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# **CIVIL SOCIETY NETWORK ON CLIMATE CHANGE (CISONECC)**

## **State of Play for the Civil Society Organizations in Green Climate Fund in Malawi**

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### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CADECOM	Catholic Development Commission
CEPA	Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy
CISANET	Civil Society Agriculture Network
CISONECC	Civil Society Network on Climate Change
COP22	22 <sup>nd</sup> Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EAD	Environmental Affairs Department
EAM	Evangelical Association of Malawi
EP&D	Economic Planning and Development
LEAD	Leadership for Environmental Development
LUANAR	Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources
MEET	Malawi Environmental Endowment Trust
MERA	Malawi Energy Regulatory Authority
MIE	Multilateral Implementing Entity
MMCT	Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust
MNRE&M	Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy and Mining
MUST	Malawi University of Science and Technology
NASFAM	National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi
NCSO	National Civil Society Organizations
NDA	National Designated Authority
NFP	National Focal Point
NIE	National Implementing Entity
NYNCC	National Youth Network on Climate Change
PERFORM	Protecting Ecosystems and Restoring Forests in Malawi
RIE	Regional Implementing Entity
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This study consolidates experiences of civil society organizations (CSO) in Malawi regarding their knowledge of Green Climate Fund (GCF) processes. It specifically sought to understand their level of involvement in working with or guiding the Malawi government as a recipient country of GCF funding in order to help it effectively implement the planned GCF projects. The study was commissioned by Germanwatch following their realization that CSOs in Africa were generally not adequately involved neither were they aware of the GCF.

The study starts with a brief description of the GCF globally and nationally explaining its intended purpose and mentions the 5 implementing countries in Africa. There was generally poor response by the CSOs to the framework which was sent to them to guide their feedback. Additionally, the few that responded left many questions unanswered; an indication that either they were not familiar with the GCF Project in Malawi or the questions were not applicable to their situations. The questions focused on understanding the local partner organizations; the institutional structure for GCF as well as the implementing entities at various levels. They further probed CSO's knowledge about GCF activities, the key players to the GCF, regional and local participation of CSOs in GCF activities and identification of gaps for monitoring the GCF impacts. Finally, the framework sought feedback on the usefulness of the tool in guiding the CSOs to effectively assess their own readiness to the GCF and the applicability of the assessment framework to get the desired information.

All the 7 CSOs that participated in the study expressed eagerness to be involved in the Malawian GCF Project either as direct implementers or directly partnering and assisting the government achieve the goals of the project.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) is a unique global initiative to respond to climate change by investing into low-emission and climate-resilient development<sup>1</sup>. It was established by 194 governments to limit or reduce greenhouse gas emissions in developing countries and to help adapt vulnerable societies to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. Given the urgency and seriousness of the challenge, the Fund is mandated to make an ambitious contribution to the united global response to climate change. It was established with a mission to advance the goal of keeping the temperature increase on Planet Earth below 2 degrees Celsius.

It was generally observed that the involvement of civil society organizations (CSO) especially in Africa was very low especially at the national level where only few CSOs were lightly engaged in GCF discussions leading to barriers for civil society to more actively advocate on GCF matters with government counterparts and other key stakeholders.

To address the challenge of low involvement of CSOs, the Germanwatch e.V. implements the 'CSOs Readiness to the GCF - focus Africa' project in collaboration with CARE International and their partners to support broader African civil society engagement in the GCF processes in Malawi, Senegal, Kenya, Morocco and Ghana.

Strengthening the engagement of civil society actors and organizations in the GCF processes at the national level is an important step to scale-up existing CSOs' capacities to advocate for ambitious proposals, bring on-the-ground expertise to the table and ensure accountability of GCF-funded activities by national authorities through a broader societal mobilization for transformation and better impacts.

Therefore at the beginning of the project in each country, a qualitative and quantitative assessment of the current situation of the GCF in the partner countries were conducted by the national CSOs to enable an alignment of the gathered results by the assessment exercise with the organization of the national workshops in the first months of the project. In Malawi however, the assessment was purely qualitative and the process was coordinated by the Civil Society Network on Climate Change (CISONEC) with support from Care International (Malawi). The assessment serves as a baseline to understand the current situation in a way for assessing the state of play of the Fund processes and to gather an

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<sup>1</sup> Climate-resilient development is about adding considerations of climate variability and climate change to development decision-making in order to ensure that progress toward development goals now includes consideration of climate impacts.

