



Hands-on Action for Sustainable Development 1992-2002



SGP

The GEF
Small Grants
Programme



DEDICATION



This report is dedicated to the memory of Jane Wilder Jacqz (1927–2002), devoted founder of SGP and guiding spirit of the programme from its conception in 1991 to the present.

Building on her vast experience working with non-government organizations, Jane led the way in negotiations to pilot a small grants “window” under GEF, which would complement the large projects that constituted the bulk of its programme. She played a key role in its establishment, implementation and expansion, dedicating her creativity, indefatigable energy and prodigious output to the task. She has left a unique legacy, not only of environmental benefits, but also of thousands of people whose lives have improved in multiple ways as a result of SGP support.

cover photo: David Dudenhofer

Financed by SGP, a local chapter of the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement has supported 35 former poachers and their families to form a co-operative dedicated to protecting the endangered “olive ridley” turtle and develop alternative sources of income.

facing page: David Dudenhofer

Supported by SGP, a group of women in San Agustín, Bolivia, is attempting to preserve and capitalize on their ethno-botanical heritage by harvesting indigenous plants and packaging them as medicinal teas.

The GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY

SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME

1992-2002

Hands-on Action for Sustainable Development



Throughout the world, co-ordinated efforts spearheaded by local heroes and supported by the Global Environment Facility's Small Grants Programme are helping to conserve bio-diversity, reduce the risks of climate change, stop land degradation and reduce water pollution.

The GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) touches the lives of thousands and thousands of people. Since 1991, GEF has committed US\$117.35 million, leveraging US\$65.6 million from other partners, to national NGOs and community groups, directly involving them in addressing global environmental problems. Ably administered by UNDP, SGP has disbursed more than 3,000 small grants, up to US\$50,000 each, for projects that reconcile global environmental benefits with sustainable livelihoods for local people. NGOs have been ardent advocates for and participants in the programme from the beginning. Certainly, SGP is one of the most widely appreciated of all GEF efforts.

SGP recognizes the essential role that households and communities, applying locally appropriate solutions, can play in protecting the global environment. For example, GEF small grants are:

- **Supporting conservation and restoration of wild apple forests at the foothills of the Alatau Mountains in Kazakhstan and creating jobs through the manufacture of high-quality apple vinegar.**
- **Underwriting low-impact aquaculture in Mexico's Bay of Celestun, a protected area and noted bird habitat.**
- **Addressing overfishing and promoting alternative occupations in Thailand's Mekong River valley.**
- **Supporting local community management of the Khama Rhino Sanctuary in Botswana, which has resulted in the doubling of the population of white rhinoceros in the Sanctuary.**

GEF's mission is to make the connection between local and global environmental challenges and between national and international resources. SGP is an integral part of this mission. It is especially fitting, then, that this publication celebrating the 10-year anniversary of SGP be dedicated to the memory of its founder, Jane Wilder Jacqz. Without her leadership, the Small Grants Programme would not be the remarkable success it is today.

Mohamed T. El-Ashry
CEO and Chairperson
Global Environment Facility

For those who believe in people's initiatives as the driving force in sustainable development, the tenth anniversary of the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) is a moment for real celebration. In country after country, SGP has demonstrated that small amounts of support to grass-roots action can stem environmental degradation while at the same time improving people's lives and livelihoods. As the programme comes of age, I am happy to see that the potential of its approach is increasingly being recognized and adopted by others.

The GEF Small Grants Programme was built on the success of two predecessor small grants programmes of UNDP, the Partners in Development Programme and Africa 2000 Network. When GEF came into being, Jane Wilder Jacqz saw the possibilities of putting the tested mechanisms of those programmes to work for local communities and the global environment. Thanks to her persuasive abilities and assiduous efforts, SGP was born. My own association with the programme dates from that time, and subsequently in the Philippines, where I was able to see firsthand the difference that the programme's catalytic support made in the lives of thousands of people at the grass-roots level — while reducing threats to our global environment. I witnessed over and over again grantees' pride in the concrete improvements resulting from their own efforts, their knowledge of the issues, their increased confidence in their ability to tackle problems and their readiness to take on new challenges.

From my current vantage point, I have been able to appreciate that the reasons for SGP's unique success lie not only with the decentralized mechanisms and participatory, demand-driven methodologies on which it is based but, first and foremost, with the people who are at its heart. That is why this Tenth Anniversary Report draws extensively on their words to bring the programme alive to readers. Those on the front line responsible for its achievements include the grantees themselves; the exceptional team of national co-ordinators whose dedication, creativity and untiring efforts are responsible for its day-to-day management; members of the national steering committees, whose strong commitment leads them to volunteer their time to guiding, selecting and monitoring SGP activities; UNDP country office staff, including resident representatives,

who provide oversight and support, including facilitating contacts with government officials, donors and relevant UNDP and "big" GEF projects; and partners in government, academia, media and the donor community, who provide technical and financial collaboration.

At the headquarters level, several features have been mainstays of SGP's achievements: the sound policy advice and support of the many visionary GEF Council members who supported the programme from its inception and throughout the years; GEF Secretariat staff, who faced initial sceptics and have stood behind it throughout; the valuable contribution of the many people in UNOPS who have carried overall administrative and financial responsibility at different times; and the substantive and policy guidance provided by colleagues in the UNDP/GEF unit. Finally, SGP's progress has been the product of the commitment, knowledge, productivity and leadership of colleagues in the central programme management team. Special mention goes to Jane Wilder Jacqz, whose vast experience and unflagging energy brought SGP into existence, whose drive and acumen propelled it for almost 10 years, and whose spirit will continue to guide it through the years ahead.

Sarah L. Timpson
Global Manager
GEF Small Grants Programme

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CBO	Community-based organization
CCD	Convention to Combat Desertification
COMPACT	Community Management of Protected Areas Conservation Project (SGP-UNF)
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IBRD	International Bank of Reconstruction and Development (World Bank)
IPs	Indigenous peoples
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
LIFE	Local Initiatives for the Environment
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
METAP	Mediterranean Environmental Technical Assistance Programme
MSP	Medium-sized project (GEF)
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NSC	National Steering Committee
Rio Earth Summit	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 1992 (UNCED)
SGP	Small Grants Programme
SGP PTF	Small Grants Programme for Operations to Promote Tropical Forests (SGP-EC)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNF	United Nations Foundation
UNO	United Nations Organization
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
WHS	World Heritage Site
WSSD	World Summit for Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

On Costa Rica's Isla de Chira in the Gulf of Nicoya, a women's co-operative supported by SGP has successfully mobilized over 225 families to adopt sustainable fishing methods to protect fragile coastal resources, and establish an eco-tourism business to supplement their income.

“Real change comes community by community. It does not come top-down, from the global level or even from national capitals. It takes place at the grassroots, when local communities are empowered to take their future into their own hands: That is the real frontline where the struggle to build a more prosperous and sustainable planet will be won or lost. This is where the GEF Small Grants Programme makes a real difference.”

— Mark Malloch Brown, Administrator, United Nations Development Programme

Community Action

Established in 1992, the year of the Rio Earth Summit, SGP embodies the very essence of sustainable development. By providing financial and technical support to projects that conserve and restore the environment while enhancing people’s well-being and livelihoods, SGP demonstrates that community action can maintain the fine balance between human needs and environmental imperatives. Inspired by the Earth Summit slogan “in our hands...”, SGP moved to take a “hands-on” approach to its work.

Since its inception, SGP has confronted very real challenges in working with communities to reconcile global environmental priorities with local community needs — challenges that have been met in different ways across the globe depending on particular economic, cultural, political and environmental conditions. In the process, SGP became “the people’s GEF”.

SGP is rooted in the belief that global environmental problems can best be addressed if local people are involved and there are direct community benefits and ownership.

SGP is convinced that with small amounts of funding, members of local communities can undertake activities that will make a significant difference in their lives and environments, with global benefits, in contrast with top-down, expert-reliant development interventions.

GEF priority areas include biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, climate change mitigation, and protection of international waters, as well as land degradation and desertification related to these issues.

“Small is beautiful, so is SGP. SGP is the practice of sustainable living. This means one hand with nature and the other with the people, making the link between them. It is as simple as that.”

— Bilgi Bulus, SGP National Co-ordinator, Turkey

“SGP is the only micro-programme I know where the beneficiaries run the programme. It is a truly participatory programme. We have endeavoured over the years to empower communities, and one fact that demonstrates our success is that all the organizations that we funded are still in existence. SGP has demonstrated the importance of civil society participation in environmental conservation, and that sustainable development starts at the grass roots.”

— Isang Pilane, SGP National Co-ordinator, Botswana

“SGP is among the few examples of the comprehensive implementation of sustainable development. SGP has succeeded in showing that dealing with local priorities in different parts of the world can bring solutions to global environmental problems. The programme has proven that communities can more easily participate in and benefit from small projects than big ones because of the local ownership process promoted by SGP. The lessons learned from SGP implementation provide examples for sustainable development projects that can inform other projects and processes throughout the world.”

— Emad Adly, SGP National Co-ordinator, Egypt

SGP recognizes that the destruction of ecosystems and the species that depend upon them, increasing levels of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in our atmosphere, and pollution of international waters are life-threatening challenges. Although environmental degradation endangers us all, poor people are most at risk because they depend on access to natural resources for their livelihoods and often live in fragile ecosystems. The programme operates on the premise that people will protect their environment when they:

- are organized to take action;
- have a measure of control over access to the natural resource base;
- can apply necessary information and knowledge; and
- believe that their social and economic well-being is dependent on sound long-term resource management.

The **Pakistan** *Protection for the Suleiman Markhor in the Toba Kakar Mountain Range* project notes, “One of the most fundamental lessons learned from SGP was the shift in the project approach from an individualized and centralized one to that of a holistic and broad-based participatory community model.”

SGP does not pretend to have all the answers, but at the global level and in the more than 60 countries in which it has been active, it has created important opportunities for experimentation, innovation and the identification of community-based solutions to global environmental problems. Experience has taught SGP that unless the communities and people concerned feel ownership of projects, SGP activities will not be sustainable.

“I had been trained as a professional to think big. SGP’s most daunting challenge to me was learning to think small. Without learning to think small, programmes don’t realize the potential for having big impact. Meeting SGP’s challenge of working locally to have impact globally and discovering sustainable development alternatives for people who are victims of environmental degradation is a continuing journey.”

— **Fayyaz Baqir, SGP National Co-ordinator, Pakistan**

“Looking back at our project experiences, I am encouraged by scenes of men and women and children coming together to address community problems, barren hills coming to life again with endemic tree species, and women and children fetching water from a tank filled by a solar-powered pump. While much still has to be done in terms of community empowerment and capacity to build on and sustain project gains, I am convinced that smallness pays great dividends.”

— **Ponciano L. Bennagen, Sentro Para sa Ganap na Pamayanan Inc., the Philippines**

Linking Local and Global

The principle objectives of SGP are to:

- Develop community-level strategies and implement technologies that could reduce threats to the global environment if they are replicated over time.
- Gather lessons from community-level experience and initiate the sharing of successful community-level strategies and innovations among CBOs and NGOs, host governments, development aid agencies, GEF and others working on a regional or global scale.
- Build partnerships and networks of stakeholders to support and strengthen community, NGO and national capacities to address global environmental problems and promote sustainable development.
- Ensure that conservation and sustainable development strategies and projects that protect the global environment are understood and practised by communities and other key stakeholders.

SGP links global, national and local issues through a transparent, participatory and country-driven approach to project planning, design and implementation. Grants are made directly to community-based organizations (CBOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in recognition of the key role they play as a resource and constituency for environment and development concerns. The decentralized structure of SGP encourages maximum country and community-level ownership and initiative.

SGP is more than simply a fund that provides small grants to CBOs and NGOs for environmental conservation.

By raising public awareness, building partnerships and promoting policy dialogue, SGP seeks to promote an enabling environment within countries for achieving sustainable development and addressing global environmental issues. SGP has helped CBOs, NGOs and countries to simultaneously support local, community-based initiatives while meeting national obligations and global commitments.

“When I began working as national co-ordinator in Guatemala, I could see that the programme offered a golden opportunity to make a dream become a reality — to be able to see my people in the countryside improve their lives, their interpersonal communications, their capacities, their knowledge. These have been years full of satisfaction because, despite many setbacks, the dream has become reality, step by step, word by word, action by action. These have been the years with the most daily challenges of my life, and so, the most enriching.”

— Oscar Murga, SGP National Co-ordinator, Guatemala

Partnerships

SGP, at its core, is about partnerships. From management structures and funding mechanisms to grass-roots action, partnerships permeate all aspects of SGP operations. The synergies created by these multi-faceted collaborations directly contribute to the wide impact of grant activities. SGP has collaborated with nearly 2,500 partner institutions worldwide, and over 600 organizations have provided co-funding and other forms of co-operation. This includes significant financial contributions by the United Nations Foundation, the European Commission, the European Union, and the governments of Denmark, France, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, among others. SGP is mandated to raise co-financing that matches GEF funding, and the resources provided by donors and other partners have helped to support sustainable development activities that complement and reinforce the effectiveness, reach and sustainability of GEF-eligible projects by addressing communities’ immediate priorities.

