between different observers’ ability to understand those documents. So myself, for example, I am very good at English, but many of my Indigenous People colleagues were not, and they struggled with in-depth review.”*

2. The technical nature of program documents made it challenging for observers to share information in an accessible manner with affected local stakeholders in their networks.

One of the tasks for observers is to disseminate project information to the affected communities through their relevant networks. However, even when observers were well-networked and shared program information with the relevant stakeholders affected by the project, the technical nature of the documents acted as a barrier to meaningful dissemination of that information.

Time constraints led observers to forward documents on issues with which they were unfamiliar to their social networks. However, they rarely ever received a response, or any meaningful engagement, because the documents were not easily comprehensible to people in local organizations. As one observer said: *“I would always get emails that there is this project in your region, Latin America, and we disseminate that, and if our networks have feedback on the project, we can address it. But it wasn’t super clear; people did not know CTF and which countries had CTF programs. Even when I would forward the project information to my networks, I never got a reply from organizations interested or who had interventions, which probably means it was not an effective method.”*

More broadly, although observers did disseminate project information within their networks, the current methods of dissemination are not effective to engage local stakeholders. Several

observers indicated that they do not think forwarding emails with project documents is an effective way to engage. Linguistic barriers, limited internet access, and lack of technical ability all pose challenges. As one observer indicated: *“If you ask me if I feel completely happy with my role: I do not. Because it was expected that I would do more than just send around some emails, but I just did not have enough time to share information in a more accessible way... If I saw a project—for example, one in Honduras, where my organization had contacts, I would send the project info directly to them. This is how I tried to comply with my duties, but... what I would have liked to do was have time to present some short briefings and present the information in a more digestible and synthesized manner to the people, so they could identify any potential risks to them.”*

There was a lack of coordination mechanisms among observers from different climate funds and between observers and local stakeholders. There was also no procedure within the climate funds’ governance to formally record, track, and resolve observers’ concerns. As one interviewee said: *“In my role as an observer, I could not connect directly with the funded project’s stakeholders. I missed mechanisms supporting coordination among my colleagues from other climate funds and sector representation. As a group, we lacked a commonly agreed plan based on stakeholders’ concerns. I also realized the need for a formal procedure within the climate funds, which can follow and track observers’ requests. An acknowledgment of the stakeholders’ demands was not enough in terms of transparency and accountability. Stakeholders and observers needed a formal answer (either positively or negatively) from the climate funds, to be taken seriously. Based on this, I realized there is a need to formally and efficiently link the stakeholders, observers, and climate funds (‘Entities of the Climate Funding Cycle’).”*

3. Many observers noted a lack of collaboration between the private sector and civil society, despite synergies in their goals in climate finance and the insights that could accrue from collaboration. There were two main reasons behind this. First, there was little overlap or interaction among observers across constituencies—particularly between the private sector and CSOs. Some observers said CSO observers were often completely unaware of who the private sector observers in their committees were. One said: *“In my experience, the private sector and CSOs only meet at the World Bank for meetings. There is no other interaction. CSOs*

and PSEs can and should collaborate in areas where they have common ground. It is important to remain mindful of the fact that PSEs are profit-oriented, while CSOs are mainly for service delivery. There is, however, a possibility of CSOs working as social enterprises and benefiting from knowledge that PSEs already possess, while PSEs can also learn from CSOs how to be human in their operations even as they pursue profit.”

Second, there was an inherent assumption that the private sector’s interests were always incompatible or harmful to those of other non-state actors. This assumption was rooted in experience but solidified by the lack of communication and collaboration. An observer who has worked both in CSOs and the private sector said: *“I used to be in private sector earlier, doing hydroelectric projects. My company held local events to promote and inform about the project and also about corporate social responsibility to the people. All stakeholders need at some point to cooperate. PSEs benefit from CSO, because if civil society is not involved, [the] project won’t be sustainable. And how civil society benefits from [the] private sector is that private sector capacity is needed to implement the project. When I was in the private sector for a hydroelectric project, nobody wanted the project to go ahead. It was loud and it wasn’t even electricity from the grid. So civil society said, ‘We do not want private sector doing this project here, because not only do you destroy the landscape, we do not even get grid electricity.’ Because if the electricity from the hydroelectric feeds into the grid, it is not for the local people, but for the national grid. So civil society did not feel they were getting any benefits, and we were also a foreign company. But in the long term they were going to benefit from more energy in the grid passing on to them, and that’s what our outreach tried to explain—that we are renewable energy, and this kind of energy also reduces costs, so [the] prices of electricity will lower for everyone and lower pollution due to clean energy. So it is important to engage. [The] private sector, of course, also needs commitments to the community—for example, in the framework of corporate social responsibility. We invited all the leaders of the community and explained the negative short-term impacts and positive long-term impacts and made commitments of jobs, positive effects on community, etc. It would have been difficult for the project to have people so opposed to the project, so [the] private sector also needs to engage.”*

4. The engagement of observers only after the project design was finalized limited their ability to make meaningful interventions and their interest in doing so. Many observers

mentioned that project documents would only come to them for review and discussion in committee meetings after the design was finalized. This left little room to raise issues earlier in the design stage. One observer noted: *“In general, observers were consulted little to none before the finalization process of the reports presented in the meetings... [It] wasn’t the comments that were made that were not eventually adopted; it was instead the inability to make comments at an earlier, meaningful, stage. Because when we looked at documents, the only comments that we could make were, ‘Oh well, you might want to change that little thing,’ since everything was done and decided. The consulting budget had been spent; another mission to go to the country to redesign the project was not possible. So what are you going to comment as an observer? It was frustrating. I never felt that my comments were ignored in the meetings themselves, though; it was the stage of consultation I have an issue with.”*

MDB meetings about the program and the project at the country level would sometimes

exclude the CIF observer from the country. One interviewee offered this example: *“In Samoa, WB and ADB held meetings on PPCR related activities and ignored the existence of the CIF observer in Samoa (myself), who only found out of the CIF activities being held in my own country when I read about it on local papers and saw it on TV. This was relayed to CIF HQ in DC, and some inquiry was taken by the relevant subcommittee of CIF. But this dismissal attitude of the MDBs with regards [to] IPs/LCs/CSOs [is] prevalent at projects in countries not helped by the governments themselves encouraging the exclusion of these important stakeholders.”*

5. Observers noted that outsized expectations are placed on their voluntary role, with no direct budgeted resources for stakeholder engagement, resulting in misaligned incentives.

While observers did not indicate a desire to get paid for their role, they noted that they were tasked with a task too immense for a single volunteer to be able to do well. To be able to effectively deliver on their mandate, observers should be able to travel to project sites as needed to consult the affected populations or develop communication materials in local languages and accessible formats (such as posters, graphics, etc.) to inform local stakeholders.

Observers felt that stakeholder engagement was not adequately integrated into project design, further increasing the expectations placed on observers. As one said: *“The stakeholder engagement of the CIFs put a lot of important responsibility for stakeholder engagement on a*

bunch of (unpaid) volunteers—the observers. However, paid consultants who design the project were not adequately incentivized to engage local stakeholders. This made it all the more important, yet all the more difficult, for observers to review project documents and ensure stakeholder voices were heard.”

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

Observers suggested various solutions to the concerns they raised:

1. Many indicated a need for support to develop materials in formats and languages accessible to local stakeholders to disseminate information. As noted, much of the information that is provided through emails and technical program documents is often inaccessible to marginalized communities. Observers said they need to disseminate project-related materials in more accessible formats. As one observer noted: *“While observers are willing to participate and communicate with stakeholders, lack of basic logistics and communication tools make it difficult. A lot of observers come from organizations that do not have funding for this support, and therefore provisions to address these gaps are essential for observers, for communication. Observers do not need to be paid, because they need to be neutral, and paying them might be compromising, but financial support for carrying out their role is important.”*

Project teams can partner with CIF observers in the country/subregion while planning and carrying out stakeholder consultations. They can arrange for the CIF observer to participate in and/or carry out complementary consultations as needed at the local/grassroots level as part of the project design activity. CIF observers can use their networks to assist project teams in getting the buy-in of local stakeholders, sharing information, gathering input, and recording grievances. As one observer put it: *“Incentivizing engagement is the most effective tool. This does not mean to pay people to come to meetings. Rather provide resources to observers to mobilize grassroots within countries, to travel to project sites or to conduct phone surveys, depending on project risks and needs.”*

Other ways that observers’ hands-on learning and engagement with local stakeholders could be supported is through independent evaluation studies and knowledge products on

stakeholder engagement commissioned by the CIF. Observers can be contractually engaged to develop knowledge products and carry out routine evaluations of CIF's LSE practices in their region. They can also be engaged as peer reviewers for CIF publications, as well as in the planning and organization of CIF knowledge events and forums. The CIF has done this before: one of its observers, "Live n Learn" in Cambodia, received a grant to carry out an independent assessment of the CIF portfolio in the country. The report was published by the CIF.

2. CIF program leads should be more engaged in LSE efforts led by observers, particularly for CTF and SREP, where technical questions abound and LSE is already low. They can build observers' capacities on technical aspects of the program; speak at events organized by observers to raise awareness around a CIF program or project; and supporting outreach activities by observers with resources and planning. As one interviewee said: *"There was another observer from my country, Peru, and with them I once did an online webinar on the CIF and its programs in Latin America. I presented about CTF and the projects in the pipeline and my observer role, and my colleague did about PPCR. I feel the CTF program leads were less involved in these stakeholder engagement efforts with us. This is important because during these webinars many questions, us as observers can't answer. I used to think during meetings also it would be good as observers for us to meet other project stakeholders such as MDB, CIF, government."*

Program leads can also help observers build better relations with MDB counterparts, as well as government representatives. They should have open communication channels with observers who have grievances about a project, and assist them in taking these grievances to the relevant project counterparts. As one observer recalled: *"I found in my empirical experience of working with CTF committee during my two years' tenure that large-scale renewable energy projects are underrepresented by civil society stakeholders. I had written number of letters to the Government of India and Government of Rajasthan as well to involve the CSO and the community people at grassroots level, where the renewable energy projects are to be implemented, but none of them was responded [to], even acknowledged. Only the higher-level bureaucracy and the political leaders are consulted in planning and implementation levels of such projects."*

3. Climate funds should support the SAN, which many observers see as an important platform for networking and coordination among non-state actors from civil society, the private sector, and Indigenous Peoples. This includes supporting its knowledge and resource-sharing efforts and engaging with the expertise of its members. As one observer and SAN member put it: *“An improvement needed for all observers across all of the funds is a knowledge and learning center, a resource hub of sorts, which is why I’m serving on the newly elected Coordinating Committee of the [SAN], a cooperative platform that brings together climate finance actors across major climate funds to promote governance that is inclusive, transparent, and accountable at all levels of decision making. We are working on ways to strengthen partnerships of non-government stakeholders with climate finance entities to ensure the voices often ignored in development finance are heard.... better collaboration would add value to both civil society and the private sector. And bringing in Indigenous Peoples representatives to the mix allows for all stakeholders to gain a more blended insight, thereby creating a pathway for better decision-making by the climate funds. This is what we want to deliver at the SAN. [The SAN] is designed to be complimentary to the current observers at the funds and another way for them to coordinate stakeholder engagement.”*

4. Supporting the SAN as a network of observers can also support a just transition away from fossil fuels, because local stakeholder engagement is crucial to equitable climate action. This addresses distributional justice (who gets what) and procedural justice (who decides) in how we transition away from fossil fuels, both key parts of inclusive climate action.⁶ As an observer noted: *“Going forward, I view my observer role as an opportunity to help deliver on a transition that is just for society and those most marginalized. We need a dashboard of indicators that can capture ambition more holistically and do justice to the ‘differentiated responsibility’ of nations. Stakeholder engagement is crucial to deliver on the Paris Agreement objectives.”*

⁶ As per the framework adopted by the Just Transition Initiative at Climate Investment Funds: <https://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/topics/just-transition>.