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inventory and assessment from Malawian civil society in relation to mid- and long-term evaluation of the project impact.

The assessment framework was given to 30 organizations which were grouped as; CSOs (17), Development Partners (4), Policy and Regulation (4), Academia (3) and Media (1). However, only 7 representing 23% filled them out and submitted. The low feedback could mean that the framework was not user friendly to the CSOs or that they did not know much about the GCF. Of the 7 questionnaires received only 4 were filled in full but the rest had gaps. There is therefore very low knowledge of the GCF and its interventions among CSOs signifying low involvement as well.

## **2. DETAILED RESULTS BY FOCUS AREA**

### **2.1 Understanding of the local partner organizations in Malawi**

This aimed at understanding the institutional arrangements and the associated implementation entities as well as the exact GCF activities being implemented in Malawi. Only 2 of the 7 organizations were active members of the GCF or climate finance sphere. Climate change interventions in 4 organizations were headed by women while 3 were by men. The organizations are therefore well paced to utilize women's extensive theoretical and practical knowledge of the environment which in most cases is heavily underutilized (GTZ, 2010). All the 4 women were holding senior strategic positions.

### **2.2 Institutional structure for GCF in Malawi**

Environmental Affairs Department (EAD) of the Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy and Mining (MNRE&M) was mentioned 3 times as the GCF National Focal Point (NFP) in Malawi but 6 organizations did not know when the incumbent assumed the role while one said 2015. Only one organization interacted with the NFP many times but the rest never had the opportunity. The NFP was a Board member for one CSO serving as the government representative and facilitating another CSO's accreditation process on GCF. The Director was also the main stakeholder for policy work at a third CSO whose advocacy work was targeting the EAD and not necessarily GCF. Three (3) of the 7 organizations understood that in Malawi, the NFP was also responsible for National Designated Authority (NDA) roles.

There was very little knowledge by the national civil society organizations (NCSO) about the existence of the GCF Focal Point and/or the NDA neither were they knowledgeable about their roles. Very few knew about the focal point. One organization representative thought that only the CSOs with interest in climate change and also interact with EAD were privileged to know. Two organizations were aware of an activity that was organised by the GCF Focal Point and/or the NDA to inform the general public or the civil society community about their roles and/or activities. They however differed on the exact time at which the activity was held. One organization said the activity was held in August 2015 while the other said it was in 2016.

### **2.3 Implementing entities of GCF in Malawi**

All the 7 organizations did not mention the name of any GCF National Implementing Entity (NIE) nor any Regional Implementing Entity (MIE) present in Malawi. UNDP however was the only Multilateral

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Implementing Entity (MIE) mentioned by 2 organizations. It was not known by any organization when the MIE was accredited to the GCF. One CSO reported that it closely worked with the MIE because as a member to the CSO's board. There also existed collaboration in advocacy between another CSO and the MIE. The organizations were not aware if any implementing entity in Malawi was developing or had already developed a project proposal to receive funding from the GCF. The organizations did not know if the national civil society community was aware about the existence of any implementing entity accredited to GCF. However the third CSO said they were only informed by EAD that some organization was accredited. Similarly, they were not aware of any activity that was organised by the implementing entity to inform the general public or the civil society community about their roles and/or activities.

### 2.4 Assessing CSO's knowledge about GCF activities in Malawi

One CSO indicated that the main GCF activities and processes in Malawi were focussed on adaptation to climate change<sup>2</sup> but the other 6 organizations did not know the activities. Only one CSO was aware that Malawi was one recipient of the GCF but they did not know about the specific planned projects or those already implemented. No organization therefore could provide a summary of GCF Project objectives, main activities, implementing actors and institutions involved neither could they explain its stage of project implementation nor proposal development. There was a general feeling that the NCSOs including the 7 that responded to the questionnaire were not involved in the early stages of the implementation or proposal development of that GCF Project. Furthermore, CSOs believed that the civil society community and/or the population and citizens in general did not know the main GCF activities and processes because of limited funding which restricted the CSOs' ability to sensitize the people. It was reasoned by one CSO that the failure by CSOs to be involved in GCF in the early stages through sensitization meetings led to generally limited access to information by the population about the GCF processes.

### 2.5 Key GCF players in Malawi

Organizations were asked to provide a clear overview of the key players of the GCF State of Play in Malawi (excluding civil society), based on their own knowledge and/or self-conducted research. This would enable a clear understanding of which governmental, private sector, public sector, para public sector organizations and institutions were involved in the GCF discussions, policy debates, activities and

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<sup>2</sup> **Climate adaptation** is the adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities" (UNFCCC 2010).