“Three years ago, as part of my own training and certainly not part of a programme to prepare any GEF projects, I spent a week in a village, bringing only bottled water, to get to know what poverty means. I chose what I thought at the time was a poor and remote village. This was Abono, on the shores of a lake somewhere in the middle of Ghana. To be brief, let me say that they were only poor in a financial sense, but were actually endowed with tremendous community reserves. They knew what their problems were: land degradation, lake pollution and overfishing. They also knew the causes of these problems. They met regularly among themselves and with people who had to walk for hours through the rainforest from neighbouring villages, and with agents from the Forest Department. My second lesson followed soon: This place was not remote at all. One day, around noon, a young boy appeared over the hill, running to say, ‘Your car has come!’ How could this be? I had come to get away from it all, not to bring it all with me! Sure enough, there was a vehicle with a large GEF logo and, emblazoned on the side, ‘GEF Small Grants Programme’. I realized that wherever I could get to, the national co-ordinator of SGP would be there as an ambassador, too.”

— Kenneth King, Deputy CEO and Chairperson, GEF



SGP Viet Nam

The Van Long Wetland Nature Reserve in Ninh Binh Province in Viet Nam is co-managed by the community living in the buffer zone around the area. SGP support has consisted of livelihood enhancement activities and support to capacity building for co-management, including ecotourism, income generating activities and environmental education and awareness.

SGP Dominican Republic

In the community of Sábana Mula, in the Dominican Republic, solar energy is providing families with access to a range of energy services, including recreation. As a result of SGP support, schools, health clinics, and other community facilities, as well as individual households, have replaced their CO²-producing, environmentally degrading kerosene with solar power systems which provide environmentally friendly energy and help mitigate climate change.



“SGP is without a doubt one of the most successful GEF programmes in Peru because it works directly with local communities, which were for the most part forgotten, ignored or simply marginalized by the big conservation and development projects. We should congratulate UNDP and SGP for this initiative and thank all the NGOs and local communities that have worked together to achieve this success. This form of project implementation should serve as a model for many institutions for development that comes from the bottom up rather than top-down, which has been the cause of so many failures and unfulfilled objectives.”

— Antonio Brack Egg,
National Steering Committee, Peru

SGP is a GEF corporate programme implemented by UNDP on behalf of all three GEF implementing agencies — UNEP, UNDP and the World Bank — and executed by UNOPS. SGP balances global criteria and goals with programme implementation that is appropriate to each country. The global programme has developed a strategic framework that clearly outlines for country programmes the SGP approach and GEF criteria — focal areas, operational programmes and eligible SGP interventions — in addition to providing guidance about operations, resource mobilization, monitoring and evaluation, and communications.

While SGP’s structure provides for maximum country- and community-level ownership and initiative, its decentralized and flexible approach is balanced against the need for country programme consistency and accountability to achieve GEF’s global environmental objectives and SGP’s particular goals.

In general, official development agencies face difficulties when trying to reach out directly to support communities. Responding to this challenge, SGP provides a flexible, non-bureaucratic and demand-driven mechanism, which assures programme quality through regular monitoring and evaluation, suitable for use to meet both GEF and wider community priorities.

Central Programme Management Team

A small headquarters staff provides global guidance on GEF focal areas, reviews country programme strategies, receives and analyses semi-annual and biennial reports and serves as liaison with the GEF Secretariat and GEF Council, preparing annual reports and work plans and requests for replenishment for council approval. As executing agency, UNOPS has responsibility for administrative and financial matters.

While the programme has been headquartered in New York since the beginning, SGP operations are carried out in a decentralized manner. At the heart of the SGP model, funding decisions are informed, owned and implemented by local people.

Eligibility

Eligibility of potential countries for GEF funding depends on a series of factors essential to this approach. In addition to government signature of the relevant environmental conventions and availability of a sufficient resources from the GEF Trust Fund, other factors include relations between government and civil society, an active NGO community, availability of potentially useful scientific and technical resources, previous UNDP country office experience with carrying out small grant programmes, and potential to mobilize resources to match GEF funding.

National Steering Committee

“The fact that the NSC meets at least 10 times a year without any financial remuneration is an expression of the high esteem in which it holds SGP. Members have repeatedly told me that they find the participatory process SGP adopts refreshing and productive. In addition, it has also given the members a chance to obtain information on remote rural communities. The NSC describes SGP as ‘innovative, site specific and addressing a real need, open and transparent, manageable’. Members also appreciate the unbiased nature of grant-awarding procedures adopted by SGP, where even the smallest CBO can apply, along with the big, national-level NGOs that have all the expertise and experience required by funders. SGP is a mechanism with which all partners can feel comfortable.”

— Shireen Samarasuriya, National Co-ordinator,
SGP Sri Lanka

Once a country is accepted to host an SGP programme, it forms a voluntary national steering committee (NSC), which is the central element of SGP and provides the major substantive contribution to and oversight of the programme. The NSC typically comprises representatives from local NGOs, government, academia, UNDP and occasionally co-funding donors, indigenous peoples' organizations, the private sector and the media. The NSC develops a country strategy, considers whether proposals for grants are feasible and meet SGP criteria, and what kind of technical support is needed for implementation. The NSC is responsible for final approval of grants, helps undertake site visits and review, advises on design of grant proposals, ensures monitoring and evaluation, and champions SGP in national fora. Government membership on NSCs and collaboration with local government agencies enable local communities to highlight areas requiring policy change at the district, regional and national levels and influence decision-making.

“I was a member of the first national steering committee, whose main task was to work out the grant awarding rules and a kind of organizational culture that is necessary for every financial institution. National co-ordinator Przemek Czajkowski was from the very beginning deeply involved in programme activities and set stringent criteria for grantees. Thanks to that, grants were only awarded to well-prepared and researched projects. Those who implemented the projects had to demonstrate their co-operation with other project funding sources, in most cases on the commune or province level, and thus supported local leaders who would otherwise have problems with persuading local officials and communities with their ideas.”

— **Maciej Kozakiewicz, President, Forum for Responsible Business, Poland**

National Co-ordinator

A locally recruited national co-ordinator is appointed to carry out day-to-day management of the programme and serve as secretary to the NSC. An SGP office is established either in UNDP or in a host NGO. The national co-ordinator, working with the NSC, reaches out to the NGO community and CBOs to inform them of availability of grants, and receives and screens proposals.

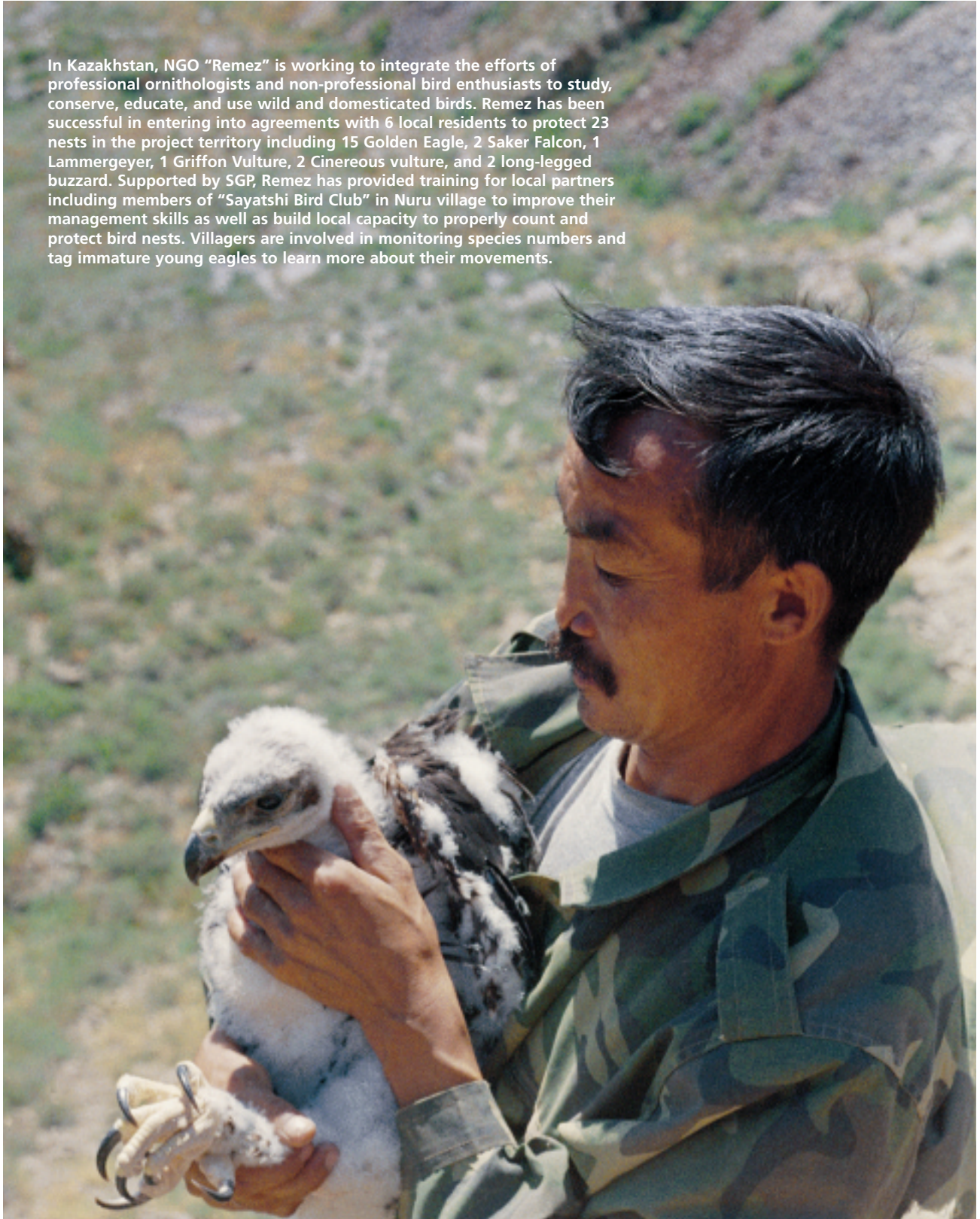
Country Programme Strategies

Each participating country develops a country programme strategy, which adapts the SGP global strategic framework to specific country conditions. SGP country strategies take into account existing national biodiversity and climate change strategies and plans, as well as those relating to national development and poverty eradication. They may put emphasis on certain thematic areas and, particularly in large countries, are encouraged to adopt geographic concentration to ensure synergy and impact, as well as to facilitate programme administration.

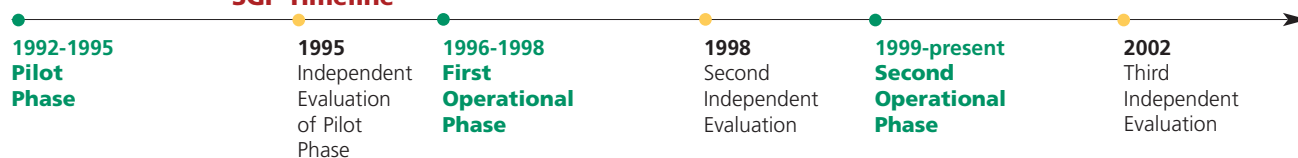
Monitoring and Evaluation

SGP's monitoring and evaluation system is intended to provide stakeholders and partners with information about the status and results of individual projects, the progress of country programmes and the achievement of overall programme objectives. SGP views monitoring and evaluation above all as a participatory and forward-looking process that enables capacity building and learning, maintains accountability, promotes sustainability, and provides opportunities to identify and communicate lessons learned from project and programme experiences. In the case of SGP, monitoring and evaluation are required at three levels — project, country and global.

In Kazakhstan, NGO "Remez" is working to integrate the efforts of professional ornithologists and non-professional bird enthusiasts to study, conserve, educate, and use wild and domesticated birds. Remez has been successful in entering into agreements with 6 local residents to protect 23 nests in the project territory including 15 Golden Eagle, 2 Saker Falcon, 1 Lammergeyer, 1 Griffon Vulture, 2 Cinereous vulture, and 2 long-legged buzzard. Supported by SGP, Remez has provided training for local partners including members of "Sayatshi Bird Club" in Nuru village to improve their management skills as well as build local capacity to properly count and protect bird nests. Villagers are involved in monitoring species numbers and tag immature young eagles to learn more about their movements.



SGP Timeline



SGP was launched in 1992 with an inaugural allocation of US\$5 million from the GEF Trust Fund. Pilot programmes were initially offered in 33 countries in Africa, the Arab States, Asia, Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

UNDP’s designation as implementing agency was a natural outcome of its proven capacity to manage a variety of small grants programmes in which UNDP worked directly with CBOs and NGOs. In the late 1980s, two such programmes emerged – the Partners in Development Programme and the Africa 2000 Network. Many SGP pilot countries were selected because national programmes could build on active PDP and Africa 2000 activities. In addition, the UNDP’s system of country offices has facilitated local management of SGP country programmes as well as providing linkages with the policy level.

“I see SGP as the seed sown and planted in various settings from forests to mountains, watersheds to marshlands, from rivers to the deepest seas, and ultimately finding its way into its rightful place — the hearts of its partners — the farmers, fisherfolk, indigenous peoples, women, youth and children. SGP belongs not only in databases, files or reports. SGP belongs to those who provide the reasons for its existence. SGP belongs to those who breathe and conserve life. SGP belongs to the men and women who believe and commit themselves to creating a world where life is sustained.”

— **Angie Cunanan, first SGP National Co-ordinator, Philippines**

During the course of the three-year pilot phase (1992–1995), the programme received US\$ 14.9 million from the GEF Trust Fund, US\$3 million from USAID, and US\$300,000 from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, allowing it to consolidate operations in more than 30 countries. An institutional and operational alliance with the Africa 2000 Network in six African countries allowed resources, staff and

NSCs to be shared between the two programmes, and enhanced SGP’s capacity to reach CBOs and NGOs by building on the older programme’s experience.