Avenues should be created for more collaboration and meaningful engagement between civil society, Indigenous Peoples, and private sector observers. Events such as panels and forums that promote conversations among observers will enable better collaboration. Other means of enabling more collaboration could be joint studies on stakeholder engagement commissioned by the CIF and/or the SAN to working groups of observers comprising all three constituencies (CSO, IP, PS). One interviewee said: *“I did not know who the private sector observers were at the CIF. So more conversations between private sector and civil society observers need to be facilitated, because perhaps they are unaware of the efforts the other is involved in. Perhaps side events that convene private sector and civil society during the CIF meetings. This could provide avenues for better engagement between the two groups.”*

The importance of collaboration between civil society and private sector at the project level should also be underscored within observer networks. This can be done by sharing the experiences of observers who successfully collaborated across these constituencies during a project, and encouraging more to do so. One observer said: *“During my tenure in the CTF committee I had interacted with a few private sector companies of Rajasthan and Delhi as well as taken the lead for implementing solar energy project in the western Rajasthan (Barmer and Jaisalmer) with support from CIF. They responded swiftly and very positively. CTF could play an important role in connecting both private sector and civil society for their useful involvement in CIF projects.”*

Another observer shared: *“I have a project I was working on in Rwanda on value chains in agriculture. Here, the private sector knows how to do the project. But the people who own land are the local community. So for the private sector, in order to be able to buy land, they need to share the benefits and value with the local people. This increases participation and benefits and reduces cost. When you have innovation and you want to disseminate it, the private sector can share it with the civil society. This enterprising, innovation dissemination, and benefit share is why the private sector and civil society need to work together.”*

5. Observers also suggested that the CIF should conduct a one-time mapping exercise of key CSO/IP/PSE stakeholders in each recipient country, which would serve as a lifelong database for all observers to disseminate information. Where this database is already available, in

various country investment plans, for instance, it should be shared with the observers.

Observers should also use the CIF stakeholder mapping tool. This mapping exercise could be carried out with the help of external agencies or consultants in each country, and the database can be updated periodically. This is important for two reasons. First, no matter how well-networked observers are, they will not be perfectly connected, especially to local organizations that do not have an international presence, but may have the greatest presence on the ground. Second, international observers may not have the cultural understanding, linguistic knowledge, or local know-how to identify these local organizations. One interviewee said: *“More homework needs to be done in countries about who the key stakeholders are, instead of expecting observers to have some kind of magic database of non-state actors working on the issue. In so many countries, local stakeholders are tiny organizations unlinked to the international community—and it would be very difficult to be aware of them for an observer from a different country. Even if you get a consultant for US\$500 to do this mapping exercise and create a database for key stakeholders in countries, it would become a permanent reference for all CIF programming going forward and can be updated routinely. It would be a huge support for observers.”*

6. Along with packages for review at TFC meetings, the CIF should explore options for delivering information to observers in more accessible formats to ease further dissemination.

These formats could include infographics in common languages, videos, two-page executive summaries highlighting relevant aspects, social media content, webinars on projects, ads, virtual billboards, and music. While some of this content could be created by the CIF AU in coordination with observers, based on the needs of the population it must be disseminated to, other kinds—such as executive summaries—can benefit observers directly in reviewing projects. The CIF AU should also help observers translate important documents into the most common languages in recipient countries.

Involvement of the media can also help increase access. Some noted that the news media can present information in the ways that are most accessible to local communities, supporting greater dissemination. As one observer said: *“We need to involve the media—when you involve the media it brings out the success stories and increases motivation and incentives to engage.”*

The media can also help translate and package information to make it comprehensible for communities and local stakeholders.”

7. Project task teams should look into incentivizing local stakeholder engagement as part of the deliverables, to ensure it is an integral part of project design. The way project task teams define and incentivize the deliverables required during project design is an important part of CIF’s programmatic approach, since projects are implemented through MDBs. These deliverables form the bedrock of project design, and many international consultants design/draft projects across countries. Local stakeholder engagement can be incentivized into the deliverables, including from consultants through built-in targets for information-sharing, consultations, and training. This would mainstream and integrate stakeholder engagement into project design. This quote illustrates the idea: *“It is not part of the mandate of these consultants to get these voices. But if somebody were to tell these consultants that the third tranche of your remuneration is conditional on local stakeholders approving your stakeholder engagement method; if local stakeholder engagement was part of quality assurance, and there was a template to fulfill that quality assurance—in the consultant’s application if the methodology asked for stakeholder engagement too and created a disbursement barrier on the basis of this criteria—then that would really incentivize better stakeholder engagement. LSE rubrics and expectations need to be built into the budget and deliverable of these consultants.”*

8. In regions with significant populations of Indigenous Peoples and/or marginalized communities with unique needs, the CIF should look into mapping observers to enable better outreach. This can be done by identifying certain regions with unique needs and contexts and assigning more local observers for those regions. It is especially relevant for regions with high proportions of marginalized communities to have assigned observers who are well informed about the needs of the community and can effectively reach out to those communities about CIF projects. As one observer said: *“I was able to read the proposals; I was able to research on the web about the country that presented the proposal. However, in many cases I could not establish contact with Indigenous Peoples’ organizations in the target countries, and I tried to use third parties to establish these contacts; however, he could not get answers. That way I did not dare to comment on the proposals. In addition, it must be considered that in some countries the rights of Indigenous Peoples are not recognized, while in others the existence of Indigenous*

Peoples is not even recognized. As a recommendation, in the case of Indigenous Peoples, it would be convenient to have one observer per continent, or one for each of the seven socio-cultural regions of the world (Asia, Africa, Latin America, North America, Pacific, Arctic, Russia – Caucasus)."

9. Climate funds should establish mechanisms that can enable better coordination between observers and local stakeholders and formally track concerns raised by observers. An observer and SAN CC member suggested a way to achieve this goal: *"Is it possible to incorporate and regulate a formal procedure for stakeholders' demands within the Climate Funds procedures?"* She recommended creating communication channels for stakeholders and observers, as well as a coordination platform for the observers. She noted that this could include a SAN website, with a section with Google forms for each fund through which local stakeholders could register their concerns. The Google forms would be connected to forums where observers can report on the status of the concern submitted and share information among the observers. This interviewee also suggested developing a status tracking system for requests submitted to the Climate Funds by observers, noting: *"A website/forum and status tracking system will provide the transparency and accountability requested from the climate funds by donors."*

6. Conclusion

Through observer stories, this study brings forth important recommendations to strengthen the role of observers in the governance of climate funds. CIF program leads should be more engaged in observers' outreach efforts as well as their capacity building on the program. Program leads should help observers build better relations with MDBs and governments. Observers should be supported with the design of project materials in formats and languages that make them more accessible to local stakeholders in their constituency. Observers should also be integrated into other stakeholder engagement initiatives, such as evaluation studies on LSE and country-level consultations during the project design phase.

Observers recognize the need for climate funds to support the Stakeholder Advisory Network on Climate Finance (SAN), since it enables networking and coordination among observers across climate funds. The SAN could be supported in its knowledge and resource sharing, and the expertise of its members could be drawn upon to inform stakeholder engagement within climate funds. Observers propose building in communication channels such as Google forms on the SAN website to enable local stakeholders to share concerns for observers to raise with climate funds. Forums for observers to coordinate action and formal tracking of complaints raised by observers will also aid coordination, ensuring the transparency and accountability required by donors of climate funds.

Observers also note the need to promote collaboration between the private sector and civil society, through forums and joint knowledge products commissioned by the CIF. The importance of this collaboration also needs to be underscored within observer networks through recognition of successful partnerships between private sector and civil society observers.

Observers recommend a one-time mapping exercise to create a database of relevant stakeholders in each country, so information can be disseminated easily. Where this database already exists, as part of investment plans, it should be shared with observers. Observers note the need for project task teams to integrate and incentivize local stakeholder engagement through built-in targets for information sharing, consultations and training, into the deliverables of consultants during project design. Observers also recommend the assignment of more local observers to regions with particular concerns, such as non-recognition of Indigenous People, to enable better outreach.

As climate finance continues to grow in impact, it becomes imperative to ensure that the representation of non-state actors in decision-making processes is not just symbolic—that when we say they have voice, they also have the power to be heard. We achieve this is by empowering and supporting the work of climate fund observers, enabling them to better carry out their role as agents of transparency and accountability in climate finance. The experiences and stories of observers presented in this study are a step towards that goal. The resulting insights can help us close gaps in our engagement with local stakeholders. They also provide a foundation for ongoing collaboration with observers to learn how they can be better supported in their role.

7. Annex: Interview Transcripts

Jocelyn Bueno, Peru, CSO

Observer, CTF CIF

Can you tell me a little about your engagement with the CIF program?

I was an alternate observer for Swisscontact and attended several CIF committee meetings to the CTF programs once my colleague left—from 2015 to 2017. I did not know much about the program, and the process where they explained everything was complicated. Initially I wasn't very involved, and the first meeting I was completely lost and did not know what my role there was. With time of course I understood my role better and tried to fulfill it. I still could not support the CTF much I felt. I think eventually my organization also could not commit time and did not continue with the observer role after I left in 2017.

We did not know what exactly our role entailed—whether we had to disseminate information or make interventions ourselves after reading reports or both. I would always get emails that there is this project in your region, Latin America, and we disseminate that, and if our networks have feedback on the project, we can address it. But it wasn't super clear; people did not know CTF and which countries had CTF programs. Even when I would forward the project information to my networks, I never got a reply from organizations interested or who had interventions, which probably means it was not an effective method. Even when I reviewed comments made on projects, I remember all comments were from MDBs or donors but rarely if ever from observers.

Can you narrate an instance of stakeholder engagement during your involvement with CIF?

There was another observer from my country, Peru, and with them I once did an online webinar on the CIF and its programs in Latin America and there were a lot of engagement. I presented about CTF and the projects in the pipeline and my observer role, and my colleague did about PPCR. Later we sent the PowerPoint to the attendees and kept the database of attendees, which was very

useful. But it was a one-off instance; otherwise we would mostly engage through emails. I also feel the CTF program leads were less involved in these stakeholder engagement efforts with us. This is important because during these webinars many questions, us as observers can't answer. I used to think during meetings also it would be good as observers for us to meet other project stakeholders such as MDB, CIF, government.

At least for me it was not clear how to disseminate this information and really get more local stakeholders involved. Most projects in Latin America were not in my country, either (Peru), and even though we had our networks in other countries and forwarded the project information, the connection was not that close, so we did not know what else to do. We also requested CTF if we could make a Facebook or social media observer page to inform civil society and disseminate information; there were admin hassles with the logo and they did not want the page to reflect views of the CTF, but the observers. We started the social media account, but it was getting difficult to implement because of keeping it separate from CTF.

How do private sector stakeholders and civil society stakeholders interact with each other for CIF's projects? Do you think they can collaborate better or add more value to each other?

I used to be in private sector earlier, doing hydroelectric projects. My company held local events to promote and inform about the project and also about corporate social responsibility to the people. All stakeholders need at some point to cooperate. PSEs benefit from CSO, because if civil society is not involved project won't be sustainable. And how civil society benefits from private sector is that private sector capacity is needed to implement the project. When I was in the private sector for a hydroelectric project, nobody wanted the project to go ahead. It was loud and it wasn't even electricity from the grid. So civil society said, "We do not want private sector doing this project here, because not only do you destroy the landscape, we do not even get grid electricity." Because if the electricity from the hydroelectric feeds into the grid, it is not for the local people, but for the national grid. So civil society did not feel they were getting any benefits, and we were also a foreign company. But in the long term they were going to benefit from more energy in the grid passing on to them, and that's what our outreach tried to explain—that we are renewable energy, and this kind of energy also reduces costs, so [the] prices of electricity will lower for everyone and lower pollution due to clean energy. So it is important to engage. Private sector, of course, also needs commitments

to the community—for example, in the framework of corporate social responsibility. We invited all the leaders of the community and explained the negative short-term impacts and positive long-term impacts and made commitments of jobs, positive effects on community, etc. It would have been difficult for the project to have people so opposed to the project, so private sector also needs to engage.

How can we engage non-state actors better in climate finance?

The documents are long, and if you are not from the community where the projects are implemented, then it is hard to have interest or knowledge about them. Observers are most passionate when projects are in their areas of work. I think we need to first make a clear structure—a database—for observers to disseminate information on projects. Even though that is our job as observers, we need support from the CIF to do so. Next, we need social media tools and active engagement on social media to engage local stakeholders. Nobody understands or wants to read very technical documents, but if there are videos and infographics posted on social media accounts to inform local stakeholders about a project, that would be more effective. We must use the tools that people like to use. Webinars where people can get informed can also be helpful. Even for us observers those means of information are easier than technical documents.

First of all, observers need to be supported with identifying stakeholders in the regions they represent, because these regions are big and it is difficult to identify where our organizations don't have a strong presence. More clarity on the role of observers is also important. Further, the information needs to be shared in more creative and accessible ways which are not a technical report but infographics, videos, short summaries, and briefs. It is really important to meaningfully engage and inform local stakeholders. Even in my experience as a CSO employee who works on a particular policy issues, there have been times my organization has struggled with keeping up to date with government orders on the issue. If full-time NGOs find it hard to stay informed, the case is even worse for vulnerable local stakeholders for whom information is not accessible until it is actively provided to them. And in my experience as observer, we did not do that at CIF. For the most remote communities, it would never work with an email. Especially big emails with technical information. It has to be either through local organizations or through more accessible means of information, because observers don't have the resources or the people to do it. Civil society cannot

engage with local people through emails often. Instead part of the funds should go into local stakeholder engagement and observers can be part of this engagement, but it also has to be funded and supported through program budget. It should be part of program funds to initially scope out these local stakeholders for projects. For example, in the Andes in Peru there is no internet, so local organizations are needed.