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processes in Malawi and were playing a part in the processes. Four organizations reported that the EAD of the MNRE&M, was the key public sector player within the GCF processes in Malawi. Economic Planning and Development (EP&D) and Department of Forestry were also mentioned once. From the point of view of the CSOs interviewed, there were only few public sector players involved in GCF. CSOs understand that the key functions of the public sector players included being the GCF focal point, coordinating and planning GCF activities, raising awareness and providing technical support on the GCF processes.

One respondent organization mentioned Malawi Environmental Endowment Trust (MEET), Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust (MMCT), Leadership for Environmental Development (LEAD), and the Academia as the key private sector players in the GCF processes while another mentioned Eco Bank. The remaining 6 CSOs did not know any private sector players. Despite the NHBG private sector player being named no CSO knew their roles, who they involved neither their activities nor the achievement they realised. Efforts to trace NHBG for such information and its full name were not successful. Furthermore the organization did not mention key players from other relevant sectors within the GCF processes such as the media and others alike. Roles that such players performed were also not mentioned including the people they involved, their specific activities as well as achievements they realised. One organization thought the key players ought to conduct capacity building sessions for CSOs and to support their readiness to become NIE.

Locally, the public sector key players did little to support or advance the roles and participation of CSOs within the GCF. Only one organization remembered the GCF meeting of August 2015 and a similar follow up meeting in 2016 in preparation for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP22) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). There was also an accreditation sensitization meeting for CSOs within 2016. The other 6 CSOs did not know and/or remember anything. Limited funding was cited as the significant challenge or limitation which was making the local public sector players fail to involve the CSOs. Local participation of CSOs within the GCF was not supported by either the private sector key players or any other players to advance their understanding of the expected key GCF roles.

### 2.6 Regional and local interaction of CSOs with GCF

Three organizations thought there were 7 key CSOs known for taking part in GCF debates, activities and processes in Malawi. These were MMCT, LEAD, Protecting Ecosystems and Restoring Forests in Malawi (PERFORM), Civil Society Network on Climate Change (CISONECC), Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy (CEPA), MEET and LEAD. MMCT and LEAD were known for pursuing GCF accreditation while PERFORM was said to be the provider of support and capacity to organizations pursuing accreditation. The roles of CISONECC, CEPA, MEET and LEAD were known for policy participation, lobbying for accountability and speeding up response processes for addressing climate change. The only significant activities, results or achievements of the NCSOs interacting with GCF processes in Malawi were events and publications by CISONECC but no links for accessing such were provided. Coordination and shared interest on GCF processes were mentioned as the key factors that contribute to the two CISONECC mentioned successes.

Two organizations explained that limited internal human resources, insufficient financial capacity, inadequate interaction with government and limited collaboration with responsible GCF entities were the most significant challenges faced by NCSOs in interacting with the GCF processes. The limited interaction was a result of financial constraints for creating specific GCF platforms and limited knowledge on its processes. All the 7 organizations did not provide answers about how their organizations engage with GCF debates, activities and processes at the regional (within Africa regions) and international levels because they had limited opportunities, if any, to do so.

### 2.7 Identifying gaps for monitoring the GCF project impacts

The influence of CSOs and actors on GCF relevant national processes was rated differently. One organization rated the CSO influence “low” saying the CSOs depended on guessing about GCF processes and that most of the CSOs were not aware of what processes to monitor, the CSOs suffer failure to coordinate efforts among themselves and that they had limited capacity to develop good GCF proposals. The second respondent CSO said the CSOs had existing but limited influence on the processes. However, no reasons were given for their rating while the third indicated that they were good because the advocacy that the CSOs had done on Malawi's readiness to access GCF as well as establishing of NIEs persuaded the government to speed up the GCF process.

**2.7.1 Policy participation by CSOs**

One CSO rated its policy participation and that of others as low because they were never involved. Another organization said its participation and of its fellow CSOs was increasing but the reasons were not given. Only one organization said there were 3 NCSOs that were fully engaged in the GCF policies in a critical and constructive manner within Malawi or at the regional and international levels but their policy participation locally had stayed the same. The CSOs in the assessment did not know whether Malawi had a GCF or an alternate board member.