Within a year of SGP’s launch, a number of very promising demonstration activities were under way across the globe, many of which laid the groundwork for sustainable activities and results over the next 10 years:

- In **Botswana**, the Khama Rhino Sanctuary Trust project established an environmental education centre and a sanctuary to protect the critically threatened African white rhinoceros, raising awareness among communities about the importance and benefits of conserving the white rhino. The project also supported a breeding programme, which doubled the site’s rhino population within a decade.
- In **Jordan**, the Jordan Society for the Prevention of Road Accidents monitored air-pollution levels in Amman as part of a national campaign to combat greenhouse gas emissions and promote the use of public transport. A project study, undertaken in co-operation with the Traffic Department and Public Security Department, the Royal Scientific Society and universities, became the basis for new standards, and emissions monitoring was added to the annual vehicle testing requirements.
- In **Chile**, with support from SGP, the Fishermen’s Union of the community of Quintay, together with technical advisors, initiated a series of “dialogue” workshops with local stakeholders, including government authorities and developers, to form a coastal management and conservation plan. The Quintay model has been replicated in other parts of the country.

The **Independent Evaluation of the GEF Small Grants Programme Pilot Phase**, carried out in 1995, analysed the overall project portfolio. The pilot phase was considered to be a “genuine success, although important weaknesses were identified — the very purpose of a pilot”.

Among those weaknesses, the evaluation highlighted the lack of strategic focus in most country portfolios beyond making small grants; “woeful” understaffing at SGP headquarters; underdeveloped administrative and financial systems; a frustratingly low ratio between proposals received and grants approved; the very real potential for national co-ordinator burn-out given an often overwhelming workload; insufficient attention to project sustainability; and, finally, few real linkages with GEF full-sized projects. However, the evaluation concluded that SGP was “a reasonably efficient and cost-effective method to provide funding for community-focused environmental and capacity-building projects”, and that “an effective, prototype foundation” was being laid for expanded support of community-based activities related to GEF focal areas. The evaluation recommended that SGP be given operational status.

“I joined SGP nine years ago when the programme’s national co-ordinator and the secretary were sharing one computer, and the programme had funded only a handful of capacity-building projects. I have seen the programme grow to the current level with almost 50 ongoing projects in different thematic areas, and a further 50 already completed. It has been my pleasant duty to drive the national co-ordinator and members of the National Steering Committee to field project sites in different corners of Kenya. The best part is that I have had close informal interactions with community members as well as NGO representatives, and I have no doubt that they appreciate what the programme has achieved to date.”

— Charles Mithamo, SGP Kenya driver

The **first operational phase** of SGP was launched on 1 July 1996, with a two-year allocation of US\$24 million. In the next two years, the programme expanded from 33 to 45 participating countries, and funded over 800 new projects. During this time, SGP focused on creating integrated frameworks for action that reflected GEF focal areas and local conditions, as well as responding to the GEF council’s requirements for enhanced monitoring and evaluation, a resource-mobilization strategy and more effective dissemination of lessons learned.

The evolution of the programme in the first operational phase allowed for more ambitious undertakings and more effective response to community constituencies. In **Mexico**, climate-change projects were based on SGP-

funded planning exercises that revealed Maya community demands for apiculture, organic agriculture and agro-forestry as tools to prevent the expansion of the agricultural frontier and reduce the emission of greenhouse gases. These activities, profoundly linked with the peasant way of life, were chosen as the most likely to respond to both community and global interests in avoiding global warming. Two biodiversity conservation projects, both carried out by the United Fishing Co-operative of San Felipe, established the first community-managed protected area in the Yucatán Peninsula, covering 2,100 hectares and encompassing one of the largest concentrations of marine species off the peninsular coast.

A **second independent evaluation of SGP** was carried out in 1998. The overall findings were highly positive, confirming SGP’s status as a unique mechanism that enables civil society to contribute towards addressing global environmental concerns. The evaluation described SGP as “unmatched by other environmental programmes in terms of its innovation, flexibility and responsiveness” and found “no comparable mechanism for raising environmental awareness and building capacity across such a broad spectrum of constituencies within the respective countries”. The evaluation also noted the effectiveness of SGP’s national-level operations in engaging a wide variety of stakeholders, developing innovative partnerships, attracting co-financing, conducting monitoring and supervision, and facilitating the replication and scaling-up of successful pilot projects.

The favourable evaluation was instrumental in the GEF Council’s approval of SGP’s second operational phase, and the change from project status to that of a GEF corporate programme. Under this programme approach, a two-year replenishment for US\$31.6 million was granted, with a subsequent annual, “rolling” financial modality to ensure programme continuity. As part of the GEF business plan, SGP now reports annually to the GEF Council as a basis for consideration of its next-year replenishment. Programme performance is assessed based on specific benchmarks and a two-year work plan. Through February 2003, replenishments to SGP have brought the second operational phase total to US\$74.7 million.

Since SGP’s inception, its portfolio of projects has totalled 3,150 community initiatives, totalling over US\$60 million. Of those, over 1,700 have been approved during the second operational phase. In mid-2002, SGP had more than 1,078 ongoing projects, totalling US\$25.5 million.

The Crocker Mountain Range in Malaysia holds an array of flora and fauna, including the signature Borneo species, the orangutan. SGP is supporting a local group, Partners of Community Organizations (PACOS), to launch an ecotourism project to raise the number of visitors to the area while managing their impact.



Biodiversity Conservation

As an integral part of GEF, and in accordance with the mandate of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, SGP takes an ecosystem approach to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. SGP projects tackle threats to globally significant biodiversity through local action in all types of ecosystems — arid and semi-arid, coastal and marine, freshwater, forest and mountain. SGP has supported almost 2,000 biodiversity projects, representing at present

around 65 per cent of the overall portfolio. While more than a third of the biodiversity projects are concentrated in forest ecosystems and nearly another third are in coastal, marine and freshwater ecosystems, there are about 250 community biodiversity interventions in arid and semi-arid ecosystems, and of these, 60 per cent are situated in the Africa and Arab States regions. Because SGP is rooted in the belief that biodiversity conservation cannot be achieved without addressing community needs, the programme supports alternative livelihood

To overcome the negative impact of desert tourism and promote awareness among local people about protection of natural resources, SGP has provided a grant for the Wadi Rum Community Eco-tourism Project in Jordan. The grant aims to strengthen the capacity of a local Bedouin Co-operative and the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority to manage tourism activities and protect natural resources.



strategies that benefit both communities and targeted ecosystems. Biodiversity important for agriculture — or agro-biodiversity — which is of critical consequence for most of the communities worldwide that form SGP’s constituency, is being protected in situ through a wide variety of projects ranging from the application of local and indigenous knowledge for the protection of genetic crop resources to the use of modern technologies for conservation farming.

“Actions resulting from SGP projects show how much the environmental dimension is taken into account. By laying down rows of stones and establishing hedgerows, erosion has been lessened and soils have been restored; the introduction of individual and family orchards has increased wood stocks; woodcutting has been reduced, thanks to bush overseers; channelling of running water into ponds, increase of fish in ponds, better organization of fishing and hunting are all results that demonstrate the increased levels of collective awareness and results obtained within the framework of the project.”

— Mr. Doumbia, Nansala Village, commenting on the results of the Farmers Initiatives for Protection of the Environment project, Mali

SGP has encouraged linkages of local in situ activities with regional conservation efforts such as the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor and the protection of the Red Sea. Almost every country programme has projects that work with communities to relieve pressure on national parks and protected areas. Several community-owned and managed protected areas have also been set up, for example, in **Costa Rica, Jordan, Mexico, the Philippines** and **Senegal**. In northern **Botswana**, the *Permaculture Trust* and *Botswana’s Community Seed Exchange Project* have facilitated the exchange of traditional seed varieties among mostly subsistence farmers, thereby increasing the possibility for seed conservation, multiplication and use.

“An enormous window was opened for me. Now I know what the park is, the importance it has. This project has helped me to understand what it is that I have as an inheritance, and that I must take care of it at all costs.”

— Sylvia López, Aymara woman, Lauca, Region I, Chile, Participatory Planning Strategy for the Lauca National Park project

Dozens of projects protecting endangered animal and plant species and the ecosystems they depend on — among them sea turtles in **Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Trinidad & Tobago** and the **Philippines**; white and black rhinoceros in **Botswana**; the blind Indus River dolphin and brown bear in **Pakistan**; the **Bali** starling and gaharu tree in **Indonesia**; migratory birds in **Tunisia**; the scarlet macaw in **Belize**; black-necked cranes in **Bhutan**; the white stork in **Poland**; the golden eagle in **Kazakhstan**; multiple Andean potato and other native tuber varieties in **Bolivia, Ecuador** and **Chile**; coral in the **Red Sea, Costa Rica** and **Malaysia**; and mangroves in **Ecuador** — have been implemented by communities with SGP support, receiving wide acclaim.

An important partner in biodiversity conservation has been the government of the **Netherlands**, which has collaborated in co-financing conservation and sustainable-use projects in **Guatemala, Ecuador** and the **Philippines**. In a presentation to the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 6) in the Hague in April 2002, Ana María Varea, national co-ordinator in **Ecuador**, analysed the results of the 23 projects funded, integrating both SGP and Dutch criteria. Her findings, which are typical of SGP biodiversity projects, include:

- Communities have a growing interest in sustainable natural resource management, and the programme has enabled community-local government dialogue and negotiation.
- Major zones of the Andean range now have initiatives for the sustainable management and conservation of forest areas; many of them are related to the national protected area system.
- Issues of agro diversity and forest biodiversity have been addressed, covering a large number of species and varieties in each project.
- Projects have contributed to forest management on the basis of studies and inventories, thereby involving universities and researchers, and have enriched forests through appropriate reforestation.
- Preservation of ancestral knowledge has been effectively combined with new natural resource management methodologies.



- Multiple economic alternatives to the clearing of woodlands and indiscriminate use of forest resources have been generated, including identification of new resources with commercial potential.
- A number of wage-earning jobs have been generated and rural sustainable development organizations are receiving business training.
- Multiplier effects have been generated by involving new communities and stakeholders, for example, in the management of areas that are suitable for protection.
- Communities have become involved in broader environmental management actions with public and private institutions in order to provide continuity for SGP initiatives.

SGP in Ecuador has become a “school” or “space for reflection” for the sustainable conservation and use of the country’s Andean biodiversity. This results from the high quality of the technical assistance provided to the projects, involving many partners, including the communities themselves with their store of indigenous knowledge systems; rigorous monitoring by specialized NGOs that accompanied the process of project implementation; and systematic analysis and dissemination of lessons learned.

left

An egret, a species found in the Likas Bird Sanctuary supported by SGP in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia.

facing page

Supported by SGP, local communities in Peru are conserving local agricultural biodiversity in the remote Cajamarca region.

Biodiversity Conservation through Sustainable Livelihoods

“Throughout my 20 years of experience in development work, starting in the government, with NGOs and now in UNDP, I have never come across a programme that more effectively improves the livelihoods and resource management of people living in poverty than SGP. Through catalytic support to community-based initiatives that are generated and sustained by local communities, and using its flexible criteria, SGP has demonstrated its uniqueness to link community needs and priorities and the global environment.”

— Nehemiah Murusuri, SGP National Co-ordinator,
Tanzania

Support for sustainable livelihoods is a cornerstone of the SGP approach. The programme believes that sustainable livelihood components in funded projects are essential to attain global environmental objectives.

- The **Brazil** programme’s portfolio of 65 projects covering the Cerrado ecosystem almost entirely focuses on sustainable livelihoods. It has supported income-generation activities that have produced a myriad of marketable products through the sustainable use of biodiversity: honey, dry fruit and fruit pulp, jellies and jams, nuts, sweets and candy, industrial and cooking oils, spices, dry flowers and ornamental plants, semi-domesticated wild animals (pigs, capybaras, rheas, turtles, fish), soap, handicrafts, cosmetics and herbal medicines.



- In **Mauritius**, SGP is supporting several projects for the conservation and propagation of endemic medicinal and ornamental plants, one of which recently won the Whitley Award for International Nature Conservation.
- In **Kenya**, the Miliru Farmers Conservation Group, in partnership with the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE), has significantly reduced pressure on the endangered Kakamega Forest by promoting alternative income-generating activities for surrounding communities and fostering greater awareness of the importance of biodiversity conservation. An SGP grant supports the cultivation and commercial processing of indigenous medicinal plants, primarily the ocimum (*Ocimum kilimandscharicum*) and the mondia whitey, both of which have remarkable properties. An essential oil is extracted from the ocimum to produce *Naturub*, a natural medicinal balm that is professionally packaged and sold in over 60 outlets in the country. Tomas Mmasi, member

of the farmers' group, recalled that before the project he did not know anything about natural products, because the ancestors used ocimum in a different way: "For us, the plant is like magic. Aside from its medicinal properties, the leaves can be used as a mosquito repellent. After harvesting, we use the dry plant for firewood and the ashes as salt. Thanks to the income from selling this medicinal plant, I stopped going into the forest to collect wood. The project helped me realize the importance of Kakamega Forest." *Naturub* is competing very well with similar products. As Dr. Wilber Lwande of ICIPE remarked, "This is proof that when you produce something locally with a good marketing strategy, you can compete successfully."

The focus on biodiversity conservation linked with sustainable livelihoods inevitably has implications for the food security of peasant and indigenous farmer populations across the globe.



