

Submission on the GCF Updated Strategic Plan

In the over ten years since the GCF was created, the world has changed dramatically, and the climate crisis has worsened every year. Changes have also been evident since the last Updated Strategic Plan was discussed and ultimately adopted in 2020. The climate crisis has continued to accelerate and the need to take urgent mitigation action and to adapt to the increasingly changing climate is even more apparent and undeniable. Thus, the GCF must continue to focus on high impact mitigation action that will spur the energy transition in developing countries. But it's not just the climate crisis that is worsening; there are multiple intersecting and mutually reinforcing crises, including the biodiversity crisis with global ecosystems being under increased stressed (tropical forests, oceans etc.) and rising concerns regarding food security. Many so-called mega cities are also facing increased challenges regarding air quality, threatening human health. **Thus, if the GCF wants to remain relevant, it must ensure that the revisions to the Updated Strategic Plan reflect the interlinkages between various challenges humanity is facing and the increased urgency of the climate crisis.**

Correspondingly, the GCF must **focus more strongly on multi-benefit interventions** than what has been the case during its first funding phases. In particular, ensuring climate and biodiversity protection through ecosystem-based, cross-cutting funding approaches, addressing the drivers for the loss of biodiversity and ecosystems has to be prioritized. **The Updated Strategic Plan thus should outline a stronger focus on sustainable food systems, blue economy and natural climate solutions, actively seeking to engage and to partner with the private sector.** With the upcoming adoption of a post 2020 global biodiversity framework under the UN Convention on biological diversity, the Updated Strategic Plan must stress the need to make sure that GCF and accredited partner entities are not only Paris aligned but also make a positive contribution to protect biodiversity and global ecosystems. The GCF could also play an important role in highlighting the interlinkages between climate change and human health and actively pursue interventions seeking to address both.

Given the importance of forests for both mitigation and adaptation, further accelerating the paradigm-shift in GCF's **forest-related activities** is particularly relevant. This should include but go beyond results-based finance instruments (e.g. REDD+). Additional measures may include (i) support for readiness/capacity conditions, (ii) investments into low-carbon land use, (iii) supporting actors that do not have access to forest-related carbon market access and (iv) explore programmatic (non-market) approaches to tackle drivers of unsustainable practices (e.g. by supporting governance, land use planning, alternative income approaches).

The GCF should also explore opportunities to strengthen its work on oceans and blue economy, including on small scale fisheries and sustainable food systems as well as sustainable shipping, e.g. through **targeted Requests for Proposals (RfPs)**.

The GCF must also continue to build on its comparative advantages and ensure that it is creating and holding the highest standards when it comes to implementing ambitious climate solutions that are firmly anchored in human rights, gender equality, and country ownership.

Part of the paradigm-shift the GCF was created to achieve is building long-term institutional capacities and capacities for strategic planning in developing countries. This requires greater support and prioritization to help develop a robust pipeline of DAE funding proposals, e.g. through providing **funding for Early-Stage Project Development**. Such funding could help entities initiate the process for selecting and developing funding proposals. The GCF should also consider combining the Readiness Program and Project Preparation Facility to create a more straightforward and streamlined approach to support accreditation, project identification, concept note development and the completion of full proposals. The GCF could also finance a **rooster of experts/organizations** that could provide technical support for project development for direct access entities.