Aaron Leopold, Kenya, CSO

Observer, SREP CIF

Can you tell me a little about your engagement with the CIF program?

I was the CSO Global North observer to SREP, from 2015 to 2017, I think. One of the biggest challenges for me was not knowing who the right people to contact are in the countries you represent as an observer, also since some governments are antagonistic to their CSOs and Indigenous People. For instance, in India, one of the biggest energy access NGOs is WWF—who the government hates on energy issues and has been extremely antagonistic to the extent of WWF developing a mini grid to prove a concept and the government immediately going to the same village and connecting them to the grid. There are challenges of going through some channels and also challenges to getting engagements, which observers struggled with.

Can you narrate an instance of stakeholder engagement during your involvement with CIF?

The CIF needs to do due diligence on the possibility of stakeholder engagement in each country. The stakeholder engagement of the CIFs put a lot of important responsibility for stakeholder engagement on a bunch of (unpaid) volunteers—the observers. However, paid consultants who design the project were not adequately incentivized to engage local stakeholders. This made it all the more important yet all the more difficult for observers to review project documents and ensure stakeholder voices were heard. It was dysfunctional and wrongly incentivized and put all due

responsibilities on volunteers who were thousands of miles away, relatively unequipped and ill-prepared.

Do you think large-scale renewable energy projects tend to underrepresent civil society stakeholders? Why is that the case?

The irony was that particularly for SREP, which is an energy access program supposed to benefit bottom of the pyramid, rural and remote communities, does not talk to any of these beneficiaries. A lot of projects designed were grid extension programs that were not addressing SREP's mandate; they were about how to connect the next town to the grid, but the problem was that there were other development programs that should have financed those projects, not the CIF. In order for the CIF to add value, enable something that would not have been possible, talking to the right beneficiary local stakeholders was important.

I am lucky enough to be a native English speaker. But the documents that were sent to us in advance of the CIF committee meetings were technocratic reports; even for the government counterparts, the people who presented the programs were not always fluent in English. So having a readable summary would have been helpful. We would also regularly get 300 pages of documents to read within 14 days, and no advance notice to schedule our time to review them. There was also a huge gap between different observers' ability to understand those documents. So myself, for example, I am very good at English, but many of my Indigenous People colleagues were not, and they struggled with in-depth review. I am also an energy access expert, so I ended up talking a lot in the SREP committee meetings, but our Indigenous People colleagues, who were more focused on remote communities and political issues around rights and justice, did not know the technical context of the topics well enough. This meant there was often a huge mismatch in the skill sets. It was as if some observers were put there because they were the correct label, but that does not help make the program better—that, in fact, makes the program worse. Without proper training, those observer colleagues could not understand 300 pages' worth of technical information, and as a result their issues remain unaddressed. It is not that I was better than those observers—it is that they have a different skill set which does not necessarily align with raising issues with project technical documents. That skill and the world of energy access is familiar to me, but may not be to them, leaving a gap in ability to intervene. So there is a fundamental flaw in the gap between issue

expertise and stakeholder constituency expertise. It is like sending a criminal attorney to negotiate the sale of your house. Yeah sure, they're both lawyers; but you're going to get a bad deal if you do that.

How can we engage civil society better in large-scale renewable projects at different levels—investment planning, project design, and monitoring and evaluation?

I think if CIF cares about local stakeholders, they need to make an executive summary of documents for the different observer groups. What does this technical document say that might be relevant to Indigenous People groups? To CSOs? What does it say about poor, marginalized communities? That would also give the program designers a huge incentive to incorporate these aspects into the program documents more directly. But often, there would be just one paragraph at the end about stakeholder consultation, and it often would say “We held a workshop with x number of people.” And it would have no information about when the process was started, when the mission went to the country, how much time the persons on the mission had to meet with local stakeholders. None of that information is given. So as observers we also could not do a lot of local stakeholder engagement work because most of the times we were just getting the final report. So, it was not a reasonable request to engage observers at that point. If the consultants or TTLs going on the mission had to have part of their deliverables to create a two-page executive summary for each of the observer constituencies on how the project impacts them or the aspects pertaining to them—for example, for women or youth, will this program enable technical vocational training for young women? What is the gender focus of the program? Is this program going to offer livelihood opportunities for Indigenous People? It doesn't even have to be an executive summary; it could even be five or six key questions that are agreed with each observer group that these TTLs on mission have to answer those as part of the final report. It doesn't have to be more complicated than that, but it would make them aware going into the process that they have to be mindful of these elements.

During most of the SREP portfolio was in the project design stage—investment plans had been made already. Sometimes our inputs in committee meetings would be considered, and sometimes not. But in general, observers were consulted little to none before the finalization process of the reports presented in the meetings. Often, my comment would have been: “This program is

fundamentally wrong in its concept, because it is not truly delivering on sustainable development objectives; it's not truly having a catalytic impact by doing something that otherwise couldn't have done." So the most frustrating thing wasn't the comments that were made that were not eventually adopted; it was instead the inability to make comments at an earlier, meaningful stage. Because when we looked at documents, the only comments that we could make were, "Oh well, you might want to change that little thing," since everything was done and decided. The consulting budget had been spent; another mission to go to the country to redesign the project was not possible. So, what are you going to comment as an observer? It was frustrating. I never felt that my comments were ignored in the meetings themselves, though; it was the stage of consultation I have an issue with. Another issue was, even during these country missions, which local stakeholders are you consulting? Are they local issue experts for the project?

CIF also did not offer compensation for observers' time, except for paying for travel to the committee meetings. My organization is an NGO that has 90 percent of its staff in developing countries. I was not compensated for reading those 300 pages of technical documents and supporting other observers. This makes allocation of observers' time even more complicated and challenging.

There is also not a good enough awareness of CIF observers, so grievances with projects that local stakeholders have can be sent to the observers (via email maybe). Further, the communities most affected rarely speak English—someone in Yemen would not know how to go through the CIF website and find my email address to send me concerns about the project. Even though CIF observers are chosen because they are well networked, but some observer in Brazil cannot possibly be so well networked to represent all the regions he is tasked with; he is not even being paid to do this. I personally feel it should be a paid consultant's job to offer assistance with identifying the right stakeholders affected in the respective projects and consult with the observer about the strategy to engage them. But in reality, it is more like: "You're the observer, good luck!" We have this huge list of tasks and zero support.

Having phone numbers of observers and using WhatsApp groups to help them organize is very important. I think the challenge is also when you're involving these observers, there is a big difference between the government's perception of what's needed and the real needs at

grassroots. Engaging meaningfully needs much clearer mission statements and ways of delivering on them. It needs a budget to engage local stakeholders at the national level.

Incentivizing engagement is the most effective tool. This does not mean to pay people to come to meetings. Rather provide resources to observers to mobilize grassroots within countries, to travel to project sites or to conduct phone surveys depending on project risks and needs. At the end of the day, international observers do not have a great cultural understanding of all the regions they are supposed to represent, or contacts in those regions. To get better consultations at the national level we need to incentivize them, in creative ways. MDBs pay consultants a hundred thousand dollars for two- to three-week missions, hundreds of hours of research time—some of these resources could be channelized towards observers. For example, US\$5,000 per project for national level consultations does not seem like a big ask to give to observers by comparison, and I believe it would be easy to budget.

To do this, we can go through an exercise of how many hours it would take to meaningfully do stakeholder engagement. The phone calls they would have to make, the travel they would have to do, taking days off work, hours of research and reading, additional follow-up, maybe writing reports on this mission, translation services—it would add up to thousands of dollars per country and we allocate nothing to it. We need to do this mapping of unpaid costs to really estimate what we are expecting of our observers. If you are unimpressed with the level of engagement it is because you are asking them to do this huge amount of work for free.

It is also possible to have a model where observers who are employed by an organization, for e.g., WWF, retain their organizational affiliation, but work part-time for the CIF until their term ends. Thus, they officially divide their time between their organization and the CIF. This could be funded through grants by the CIF—like a fellowship. The fellowship grant could pay out to the organization which would then use it to remunerate the designated employee who is serving as CIF observer.

More homework needs to be done in countries about who the key stakeholders are, instead of expecting observers to have some kind of magic database of non-state actors working on the issue. In so many countries, local stakeholders are tiny organizations unlinked to the international community—and it would be very difficult to be aware of them for an observer from a different country. Even if you get a consultant for US\$500 to do this mapping exercise and create a database

for key stakeholders in countries, it would become a permanent reference for all CIF programming going forward and can be updated routinely. It would be a huge support for observers.

Now that the CIF has a decade of experience, pulling together a factsheet of key issues to orient new observers would help them ask more contextually relevant questions. Former observers could be consulted to create this factsheet, with issues pertaining to youth, women, etc.

Generally, consultants have a much better understanding of programs than the government. The same consultants would do projects around the world, so the mistakes are also replicated. They mediate between MDBs and the governments. This makes the voices of local stakeholders even more relevant. It is not part of the mandate of these consultants to get these voices either. But if somebody were to tell these consultants that the third tranche of your remuneration is conditional on local stakeholders approving your stakeholder engagement method; if local stakeholder engagement was part of quality assurance, and there was a template to fulfil that quality assurance—in the consultant’s application if the methodology asked for stakeholder engagement too and created a disbursement barrier on the basis of this criteria—then that would really incentivize better stakeholder engagement. LSE rubrics and expectations needs to be built into the budget and deliverable of these consultants—for example, 30 people to be consulted in a particular country, 35 people to attend a workshop.

The CIFs do have comparatively much, much better stakeholder engagement in my experience relatively to the other funds. So, all my complaints come from a level of appreciation for the CIF and their respect for stakeholder engagement—unlike the other climate funds I have worked with. The CIF is a guiding light to other funds, and I want them to do better.

Bhawani Shankar Kusum, India, CSO

Observer, CTF CIF

Can you tell me a little about your engagement with the CIF program?

I was elected as NGO observer from Asia Pacific in the CTF committee in 2010 and worked there in a formal way for two consecutive years ended in 2011. I played my role as a CSO/NGO representative of the region. Thereon I have been regularly representing in the CTF committee and participated in all the meetings I was invited for until the last meeting held in Washington, DC. During my representation in the CTF committee meeting I would raise the issues advised by my constituencies and brief back to them whatever discussed in the meetings.

Can you narrate an instance of stakeholder engagement during your involvement with CTF?

I remember several instances of stakeholders' engagement during my representation in the CTF. I briefly would like to narrate two of them here:

(i) I had organized a meeting of women members of Self-Help Groups (SHG) wherein more than 20 women leaders of SHG promoted by GBS (my organization) participated. When I told them about my nomination in the CTF committee and its mandate, they raised several interesting questions: "We the women have to walk several miles early in the morning and wander here and there in search of fuel wood over the nearby hills. You cannot imagine the drudgery we have to go through every morning. When you enjoy your tea, we are wandering restlessly in search of fuel wood to cook food for our family as we don't have any gas or kerosene. Can you ask you officers as do they ever think to solve our problem and reduce our affliction?"

(ii) I remember when I raised the issue of solar energy plan for Rajasthan in my first CTF committee, as we have bright sunlight during 300–330 days of the year. Even in rainy months of July and August we have 8–9 sunshine days in the western Rajasthan. Number of questions was asked me, with eagerness, and I had to explain the geographical background and situation of desertification and long-

spread sand dunes in the Rajasthan state of India. Later, many delegates discussed with me the history and geography of Rajasthan during the lunch and tea breaks. It was very memorable meeting for me, as after that, a big proposal of climate investment fund was presented by a lady officer from the Ministry of Energy, Government of India, and I am happy that it was approved during my tenure.

Do you think large-scale renewable energy projects tend to underrepresent civil society stakeholders? Why is that the case?

Yes, I found in my empirical experience of working with CTF committee during my two years' tenure that large-scale renewable energy projects are underrepresented by civil society stakeholders. I had written number of letters to the Government of India and Government of Rajasthan as well to involve the CSO and the community people at grassroots level where the renewable energy projects are to be implemented, but none of them was responded, even acknowledged. Only the higher-level bureaucracy and the political leaders are consulted in planning and implementation levels of such projects.

How do private sector stakeholders and civil society stakeholders interact with each other for CIF's projects? Do you think they can collaborate better or add more value to each other?

Certainly if the private sector and civil society stakeholders collaborate and interact with each other they can add more value in CIF projects. During my tenure in the CTF committee I had interacted with a few private sector companies of Rajasthan and Delhi as well as taken the lead for implementing solar energy project in the western Rajasthan (Barmer and Jaisalmer) with support from CIF. They responded swiftly and very positively. CTF or SAN could play an important role in connecting both private sector and civil society for their useful involvement in CIF projects.