Supported by SGP, the Popular Movement of Rio Verde (MOPORV) located in Gioás, Brazil, has set up a community health center based on medicinal plants found in the Cerrado. The launch of the center has created new jobs and branched out into activities including paper recycling, promotion of local culture and the production of natural food, flowers, and soap. MOPORV has since replicated the project in neighbouring rural communities.



Victor Meilo

Dana Wildlife Reserve is located in southwest Jordan. It is 320 square kilometers and is filled with canyons and gorges of steep rock. It is home to more than 1,300 species of flora and fauna. Since ancient times, farming, grazing, hunting, the gathering of fodder and firewood in the area occupied by the park, had been normal activities for the local population. The creation of this reserve gradually eliminated the source of food and income for most of the local farmers. In 1995, a local NGO, "Friends of Dana", implemented the first SGP small grants project to benefit 65 farmers living in Dana village. The NGO established a programme for the rehabilitation of the infrastructure, housing, irrigation systems and agricultural terraces of the village, a dry food processing center as well as a campaign to attract tourists to the area.

SGP Brazil

In **Bolivia**, a project to promote the recovery, management and conservation of the native potato variety *Sani negra* illustrates the importance of conserving genetic resources that are both local food staples and globally significant as a means of ensuring the economic and nutritional well-being of present and future generations.

The Andean region of South America was the site of the domestication of the potato and other tubers, and Andean farmers have traditionally cultivated dozens, if not hundreds, of potato varieties as part of an ecological, economic and food security strategy. The *Sani negra* is just one of the numerous native potato varieties that have adapted very well to the semi-arid high plains and mountain valleys of the southern Andes. However, the influence of imported, high-yielding potato varieties has eroded the genetic diversity of native species. In many localities, such as the project site near La Paz, several native varieties have been entirely lost, others have been displaced to a significant extent, and the *Sani negra* has been reduced by 90 per cent. Other factors contributing to the decline in native potato varieties include vanishing knowledge about potato germplasm, especially among



women who are traditionally responsible for producing and selecting seed potatoes; inadequate management of potato germplasm and soils; and the negative impact of government policies and donor programmes that promote imported “improved” potato varieties.

With SGP-funded technical assistance from a local women’s group, households in an Aymara community have developed their capacities to recover, conserve and manage the *Sani negra* and other potato varieties. Project results have been very favourable, and the 35 families involved have cultivated 8.5 hectares of *Sani negra*, and produced 32.5 tons of seed for their own use and for sale to five neighbouring communities.

“Before the project, our principal sources of livelihood were cutting firewood from the carob trees of the dry forest to sell or leaving our families to find unskilled work in Chiclayo (the state capital). I began to wonder what would happen once there were no more trees, and I began to worry. Fortunately, SPG came to help us to take care of the trees in ways that could generate income through honey and cattle fodder, while ensuring the natural regeneration of the forest. This helped me to earn an income for my family without having to travel to Chiclayo to look for work. Complementary project activities such as pumps and improved stoves allow us to live better — we now have water, which is very scarce in this ecosystem, and the stoves have improved the health of the wives and children by reducing the amount of smoke produced as well as the amount of fuel-wood needed.”

— Don Emilio, peasant extension agent, Jayanca, Lambayeque, Peru

Conservation and Restoration of Wild Apple Forests in the Zailiyskij-Alatau Foothills, Kazakhstan

The Zailiyskij-Alatau region near Almaty in southern Kazakhstan has been identified as a centre of global genetic diversity and is considered to be the birthplace of the domesticated apple. But since 1935, 90 per cent of the wild apple groves have been cleared to open land for agricultural and other land use. The problem has been aggravated by the decline in economic and social conditions of a transition economy, forcing local people to cut forests for firewood and other domestic uses. Agro-biodiversity Alatau, a five-year demonstration project started in 1998 by the NGO ASSA, with the help of a US\$50,000 SGP grant, links conservation and restoration of the wild apple forests, ecological education, and the production of marketable apple vinegar by a non-profit medicinal and food research organization, Alma-Ata Ltd. In order to both conserve existing forests and restore degraded apple groves, ASSA has been working with the local population to raise awareness about the importance of the biodiversity of wild apple groves, primarily through a partnership with a teacher-student association of a local state farm school.

Biodiversity Conservation through Eco-tourism

As part of a broad strategy to address simultaneously the imperatives of biodiversity conservation and sustainable community development, SGP has increasingly supported eco-tourism activities. It works closely with partners that are similarly interested in developing sustainable, community-based eco-tourism such as the Nature Conservancy, RARE Centre for Tropical Conservation, and The International Eco-tourism Society (TIES).

The programme has supported over 100 eco-tourism projects that directly benefit local communities and are both environmentally and culturally sound. The **Costa Rica, Jordan, Kenya, Mexico** and **Bolivia** country portfolios include several innovative eco-tourism initiatives in varied ecosystems using diverse approaches.

SGP in **Costa Rica** has funded 140 projects since its inception, of which 40 have supported local sustainable tourism initiatives. Eduardo Mata, national co-ordinator in **Costa Rica**, explained that the development and promotion of eco-tourism is not an end in itself, but rather a means for groups to sustainably use their natural resources as part of biodiversity conservation projects, and generate economic benefits for the community.

Analyses of SGP's ecotourism portfolio indicate that real benefits to the local people are likely to be realized only if they start small and focus on community management and include particular attention to quality of services, identification of niche in the larger market, targetting, and partnerships to build capacity in business practices, planning and marketing. Networking and exchange of experience with other "microtourism" providers can also increase success.

In the case of **Costa Rica** these lessons led SGP to support a series of workshops for capacity building and exchange of experience among communities supported by SGP. Thirty of them have formed the ACTUAR network, which has organised several "eco-routes" and reached out to tourism agents, hotels and government agencies through a national Ecotourism Fair and prepared an innovative rural community tourism guide.

In **Jordan**, to overcome the negative impact of unregulated desert tourism and to promote awareness among local people about the protection of natural resources, SGP approved the Wadi Rum Community Eco-tourism Project in 2001. The desert of Wadi Rum, known as the "Valley of the Moon", lies in the southern part of the country, 300 kilometres south of the capital city of Amman. It has beautiful scenery with a combination of sandstone rocks, sheer cliffs, deeply carved valleys, ancient dry riverbeds and more than 4,000 scattered inscriptions on the rocks, many of them dating from the Palaeolithic period. Due to its unique topography and natural attraction, in 1997 the government of Jordan declared Wadi Rum a protected area. Last year, 100,000 tourists visited the area, adversely affecting desert ecosystems. The main problem is soil destruction by the wheels of the trucks used to transport tourists. Damaging environmental practices by local people, such as illegal hunting and grassing, worsen the problem.

Wadi Rum is also the territory of the Bedouin, Jordan's indigenous and still nomadic people. Munir Al-adgham, SGP national co-ordinator, noted: "We have formed a partnership with the NGO Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature and the local management authority. We are very proud to be the first in having a community project with Jordanian Bedouins to manage the huge numbers of tourists flowing into the area — no one else has yet been able to work with them."



At the Yunguilla Community Ecotourism project in Ecuador, nature guide Luis Parra explains the bromeliad nursery to a group of visitors behind the Yunguilla community tourist center. Parra also works part time as a forest guard, paid by the community tourism corporation.

Selling Nature Without Destroying It: Community Eco-tourism in Eastern Bolivia

Bolivia's Noel Kempff Mercado National Park and surrounding protected area, near the border with Brazil, is home to an amazing array of flora and fauna, from endangered jaguars and massive fig trees to millions of colourful butterflies. In an area of just 15,234 square kilometres, there are 630 bird species — more than exist in all of North America — and its forests and savannas hold an estimated 4,000 plant species.

Despite its natural assets, the park has received little tourism to date, due to its remote location and relative obscurity. The tiny Chiquitano Indian agricultural community of La Florida, near the park's main entrance, together with the NGO Fundación Amigos de la Naturaleza, embarked in 2000 on an eco-tourism project supported by SGP. The US\$23,163 grant has financed efforts to draw more visitors to the remote park while improving the ability of local people to accommodate them. The eco-tourism project supplements La Florida's subsistence economy in various ways — with nature guide training; and loans to purchase camping equipment, construct rustic accommodations, equip tiny restaurants, and buy bicycles and dugout canoes to rent to tourists — as well as strengthening local organizations by creating an eco-tourism association and a local guides' association. Juan Surubí, who acquired five bicycles to rent through the loan fund, is enthusiastic about tourism's potential. "It is a source of work that is going to carry us forward, toward a better future."

Manuel Arias, who sometimes spends days hiking and camping in the park with groups of backpackers, has a more hands-on relationship with eco-tourism, since he introduces the tourists to the local ecology. The 19-year-old guide took two training courses and worked as a field assistant for biological researchers. He explained that he enjoys working in the national park and finds its primary (virgin) forest especially interesting. "Luckily, they had the initiative to protect the park", he said. "Now we can be sure that this beauty won't be destroyed."

Biodiversity Conservation and Indigenous Peoples

"The COMPACT project will be the way, after a long, long time, by which we indigenous peoples can realize a better future for our children and grandchildren through the livelihood support it will bring to us."

— **Bernabe Panday, Sr., Chieftain of Tagbanuas, Barangay Marufinas, Philippines**

SGP has always placed special emphasis on working with indigenous peoples in conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. This is based on the principle that the survival and well-being of indigenous peoples is inextricably linked to both cultural and environmental conservation.

The International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, for example, has recognized that indigenous groups can overcome marginalization and discrimination only by securing rights to ancestral territories and natural resources, as well as cultural rights to their identities, languages, religions, and political and legal institutions. The Convention on Biological Diversity has emphasized the close relationship between indigenous communities

and knowledge systems and the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. UNDP, in a recent policy note on engagement with indigenous peoples, highlighted the link between indigenous peoples' human rights and right to development with the defence of territorial and resource rights. Of growing concern is the expropriation of lands for national and corporate interests (for example, logging, mining and hydropower development) and the resulting removal and dislocation of indigenous peoples on those lands, leading at times to heightened social conflict and environmental destruction. A related problem is the increasingly widespread practice of "biopiracy", that is, the research, appropriation and patenting of biological diversity and genetic material, which infringes on and exploits indigenous peoples' knowledge systems and rights to territories, lands and resources. Biopiracy has become a major threat to indigenous knowledge systems and cultures.

SGP has funded almost 500 projects, about 17 per cent of its overall portfolio, that involve indigenous peoples in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Suriname, Thailand and Viet Nam all have

significant numbers of projects with indigenous peoples. SGP grants have supported land use planning in indigenous territories to ensure conservation of biodiversity; participation of indigenous peoples in protected area management, and conflict negotiation in protected areas that overlap with indigenous lands; sustainable extraction and use of non-timber forest products, such as medicinal plants, and the recovery and application of traditional plant dyes and paper-making techniques; and the conservation and appreciation of indigenous knowledge systems and cultural practices linked to wise use of natural resources, among many other types of initiatives.

“We are very grateful for the support that SGP has given us to establish natural resource protection committees in all of the indigenous territories in the southern part of the country. Thanks to this organizational work and awareness raising, our communities have gained enough understanding of legislation and the rights of indigenous peoples to protect our territories, and to organize marches, protests and negotiations with national authorities.”

— **Cristino Lázaro, Regional Indigenous Council, Rey Curré, Costa Rica**

In **Guatemala**, for example, the NGO Pastoral de la Tierra San Marcos collaborated with Mam ethnic communities to identify and recover traditional knowledge about native biodiversity, especially traditional use of natural resources, both medicinal and nutritional. This SGP project has identified 85 plant and eight animal species, 16 of which had not been previously recorded in national scientific catalogues. The information was collected through participatory processes, and validated by interviews with community elders and leaders, both women and men. The Mam communities are building on this catalogue to conserve these species and ensure that their traditional knowledge and practices are recorded and left as a legacy for the next generation.

In **Viet Nam**, SGP supported the Association of Traditional Medicine of Tuyen Quang Province, composed of a group of 16 women traditional health practitioners from the Cao Lan ethnic minority, in a project for the *Conservation and Sustainable Use of Indigenous Medicinal Plants*. One member, Mrs. Phan Tlu Thi, explains: “We have medicines for nearly every illness, but many of the plants we make them from were disappearing from the forests.” Working



In Costa Rica's Peninsula de Osa, SGP has worked to strengthen the capacities of indigenous Guaymi communities to protect the legal and territorial rights of the peoples' reserve and the fragile biodiversity found in the region.

with assistance of an NGO and the health care centre of Doi Can Commune, small teams of two university biology students and two association members conducted a species survey in the local forest. Between 300 and 400 species were identified and classified with their local and scientific names and known properties.

The local health authority is collaborating with the association to register the traditional knowledge.

Association members are establishing nurseries, along with one at the health care centre, where traditional medicine has an important role in medical practice. The establishment of a school of traditional medicine is

supported by the national government. As a result, another association member, Mrs. Luong Thi Loc, notes: “While we are working to save the forests, we are also saving the plants. Now that people from the outside are supporting us, the younger generation is taking notice. Already some of the children who wanted to move to the cities are staying to learn how to make medicine.”



In 1994, Tasek Bera was declared a Ramsar site – a wetland of international importance – and the government has since banned activities such as commercial hunting and fishing and forest clearing, which leaves 2000 ethnic Semelai people with fewer options for earning money. Wetlands International Malaysia is consequently promoting ecotourism as an economic alternative for the Semelai of Tasek Bera, nearly half of whom live below the national poverty line. With funds from SGP, Wetlands International has helped the Semelai develop a basic tourism infrastructure, trained them in guiding and other useful skills, and assisted them in forming a community organization to manage tourism: The Semelai Association for Boating and Tourism (SABOT). SABOT's guides complement their wetland tours with demonstrations of traditional farming and hunting techniques, folk music, and information about medicinal plants.



