



**GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY**  
INVESTING IN OUR PLANET

Policy: GA/PL/04

Approved on December 20, 2018

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## **POLICY ON ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

## GA/PL/04 Policy on Access to Information

<b>Summary</b>	This Policy sets out the principles and mandatory requirements for the public accessibility of Council Information, thereby contributing to the transparent governance of the GEF.
<b>Approved By</b>	GEF Council (55 <sup>th</sup> Council meeting)
<b>Approval Date</b>	December 20, 2018
<b>Effective Date</b>	December 20, 2018
<b>Applicability</b>	<p>This Policy applies to Council information.</p> <p>The Ethics Committee, the Ethics Officer, the Independent Evaluation Office, the Secretariat, and the Trustee are subject to the <a href="#">World Bank Policy on Access to Information</a>.</p> <p>The Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel and GEF Partner Agencies are subject to their respective policies and procedures on access to information.</p>
<b>Council Document</b>	Policy on Access to Information ( <a href="#">GEF/C.55/06</a> )
<b>Related Documents</b>	<p><i>GEF Policies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Agency Minimum Standards on Environmental and Social Safeguards (<a href="#">OP/PL/01</a>)</li><li>• Minimum Fiduciary Standards for GEF Partner Agencies (<a href="#">GA/PL/02</a>)</li><li>• Monitoring and Evaluation Policy</li><li>• Project and Program Cycle (<a href="#">OP/PL/01</a>)</li></ul> <p><i>GEF Guidelines</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy (<a href="#">GEF/C.52/Inf.06/Rev.1</a>)</li></ul>
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## Definitions

**Adviser** means an individual providing advice to a Council Member or Alternate Council Member, as communicated by the Council Member or Alternate Council Member to the Secretariat

**Alternate Council Member** means an alternate for a Council Member as used in the Instrument

**Assembly** means the GEF Assembly that convenes all Participants to the GEF every three to four years as set out in the Instrument

**Council** means the 32 members that make up the GEF Council as set out in the Instrument

**Council Information** means documents of any type, such as paper, electronic, photograph, audio or video recordings prepared by the Council in the course of its official business

**Council Member** means any member of the Council as used in the Instrument

**Ethics Committee** means the committee of the Council established by a decision of the Council to provide Council oversight over the implementation of its policy on *Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Council Members, Alternates, and Advisers*<sup>1</sup> and to help prevent and monitor situations that might affect the reputation and integrity of the Council

**Ethics Officer** means the person in the World Bank's Ethics and Business Conduct Vice Presidency tasked to support the Ethics Committee in the coordination, communication and administration tasks related the management of the policy on *Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Council Members, Alternates, and Advisers*<sup>2</sup>

**Executive Session** means executive sessions of Council meetings as defined in Paragraph 23 of the *Rules of Procedure for the GEF Council*<sup>3</sup>

**Independent Evaluation Office** means the Independent Evaluation Office of the GEF whose responsibility it is to carry out independent evaluations consistent with decisions of the Council, as set out in the Instrument

**Instrument** means the *Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility*<sup>4</sup>, effective July 7, 1994 and as amended

**GEF Partner Agency or Agencies** means an agency eligible to request and receive GEF resources directly for the design, implementation, and supervision of GEF projects

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<sup>1</sup> GA/PL/03 ([http://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/Ethics\\_Conflict\\_of\\_Interest\\_Policy.pdf](http://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/Ethics_Conflict_of_Interest_Policy.pdf))

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> ([https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/publications/11488\\_English\\_2.pdf](https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/publications/11488_English_2.pdf))

<sup>4</sup> ([https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/GEF\\_Instrument-Interior-March23.2015.pdf](https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/GEF_Instrument-Interior-March23.2015.pdf))

**Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel** means the body that provides the GEF with scientific and technical advice as set out in the Instrument

**Secretariat** means the GEF Secretariat that services and reports to the GEF Assembly and the Council as set out in the Instrument

**Trustee** means the Trustee of the GEF Trust Fund as set out in the Instrument

## Introduction

1. Consistent with the Instrument, access to information underpins the GEF's commitment to transparent governance, accountability and integrity, and it contributes towards reducing risks, effective stakeholder engagement, public awareness and trust, as well as the dissemination of knowledge, experience and lessons learned.

## Purpose

2. This Policy sets out the principles and mandatory requirements for the public accessibility of Council Information, thereby contributing to the transparent governance of the GEF.

## Application

3. This Policy applies to Council Information.

4. The Ethics Committee, the Ethics Officer, the Independent Evaluation Office, the Secretariat, and the Trustee are subject to the *World Bank Policy on Access to Information*<sup>5</sup>.

5. The Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel and GEF Partner Agencies are subject to their respective policies and procedures on access to information.

## Guiding Principles

6. This Policy is based on the following principles:

- (a) The Council allows access to any Council Information unless the information is restricted based on the list of exceptions set out in Paragraph 8.
- (b) Council Information that is not restricted from public access is disclosed proactively.
- (c) Council Information that is not disclosed proactively is disclosed upon request, in accordance with clear time standards.
- (d) Any decision to restrict Council Information from public access is justified based on the list of exceptions set out in Paragraph 8.

## Policy Requirements

7. When Council Information is not restricted from public access, the Secretariat discloses such information on the GEF website when feasible.

8. The following exceptions justify restricting certain Council Information from public

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<sup>5</sup> (<https://policies.worldbank.org/sites/ppf3/PPFDocuments/Forms/DispPage.aspx?docid=3693>)

access:

- (a) Personal information on Council Members, Alternates and Advisers;
- (b) Information that may compromise the security, safety or health of any individual or the environment;
- (c) Information received in confidence or restricted under a separate disclosure/ access to information regime or equivalent and/or conveyed to the Council as restricted from public access in accordance with the owner's policies on access to information or equivalent;
- (d) Information prepared by the Council as part of Executive Sessions and other deliberative information as decided by the Council; and
- (e) Information subject to attorney-client privilege.

9. The Council responds within ten (10) business days to a request from the public for Council Information. The Council informs the requester if additional time is required because of the nature, scale and scope of the request. The Secretariat facilitates the correspondence upon instruction of the Council.

10. Should the Council receive a request for Council Information that is restricted from public access in accordance with this Policy, it informs the requester accordingly.

11. Should a requester wish to appeal the Council's decision to restrict certain Council Information from public access in accordance with this Policy, the Council considers the request in Executive Session at the next Council meeting.

12. The Council may decide, in exceptional circumstances, to provide access to certain Council Information prepared by the Council as part of Executive Sessions, or other deliberative information restricted from public access, if it determines that the benefit from doing so outweighs the potential harm to the interests that the exception in Paragraph 8 (d) above seeks to protect.

### **Review of the Policy**

13. The Council decides on the review and revision of this Policy.

### **Effectiveness**

14. This Policy comes into effect on the date approved by the Council and remains in effect until amended or superseded by the Council.