How can we engage non-state actors better in climate finance?

A joint committee should be formed at national and state (province) level comprising private sector and CSO/NGO to involve them at all levels of the large-scale renewable projects right from planning through implementation and monitoring. As CSO/NGOs have good rapport with the local communities at village level; they can mobilize the community people to participate in such projects.

Tania Guillén Bolaños, Nicaragua, CSO

Observer, SREP CIF

Can you tell me a little about your engagement with the CIF program?

I had a rather brief experience as an observer, for one year. I am from Nicaragua and back in 2015 when I was selected as observer I was working with Centro Humboldt. After I left my organization for a fellowship to Germany, my colleague replaced me as observer. For me, that year, 2015, was a hectic year, also due to the climate negotiations. I really liked my experience as observer because I have been participating in climate negotiations since 2010, and as observer in UNFCCC COP meetings, you do not have any voice—and even if you do, it is barely two or three minutes at the end. It is a very different dynamic, and you have to work with your networks. But in CIF meetings, in the meetings I attended, the atmosphere was different. We had specific briefings from the CIF AU, and they helped us understand the process; it felt very welcoming, and the exchange of information was valuable. Even during the meetings it was great to see that one could just ask for the floor and then they would have the floor—not like the UNFCCC.

In the initial meetings I did not know how everything worked. I may have had influence, but I did not trust I did—because everything was new. We did have very few exchanges with the government representatives, so it would have been good to have a space to exchange information with them. There is a lot of information in one day in these meetings. One of the limitations I had was the very limited amount of time I would get to prepare for the meetings. I remember that we were getting a lot of emails and documents on the projects, but one simply did not have time to go through all this information in time and detail. What I would do is since my focus of work was Latin America every time I got a project on Latin America I shared it with my networks that I was part of.

But if you ask me if I feel completely happy with my role: I do not. Because it was expected that I would do more than just send around some emails, but I just did not have enough time to share

information in a more accessible way—for example, rather than technical documents, through Spanish infographics. If I saw a project—for example, one in Honduras where my organization had contacts, I would send the project info directly to them. This is how I tried to comply with my duties, but I was not completely happy with my role. What I would have liked to do was have time to present some short briefings and present the information in a more digestible and synthesized manner to the people, so they could identify any potential risks to them.

Apart from the committee meetings in Washington, I had no engagement with CIF projects. By the time I was engaged as observer, the project in Nicaragua was being presented by the government and discussed in the meetings. Some of the colleagues from my organization were mentioning the risks from the project, and that, along with my own feedback, is what I presented during the meetings.

Can you narrate an instance of stakeholder engagement during your involvement with CIF?

The opportunity I had to give feedback to a proposal for my country, Nicaragua, in the CIF meeting was a very positive experience—one I would never have had, and that is the safe space CIF gives its observers. I remember when the Nicaraguan representative presented the proposal, and I asked questions and they responded, and then I could even ask follow-up questions in detail, which was very valuable. I had more information to ask than others in the meeting, because it was my country. I had read the proposal and identified the issues—for example, in an autonomous region, you could not do the project, because you had to pass through regional governments. These issues I knew because I had the cultural information on the country context. For me, that was a very good experience as an observer, to give feedback directly to the government from my country, and you felt at the same level as them—such that the observers weren't just there to listen, but they also had power. This was so unlike the UNFCCC meetings, where we are only given two minutes—which, too, has to be divided amongst civil society groups. In CIF meetings you really have the opportunity to take the floor and present your opinion. In CIF meetings you really have the opportunity to take the floor and present your opinion. CIF meetings are unlike many other forums for climate action where most non-state actors watch the negotiations from a TV because not all of them fit into the space. But in the CIF, you have your space—you can speak out.

Do you think large-scale renewable energy projects tend to underrepresent civil society stakeholders? Why is that the case?

I think that the civil society stakeholders who may be affected by a project are underrepresented in energy projects. They get to know about the projects only once the projects have been approved. I have observed this at various instances, but especially in Nicaragua. Even me, I work in climate, and everything climate-related is easier for me to find. But if I were not working in climate then as member of civil society, I would have no idea what is happening; sometimes you just hear a project is coming and you're not even consulted. And maybe your property will be affected, but the government representatives say they will compensate you without even asking if you want that.

How can we engage non-state actors better in climate finance?

It would be good to let the observers know what really the role entails. Of course you receive some briefings, but in terms of time consumption, it should be made clear. The fact that you are observer also means you should be able to transfer the knowledge in a more accessible way to people. Out of personal interest I have been trying to read this project document from GCF recently, and when I open it, it is 100 pages, and I keep procrastinating reading it. If it were a two-page summary it would be so great. These two-page summaries can be made either for or by observers, to make information more digestible. Having the role of observer, of course, gives you more distinction, but the only benefit you get is being part of the process. But as an organization you are putting a lot of time and effort. For us it was important being an observer to do the best job we could do. A little more support from CIF AU would have been very helpful, to synthesize information. Even though I think the observers should also do some work in synthesizing information, the CIF AU could help provide a template to fill with information or summary of the project and flag relevant sections to the observers on stakeholder engagement.

There also need to be some funds allocated for observers so they are able to engage effectively. You could compensate them for some of their time, or resources they can travel. Merely volunteer based models won't ensure accountability.

John Gakumba, Rwanda, CSO

Observer, CTF CIF

Can you tell me a little about your engagement with the CIF program?

I joined CTF in 2009 as an active observer, until 2012. After that I joined the Stakeholder Advisory Network (SAN). I have been involved in reviewing the technical documents for CTF programs. I have constantly advocated for better involvement of civil society and private sector within CTF. I have been doing various kinds of climate work with UNFCCC, and other climate funds, and have been involved in clean energy and adaptation projects.

Government has been very slow and ineffective in engaging private sector and civil society from the project design and implementation of program. This I think affects the value of money for the project because the beneficiaries are not consulted. There needs to be a requirement for engagement and benefits for civil society and private sector. There is reluctance currently in trying to have credible and visible impact and unwillingness from governments that the CIF funds to engage local stakeholders. Then, there is lack of systematic accountability and transparency in engaging from the part of the government.

There is lack of a budget for observers for capacity building and spreading awareness and getting inputs from program beneficiaries. There needs to be a travel budget to understand how people on the ground are being affected. For example, during my time in CTF, there were projects in Nigeria, Ethiopia, but we never got the chance to go look at those projects and their local stakeholder engagement, because there was no funding for that. So what ended up happening was as observers we were only getting reports and had no way to tell whether stakeholders were being involved.

Can you narrate an instance of stakeholder engagement during your involvement with CIF?

There were a number of WhatsApp groups that were raising awareness on the projects among different stakeholders, in South Africa for a CTF project. I was able to witness one workshop that brought together private sector, civil society and government to share information about project because there was willingness on part of the government in Cape Town and concrete engagement was there.

During meetings in Washington, the challenge was there was rarely enough time for us to go through these technical project documents and review them in time. We were given big lumps of books upon arrival and maybe a summary at the last moment and we did not have the documents in advance to be able to consult and confirm things on the ground. We had no information on the ground, only documents on the table. Sometimes they were passed without observers even having a say. We did not want to be silent observers but active observers, and that was our fight—to make sure the observers had strong say and could influence the credibility of the projects being approved.

How can private sector stakeholders and civil society stakeholders interact with each other?

I have a project I was working on in Rwanda on value chains in agriculture. Here, the private sector knows how to do the project. But the people who own land are the local community. So for the private sector, in order to be able to buy land, they need to share the benefits and value with the local people. This increases participation and benefits and reduces cost. When you have innovation and you want to disseminate it, the private sector can share it with the civil society. This enterprising, innovation dissemination, and benefit share is why the private sector and civil society need to work together.

How can we engage non-state actors better in climate finance?

I think any project being designed needs to involve the observers from the start, so that if there are workshops or project documents are being put together the observer should at the very least be consulted to get in touch with the beneficiaries on the ground—private sector and civil society—so they can get the feedback of those beneficiaries. There also needs to be better stakeholder mapping to involve local stakeholders from the very start. This will also give value money for the projects. The current problem is projects come from the high level and they are submitted without anybody knowing and the communities have no idea. There is also scope for corruption in this current

process because communities are not informed about the money that is being allocated or disbursed so they are not engaged in monitoring.

While observers are willing to participate and communicate with stakeholders, lack of basic logistics and communication tools make it difficult. A lot of observers come from organizations that do not have funding for this support, and therefore provisions to address these gaps are essential for observers, for communication. Observers do not need to be paid, because they need to be neutral, and paying them might be compromising, but financial support for carrying out their role is important.

The project documentation needs to provide evidence and proof that they got active participation of local stakeholders in affected regions in the project designing. There needs to be stakeholder mapping and identification to figure out how all the comprehensive categories of civil society have been engaged. We need to have a way to ensure shared benefits for them. There need to be a specific criteria for number and nature of stakeholders to be involved that project documents should have. When you work with communities of people who are directly affected, you get the best ownership of projects, and it makes it most sustainable. Some of the government officials sometimes create companies which are then given tenders for the project, but they are not really private sector. If you give the money to the people directly affected, they will take charge and responsibility to hold each other accountable. And before you give them money, you need to build their capacity by raising awareness and advocacy so they are capable of implementing the project.

We need to have a better flow of information, and also involve the media—when you involve the media, it brings out the success stories and increases motivation and incentives to engage. The media can also help translate and package information to make it comprehensible for communities and local stakeholders. Particular levels of comprehension require particular modes of communication. Virtual billboards, music, ads are all important ways to share information to make it accessible to local communities.

Margaux Granat, USA, CSO

Observer, PPCR & CTF CIF

Can you tell me a little about your engagement with the CIF program?

I was an observer to PPCR and CTF on behalf of WEDO in 2018—WEDO has been an observer for quite a long time. From my role as an observer representing WEDO, I felt limited. I think the observer program itself is an admirable effort, but the actual engagement with the observers to support the governance process is minimal. There doesn't seem to be a lot of capacity among different observers—some are very engaged (I found more observers active in PPCR than other programs) but others not, and there is limited research and advocacy efforts. WEDO as an observer wanted to provide inputs, but even when we would provide inputs to projects that were coming up nothing really could be done because the observers don't really have a definitive say in the governance. What could maybe happen is if observers raised issues, the committee members might urge the respective country representatives to have a conversation with the observers to address and hear out their issues. So it felt like this was business as usual, for observers not to have a say. This also seemed to make some observers less interested to engage actively.

The documents sent to us are very long and complex, and sure, we might be getting paid to attend the actual CIF meetings, but you're not paid pre-meeting to review those documents. So any small NGO or CSO would be strapped for time and funding, and might have to prioritize their full time work. Hence, I did not feel the observers were supported in ways to really influence the CIF governance. The lack of a full-time dedicated CSO group makes it this way for the CIF.

Can you narrate an instance of stakeholder engagement during your involvement with CIF?

CIF tries to organize the observers before the meetings to brainstorm issues with the projects and discuss interventions, but because of time constraints it somehow fizzled out and became less

effective over time. There are capacity gaps in Global North and Global South NGOs. There are also disinterested Global North NGOs which stopped participating, and both are equally important to address. At some point even though observers were meant to be participants in the committee meetings, they were reduced to literally being observers—they were literally observing, and unable or unwilling to participate.

There was one time where in the Washington, DC, meeting in June 2019 where a report had come out and due to time constraints, I had just skimmed the executive summary. And they were referencing it during the meeting, and I thought of intervening but chose not to because we did not have the heart to do it. It was also the time we thought the CIF was sunseting. There was also so little space to have pre-coordination about what other observers' concerns were—to really know if they had concerns and were just not voicing them.

I also found the online approval process—over emails—for projects to be even more concerning. It bypassed actual discussions on projects, and observers did not have time often to review those projects. So these projects or decisions get approved over email with little involvement of non-state actors. Either new projects or decisions that did not get time during committee meetings, would be approved this way. Although there were many comments by country representatives, I rarely saw any responses from observers on those emails, so active engagement on those was even lower.

How should private sector stakeholders and civil society stakeholders interact with each other?

I think the only way the private sector will make progress is to engage more with civil society. I did not know who the private sector observers were at the CIF. So more conversations between private sector and civil society observers need to be facilitated, because perhaps they are unaware of the efforts the other is involved in. Perhaps side events that convene private sector and civil society during the CIF meetings. This could provide avenues for better engagement between the two groups.

How can we engage non-state actors better in climate finance?

There have to be better ways to provide support to observers on these technical project reports. For example, brief 30-minute presentations with observers on these technical reports beforehand to have a discussion on the relevant parts of the project.

To make observer engagement more active, there could be assigned, or designated observer leadership selected amongst the observers that can perhaps increase active participation.