SGP UNF COMPACT Focus on Indigenous Peoples

Preserving Mayan Culture to Preserve the Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve

The Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve and World Heritage Site (WHS), Mexico, recognized as such in 1986, covers 652,192 hectares of terrestrial and marine ecosystems and is characterized by forest, wetland, coastal and coral reef biodiversity of global significance. The reserve is surrounded by Mayan communities, consisting of a total of nearly 30,000 people, dedicated to agriculture, apiculture, and timber and chicle extraction (outside the reserve and buffer zone boundaries). While there are no permanent human settlements inside the Sian Ka'an core area, about 800 people live in the buffer zone, subsisting on fishing and eco-tourism.

In Sian Ka'an, cultural and biological conservation are inextricably linked. Any conservation and development efforts, in order to be relevant and have a chance of success, must be rooted in Mayan knowledge and practice. Research and experience in the area have shown that Mayan communities have a deep understanding of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. All COMPACT documents in Mexico are bilingual in Spanish and Maya. Seventeen COMPACT projects that involve Mayan communities in cultural and biodiversity conservation are under way around the WHS.

Puerto Princesa National Park and WHS, Philippines

The WHS encompasses an area of rich terrestrial and marine biodiversity, including many endemic and endangered species, mangrove forests and coral reefs, as well as the 8.2-kilometre-long St. Paul's Underground River, one of the longest underground rivers in the world. The park area has been greatly extended in recent years, but there has not yet been any proper demarcation of boundaries. Moreover, two legal definitions of the buffer zone exist. Adjacent to the park is a community-managed protected area of 5,000 hectares. Other communities are applying for this status, a trend that will increase as logging concessions are rescinded and lands revert to the public domain. In addition, there is overlap of indigenous people's Certificates of Ancestral Domain Claims with the park area, and these conflicting territorial jurisdictions must be resolved. Mapping will have to be done on the ground with the participation of different interest groups, including indigenous peoples. A COMPACT flyer was produced in English, Tagbanua and Batak (two local languages) to facilitate dissemination of project information and participation by local communities and especially the indigenous peoples.

With the support of SGP, Costa Rica's Sol de Vida Foundation has established a research centre to promote the different uses of solar energy. Solar creativity workshops have been organized so that families can sample food made in solar kitchens, exchange recipes, learn about technical issues such as photovoltaic cells and drip irrigation, and even introduce their children to solar-powered toys.



“Before SGP’s micro-hydro project arrived in Kenya, there was no decentralized energy policy or legislation on production and distribution of power. The project, focusing on the development of the first community-owned micro-hydro scheme in the country, demonstrated that communities can take charge of their own energy needs in ways that protect and conserve the environment. The project stimulated the Ministry of Energy, working in collaboration with the Intermediate Technology Development Group and the community itself, to amend the Electric Power Act to include a provision on decentralized energy generation and distribution.”

— Stephen Gitonga, Energy Programme Manager,
Intermediate Technology Development Group, Kenya

SGP contributes to climate change mitigation through support to CBO and NGO renewable energy, energy efficiency and sustainable transport initiatives. Since 1992, the programme has funded more than 530 climate change mitigation projects for a value of over US\$10.9 million.

Renewable energy options include micro-hydro, wind, biomass and solar technology. SGP projects revolve around the energy needs of households, local public facilities (for example, rural schools and health centres) and community enterprises; and provide renewable energy, for example, for lighting, heating, water pumping (irrigation and human consumption) and community-based micro-enterprise development. Regarding energy efficiency projects, SGP has supported the adoption of efficient cook stoves and efficient heating and refrigeration as well as the implementation of power-saving schemes, among other approaches. Public awareness and education are major components of energy efficiency projects.

SGP supports the promotion and advocacy of shifts to more efficient, less polluting forms of public and freight transport through traffic management, avoidance, and use of cleaner fuels, especially in small and medium-sized towns. Projects include campaigns to promote non-motorized transport through, for example, safe bicycle routes, better pedestrian facilities and parking areas convenient to public transport. Training and capacity building for CBO and NGO participation in establishing ground transport emissions standards and emissions monitoring have also been funded.

- SGP provided grants of US\$50,000 each to three local NGOs in the **Dominican Republic** — ADESOL, the Society for Integral Development for the North-east, and Social Services of Dominican Churches — to establish a micro-credit scheme for people in remote rural areas to equip their households, schools, health centres and irrigation schemes with solar energy. Twenty-five men and women trained in photovoltaic technology have started 14 new businesses and sold and installed 4,300 systems, providing reliable and affordable electricity. These systems replace kerosene consumption, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and producing savings that have enabled people to repay the initial credit. Agricultural production has improved with the installation of solar-powered pumps for irrigation, and computers installed in schools have expanded learning opportunities for local children.

- **Poland’s** Barka Foundation is an exemplary model of a people’s organization working to fight poverty and protect the environment, in a village near Poznan. By empowering destitute people to take action to improve their lives with three grants from SGP, the foundation has achieved remarkable social and environmental results. Activities to conserve endemic fruit varieties and a local breed of pig, as well as convert from coal to waste wood for heating, have not only accrued global environmental benefits but also provided livelihoods for 20 self-help communities. This successful experience with wood-waste energy is now being replicated through a GEF medium-sized project.

- Six wind turbines provide electricity to rural households in a coastal village in **Sri Lanka**. The Kirinda Small Wind System Project was initiated by a local NGO, Manawa Sampath Surakum Sanvidhanaya (Human Resource Protection Organization), with technical assistance from Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG)-Sri Lanka. The project consists of six small wind turbines that generate a cumulative 1.4 kilowatts of power, installed on a rock crest along the shoreline in the south-eastern part of the island. Six households benefit from this project, and each is allocated one wind system that produces 250 watts of power. Each household enjoys the illumination of five to six compact florescent lights, and wind electricity is also used to power 12-inch black and white televisions, cassette players and radios. Based on the lessons learned from this SGP pilot project, ITDG has developed a

programme to address the issue of subsidy for wind-mills until they take off enough to be a commercially viable venture. This involves creating awareness among state authorities and policy-makers, and facilitating credit through existing mechanisms to communities, NGOs and other institutions.

- Kigezi — now Kabale District — is one of the most densely populated areas in **Uganda**. It is a highland area prone to soil erosion and land degradation. Population pressure has caused large-scale deforestation and land fragmentation, and fuel-wood is hard to come by; there is not enough land to grow both crops and fuel-wood. The SGP-supported Energy Conservation in Kigezi Diocese project is addressing fuel efficiency in homes. Activities include agro-forestry, introduction of fuel-efficient stoves and biogas development. According to
- In **Côte d'Ivoire**, rural households and communities are benefiting from the introduction of energy-efficient stoves. A comparison between two primary schools in western Côte d'Ivoire demonstrates the impact: The first primary school, serving 100 lunch meals per day using an energy-efficient stove, reports firewood usage of just four kilogrammes per day. The other school, serving the same number of meals on a traditional stove, requires twelve kilogrammes.

Victor Mello



- The Kwimba Biogas Demonstration Project in Kwimba District of **Tanzania** installed 100 biogas units in nine villages of Mwanashimba, Nyamilama and Ngudu divisions, providing households with an alternative to firewood for cooking and kerosene for lighting. The project has also provided the households with the slurry, which is used as high-quality fertilizer, improving agricultural production. The use of biogas has reduced the levels of indoor air pollution, which is associated with breathing, eye and health problems of women and children.

As a result, the Project has disseminated low cost household biogas technology to three other African countries: **Uganda, Cameroon and Nigeria**. In **Uganda**, Training of Trainer courses to promote use of the technology and reduce tree cutting for fuelwood were organized by Africa 2000 Network and similar training was organized

by UNDP Nigeria. Reports from all three countries are very positive, indicating that more and more households are installing and using biogas units.

In Kenya, SGP has sponsored a community micro-hydropower project in collaboration with NGO Intermediate Technology Development Group. Members of the project, which is wholly owned by the community, will set their own tariffs and sell the power to local trades, and use the electricity to meet basic needs, including charging batteries, welding and joinery, maize grinding, garment tailoring, oil processing and many other micro industries.





Anne-Sophie and Lionel Pozzoli

SGP contributes to the protection of international waters through support to CBO- and NGO-led initiatives that prevent degradation of water bodies shared by two or more countries. Since 1992, SGP has funded over 170 international waters projects, constituting 6 per cent of SGP's total project portfolio. This is supplemented by many projects in SGP's biodiversity portfolio that address the protection of coastal ecosystems and trans-boundary lakes and rivers, as well as conservation of endangered marine and freshwater species.

Promoting innovative local solutions to marine and freshwater environmental problems, SGP works with communities to prevent the release of harmful substances, such as persistent organic pollutants (known as POPs) and heavy metals that cannot be neutralized by marine and freshwater ecosystems, or that accumulate in living organisms. In practice, this means helping communities to identify innovative ways to minimize agricultural run-off by improving soil management practices and avoiding use of contaminants, such as chemical fertilizers; to prevent ecological degradation of critical aquatic habitats (including wetlands, shallow waters and reefs) that sustain biodiversity; and to reduce unsustainable use of freshwater and marine resources resulting from over-fishing and excessive withdrawal of freshwater. Advocacy and awareness raising on international waters issues are important components of SGP's work.

Grounded in a decade of learning, SGP projects have demonstrated some significant outcomes. For example, in eastern **Zimbabwe**, the Gudyanga Group has successfully mobilized nearly 200 members of the Nyanyadzi community to protect the Save River Valley — an international watercourse — from siltation and pollution through sustainable agriculture and alternative livelihoods. Exchanges and visits to other projects have built the community's capacities and strengthened their knowledge of sustainable irrigation practices and ecologically friendly methods of food production, thus reducing massive soil loss and fertilizer and chemical deposition into the Save River. Produce from the irrigation scheme is both consumed within the community and sold to other communities.

In **Jordan**, in 1995, SGP supported the establishment of the Jordan Royal Ecological Diving Society (JRED), the first NGO dedicated to protecting the unique ecosystem

of the Red Sea. JRED has initiated continuous monitoring of the coral reefs in the Gulf of Aqaba along with an intense public information and awareness campaign. The NGO partnered with an international research vessel, which used data collected by the project as part of a global survey on coral reefs. It also established a youth training centre on marine ecology and conservation. Through funding secured following completion of the SGP project, JRED is assisting marine conservation efforts by other local groups in Aqaba and is implementing an eco-tourism project to help change unsustainable tourism practices in the Red Sea.

The Nairobi Dam Initiative in **Kenya** probably has the highest number of partnerships of any project supported by SGP. A diverse group of individuals and organizations have joined forces to solve one common problem — the destruction of the Athi River Basin. They include UNEP, Rotary Club of Nairobi, UN Centre for Human Settlements, the Nairobi City Council, Friends of Nairobi National Park, Kenya's Ministry of Environmental and Natural Resources, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Kibera Slum Dwellers Association, the Sailing Club of Nairobi and other local civil society groups. Athi, the second largest river in Kenya, carries pollutants into the Indian Ocean to the detriment of the mangrove ecosystem and marine biodiversity. A lake, formed by the Nairobi dam, is choked by water hyacinth and fed by effluents from nearby Kibera — a slum where nearly 800,000 people live. Chemical pollutants from Nairobi's industrial area also flow into the river. Through initial grants of US\$50,000 allocated by SGP to three different local NGOs, partners have emerged from all sectors to support the initiative. Recently US\$640,000 of co-funding (allocated through UNEP) was raised from the governments of Belgium and France and the Rotary Club of Nairobi. It is expected that the two-year initiative will ultimately result in data collection, the construction of wetlands to remove pollutants, sanitation facilities for 200 families living upstream from the Dam and a solid waste recycling project in Kibera. But the most important result is already happening: Local people are working together for change.

Buddhist Monks in Thailand Join Forces with Communities to Protect International Waters

As the Nan River runs its 770-kilometer course through areas of rice cultivation in northern Thailand, flowing into the Chaophraya River and then into the Gulf of Thailand bordered by Thailand, Cambodia and Viet Nam, it picks up discharges of agrochemicals, sediment and solid waste. Thailand is South-east Asia's biggest rice producer, harvesting more than 15 million tons per year. Just in 2001, Thai rice farmers applied 31,000 tons of pesticides and 3.5 million tons of chemical fertilizers, a significant portion of which was washed by rainfall into rivers that drain into the Gulf of Thailand. "This means that everybody lives downstream", says Poonsin Sreesangkom, SGP national co-ordinator. Noting that UNEP designated the Nan River as a "pollution hotspot", and the World Resources Institute reported that the Gulf of Thailand's coral reefs are being damaged by chemical fertilizer runoff, he concluded: "We have to work on the land to protect the sea."