**2.7.2 Public information and awareness on GCF in Malawi**

The level of public information and awareness about the GCF processes and activities among civil society in Malawi was described as being poor where citizens in general and NCSOs in particular were not well informed and not aware about the GCF activities. Respondent organizations thought that if they were well informed and aware, then their level of interaction among themselves would be high. They also said that at the time only the partners and line ministries were aware. While one participating CSO believed that based on their organizational experience, information and awareness of national CSOs on the GCF processes in Malawi had decreased because there was no reach to other CSOs to participate in GCF activities. Another one however thought it increased because most of the organizations had recognised climate change in their medium and long term strategies and wanted to be linked to funding institutions since COP21 of 2015.

**2.7.3 Collaborations and partnerships with other CSOs on GCF**

There was limited collaboration among CSOs on GCF processes and activities in Malawi. There was no confident response among all the involved CSOs to prove that collaboration on GCF was taking place. One respondent CSO felt that there was some level of collaboration to identify capacity gaps and to share accreditation experiences while the second felt that collaboration was not up to date and left a lot to be desired because of differences in their mandate and core business or nature of the projects/programmes. It also observed that the CSOs always fight for the same limited resources and collaboration was somehow compromised. The final CSO observed that CISONTECC was better placed to enhance collaboration of CSOs on GCF but it had limited financial and technical capacity to effectively do so. Only two organizations thought that there was an increase in collaboration around GCF since they started engaging in the GCF processes. The other five however observed no change at all.

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On whether their CSOs were actively engaged with other NCSOs or other relevant non-state actors around the GCF activities and processes, three CSOs reported an increase in their involvement and that their involvement was beneficial to their CSOs while the remaining four observed no change.

### 2.7.4 CSO's participation in national or regional GCF readiness activities

None of the seven CSOs ever participated in any national or regional GCF readiness activities. Although only one CSO was aware of other NCSOs in Malawi which had participated in GCF readiness activities, it appears even those that did not respond to the questions never participated in such activities. The CSO that indicated knowing other CSOs to have participated in GCF readiness activities did not mention such organizations neither were their activities nor lessons of their involvement mentioned.

### 2.7.5 Learning and experience sharing around the GCF involvement

One CSO said it was aware of existing peer-learning and experience sharing around the GCF processes and activities among NCSOs and those at regional level at the time of reporting. It was involved in planning the GCF training workshop through the PERFORM Project and organizations seeking GCF accreditation. However, just like the other six CSOs, it never received any technical/advisory or institutional support from other African or national CSOs to develop or improve their knowledge, skills and understanding about the GCF modalities.

## 2.8 Evaluation of the assessment activity

Four respondent CSOs generally felt this assessment process was effective and worthwhile and the remaining three did not provide feedback. Out of 18 cumulative responses received, only 5 found the assessment criteria limiting while 7 and 6 responses said the assessment activity was “very good” and “good” respectively, Table 1.

**Table 1: Frequencies for evaluating the assessment activity**

Assessment criteria	Frequency of responses			
	V. good	Good	Limited	All
Relevance of the assessment framework	3	0	1	4
Choice and types of the targeted groups, actors and institutions	3	1	0	4
Participation and availability of groups, actors and institutions	0	3	1	4
Relevance and quality of the information and data collected	0	1	2	3
Value of the framework to inform, guide and help the organization	1	1	1	3
<b>Overall</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>18</b>

The overall evaluation of the completion of the assessment framework however received mid satisfaction by three CSOs while one was not satisfied. Such assessment was done by indicating the overall status of CSO's ranking of this activity by their organization after the work had completed.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

From this analysis, it is evident that the GCF Project and its accompanying processes is not popular among organizations especially CSOs. The failure by 23 organizations to respond could be interpreted as a clear sign that they were not aware of the GCF Project or they struggled to complete the assessment using the framework. CISON ECC, as a coordinating body for CSOs on climate change needs financial and technical assistance in order to strengthen its capacity to effectively perform its roles. Wider involvement of the CSOs is important for community mobilization for the people's meaningful and effective involvement for the intended results.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: List of Organizations Targeted For Assessment

Organizational Classification	Name of organization	Contact person	Contact Details	
			Email	Phone
Civil Society Organizations	LEAD SEA	Gibson Mphepo	<a href="mailto:Gmphepo@leadsea.mw">Gmphepo@leadsea.mw</a>	+2651526059/524
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	CURE	Crispin Mwambene	<a href="mailto:cmwambene@gmail.com">cmwambene@gmail.com</a>	
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	TROCAIRE	Violet Moyo	<a href="mailto:violet.moyo@trocaire.org">violet.moyo@trocaire.org</a>	
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