Another important solution is actual capacity building of the observers. Do observers know what role exactly they are getting into? Reviewing documents and understanding the issues? For example, my organization, WEDO, is working on women's issues, but may not be an expert on how this applies to the climate. We might invite observers to level the playing field at the table, but it is important to ask, are they even saying anything at the table? Are they intimidated to participate? It is such a long process to active stakeholder engagement that involves more than just plugging people into a room who travelled halfway across the world and assume they will dive right into their accurately crafted intervention speeches. How do these observers engage with the state actors—the government counterparts? Can we enable that? From what I have seen there is little communication between observers and government counterparts at these meetings. So better all-round capacity building of observers is very important, how they can participate even despite language barriers.

Margaret-Ann Splawn, United Kingdom, PS

Observer, Green Climate Fund (GCF)

Observer, FIP CIF

Can you tell me a little about your engagement as an observer? How long have you been engaged and what role have you played?

I am the Active Private Sector Observer at the UN Green Climate Fund (GCF) representing the developed nations constituency. There are four Active Observers at the GCF, two from the private

sector and two from civil society. While there are currently 296 civil society organizations (CSOs) and 83 private sector organizations (PSOs) that are Accredited Observers at the GCF, only Active Observers are allowed to participate in Board sessions. To this end there is one Active Observer representing developed nations and the other representing developing countries. My term is for the 2020–2021 period, but I’ve been working with the GCF since 2016, when I joined the Climate Markets and Investment Association (CMIA) as Executive Director. CMIA is an Accredited Observer at the GCF, and my predecessor, Alexandra Tracy, was our representative at the GCF from 2016 to 2020.

I was also previously a CIF private sector observer through the Forest Investment Program, and CMIA held the private sector observer role at the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) until 2018. Throughout the years and by serving as private sector observer at these different funds, CMIA has built up deep institutional knowledge of climate funds and how they operate. We provide private sector expertise and insight to assist board decision making and have created collaborative partnerships along the way.

Going forward, I view my observer role as an opportunity to help deliver on a transition that is just for society and those most marginalized. We need a dashboard of indicators that can capture ambition more holistically and do justice to the “differentiated responsibility” of nations. Stakeholder engagement is crucial to deliver on the Paris Agreement objectives.

Can you narrate an instance (or several instances) of stakeholder engagement during your involvement with your fund? What was good and what did you find lacking? How do you think it can be improved?

As Active Private Sector Observer at the GCF, my objective is to represent the collective voice of the private sector with regards to best practice, good governance, market developments, and climate science. Saying that, it’s important for observers to understand the governance of the funds they represent. This is really crucial because that’s how the fund functions, and it can be somewhat confusing for the private sector to understand this. However, to make an intervention or a suggestion that doesn’t fit into the existing governance of the fund where you are serving, as an observer without this knowledge, is a waste of time and loses an opportunity to actually create an enabling environment between the fund and the private sector.

Let's take an example. If an observer were to suggest ways for a fund to deal directly with the private sector as delivery partner, this would be possible to do at the GCF, as their governance allows for International and Direct Access Entities. However, in the governance of the CIF, the delivery partners are five multilateral development banks, so observers have to understand the "rules of operation," so to speak.

Thus, in my role I serve as a bridge of knowledge, insight and expertise when I speak with my constituency to get feedback on board papers or projects at these funds. I engage with my stakeholders on a regular basis to stay on top of the latest market developments, innovations, and research. The momentum of climate development in business is astonishing, and real leadership is emerging, but we still need better policy designs to leverage more private sector capital.

Stakeholder engagement is one of the keys to success as an observer. Thus, I regularly reach out to private sector colleagues and serve on a variety of committees, ranging from the B20 Energy & Resource Efficiency Task Force, the official business dialogue with the G20, to the Finance Working Group of the Independent Global Stocktake, which is a consortium of civil society actors working together to support the Global Stocktake (GST)—the formal process established under the Paris Agreement to periodically take stock of collective progress toward its long term goals. These roles allow me to gain better insight into private sector developments, thought leadership, and the direction of travel. Time is always an issue to dedicate to this role, balancing this voluntary role with demands of client work is not easy, so I've created a network of 'go to' people when I need specific technical expertise.

An improvement needed for all observers across all of the funds is a knowledge and learning center, a resource hub of sorts, which is why I'm serving on the newly elected Coordinating Committee of the Stakeholder Advisory Network on Climate Finance (SAN), a cooperative platform that brings together climate finance actors across major climate funds to promote governance that is inclusive, transparent, and accountable at all levels of decision making. The SAN Coordinating Committee is comprised of civil society, Indigenous Peoples representatives, and the private sector. I am enjoying getting to know my new colleagues. We are working on ways to strengthen partnerships of non-government stakeholders with climate finance entities to ensure the voices often ignored in

development finance are heard. We've all got to work together to help design the future and a just transition that we want to see.

Do you think large-scale renewable energy projects tend to under-represent civil society stakeholders?

In my work, I speak with and get to know many project developers, both large and small scale. My experience shows that, for the most part, they are good people and want to build renewable energy projects that are impactful and beneficial to all of society, not just their shareholders. The project developers I know really care about the quality of their work and want to contribute to society. Large-scale projects will conduct stakeholder engagement during the planning and implementation phase. In addition, companies have on going concern about investor relations and take reputational risk seriously. There is a real drive in the market for business to be profitable but not at the expense of civil society and the planet.

In your experience, how do private sector stakeholders and civil society stakeholders interact with each other? Do you think they can collaborate better or add more value to each other?

For the most part, my experience of interaction with civil society has been positive. While we might approach things differently, in the end, we want the same thing: climate finance flowing to those most vulnerable and impacted by climate change. At the GCF, I regularly exchange views and opinions with the civil society observers. They are a wealth of knowledge and insight, plus speaking with them allows me to better understand their views, which can appear hard-edged during their interventions at time.

I absolutely agree that better collaboration would add value to both civil society and the private sector. And bringing in Indigenous Peoples representatives to the mix allows for all stakeholders to gain a more blended insight thereby creating a pathway for better decision making by the climate funds. This is what we want to deliver at the SAN. Our organization is designed to be complimentary to the current observers at the funds and another way for them to coordinate stakeholder engagement.

Do you have any other stories you want to share that reflect on stakeholder engagement, and the gaps or bright spots that observers face at climate funds?

A story I like to share is about how Camco Clean Energy became a delivery partner at the GCF. Camco Clean Energy is a leader in sustainable energy projects and low-carbon finance. They are also the fund manager for the £148 million UK funded Renewable Energy Performance Platform (REPP), founded in 2015 to catalyze the growth of sub-Saharan Africa's renewable energy sector by helping developers overcome barriers to finance. REPP seeks to enable change where it's needed most. Camco is a member of the Climate Markets and Investment Association, and I've known their CEO and Managing Director, Geoff Sinclair, for many years, so it was great to finally see Camco come up for accreditation at the GCF at B.27 in November 2020. I spoke with Geoff and his team at several points to provide guidance and insight to the GCF accreditation process and thus it slightly felt like my own victory when they were approved by the board. Usually, I would have toasted with Geoff in Songdo but in a COVID-19 world, it was a virtual one.

And why a toast? Well, people unfamiliar with the fund don't realize just how long it takes, or what is required, to become a delivery partner at the GCF. It's a long, hard process that took Camco over two years to achieve, which is pretty much the average length of time it takes to become an accredited entity. Think about it: all that time, money (yes there are fees to pay!), and energy—with no guarantee that your company will gain accreditation. It's not an easy decision to make, particularly for private sector companies. And while the GCF Secretariat provides a lot of guidance and works with entities in their pipeline toward accreditation, for a private sector company going through the process it can feel a bit like trying to fit a square peg into a round hole. Deciding to become a delivery partner at the GCF really has to be a business development decision with strong rationale to decide to go down that long, arduous route. It's probably one of the reasons why private sector is only about 25 percent of GCF accredited entities. The CIF doesn't operate like that; there are no direct access entities to the CIF.

Bhola Bhattarai, Nepal, CSO

Observer, Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF)

Observer, FIP CIF

Can you tell me a little about your engagement with as an observer?

I was an observer for primarily Forest Investment Program (FIP) but also, for a brief while, Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR) in the CIF, and for the FCPF. I started in 2008. We were in one of the consultations in Washington, DC, regarding stakeholder engagement. There were around 30 participants from different countries, and I was one of them. During that meeting, we had talked a lot about the role of Indigenous People and local communities (IPLCs) when we implement anything under CIF. During that time, the FIP was a relatively new program.

How was your experience as an observer?

Frankly speaking for me, it was so difficult in the initial days to participate and take position because of people's understanding about the role of IPLCs. During that time, Global North observers really helped develop my capacity—the role of Global North's CSOs was significant to developing the capacity of Global South observers. Back then I was working with Federation of Community Forestry Users, Nepal (FECOFUN), which represented thousands of forest community groups. The role of Global North's CSOs was significant to developing the capacity of Global South observers. The first meeting I participated in, I had no idea what carbon trading or carbon markets meant—neither did my Indigenous People colleagues. So I was very lost during the first workshop. But the next day, I met a CSO observer from the Global North during breakfast, and I said to him: "I am from Nepal, and all of this probably affects me, but I don't know what we are talking about in our workshop." So then as a teacher he drew pictures and explained to me over breakfast these concepts. For the next 4–5 days then, I actively participated and got ideas about how this discourse impacts my

community. I collected materials from that workshop and came back to Nepal. I made a 4–5 page document in the local language and shared what I had learned with many CSOs working in forestry in Nepal. They were very interested to know about it. I wrote many articles on this and met with many government officials to inform them about these concepts, too. Ultimately this led to the first REDD+ proposal being developed for Nepal. Still at the grassroots level, there was very little knowledge. So we developed proposals in local languages, including videos and pamphlets to educate at the grassroots about these REDD strategy concepts.

That was my major learning from initial days. I learned so much from Global North CSOs, and when I returned to my country Nepal, I invited a number of people working in forestry sector and shared with them the importance of stakeholder engagement. I initiated a multi-stakeholder forum within my country and regionally too, and till now (from 2008 to 2020) those network forums are contributing to raise concerns, provide inputs to policymaking, dialogue in government—they are very active at the national level. Today we have new REDD+ strategy in Nepal due to active engagement of these non-state actors. It gave people working in these sectors a space to raise their concerns. Currently, in Nepalese policymaking process, without civil society and Indigenous People's voices, the government cannot formulate or implement any policy. Before 2008 there was no such mechanism, no such power for non-state actors. Right now we have that power.

Institutionalization of stakeholder engagement is very important. We have a loose forum/network of people working in different organizations, since 2008, and even with no funding for the forum it is still functioning and engaging with the policymaking process actively. We also have regional networks—very strong relations with CSOs and CBOs in India and Pakistan working in forestry, in East Asia (Taiwan, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Philippines) too we have that network that we engage with routinely. This helps us provide space to all marginalized local stakeholders in all these countries. This institutionalization is something I learned from my participation in the CIF observers program.

Can you narrate an instance of stakeholder engagement during your involvement with CIF?

One of the major outcomes of the CIF observers program was to FIP. When it was starting, FIP had no resources allocated to local stakeholder engagement of Indigenous People, who are greatly affected by any forestry programs. Due to our frequent discourse, today there is a Dedicated Grant

Mechanism (DGM) within FIP to fund IPLC. This was approved by the committee due to consistent engagement of observers. There is a long story behind the origination of this engagement: CIF had asked us to participate in some brainstorming session, with some 20 observers. I remember colleagues from East Asia, South America, few from Africa were there. But as is standard with World Bank, this session comprised a formal presentation.

But in the evening, a few of us Indigenous People observers who participated in this session were walking around Washington, DC, and during that time we talked about how the CIF is sharing their agenda with us during these days of committee meetings, but where is our agenda? Most of CIF financial resources go to the government, but when it goes to government, it is not easy to access by marginalized people. So we said: Why don't we raise this concern? Why don't we ask for a special grant for Indigenous People? So the next day we put that agenda forward during the meeting. We asked for a dedicated grant through a new mechanism to the marginalized community to make it equitable for them to engage. We put that agenda before different groups and presented it in the plenary session. At first, there was no positive response. But by the next round of meetings, we had organized more around this grant mechanism and raised it within FCPF too. Eventually, after several discussions and continuous advocacy, it was accepted. And today, this dedicated grant is helping to enhance the capacity of Indigenous People in various countries, through CIF and FCPF.