With SGP funding, the Indo-China Development Institute (ICDC) is working with Buddhist monasteries and villages along the Nan River to reduce pollution at the source by decreasing farmers' use of agrochemicals. Monks living in temple complexes, or wats, scattered along 40 kilometres of the river have organized the Network for Conservation of the Nan River. They have adopted organic agriculture on monastery farms, and these have served as demonstration sites to train neighboring farmers in 29 communities in organic agriculture as a means of reducing dependency on agrochemicals. Thaweesak Nopkasorn, director of ICDC, believes that the Buddhists' environmental education efforts have been successful in converting farmers to organic methods because the monks have so much moral authority. Phra Atikan Chulan, abbot of the Klap Puong Ngua Monastery, recalled, "At first I thought it would create too much conflict between the monks and the villagers. But after several meetings, I realized that the messages are very much in harmony with our religion, and the monks are perhaps in the best position to teach environmental awareness to the villagers, because they are in constant contact with them and come from among them. We are helping people to live cleaner lives without chemicals."

Project impact is difficult to assess, but since the project began, there has been a 50 per cent decrease in the number of cases of pesticide poisoning treated by the district hospital, and farmers' savings are up, since they are spending less on expensive chemical fertilizers and pesticides. ICDC reports that the project has been such a success that the Australian Agency for International Development is interested in funding an expansion to cover 120 kilometres of the river.

Partnership has made SGP's mission both a reality and a success. Working in partnership on every aspect of the programme has enabled SGP to capitalize on the synergy that true collaboration can produce, making grants go further and do more. While SGP considers grantees as the core partners, others include bilateral donors, foundations, international NGOs, national and local government agencies, national environment funds, national poverty programmes, service organizations, universities, the private sector, and GEF large and medium-scale and UNDP core programmes. Efforts to link communities with ongoing global and national sustainable development efforts and with a broad array of other stakeholders and partners are hallmarks of SGP.

Co-financing and Complementarity

Over 600 partner organizations now provide co-financing and other support to SGP activities, including bilateral donors, foundations, national and local government agencies, national environment funds, national poverty programmes, service organizations, universities, the private sector and UNDP core contributions.

While mandated to focus on GEF priority areas, SGP has raised co-funding to meet complementary community priorities. Donors trust the flexible, country-driven SGP mechanism. For example, the UN Foundation has given SGP US\$3 million to implement the *Community Management of Protected Areas Conservation (COMPACT)* project to demonstrate how community action can enhance biodiversity conservation in and around six World Natural Heritage Sites: Mount Kenya in **Kenya**; Mount Kilimanjaro in **Tanzania**; Sian Ka'an in **Mexico**; the Belize Barrier Reef in **Belize**; Morne Trois Pitons in **Dominica**; and Puerto Princesa National Park in Palawan, **Philippines**.

Under the auspices of the SGP UNF COMPACT, the **Kenya** programme has created a unique platform for bringing together partners, strengthening the potential for co-ordination and co-operation, and discussing and resolving pressing environment and development issues — the Mt. Kenya Donor Forum. The forum gathers international donors, government agencies, foundations and the private sector, all of which have a stake in the Mt. Kenya World Heritage Site.

David Dudenhoefer



In Ecuador, the Ilaló Ecosystem Regeneration project, supported by SGP, involves the whole community in the reforestation of the upper slopes of Ilaló Hill.

A regional programme linked to SGP biodiversity conservation was launched at the end of 2001: the *Small Grants Programme for Operations to Promote Tropical Forests* (SGP PTF) funded by the European Commission (15 million Euros) for five years. Operations are taking place initially in four countries (**Pakistan, Philippines, Viet Nam and Thailand**) with expansion to other countries in South and South-east Asia envisaged when conditions are propitious. SGP PTF will complement the existing SGP projects in each country to benefit poor forest-user groups by pursuing the following key objectives:

- Act as a catalyst to promote and demonstrate community-based management and resource-use in tropical forests.
- Identify lessons from local experience and support the spread of successful community-level strategies and innovations.
- Build grass-roots-level capacity to tackle problems that are contributing to forest destruction and degradation through partnerships and networks.

Synergies with Large GEF Projects, UNDP and Other Initiatives

SGP aims to achieve a greater effect in GEF focal areas by incorporating and expanding its approach using the medium- and full-sized GEF project mechanisms. Country programmes have also contributed to full-sized GEF projects by implementing related community-based and capacity-building components and serving on project advisory boards.

SGP co-operates with many UNDP programmes, including LIFE, the Africa 2000 Network, and others relating to poverty alleviation, indigenous peoples, gender equity and community development. UNDP country office staff and resources have been essential to the programme's progress, especially the core funding provided UNDP in **Tanzania, India and Pakistan**. SGP serves as a source of advice to UNDP and government agencies on community-based approaches to global environmental issues.

Partnerships also serve as a valuable knowledge resource for SGP and its grantees. Agreements with universities and joint projects with local branches of large international NGOs such as IUCN and WWF ensure technical inputs and access to global level networks. NSC members also provide linkages to knowledge resources of their own institutions.

facing page

In 2002, SGP provided a grant to the Arab Women Organization to launch an on-line forum for SGP partner NGOs. The network bridges the gap between NGOs concerned with environmental activities at the community level. The objective is to promote knowledge sharing and experience exchange among Jordanian NGOs, with special emphasis on SGP-supported projects. The project also establishes web pages for smaller NGOs and training in information technology and environmental information management.

“More than a financial partner, SGP is a tool for mentoring and capacity development, which encourages communities to think about their problems concerning biological diversity and climate change in order to find solutions that are appropriate for their context. Implementation of their projects constitutes for them natural laboratories for experimentation. With SGP, communities themselves take charge of the funds and carry out and provide justification for expenditures. Even better, it is they who pay for the technical services responsible for monitoring their activities. Paternalism has been replaced by handing responsibility to small farmer organizations, which establish local project management committees that work very well. SGP serves as a trigger for an active partnership. This is a very important innovation.”

— **Hamidou Benoit Ouédraogo, President, Burkinabe Association of Action-Research and Self-Teaching for Development, and member, SGP National Steering Committee, Burkina Faso**

Capacity development and learning underpin all SGP activities. An integral understanding of how local communities manage change combined with innovative approaches to capacity development — at all levels and among a broad spectrum of grantees and partner

organizations — have proven critical to achieve environment and sustainability goals. Almost all SGP-supported projects include capacity-building, communications and experience-sharing elements.

In **Sri Lanka**, many partners consider SGP’s capacity development approach one of its most valuable features, whether it takes the form of participating in the NSC, conducting meetings with partners, strategic planning and management of the project, building consensus and promoting dialogue between stakeholders, publishing an article in the media, or developing monitoring and learning tools to measure and reflect on progress. The programme’s flexibility and willingness to delegate responsibilities to grantees and partners are positive factors.

SGP’s “learning-by-doing” approach builds capacity across the board. In addition, 13 per cent of the overall SGP portfolio is devoted to other capacity development, training and awareness-raising activities. These activities have included events such as stakeholder and community workshops to promote experience exchange and lessons learning, and meetings or workshops designed to strengthen the capacities of the grantees on such specific subjects as GEF thematic areas, monitoring and evaluation, participatory approaches and gender issues.

Victor Mello



In many cases, environmental advocacy NGOs may be well-qualified to deal with environmental issues, but have little experience working in poor communities; while, on the other hand, CBOs may lack a full understanding of the environmental implications of their activities. SGP encourages twinning arrangements and partnerships between organizations to fill these capacity gaps. NGOs or academic institutions are given grants to conduct stakeholder grant-writing workshops to familiarize potential grantees with SGP criteria and help them prepare the necessary documentation. Planning grants are made directly to CBOs and NGOs presenting interesting initial concept papers to allow them to obtain assistance in project design. These mechanisms allow grantees to obtain the managerial and/or technical advice necessary, not only to write an eligible proposal, but to manage the project in the future — including administrative and financial reporting, as well as participatory monitoring and evaluation. This process is critical for ensuring sustainability through a sense of ownership.

“When we first heard about SGP, we thought that like all the other programmes, we would be ignored. We submitted a project for a botanical garden in any case, and to our surprise, within two months it was approved. Before we received the funding, we took accounting courses and participated in several workshops. We got to know organizations that had worked with SGP in other projects, and we began to gain more confidence. It was hard to believe, but SGP gave us the grant, organized research institutions and scientists to give us technical assistance, and put us in contact with other grass-roots groups and NGOs to learn about the country programme strategy, planning, evaluation, analysis and many other technical and organizational themes. We have learned, and now we organize our own workshops to evaluate or plan activities and to prepare proposals.”

— José Chim, President, Organización Coox ba Xahá,
Mexico

Networking Partnerships and Exchanging Experience

Efforts are being stepped up to enable project participants to take part in exchange visits among projects as a means of sharing information about and lessons learned from SGP’s community experience. Exchange visits between grantees provide opportunities for knowledge

sharing and learning. SGP has confirmed over the years that peer learning is extremely effective, and so encourages project site visits, training workshops, and monitoring and evaluation by and for participating communities and organizations.

Community Building and Governance

A community’s capacity to communicate effectively with decision-makers in local and central government affects policy development and legislation that ultimately affect the allocation of needed resources to the local level. With the evolution of the role of government and decentralization, SGP has proven vital to support the development of networks of CBOs and NGOs that can capture political support from the bottom up. SGP channels resources to build the capacities of communities and local NGOs to identify their priorities and plan their actions so that they achieve their goals. In **Kenya**, central and local governments have recognized partnerships



with communities and local NGOs as central to their agendas, and institutional barriers have been consciously changed. SGP has provided an opportunity for poor communities to make informed choices about their destiny and catalyze policy reform. SGP has affected performance of governance at all levels.

Gender and Women's Participation

“I am very proud of the way my life has changed because of the paper project. I only studied through primary school, and sometimes I think that it isn't necessary to study much more to achieve what one wants in life, but definitely “yes” to capacity building, training and conquering fear and shyness.”

— Yorlenny Blanco, Bagatzi, Costa Rica

Many SGP country-programme strategies address gender issues, that is, the participation of women and men in

different aspects of SGP in varying cultural contexts. A number of countries have undertaken substantive gender training for grantees, NSC members and other partners, in response to specific, local conditions. In **Guatemala**, the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) has assisted in designing a specific gender strategy, which is being tested for wider application. Specific emphasis has been focused on the development of a monitoring and evaluation system that analyses project performance and results in gender terms, analysing all aspects of men and women's participation. Gender issues are always a consideration in SGP projects; women's groups are among SGP grantees. About half of SGP national co-ordinators are women.

“As for exchanging experiences and having a good time, we all enjoyed going to the SGP 1999–2001 evaluation workshop. I would want everyone to have this experience, and I hope countless numbers of women will get interested and continue our work. When I die, I want to leave behind many, many women working with native potatoes.”

— María Norma Aguilar, woman farmer from Chiloé, Region X, Chile

Restoring Wetlands in Zimbabwe

Large areas of Zimbabwe are approaching desert conditions. In many areas, rainfall simply runs off the hard, dry ground in torrents, creating deep gullies rather than replenishing the earth. In 1997, a community in Masvingo Province joined forces with a local NGO, Association of Zimbabwe Traditional Environmental Conservationists, to rehabilitate six degraded wetland sites. With support from SGP, women and men have been trained in modern conservation techniques combined with nearly forgotten traditional methods of land management. Working together, they have reclaimed the deep gullies by planting vetiver and other grasses — rich sources of fodder and renewed habitats for wildlife. They also planted indigenous tree species around the wetlands, and organic gardens with medicinal plants and fruit trees. Fishponds were stocked, sacred springs revived and eco-tourism introduced into the area. Kate Moyo Mhlanga, SGP national co-ordinator, has highlighted community involvement in project design, and the pivotal role of women in implementation and decision-making.



HOW HAS SGP MADE A DIFFERENCE?

SGP's effectiveness is, above all, the result of concerted efforts at local, national and global levels to (1) raise public awareness and mobilize local activity about global environment problems by attracting appropriate partners and technical and financial resources, and (2) influence its small grants to leverage larger projects and broader policies. These local, national and global efforts involve a number of interrelated processes:

- Raising awareness concerning threats to the global environment.
- Demonstrating community-level strategies and technologies that, if replicated over time, could reduce these threats.
- Assessing the effects of SGP interventions through participatory monitoring and evaluation.
- Identifying lessons from community-level experience, and support for the spread of successful community-level strategies and innovations among CBOs and NGOs, host governments, development aid agencies, GEF and others working on a larger scale.

David Dudenhoefer

- Building partnerships and networks of local stakeholders to support and strengthen community, CBO and NGO capacities to address global environmental problems through the sustainable livelihood approach.
- Disseminating experience through communications activities, with particular emphasis on outreach to the media.

Awareness Raising

“In my opinion the success of the programme in Mali should not be measured by the number of globally important species conserved or the positive impact on climate change or international waters. Rather, it should rest on the degree of people’s involvement and their awareness regarding GEF areas of interest. That constitutes a brilliant success, the fact that the people involved in SGP projects are, from that time forward, aware of the global stakes involved in environmental degradation and participate in the formulation of strategies to slow these unfavourable tendencies. This is a highly encouraging result.”

— Oumar Salim Mohame Kaba, SGP National Co-ordinator, Mali

Sponsored by SGP, the Asociación Venecia del Mar are developing an alternative to the destruction of shrimp farming. They are protecting and aiding the recuperation of 120 hectares of Ecuador's Machala Mangroves, on the border of Peru.



Over the past decade, the programme has developed its own global community — including conservation and development practitioners at all levels, national and international advisors and champions, NSC members, and CBOs and NGOs — that is able to interchange experiences and lessons learned. Academic institutions and partners, such as regional universities, international research centres and NGOs, and the private sector, have helped to address technical issues, and have supported human and institutional capacity development of CBOs and NGOs.