Another story comes to mind. A few years ago I was preparing to participate in the committee meeting. I got an email from an Indigenous People colleague from Bangkok, and he informed me that the Government of Thailand was going to submit their proposal in FCPF, but the proposal is not respecting the rights of Indigenous People. When I got the project document, I read it and developed a few points of intervention. During the discussion on the project in the committee meeting, I raised the concern with the project and showed them the press release from Bangkok CSOs. There was a hot debate during the committee meeting, and the chair decided to form a separate subcommittee to discuss the proposal, and I was selected to be part of it. I asked them to update the proposal in a participatory manner with the marginalized communities. I also requested the committee to allot a separate grant to educate and empower Thai civil society members who would be affected by the project, so they could engage effectively. The Swiss government in that meeting declared a US\$500,000 grant for this purpose, and asked the Thai government to resubmit their proposal in the next meeting. The grant went to a regional NGO that trained the civil society

and redeveloped the proposal, which was subsequently submitted by the Thailand government in the next meeting. So this kind of dialogue is very important. This kind of inclusive process makes the government also more responsive and capable of addressing the needs of the Indigenous People and marginalized and local communities.

How do private sector stakeholders and civil society stakeholders interact with each other for CIF's projects? Do you think they can collaborate better or add more value to each other?

During my experience, we did not have very strong engagement with private sector. However, when we talk about the development of forest resources or forestry projects, I realize we need to have effective engagement of private sector. In Nepal, when you talk about forestry or energy, without engagement of private sector it is not easy to make change to scale. We need to engagement private sector more effectively, but it has not happened so far, and we did not have a dialogue with the private sector. In Nepal, the government has restricted harvesting of forest products and private sector is trying to advocate to lift those restrictions. We are trying to join on this effort with them, but it needs to be more effective.

Were there any challenges you have faced during your role as an observer?

We did not have the capacity to review all the technical documents they sent us. There were a lot of documents, and we struggled to provide timely comments. To address this, we asked our Global North civil society colleagues to support us. So during the first day—the day before the committee meetings—we allocated that day to discuss internally amongst observers our thoughts on the documents we had read and brainstormed ideas for intervention with our colleagues. That helped, but I still feel we were not able to fully do justice to all the technical documents discussed.

To solve this issue, the capacity of observers needs to be enhanced. Simply training them for one or two days is not going to be sufficient towards this cause. Instead, travel funding could be allocated to observers so they can travel to affected project areas to organize discourse with the local CSOs and learn more about the projects and their concerns. Further, coordinating national level CSOs will be helpful so that these CSOs can review project documents for their country and provide feedback to the observer for the region who can then bring this feedback to the committee meetings.

How can we engage non-state actors better in climate finance?

Firstly, government people are project people—they need to recognize the importance of the role of local stakeholders in development projects. In Nepal, the government does not respect the role of civil society and IPLCs. Secondly, civil society organizations engaging with projects should be open and transparent. They should organize and create space for other emerging CSOs and IPLC organizations. Thirdly, the media needs to be involved in any local stakeholder engagement efforts. This will really contribute to making government accountable. Fourth, academics and intellectuals who are generating knowledge and ideas is also very important. Finally, when CIF teams go to countries, they should continually assert the importance of involving marginalized communities. Take Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), for example; the CIF team asked a very simple question to government—how are you ensuring GESI? It really helped to make the government more accountable and mindful of these concerns.

As a last point, ultimately it is important to reach those at the grassroots. In Nepal, the participation of Dalits in forestry activities was close to zero when we started. They were extremely marginalized—people would not let them share water sources such as wells either. There was involvement of women but people living in Tarai region had very little access to forest resources. So I identified one young Dalit boy who had graduated college, I informed him about the importance of Dalits in forestry, and asked him to form a Dalit network to advocate Dalit people's rights. He said: "I don't have any money. It will take 4000 to 5000 rupees (US\$33–43) to register any organization and develop its processes." I gave him the money. Today, they have a national network of Dalit people working in the forest sector, and they are allocating land to Dalits to cultivate and earn livelihood. His organization is called DANAR—Dalit Network for Natural Resource Management in Nepal. A few years later, that Dalit boy—his name is Sunil Pariyar—went on to participate in the ADB meeting in Philippines with me, and there he returned to me the money I had given him eight years ago to start his network. ADB had given him a grant for his organization, so he returned the amount I had given him. It took just that to empower and give them prestige. When we have resources, we should use them to incentivize those at the grassroots. The Tarai people also had no access to forests. We started collaborative forests in Terai and today 100,000 hectares of land is allocated to Tarai people who now have access to it to use collaboratively. These two examples imply that when we develop

projects, if we really want to support the marginalized, there are many ways once we change our current way of thinking and move to incentivize and support the marginalized.

Gabriela Merla, France, PS

Observer, CTF CIF

Can you tell me a little about your engagement with the CIF as an observer? How was your experience as an observer?

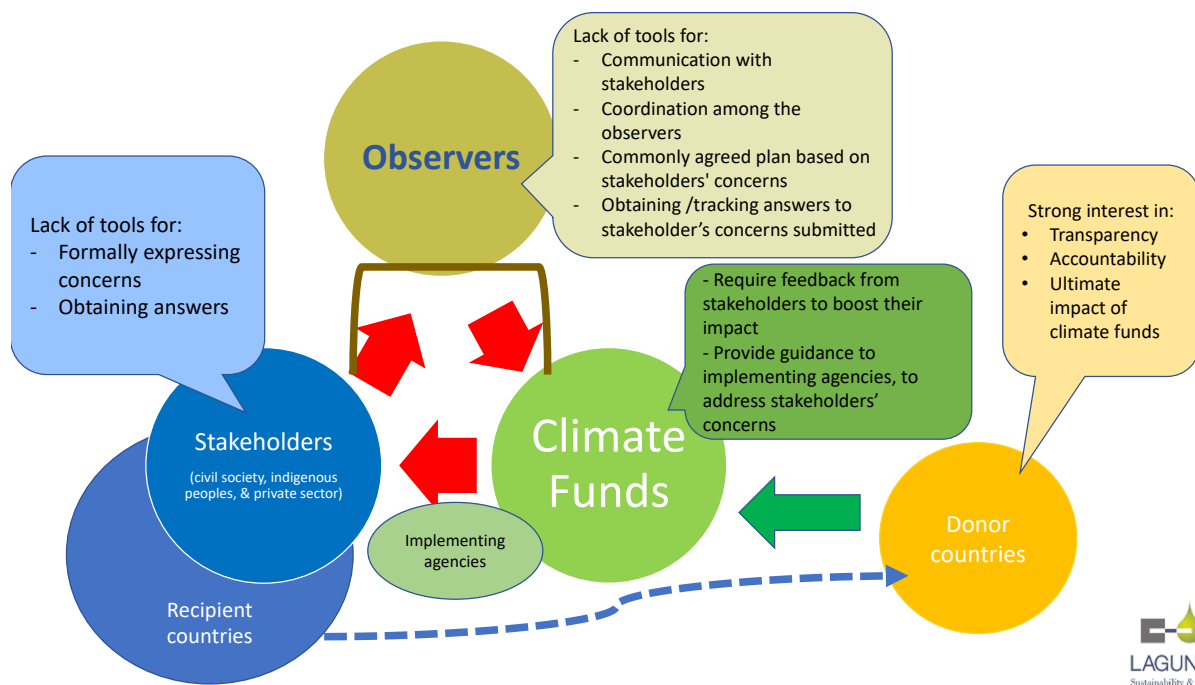
For the last 20 years, as a Mexican-French lawyer, I have been advising private, public, and NGO entities implementing climate change programs and projects in developing countries. This experience allowed me to understand stakeholders' concerns about projects funded by Climate Funds, and the lack of means they had to communicate with the latter.

On the other side of the coin, I have been an observer for the Climate Investment Funds for the last four years representing the private sector. In my role as an observer, I could not connect directly with the funded project's stakeholders. I missed mechanisms supporting coordination among my colleagues from other climate funds and sector representation. As a group, we lacked a commonly agreed plan based on stakeholders' concerns.

I also realized the need for a formal procedure within the climate funds, which can follow and track observers' requests. An acknowledgment of the stakeholders' demands was not enough in terms of transparency and accountability. Stakeholders and observers needed a formal answer (either positively or negatively) from the climate funds, to be taken seriously. Based on this, I realized there is a need to formally and efficiently link the stakeholders, observers, and climate funds ("Entities of the Climate Funding Cycle"), for the sake of the Climate Funds goals.

I map out below the challenges faced by the Entities of the Funding Cycle.

This shows the central role the observers have in order to achieve the transparency and accountability of climate funds' funding, required by the donor countries.



How can we engage non-state actors better in climate finance?

Climate funds' impact will be boosted if stakeholders can transmit their concerns directly to the observers, so that the latter can submit such matters through a coordinated and regulated procedure. My experience chairing an international organization with an international network for the past five years has provided me ideas to resolve the challenges described above. In the table below are specific proposals based on today's available technology, which tackle the "Climate Funding Cycle" challenges.

The proposal involves two questions/requests for the Climate Funds:

- a) Is it possible to incorporate and regulate a formal procedure for stakeholders' demands within the Climate Funds procedures?
- b) Is it possible for each climate fund website to provide a link to a SAN website where stakeholders could register and send their concerns to the observers?

Entity	Problem	Solution
Stakeholders	Lack of tools for: Formally expressing their needs Obtaining answers / resolving problems	SAN Website including a section with Google forms for each fund. Stakeholders will register their concern through a google form. Google forms connected to “Website forums” – operated by the Observers
	System-wide level	Climate Funds with a link to a SAN website
Observers	Lack of tools for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordination - Following a commonly agreed agenda - Obtaining /Tracking answers to concerns submitted 	A website, where Observers log into specific “Forums”, organized by type of stakeholders’ concerns. The Observers’ login section shall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Present the commonly agreed agenda, based on stakeholders’ concerns, to be implemented by the Observers. - Inform the status of the concern submitted - Share information among the Observers Not time consuming/people can access when they can
Climate Funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of a « formal » procedure providing answers to concerns submitted by the Observers. 	Development of a status tracking system for requests submitted to the Climate Funds
Donor countries	Strong interest in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transparency - Accountability - Ultimate impact of climate funds 	A Website/ forums, status tracking system, will provide transparency, and accountability.

The proposal would be a simple implementation with a reduced budget, and it will provide:

- The communication channels needed by the stakeholders-observers binomial.
- A coordination platform for the observers.
- The transparency and accountability requested from the Climate Funds by the donor countries.

Fiu Elisara, Samoa, IP

Observer, PPCR CIF

Can you tell me a little about your engagement with the CIF program as an observer?

Initially I was selected as part of a global Indigenous Peoples (IPs) meeting held in Bangkok, with follow-up meetings in Manila and in the 2009 Copenhagen UNFCCC COP15 global conference, where CIF, in its strategic inclusive governance approach, were trying to select IPs as observers to its committee and subcommittee meetings. I was part of the earlier discussions on the Forest Investment Program (FIP) negotiating the role of IPs in its implementation. As IPs we were excited when there was word that FIP was an empowering opportunity for IPs (and local communities) to access CIF funds and manage FIP resources, take decisions and implement projects using their own IP systems and processes. The Dedicated Grant Mechanism (DGM) was part of this. (This turned out to be a disappointment when in the end, the arrangement was not as envisaged.) I was later moved to be an observer in the PPCR, and later still, to be an observer in the Joint Committee of CTF and SCF (FIP, PPCR, SREP).

I have served five years as an observer in CIF and in that time tried to represent the interests of IPs and local communities (LCs) in the work of CIF, especially during the discussions of the subcommittees. I found this opportunity to act as an invaluable bridge between the real life

experiences of IPs/LCs at the country and CIF project levels and linking these to the highest decision making level of CIF governance in DC, where a majority of the subcommittee members needed more accurate and real-life accounting of the impacts of CIF resources decided upon by members of subcommittees of CIF on the lives, properties, and resources of beneficiaries such as IPs at project levels.

How was your experience as an observer?

As a Pacific representative, I raised my concern on the first FIP selected countries that failed to select any of our countries in the Pacific, given the fact that Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, and Fiji were considered heavily forested countries. The response I received at the time was the countries of our region were not able to submit proposals when expressions of interests went sent out, and the reason being there was no technical capacity for our Pacific countries to develop adequate proposals. I argued that this kind of process failed equity consideration and bordered on serious injustice when such a process, knowing the technical capacity constraints in our region, became the defining criteria for selecting the first FIP countries. By way of compromise, CIF representatives, proposed that while the Pacific forest countries may have missed out in the first resources allocation, there will be a plan for a global sharing of experience where the FIP countries selected will share their IP experiences in CIF projects and the Pacific will be able to engage in this global learning opportunity going into the future. Sadly, this has continued to be out of the FIP radar despite resources earmarked for the recommended global sharing of experience under FIP.

We as IPs also raised concerns that some of the countries selected by CIF to benefit from FIP resources are the same ones that are on record having continued to violate IP rights, and in many cases cause IPs to be forcefully removed, evacuated, and killed to make way for protecting interests of culprit logging companies and foreign investors, with the full support and enmeshment of the same governments in these heinous acts.

I also took the opportunity to raise concerns about the MDBs, being the face of CIF at the country and project levels, failure to comply with their own safeguard policies (social, environment and Indigenous Peoples) and ignoring the obligations to engage in ground-truthing checks and obligation to carry out due diligence audits and analysis at the project levels in order to hold governments to account on non-compliance, and challenge them on their own exclusive attitude towards IPs/LCs

and in fact CSOs at project levels. Often, governments collude with MDBs in implementing projects and fail to address rights violation of IPs when affected by CIF projects, fail to pay any in most, or in a few cases fair compensations for lands and resources affected, fail to hold meaningful consultations with the communities at all levels of project implementation, and report on other detrimental impacts when affected by CIF-funded, MDB-implemented, and government-executed projects.

Unfortunately, in some of the cases in my own country, I ended up being targeted as a “whistleblower” when I raised concerns with ADB and WB that when holding meetings in my country they deliberately ignore my existence as a formal CIF observer and not invite me to participate in almost all the PPCR and related CIF projects meetings. In my view, resources have been allocated to these MDBs to carry out due diligence and comply with their safeguard and compliance policies and when I, as an observer, raised valid and justified concerns for their failure to comply, I became a targeted individual by the MDBs concerned and my government as well. One wonders where the resources allocated to the MDBs for adherence and compliance to these important policies and project requirements are spent when “whistleblowers” (who should be compensated for their adherence to be the voice of the voiceless) are raising these concerns at the subcommittee levels like I did.

Can you narrate an instance of stakeholder engagement during your involvement with CIF?

In Samoa, WB and ADB held meetings on PPCR-related activities and ignored the existence of the CIF Observer in Samoa (myself), who only found out of the CIF activities being held in my own country when I read about it on local papers and saw it on TV. This was relayed to CIF HQ in DC, and some inquiry was taken by the relevant subcommittee of CIF. But this dismissal attitude of the MDBs with regards IPs/LCs/CSOs are prevalent at projects in countries not helped by the governments themselves encouraging the exclusion of these important stakeholders and indeed rights holders whose rights, properties, lives, etc. are affected at the project level and needed us to be “whistleblowers” through our observer roles to ensure the decision-makers of CIF are informed in order to take some corrective responses.

It is important that MDBs who are the face of CIF at the project and country levels are not lured into acts of non-compliance and exclusive attitudes but be more proactive to respect the rules of

engagement not only with governments but more importantly the peoples affected by projects. Whistleblowers must be compensated from the funds allocated to MDBs for due diligence checks and policy compliance.

Do you think large-scale renewable energy projects tend to underrepresent civil society stakeholders? Why is that the case?

Yes—more often than not. In Samoa, I have had to recently write specific letters to Electric Power Corporation (EPC) and government as well as ADB on multi-million hydroelectric project as well as another renewable energy GEF funded multimillion bio-energy and bio-mass project.

But it is in our government's and donors' interests to push to achieve their promises made in the Paris Agreement and other related international pledges for zero fossil fuel emissions and achieve 100 percent renewable energy use by 2030 that they ignore any avenue that provides dissenting views (from their government perspectives) that might cause delays in completing these projects and deliver on their global undertakings. Sad to say that the many invaluable suggestions, analysis, concerns, recommendations, etc. provided by stakeholders like ourselves (countries like Samoa agreed in the UNCED process through the nine Major Groups as stakeholders and rights-holders integral to achieving sustainable development) are considered "dissenting voices" by government and donors thus missing the opportunity to consider them as positive input to achieve sustainable development and future as envisaged in the 17 SDGs of the 2030 Development Agenda of the world.

In your experience, how do private sector stakeholders and civil society stakeholders interact with each other for CIF's projects? Do you think they can collaborate better or add more value to each other?

Outcomes of UNCED through the Conventions and Funding Mechanisms and Agencies such as GEF, MDBs, etc. all see private sector as key to achieving sustainable development. Unfortunately, there is no genuine attempt to decipher the primary business model and fundamental role of private sector to make profits and money. The push to 'greening' the corporate business of the private sector continues to concern the CSOs, IPs, LCs, some NGOs, and other 9 Major Groups except the private sector and perhaps those in science. The three pillars of sustainable development continue

to be the propaganda, but the reality is a continued drive for sustained economic growth led by the private sector who in many cases take over the negotiation seats of governments in the global negotiation process. CSOs continue to be concerned by the central role accorded to the private sector as shown by the many false mitigation solutions entertained by UNFCCC such as in geo-engineering, bio-energy, REDD, ocean fertilization, techno-fixing the climate, etc. etc.

So, while in theory, private sector if they genuinely take up a sincere transition of their corporate policies to ensure the three pillars of sustainable development (economic, social, environment—in our part of the world, culture is the 4th important pillar) are taken with equal treatment and respect, then there is some hope to see private sector to play a role in achieving sustainable development.

So yes, there is a role that all stakeholders as in the nine major groups can collectively work together and in a complementary way, but the power and lure of profits continues to dictate the business models of private sector thus for CSOs it continues to be platonic dream.

How can we engage civil society better in large-scale renewable projects at different levels—investment planning, project design, and monitoring and evaluation?

The key rests with the donors, governments, MDBs, private sector, etc. who fund these large scale renewable projects—there has been so much said about the integral role of CSOs in development but as we see in the reality of the globalization take over, this stated goal is further ignored as we are more and more isolated and dismissed. The sad irony is the long-term solutions continue to be found in the wisdom of our peoples who must be consulted when their lands are forcibly grabbed, and resources exploited for profits and when our own governments are enmeshed by the power of money. It is hard to see any genuine desire by the rich few to engage CSOs and there can be little or no hope for sustainability in a world moving to be owned and taken over by a few. Renewable energy projects are often associated with land grabbing, IPs/LCs/CSOs forcibly removed, inaccessible energy, poverty, etc.

While there are so many palatable policies and laudable language in global agreements, the reality is completely opposite leaving little or no role whatsoever for CSOs to be genuinely engaged. The COVID 19 has been a huge lesson for solutions vested in IP wisdom and local traditional knowledge

where land and water are fundamental in sustainable livelihood and inter-generational survival. It is a “breath of fresh air”!

Gertrude Kabusimbi Kenyangi, Uganda, CSO

Observer, FIP CIF

Can you tell me a little about your engagement with the CIF program as an observer?

I have been observer for Africa on the CIF FIP for roughly 10 years. In those 10 years I have made intervention from the floor or/and submit written inputs into the work program of the fund. I have participated in stakeholder preparation meetings in advance of Trust Fund committee and subcommittee meetings. The purpose of these meetings, carried out using teleconferencing facilities, was to provide the CIF Administrative Unit and the observers an opportunity to discuss the agendas of the committee and subcommittee meetings and share with them in advance the documents that would be presented during such meetings. This kind of preparation enabled the observers to be better equipped in observing the meetings and making informed recommendations and comments when required.

I also participated in observer consultation meetings prior to Trust Fund committee/subcommittee meetings. The purpose of these one-day in-person consultations was to enable the observers to discuss and coordinate our positions so as to make our interventions at the committee meetings more effective. This activity ultimately resulted in more effective observer dialogue and inputs into the CIF processes.

I also participated in the expanded Observer Orientation Workshop. The purpose of the orientation training workshop was to expose and equip the observers with CIF-related information to prepare us to serve effectively in our role. The workshop was facilitated by the CIF Administrative Unit for both the current and the new observers and covered areas related to enhancement of observer

engagement with the CIF, including transparent decision-making and efficient use of resources. The outcome of this activity was that the observers were strengthened in our knowledge and engagement with the CIF.

Additionally, I consulted with other civil society and private sector stakeholders in compliance with agreed consultation guidelines; solicited, collected and communicated information from CSOs to the Board on matters that the Board was considering and represented the views of my constituency; collected and disseminated information from the Board and related bodies and processes to members of the CSOs.

Can you narrate an instance of stakeholder engagement during your involvement with CIF?

Yes, there were many instances of stakeholder engagement. I used online meetings, especially Skype. I also had a Google Groups address and a group WhatsApp to communicate with my constituency. The WhatsApp and Google Groups email proved very effective. However, my constituency of forest-dependent people lives in remote areas, often off the grid electricity. This creates a challenge of not having fully charged computers and phones. Majority of forest-dependent people are poor in terms of financial resources. As such many of them do not even have smart phones and they are not connected to the internet. Internet connections are very expensive in these areas.

Do you think large-scale renewable energy projects tend to underrepresent civil society stakeholders? Why is that the case?

Yes, large scale renewable energy projects underrepresent civil society stakeholders. This is because they are owned by governments, and governments tend to view CSOs with suspicion. They do not welcome the scrutiny CSOs subject them to. They are uncomfortable with the watchdog role CSOs play. As such, governments admit CSOs into regulated, minimal participation to look legitimate. They usually leave CSOs out of decision-making.

In your experience, how do private sector stakeholders and civil society stakeholders interact with each other for CIF's projects? Do you think they can collaborate better or add more value to each other?

In my experience, the private sector and CSOs only meet at the World Bank for meetings. There is no other interaction. CSOs and PSEs can and should collaborate in areas where they have common ground. It is important to remain mindful of the fact that PSEs are profit-oriented, while CSOs are mainly for service delivery. There is, however, a possibility of CSOs working as social enterprises and benefiting from knowledge that PSEs already possess, while PSEs can also learn from CSOs how to be human in their operations even as they pursue profit.

How can we engage civil society better in large-scale renewable projects at different levels—investment planning, project design, and monitoring and evaluation?

CSOs being part of the policymaking process at CIF is a good starting point. Let CSOs participate meaningfully. The participation by CSOs should not be nominal, a box-ticking exercise. It should be transformative participation where CSOs are actively involved in considering options, making choices and decisions. This requires that the capacity of CSOs is built. Create awareness and encourage CSOs to be transparent. Identify weaknesses, Strengths, Opportunities and Threats of both CSOs and PSEs and find common ground. Establish a website, database and a listserv. Train CSOs in social media use.

Lilian Dome Yeng, Ghana, CSO

Observer, FIP CIF

Can you tell me a little about your engagement with the CIF program as an observer?

Basically, at the time, the role of an observer was to make an observation about the subcommittee meetings when given the opportunity to attend. When there was the forum, observers would be represented and concerns based on proceedings of the meetings raised, and where clarity need to be given. I was an alternate observer of the CIF-FIP from 2010 to 2011.

Can you narrate an instance of stakeholder engagement during your involvement with CIF?

The agenda on the Dedicated Grant Mechanism to support the effective participation of the Local Communities and the Indigenous People was very much engaging. Observers raised series of concerns to include the involvement of observers in the process, especially observers coming from pilot countries. The concerns of the observers raised resulted in my participation in some of the consultation process on the DGM development stage at the Africa regional level in Accra Ghana, and at the Global Level in Bangkok Thailand.

I think the scope of observers should not just be limited to observing subcommittee meetings, to include having a budget to effectively engage with other CSOs on critical issues pertaining to climate financing at the national level. It helps to understand the process much better both at the national and at the subcommittee level.

Do you think large-scale renewable energy projects tend to underrepresent civil society stakeholders? Why is that the case?

Yes. There are few civil society players, especially at the national and local levels, who are actively working on renewables, thus leading to a situation of underrepresentation. However, CSOs are very well represented at the global and regional levels contributing to the decision-making process.

In your experience, how do private sector stakeholders and civil society stakeholders interact with each other for CIF's projects? Do you think they can collaborate better or add more value to each other?

In Ghana, such interaction does not exist. The key funding mechanism that has attracted private sector engagement with civil society is the Green Climate Fund (GCF). For example, Ecobank Ltd has now an Accredited Entity with GCF. Prior to that, a number of meetings with CSOs were organized.

How can we engage civil society better in large-scale renewable projects at different levels—investment planning, project design and monitoring and evaluation?

The proposed approach is to identify very active CSOs at the global and regional with strong presence at the national level. This guarantees constant flow of information at all levels thereby aiding CSOs to participate actively at all levels. A key example is the Alliance of Civil Society Organisations for Clean Energy Access (ACCESS) Coalition, which advocates for people living in

poverty to have access to safe, reliable and affordable energy, and for environmentally sustainable and efficient energy systems globally. ACCESS has three work streams—notably, SDG 7 implementation, World Bank/AfDB engagement, as well as learning and capacity building. It has Regional Coordinating Organisations with national level presence. With such structure, ACCESS can be in a position to engage at all levels including investment planning, project design, implementation and M&E.

Bijay Nanda, India, CSO

Observer, FIP CIF

Can you tell me a little about your engagement with the CIF program?