“I am very proud of my role as national co-ordinator of SGP in Belize for the past seven years. I have interacted with many excellent individuals and groups and established lasting friendships, while seeing the programme evolve from a primarily environmental one to one that is more people-oriented, focusing on community livelihoods. In particular, witnessing the improved level of awareness for the protection of endangered species such as the scarlet macaw, seeing the success of various environmental education efforts and the establishment of new community-managed protected areas has been immensely gratifying. The major challenge we currently face is how to sustain the local successes of SGP project interventions while connecting these benefits to global environmental issues.”

— Philip Balderamos, SGP National Co-ordinator, Belize

Identifying Lessons and Sharing Experience

Information sharing among national co-ordinators — through exchange visits such as “twinning” arrangements, whereby experienced national co-ordinators match up with new national co-ordinators to initiate country programme activities; the electronic forum of the sgp-xchange (an intranet); or dialogue in regional or global meetings — has had very positive results. For example, Celeste St. Hill, former national co-ordinator in **Barbados**, has noted how useful it was to publicize the innovative and successful **Uganda** SGP’s Luzira Water Hyacinth Art-Craft Training Project in the media in Barbados, where there is a similar problem. The Uganda project was implemented by a group of prisoners from the Luzira Prison near Port Bell Pier, the main inlet to Uganda on Lake Victoria. Extensive amounts of water hyacinth clogged the pier and the landing site, hampering local transport, fishing and navigation. The weed has been a serious threat to the lake and its biodiversity, as

well as the livelihood of the people who depend on it. The project has demonstrated that local people can sustainably control the water hyacinth by harvesting it for the production of furniture, baskets and mats. In addition, prisoners are trained in arts and crafts, providing them with direct livelihood benefits while in prison, and equipping them with skills they can use after release.

In the report from **Thailand** for the end of 2001, national co-ordinator Poonsin Sreesangkom recorded that 21 projects had completed activities, and prepared and presented final participatory evaluations and assessments of lessons learned. Moreover, three projects had incorporated lessons learned from other SGP projects.

The start-up mission of the **Pakistan** NC to **Iran** has led to subsequent exchange and collaboration between the two programmes in bordering areas of Baluchistan, with support from WWF Pakistan. The impact of one SGP project on another is a specific benchmark included in semi-annual progress reports from all participating countries as a fundamental part of SGP monitoring.

Under the auspices of the SGP UNF COMPACT, a strategic grant was provided to the Wildlife Conservation Society of **Tanzania** to conduct an aerial survey of the Mt. Kilimanjaro WHS in partnership with UNEP, Kilimanjaro National Park Authority and Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS). This arrangement, the product of early efforts to establish co-operation between COMPACT teams working in the two East African mountain WHSs, was directly influenced by the very positive effects for conservation and development planning of the aerial survey of Mt. Kenya undertaken some years ago by UNEP and KWS.

Communications

An SGP global communications strategy was issued in 2000, and has been adapted by participating countries into national communications strategies. As a result of intensified efforts, SGP’s programmes and projects have been featured in newspaper articles and other media as well as in GEF publications and exhibitions. Videos and other visual materials have been prepared and aired in various venues, and SGP country Web sites are being developed. Posters, brochures, manuals, analyses of lessons learned and other publications are being distributed. The diversity of successful initiatives in the Pakistan SGP inspired a resource book on environmental work in

Pakistan. *Green Pioneers: Stories from the Grass Roots* was launched on 2002 World Environment Day by Shafkat Kakakhel, assistant secretary-general of UNEP. The **Philippines** national co-ordinator has a weekly radio programme broadcast to remote areas of the country, and the Pakistan national co-ordinator has participated in a number of TV interview programmes.

National co-ordinators and project grantees are also invited to share experiences in a wide range of meetings and conferences. They have organized events to raise visibility of the programme, such as project-signing ceremonies, inauguration of new activities and other special events, that have attracted high-level government officials, including the president or prime minister in certain cases. In 2001, SGP and UN volunteers joined to mark the International Year of the Volunteer and World Environment Day with ceremonies featuring the distribution of certificates of recognition of voluntary service to the UN by NSC members. In a number of countries, including **Viet Nam**, SGP has collaborated with partners to organize awareness-raising events involving school children and youth around World Environment Day.

In 2002, the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in Johannesburg provided SGP, a model of sustainable development since Rio, with an important opportunity to highlight programme achievements. SGP participated in the WSSD Preparatory Committee Meetings in New York and Bali, and hosted a special event in Johannesburg titled "Voices of Reality: Communities and Sustainable Development". The event demonstrated practical achievements by local communities in contributing to sustainable development with emphasis on SGP activities. SGP actively supported country-level civil society preparations for and engagement in WSSD. For example, in Botswana, SGP funded civil society preparation of an assessment of Agenda 21 implementation; fifteen civil society organizations, including SGP grantees, participated in WSSD funded by the EU, private sector and SGP; and SGP is sponsoring a workshop on country follow-up.

Government Linkages

Government membership on NSCs, collaboration with local government agencies and empowerment of local communities are some of the channels through which

SGP highlights areas requiring policy change and brings them to the attention of decision-makers. In addition to national plans to implement global environmental conventions, SGP country strategies reflect national sustainable development strategy goals (including poverty reduction strategy papers and national action plans), and NSC members frequently participate in national sustainable development planning processes. SGP provides an important opportunity to enable central and local government to reflect expressed demand from the grass roots. Government agencies collaborate at the local level by providing technical advice and support, while in a number of cases governments provide parallel funding support to projects with SGP involvement.

"SGP fits perfectly into the process of decentralized local development, in which the Burkina Faso government has been engaged for a decade. Its implementation has brought about concrete results in the areas of flora (protecting natural formations, botanical gardens, aboreta, promotion of local species) and fauna (increase in animal life in village hunting areas, quantitative and qualitative strengthening of the fishing potential of dams of one of the largest aquacultural areas of Komienga); and in strengthening organizational and good governance capacities in organizations — thus promoting project ownership and sustainability. All of the above activities have a significant impact on poverty reduction and on improvement of local populations' living conditions."

— Jean Baptiste Kambou, Technical Counsellor,
Ministry of Environment and Water,
GEF Operational Focal Point, Burkina Faso

Upscaling from SGP to a GEF Medium-Sized Project

SGP aims to achieve greater effects in GEF focal areas by extending its approach using the medium- and full-sized GEF project mechanisms. Upscaling to a GEF medium-sized project (MSP) allows a successful SGP project to disseminate the application of proven technical and methodological innovations and lessons learned, usually by expanding from local to regional levels and reaching out to a greater number of communities and partner organizations. To date, over 20 MSP proposals in 11 countries have been developed from successful SGP funded projects.

However, unlike the SGP mechanism, which usually takes no more than six months to go from project-proposal submission to project approval and implementation, attaining an MSP may take several years, plus concerted efforts by a dedicated group of people and institutions.

For example, in **Poland**, a modest SGP grant financed the replacement of coal for heating by sawdust, branches and dry pieces of wood. The first MSP project brief based on the SGP experience was submitted in 1996, but

was rejected. A year later, another project brief was submitted, and in 1998, a PDF-A (project development grant) was given the green light. The MSP was resubmitted in 2000, and the coal to waste-wood combustion project was finally approved in 2001.

Synergies between SGP and Local Agenda 21 (LA21) in Aliaga, Turkey

Aliaga, located in the delta of the Guzelyurt River, is the centre of industry in Izmir. The delta, although mostly occupied by human settlements, is still an important wetland site. The project's goal is to protect the site from further disturbance and achieve a balance between industry and nature. The main outputs are expected to be increased local awareness and ownership of the Aliaga Bird Paradise and rehabilitation of the wetland. The project's main tool is mobilizing the local communities for the conservation of "their last oasis".

LA21 provides for a civil society platform to mainstream the project's objectives into the local planning agenda. SGP has been charged with mediating between the project partners and local and national birdlife conservation experts. SGP NSC members have contributed significantly to the design of project activities, and have visited sites to volunteer their technical expertise for wetland rehabilitation and conservation activities.

BUN-Central America: From SGP to a Regional GEF Renewable Energy Initiative

Biomass Users Network Inc. (BUN) was founded in 1985 by leaders from more than 20 countries who were committed to using biomass energy as a catalyst for rural economic development that would contribute to natural resource conservation. In 1993, BUN-Costa Rica received an SGP grant to work with three rural groups in the areas of solar energy, composting, reduction of fuel-wood use, organic agriculture and capacity development of project participants. Based on the success of this process, BUN-Costa Rica, together with universities and the National Organic Agriculture Association, received another SGP grant in 1996 to promote the certification of organic agricultural products.

By the end of 1998, BUN-Costa Rica had obtained the backing of all the Central American governments to present an MSP proposal to extend renewable energy and environmental conservation activities and reduce the use of fossil fuels and firewood throughout the region. The implementation of the MSP focused the organization's activities in the areas of sustainable agriculture, energy efficiency and renewable energy, and led to a name change: BUN-Central America.

The MSP was approved in 1999 as the first regional UNDP GEF climate change project executed by an NGO in Central America. The project is currently under way, and BUN-Central America has been able to involve government agencies, the private sector, universities and NGOs in a successful regional initiative that UNDP GEF seeks to replicate in other world regions.

In Sapal Bandai, Pakistan, SGP has supported the reforestation of hill slopes by local communities and tree plantation on farmlands. Community control of the design, implementation and self-evaluation of SGP projects promotes sustainability.

...And Downscaling

Carmen Tavera, SGP deputy global manager, believes that this is an area that deserves further attention and action. Based on SGP experience, GEF and other donors' funding projects are realizing that their project objectives cannot be achieved without giving local communities the means to take action. SGP is now being approached by large projects to implement their community-based components in specific geographical areas. For example, in **Guatemala**, UNDP/GEF's *Integrated Biodiversity Protection in the Sarstun-Motagua RECOSMO* project in the country's north-east has designated US\$210,000 of Dutch government counterpart funding to support a small grants component to work with communities. This has essentially meant an expansion of the Guatemala SGP, not only in terms of geography, but also operational infrastructure and staff.

The GEF UNDP/World Bank *Nile Trans-boundary Environmental Action Project* (**Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania** and **Uganda**) will develop a long-term regional co-operative programme to promote sustainable development in the Nile Basin. One project component, the Nile Trans-boundary Micro-grants Fund, is inspired by and directly modelled on SGP. It will support community-driven interventions to address trans-boundary environmental threats on a local scale, providing alternative sustainable livelihood opportunities to communities that might otherwise be obliged to overexploit their natural resources. It is expected that the Micro-grants Fund will operate in conjunction with SGP in programme countries.

An agreement has been signed between SGP Jordan and the IBRD-implemented Mediterranean Environment Technical Assistance Programme (METAP) to administer a METAP small-grants initiative in **Jordan**, for a management fee. Five projects have been approved to date, with a number of others in the pipeline.

Sustainability

It is a challenge to make SGP initiatives sustainable beyond the life of the SGP grant, although every effort is made to ensure that results of successful projects are indeed maintained.

Sustainability depends in large part on community ownership of a project; this in turn is based on community control of its design, implementation and self-evaluation. It also means incorporating the project's essence — working towards local and global environmental benefits — into community practices for medium- to long-term results. In this sense, many country programmes ask for a feasibility plan for long-term sustainability in every approved project proposal — one that, whenever possible, considers other options besides pursuing additional donor funding after SGP funding is terminated. Revolving funds and links to micro-credit agencies are important in ensuring continued viability of livelihood activities, as is capacity building in small business management and marketing.

Many country programmes “inject” grantees into a network of partners — such as local NGOs, other projects, funding agencies — as soon as projects are approved, whether informally or through workshop mechanisms. Such a strategy ensures that technical assistance and other forms of guidance and exchange are readily available through the course of project activities and beyond. Marisol Tovarias, former national co-ordinator in **Chile**, remarked: “The policy of the programme is to make sure that no SGP project works in isolation — every initiative is accompanied by us as well as local and national partners.” In addition, SGP grantees see the possibilities for follow-up activities after formal project termination to ensure sustainability. Networks of SGP grantees, past and present, exist in most countries, although they may be institutionalized in only a few. These networks for mutual help and advocacy sustain SGP initiatives over time and extend their reach.

Global Benefits

“Had someone asked if Permaculture Trust Botswana (PTB) anticipated that the project would produce global benefits, the answer would probably have been “no”. The experience we have gained and the information we have gathered is bound to be of value to someone in the world. Through this SGP-funded project, PTB has influenced other organizations in Botswana to take interest in the threats of bio-piracy. SGP acts locally, but it makes local organizations start thinking globally.”

— Russell Clarke, CEO, PTB

One of SGP's greatest challenges, especially in the second operational phase, has been to simultaneously meet the needs of the tremendous diversity of communities worldwide and, at the same time, demonstrate that programme interventions are contributing to global environmental benefits. In response to GEF Council benchmarks requiring the demonstration of global benefits, SGP national co-ordinators who gathered together at the Third Global Workshop in **Tunisia** in 2001 determined that most of their project portfolios — by meeting GEF focal area criteria in project design, strategically combining GEF and community sustainable development considerations, and conducting careful project monitoring and evaluation — were in fact making headway in producing global benefits. Moreover, although individually small, when grants are aggregated globally, the positive effects become much clearer. For example, SGP supports projects for marine turtle conservation in a number of countries that, taken together, have a significant impact on global conservation of the species.