I served very actively as an Alternate Observer for the Forest Investment Program (FIP) from 2010 and have gathered volumes of information on FIP intent and circulated the relevant information and interacted regularly among the stakeholders of the eastern region of India as possible and practicable.

Can you narrate an instance of stakeholder engagement during your involvement with CIF?

The basics of stakeholder engagement and our role as observer is not yet laid out with clear guidelines even for which I am not at ease to narrate any particular instance of engagement with CIF but gained knowledge through my apt participation in the processes of interactions. It is to be more appropriate now to define the role, duties and responsibilities of the observer to lead LSE in a planned manner to improve, augment, and achieve the designed mandate, what I think to suggest in this context.

Do you think large-scale renewable energy projects tend to underrepresent civil society stakeholders? Why is that the case?

Because no pressure group of observers of SAN is yet formed to monitor and regulate the access of representation, the large-scale renewable energy projects therefore undermine the civil society stakeholders' representation, for which the planned long-term goals of SAN are getting affected badly and decelerates to achieve the desired mission and, therefore, the purpose of working for SAN seems gradually disheartening.

In your experience, how do private sector stakeholders and civil society stakeholders interact with each other for CIF's projects? Do you think they can collaborate better or add more value to each other?

I understand the private sector and civil society stakeholders should prepare, interact, and share vision documents regularly in favor of CIF projects for better execution as and when planned. I strongly think they should collaborate better and add more value to each other for meaningful implementation.

How can we engage civil society better in large-scale renewable projects at different levels—investment planning, project design, and monitoring and evaluation?

Civil society observers of SAN should have invested with authority to examine, study and make the need assessment for the stakeholders engagement in the large sector renewable projects at different levels of investment planning, project design, and conduct monitoring and evaluation in the spirit of delivering the short and long term benefits through which SAN may earn reputation and recognition and can't be ignored anyway.

Dennis Mairena, Nicaragua, IP

Observer, SREP CIF

Can you tell me a little about your engagement with the CIF program?

During the period that I participated as an observer of the Scaling Up Renewable Energy Program (SREP), I consider that I had a very valuable experience for me personally as well as collectively.

In general terms, I can say that the platform created by CIF funds is a unique platform, among all climate funds, since it offers the opportunity for full and effective participation that is so demanded by Indigenous Peoples, in other financing platforms.

In addition, the flow of information is constant to the observers, which allows us to keep up to date with what is happening in all participating countries.

The weakness, mine as an observer and my sector of Indigenous Peoples, is the lack of information at the local level about the proposals for review and the weak communication system between Indigenous organizations. I say this and cite any case, where I was able to read the proposals; I was able to research on the web about the country that presented the proposal. However, in many cases I could not establish contact with Indigenous Peoples' organizations in the target countries, and I tried to use third parties to establish these contacts; however, he could not get answers. That way I did not dare to comment on the proposals.

In addition, it must be considered that in some countries the rights of Indigenous Peoples are not recognized, while in others the existence of Indigenous Peoples is not even recognized. As a recommendation, in the case of Indigenous Peoples, it would be convenient to have one observer per continent, or one for each of the seven socio-cultural regions of the world (Asia, Africa, Latin America, North America, Pacific, Arctic, Russia – Caucasus).

Ute Collier, United Kingdom, CSO

Observer, SREP CIF

Can you tell me a little about your engagement with the SREP program? How long have you been engaged and what role have you played?

I inherited the role as SREP observer around two years ago, when I started this job. However, at that time all the SREP projects had already been agreed. I made some interventions at the Morocco meeting regarding the Zambia investment plan.

Can you narrate an instance of stakeholder engagement during your involvement with SREP?

I've had no SREP specific involvement, but I was involved with a couple of broader CIFs stakeholder events in London and Brussels. I actually found them very good and a lot of effort was made to engage civil society stakeholders.

Do you think large-scale renewable projects tend to underrepresent civil society stakeholders? Why is that the case?

It really depends on the country. In many developing countries, civil society capacity and expertise is often limited, so it can be difficult to get meaningful engagement at the local level. International CSOs have more capacity and can sometimes support local groups.

In your experience, how do private sector stakeholders and civil society stakeholders interact with each other for CIF/other funds' projects? Do you think they can collaborate better or add more value to each other?

I've not had that much experience of interaction within the CIFs. It's probably true to say that CSOs are wary of private sector stakeholders as they feel that the private sector rarely lacks opportunities to engage and lobby governments. However, I think it's useful for both sides to understand where each other are coming from.

How can we engage civil society better in large-scale renewable projects at different levels—investment planning, project design, and monitoring and evaluation?

Difficult due to the capacity issues I've mentioned. You need to do a lot of outreach and provide funding for things like workshops. Also persuade governments to take CSOs seriously.

Karsten Loeffler, Germany, PS

Observer, PPCR CIF

Can you tell me a little about your engagement with the CIF program?

The CIFs model with stakeholder participation is close to a role model, and much better compared to the other climate funds'. It is more diverse and that is very good. The issue is representativeness of observers—and that goes for all the three constituency groups (civil society, private sector, and Indigenous Peoples). In that respect, honestly speaking, it is unrealistic that an observer could speak for a massive group at large. Perhaps the civil society and Indigenous People groups are more homogenous and can do that, but with private sector that I represent, it is more diverse, and there is no one perspective of "the private sector." I found it difficult that if the expectation is for me to give feedback to my constituency, what is my constituency? I don't have a well-defined constituency per se. That was a major obstacle for me. My experience as a private sector observer felt a little up in the air. I always found it a little tricky to say I represent the private sector because I did not feel like I represented a fixed community. When we talk about private sector engagement within CIF, it is generally more direct private sector windows, but to me it seems quite negligible.

Engagement as an observer was pretty shallow—I was part of the distribution list, could voice any concerns to funding proposals (which never happened; I haven't seen any observers send comments to those proposals). And in the meetings, it was about future direction or policy issues. Perhaps there could be a natural subgroup within the private sector to reach out to—like companies with

global business models—because there are generally specialized communities within the private sector that would know about the work of the CIFs. From my perspective, coming from a developed country, that is a challenge; perhaps in developing countries they might be more relevant, since the private sector might benefit from CIF's activities. Other private sector observers, I have noticed, were able to organize the constituency much better, so perhaps in emerging economies it is easier where CIF is active.

Can you narrate an instance of stakeholder engagement during your involvement with CIF?

Once when I engaged in the meetings the session was about the investment strategy for liquidity along the lines of World Bank's investment policies; there was discussion amongst funds how liquidity of the CIFs at that time was to be invested along the lines of World Bank's investment policies, which, interestingly, at that time included fossil fuel investments. Because of my background I saw those contradictions, so I engaged in that. I advocated for the CIF's liquidity investments not to be made in fossil fuels. It was acknowledged that it was indeed a contradiction after my intervention. This is an example of where private sector observer interests were aligned with civil society observers.

Another time I engaged in the meetings was when there was a debate about the role of insurance in providing protection for poor communities vulnerable to climate change. Developed countries concede that insurance is one of the available tools for that and are willing to provide some finance for that. I participated in a panel discussion on this and advocated for insurance to be financed to poor communities in developing countries—it should at least be an option to consider. It should be considered what the best way to provide protection is—insurance is one means of providing this protection. But it is very important to come up with national adaptation plans that consider opportunities for ways to provide this protection—in addition to insurance.

How can private sector stakeholders and civil society stakeholders interact with each other?

In the meetings there was no tension between private sector and civil society. It was generally the same routine in the meetings—the committee members commenting on the agenda items and then the observers could raise any comments. There wasn't a lot of conversation or contradictions or conflicts per se. It wasn't all the stringently organized—there was effort by the secretariat to

facilitate involvement of observers, and in my second meetings onwards I participated, and it was pretty straightforward. There were some civil society organizations that had a very close understanding of the process and what the particular issues were when it came to participation of civil society organizations in implementation of projects—that was a major concern for them.

In my previous job with a large insurance company we always worked with civil society organizations, because they are important and provide insights and inputs which is always welcome. So from my experience in the private sector it has always been efficient working with civil society.

I do see how in many cases where private sector may have close relations with the government and work against the interests of Indigenous People or civil society, when it comes to say human rights, participation, etc.

Crispin Swedi, Democratic Republic of Congo, CSO

Observer, Global Environment Facility (GEF)

Can you tell me a little about your engagement as an observer? How long have you been engaged and what role have you played?

Since December 2016 until present, I have served as the elected Regional Focal Point for the Central African region, for the GEF-CSO Network. In my role, I have:

- Helped strengthen civil society engagement with the GEF, and on ground implementation and evaluation of GEF policy;
- Facilitated the participation of civil society organizations in the processes from implementation to membership with the GEF Secretariat;
- Strengthened support for CSO engagement in the GEF-CSO Network;
- Participated in GEF Council meetings and extended constituency meetings;

- Participated in the Stakeholder Advisory Network (SAN) and contested the elections for its Coordinating Committee for the GEF CSO representative; also participated in SAN assembly.

Can you narrate an instance (or several instances) of stakeholder engagement during your involvement with your fund? What was good and what did you find lacking? How do you think it can be improved?

I attend regional meetings, as a stakeholder representative, and was funded to attend the GEF Council meeting, although some formalities in the visa process for the United States had not been approved for me. I strengthened my skills in knowledge and capacity building at the global level during the enlarged regional constituency workshops such as Regional Focal Points of the network and the CSOs linked by the GEF Secretariat.

However, there is a lack of means for the CSO network to coordinate the work of the CSO community and contribute to the work of the GEF Secretariat. There is a lack of support as a CSO for participation in board meetings, and low involvement for engagement in GEF funded implementation, monitoring and evaluation project development (SGP). There is also a lack of opportunity for the GEF mechanism to establish a framework for exchange and sharing of a better experience between the members involved in the fields for an effective dialogue with the CSO Network.

There is also weak financial support in monitoring and evaluation to establish communication with stakeholders or community groups (women, youth, Indigenous People, and men) involved in the field in collecting information. I will propose to strengthen the public participation policy in the GEF process on CSO engagement at country level to address the concerns of civil society, in order to strengthen the engagement of civil society in a transparent manner.

Do you think large-scale renewable energy projects tend to underrepresent civil society stakeholders? Why is that the case?

Yes, large-scale renewable energy projects bring substantial resources to their realization. But civil society stakeholders do not have enough means for their visibility on the ground and to mobilize the public's attention and the necessary interest in disseminating renewable energies and information through local NGOs. These projects should complement civil society and not underrepresent them.

In your experience, how do private sector stakeholders and civil society stakeholders interact with each other? Do you think they can collaborate better or add more value to each other?

In my experience, civil society and private sector will interact in positive aspects by helping them to establish a framework of cooperation or partnerships in the field, on private sector access to investments in infrastructure in order to support development between communities, providing training for installers and users and developing business in the implementation of renewable energies.

Civil society stakeholders can seize this opportunity to play an important role on the ground, disseminating information on promoting technology acquisition to grassroots communities, educating the population on the issues by adding more value to the information dissemination campaign.

The participatory approach is the best option for renewable energy systems when it comes to local communities. I am convinced that they can better collaborate or enhance each other to allow them to play an important role.

How can we engage civil society better in large-scale renewable projects at different levels—investment planning, project design and monitoring and evaluation?

By adopting an appropriate strategy to select civil society through project training activities in order to improve performance and the impacts of the project in:

- Analyzing serious energy problems and proposing priority investments and technical assistance;
- Addressing these energy problems with environmental, financial, and social sustainability;
- Taking advantage of the skills experiences and knowledge of non-governmental NGOs, local groups and the private sector in the design, implementation, and evaluation of project people;
- Creating partnerships between project executing agencies and stakeholders;
- Responding to the social and economic needs of those affected;
- Transparency for the preparation, reporting and evaluation of public participation and evaluation of projects.

THE CLIMATE INVESTMENT FUNDS

The Climate Investment Funds (CIF) was established in 2008 to mobilize resources and trigger investments for low carbon, climate resilient development in select middle and low income countries. 14 contributor countries have pledged over US\$8.5 billion to the funds. To date CIF committed capital has generated an additional US\$61 billion in co-financing for mitigation and adaptation interventions at an unprecedented scale in 72 recipient countries. CIF's large-scale, low-cost, long-term financing lowers the risk and cost of climate financing. It tests new business models, builds track records in unproven markets, and boosts investor confidence to unlock additional sources of finance. The CIF is one of the largest active climate finance mechanisms in the world.



THE STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY NETWORK

The Stakeholder Advisory Network on Climate Finance (SAN) was created to promote good governance in climate finance through enhanced stakeholder engagement by supporting non-state oversight, promoting transparency and building capacity to enhance meaningful participation at all levels of climate finance decision-making with particular focus on the global level. It is a network that aims to facilitate sharing of knowledge and coordination among climate fund observers from civil society, indigenous people, and the private sector.



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