Mercy Morales, co-ordinator of Yunguilla Community Eco-tourism Project in Ecuador supported by SGP, works on the community's 23-hectare organic vegetable farm. Some of the vegetables produced are served to tourists, but much of the produce is sold at a regional market. What is not sold ends up on local tables. An added advantage of the project has been the fact that 18 families have started their own organic vegetable gardens, which were a rarity in Yunguilla just a few years ago.



David Dudenhoefer

Global Benefits Analysed and Quantified: The Case of the Mexico SGP

Over the course of the second operational phase, through a strategic monitoring and evaluation system that was designed to assess both local community effects and global environmental benefits of SGP interventions, the Mexico SGP estimates that it is conserving 127 species, either directly or through conservation and sustainable use of their habitats. The country programme strategy has emphasized the protection of habitats and ecosystems — resulting in seven SGP projects that, together, have produced 560 hectares of agro-ecosystems and are conserving 3,370 hectares of tropical forest. Apiculture activities are helping to conserve nearly 8,800 hectares, and the sustainable use of timber species in another project covers more than 24,000 more. In addition, collaboration with the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor will bring 132,500 hectares under SGP-financed sustainable forest management. Community conservation of wildlife habitats includes 20,467 hectares of wetlands, 450 of coastal dunes and beach, and the establishment of three permanent reserves covering a total of 916 hectares of forest. In sum, the community-based actions of the Mexico SGP have benefited more than 1,000 people, enhanced the capacities of over 850 and offered workshops to 2,000 more. Of 63 projects, 26 are engaged in productive income-generating activities. And besides conserving 57,716 hectares of habitat, the programme has prevented the annual emission of more than 2 million tons of CO₂ as a result of protecting 36,799 hectares of tropical forest from forest fires.

David Dudenhoefer



Flor de Mayo lies near the eastern extreme of the province of Sud Yungas in Bolivia, perched on mountainside in the valley of the Bopi River. A suspension bridge built by the community spans that muddy river, connecting Flor de Mayo to a gravel road that winds its way over 254 tortuous kilometers to La Paz. The forested slopes rising above the farms are collect the rainwater that supplies water for the town's

communal taps, serves as public bath and laundry, and powers a small hydroelectric plant supported by SGP and the Institute of Hydrology and Hydraulics at Bolivia's Universidad Mayor de San Andrés. Residents of Flor de Mayo provided labor for construction of the plant, and created a micro-hydroelectric committee to maintain the plant and collect monthly payments from every family.

“In fewer than 10 years, SGP has come to be Costa Rica's most valuable and cost-effective source of support for addressing the often conflicting needs of humans and their environment. Rural people and communities are the stewards of our natural environment, but seldom have access to support to help them be good stewards. SGP is bridging this gap, making it possible for many communities all over the country to invest in sustainable livelihood initiatives that also protect the environment. Through carefully considered financial support for community projects, training, exchanges to share experiences and the nurturing of community organizations, SGP is successfully creating a groundswell of new environmental stakeholders, committed to improving their lives and our planet's future. Small investments are creating enormous potential, channelling constructive energies far beyond the scope of the projects supported. The international community would do well to look closely at strengthening and expanding this model as it ponders the ways and means of reversing our headlong rush towards environmental disaster.”

— **Diego Lynch, member, National Steering Committee, Costa Rica**

In the course of its first decade of operations, SGP reached out to communities around the world and, in partnership with them, demonstrated that it is possible to improve livelihoods without endangering the resources on which all of our lives depend. Technologies have been tested, traditional knowledge has been revived and applied, participatory methodologies have been employed, organizational capacities have been built and lessons have been learned.

The **third independent evaluation** of SGP is under way, and results will be presented to the Second GEF Assembly in October 2002. Its findings and recommendations will be used to determine the programme's future directions. Challenges for the years ahead include:

- **Expanding the programme** to give new countries that meet the criteria access to the GEF small grants window. Demand is increasing, and there is a long waiting list of countries that have requested participation.
- **Strengthening analysis and sharing of lessons learned**, both across SGP country activities and with other interested partners. SGP's extensive and varied record of experience constitutes an important knowledge resource. The advantages of the programme's decentralized

operations need to be complemented by enhanced mechanisms to ensure that proposals put forward in different countries can draw on other relevant experience, both within SGP and elsewhere. Exchange visits, study tours and workshops between communities and countries, as well as dissemination through electronic networking, publications and the media, will all be expanded. SGP will work closely with UNDP's new Equator Initiative, which has such experience exchange as one of its primary objectives. International meetings such as the Second GEF Assembly, the Conferences of the Parties to environmental conventions and the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) are all opportunities for showcasing SGP experience. SGP will also explore expanding its partnerships with international institutions and NGOs working in related areas.

- **Ensuring adequate attention to financial and market mechanisms for sustainable livelihood activities.** The availability of credit, business plans and access to local, national or foreign markets; the quality required to meet relevant product and service standards; and the roles of intermediaries, legislation and many other issues are all keys to longer-term sustainability. CBO and NGO partners often need to strengthen capacity in these areas.

- **Increasing appreciation for global programme impact.** While the impact of one particular small grant may not seem to make much difference on a global scale, when taken together, these grants can add up to significant gains both at national and global levels. Follow-up investments — by communities and NGOs, governments, other donors or the private sector — that build on and spread the benefits of initial SGP support, denote another form of impact. Another SGP contribution is its influence on others, who, through exposure to SGP, may increasingly recognize the potential benefits of small, community-based initiatives and establish mechanisms to promote them within their own programmes. Tracking these kinds of indicators more systematically to assess the programme's global impact will be important to fully convey the value of this small grants component of the GEF portfolio. The task ahead for the SGP monitoring and evaluation system is to create effective mechanisms at the local project, country programme and global levels to capture and describe these global benefits without jeopardising the "hands-on" focus which has been the basis for its success to date.

- **Mobilizing resources to meet the GEF Council matching requirement** — an ongoing challenge at global and national levels. Considering both in-kind and in-cash contributions, the programme has been able to meet benchmarks to date, but efforts will need to be intensified to ensure that SGP's proven success is not overlooked as donors seek new initiatives. For example, its activities related to integrated watershed management and measures to reduce pollution of international waters, renewable energy, health (traditional medicines), organic and dry-lands agriculture, and biodiversity demonstrate the potential contribution of SGP mechanisms to meeting the WEHAB (water, energy, health, agriculture, biodiversity) action agenda proposed by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan for the WSSD.

- **Enhancing support to CBOs and NGOs** to gain access to opportunities offered by GEF's new operational programmes on agro-biodiversity, sustainable transport, persistent organic pollutants and integrated ecosystem management. Land degradation issues are also likely to expand as GEF takes on its role as the financial mechanism of the CCD. The evolving guidance of the Conference of the Parties will also be addressed in determining the work of SGP. SGP stands ready to support the implementation of WSSD agreements with full civil society participation.

In its 10 years of operations, SGP has demonstrated that, in the words of the Second Overall Performance Study of GEF, "Small, strategically targeted projects can contribute to solving global environmental problems while enhancing the livelihood security of local people. There is evidence that many of these projects deliver more favourable cost-benefit ratios than larger projects." With the 1999 conversion of its status to a GEF corporate programme, SGP's potential has been enhanced.

In the decade ahead, SGP fully expects to achieve global recognition for revealing paths to a kind of development that is truly sustainable for both this planet and all its inhabitants. As Sarah Timpson, SGP global manager, has remarked, "While the role of government is to provide the enabling framework, in the end, whether sustainable development happens or not will depend on people's actions, individually, in their families, in their communities and in their businesses. SGP is showing the way."

PRIZES AWARDED TO SGP PROJECTS

Bhutan

2002 Ministry of Agriculture Renewable Natural Resources National Exhibition (Cane and Bamboo Management in Black Mountain National Park, and Shingneer Watershed Management)

Costa Rica

2001 Ford Motor Company Environmental Awards (Sol de Vida's Solar Stove project and three additional SGP projects in the Gulf of Nicoya)
The Talamanca Initiative – a collaborative partnership of three community-focused organizations – awarded the Equator Prize 2002 'World Heritage Site'

Dominican Republic

2001 Ford Motor Company National Conservation and Environment Award (Community Hydropower and El Limón Electrification)

Guatemala

2002 Premio a la Productividad, sponsored by the World Bank and the SOROS Foundation in Guatemala (Asociacion de Desarrollo Agropecuario y Artesanal de La Guadalupeana y Asociacion Ak'Tenamit)

Kazakhstan

2002 Dubai Award for Best Practices in Improving the Living Environment (Zhanartu, and Agro-biodiversity of the Alatau)

Kenya

Kipepeo Butterfly Project: Conserving Global Biodiversity through Local Sustainable Use
1998 Dubai International Award for Best Practices in Improving the Living Environment
(see www.bestpractices.org)
Ashden Trust Award for Renewable Energy (£15,000) awarded to the Renewable Energy Technology Assistance programme
Honey Care Africa Ltd. was shortlisted for the Equator Prize 2002 and awarded \$30,000 by The Nature Conservancy

Mauritius

2001 Best Community Project Award for Africa (Jeune Chambre Economique of Quatre Bornes, for Conservation and Propagation of Endemic/Indigenous Medicinal Plants)
2001 Whitley Award for International Nature Conservation (Mauritian Wildlife Foundation, for Sustainable Use of Rodriguan Endemic Plants)
2000 Mauritius Council of Social Service International Volunteer Day Most Outstanding NGO Award (Jeune Chambre Economique of Port Louis)

Philippines

Philippine National Oil Company, Christopher Jordan, MD, Inc., and SATMP National Contest, Third Prize (Community-Based Watershed Management and Water Resource Utilization for Hydropower in Davao City)

Poland

2000 Ford Motor Company Environmental Awards, First Prize (Pronatura for Conservation of White Stork project); Second Prize (Association of Friends of Lower Vistula Landscape Park; and Mazovian Association for Fauna Protection); Third Prize (Green Federation Gaja Szczecin)

Senegal

2000 Special mention by the Environment Advisor of the President of the Republic of Senegal (Lutte contre une plante envahissante dans les eaux du fleuve Sénégal et au parc des oiseaux du Djoudj [Ramsar Site and World Heritage Site])

Thailand

2000 His Majesty the King's Golden Jubilee Village Pond Project Honours Ceremony (Nakham Tambol Administrative Organization, for Solar Water Pumping for Sustainable Agriculture; and Pa Tueng Administrative Organization, for Promotion of Sustainable Agriculture by Integrated Pest Management)

Tunisia

2001 ECO-LEF Award (AAGHAD, Reuse and Valorization of Solid Waste in Greater Tunis by Handicapped Women)
2000 Le deuxième Grand Prix du Président de la République pour la protection de la nature et de l'environnement (l'Association des Amis du Belvédère, AAB)
Le troisième Grand Prix du Président de la République pour la protection de la nature et de l'environnement (l'Association des Amis des Oiseaux du Cap Bon, AAO Cap Bon)
1999 Club Jeunes Sciences Hammam Lif (3ème prix)
1998 ATPNE Tunis (3ème prix)
1997 APNES Sfax (3ème prix)
1996 ASSIDJE Djerba (3ème prix)
1995 ARSEN Kef (3ème prix)
1994 APNEK Kairouan (3ème prix)

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is a major catalyst for the global environment. GEF's mandate is to make the connection between local and global environmental challenges and between national and international efforts to conserve biodiversity, reduce the risks of climate change, protect the ozone layer, clean up international waters, stop land degradation, and eliminate persistent organic pollutants

During its first decade, GEF allocated \$4.2 billion in grants, supplemented by more than \$11 billion in additional financing, for more than 1000 projects in 160 developing countries and countries with transitional economies. Through local UNDP offices, GEF has also provided over 3,000 small grants, up to \$50,000 each, directly to NGOs and community groups in more than 60 countries. The only new funding source to emerge from the Earth Summit, GEF today counts 173 countries as members.

GEF is the designated financial mechanism for international agreements on biodiversity, climate change, and persistent organic pollutants; GEF also supports the work of global agreements to combat desertification and protect international waters and the ozone layer.

GEF's three implementing agencies are the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the World Bank. GEF's executing agencies are the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

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The Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme at a glance (2002):

- The Small Grants Programme (SGP) supports activities of non-government and community-based organizations in developing countries that conserve biodiversity, mitigate climate change and protect international waters while generating sustainable livelihoods.
- Funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) as a corporate programme, SGP is implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on behalf of the three GEF implementing agencies, and executed by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).
- At present, 63 countries participate in SGP having ratified the conventions on biological diversity and climate change.
- There are 53 country offices and two regional offices, with day-to-day management by SGP national co-ordinators.
- The overall SGP portfolio comprises 65 per cent biodiversity, 16 per cent climate change, 6 per cent international waters, and 13 per cent multi-focal issues.
- The funding to date comprises US\$ 117.35 million from GEF and US\$65.66 million from other partners in cash or in-kind equivalents.
- The maximum grant amount per project is US\$50,000, but averages around US\$20,000.
- Grants are channelled directly to CBOs and NGOs.
- More than 3,150 grants have been awarded worldwide to date, with many benefiting multiple communities.
- SGP features decentralized decision-making about grant awards, and strategic directions by a voluntary national steering committee in each participating country.
- A small central programme management team, based in New York, is staffed by five people.

SGP currently has 63 participating countries in five regions of the developing world.

Africa

Botswana, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Namibia, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe

Arab States

Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Tunisia

Asia and the Pacific

Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Viet Nam

Europe/Commonwealth of Independent States

Albania, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Poland, Turkey

Latin America and the Caribbean

Anguilla, Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, British Virgin Islands, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Montserrat, Peru, St. Christopher & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago

