

**SGP** The GEF  
Small Grants  
Programme



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

**20**  
YEARS

**Community  
Action**  
for the  
Global Environment



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Action**  
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Global Environment

# PREFACE

**Ms. Monique Barbut**

CEO and Chairperson  
Global Environment Facility



Big changes can begin with small steps. That is the philosophy that underlies the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme, which celebrates its 20th anniversary with this publication. Big programs on a grand scale are, of course, a key part of any effort to address environmental programs that are global in scope. But global environmental change doesn't always take place on a giant scale. It can originate in tiny villages and remote farms. If we are to have a comprehensive approach to global environmental challenges, we must address environmental harm across a broad spectrum of scales, from continent-wide programs to projects that engage individual communities.

We at the GEF are delighted to join the GEF Small Grants Programme in celebrating this milestone, its 20th anniversary. The GEF has been involved with the Small Grants Programme since its inception, which came only a year after the GEF itself was founded. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), better known as the "Earth Summit," in Rio de Janeiro convened in June 1992. It was at that historic gathering that participating countries adopted the conventions on biodiversity and climate change. These laudable commitments needed to be backed up by concrete actions. And so the conventions included provisions to support these environmental initiatives with the Global Environment Facility – then in its infancy as a pilot program – serving in that key, catalytic role. The consensus view –one that I believe holds true today – was that there was no need for a proliferation of funds when one organization could serve the global environmental conventions with a single, streamlined bureaucracy.

As part of GEF's contribution to this process, initial funding was provided for the GEF SGP, marking the beginning of the programme's 20-year journey. The idea behind the GEF SGP was to complement the larger GEF projects by providing a window for the direct participation of local, community-based organizations on projects to benefit the global environment. The GEF SGP operates under the belief that global environmental challenges can be met only when local people and organizations are involved, and that even with funding-per-project of less than US\$50,000, community-level participation can significantly benefit the global environment.



We are particularly proud and happy that the GEF SGP has thrived in different political and economic climates around the globe, as this publication demonstrates. The programme devotes particular attention to local and indigenous communities and gender concerns. By raising public awareness, building partnerships, and encouraging policy dialogue, GEF SGP seeks to promote an enabling environment within countries for achieving sustainable development and addressing global environmental issues.

As a result, the programme today represents one of the GEF's most productive investments in supporting civil society and community initiatives and generating considerable benefits from the funds invested. We are particularly happy to see that with some \$US 670 million invested, GEF SGP has been able to support more than 14,500 projects in more than 125 countries.

This publication illustrates how skillful planning and hard work on the part of SGP teams and volunteers enable our investments to touch the lives of thousands, possibly millions of people around the globe. Today the GEF SGP is a known and respected entity in remote villages in such varied places as Malawi, Madagascar, Yemen, China, Fiji, Uzbekistan and Jamaica; it is well recognized by community-based organizations from the Mongolian plains to the mountain communities of Bolivia. Moreover, GEF SGP has become a vital partner to India, Pakistan, Brazil, Mexico and a number of other national governments in effectively investing and supporting community and civil society initiatives.

Today, the GEF Small Grants Programme has grown to become the world's largest environmental effort dedicated to civil society and community organizations, and a partner trusted by recipients, donors, GEF agencies and national governments.

The GEF SGP's efficiency and scope make it an important financial tool for countries seeking help in meeting their international environmental obligations. A programme that some may have regarded as an add-on to our large-scale environmental efforts has become a pillar of effectiveness and results, with a worldwide reputation to match. Our aim is to continue to strengthen and transform the programme to bring its record of success to more communities in more places around the globe by attracting more financing from a wider array of other sources.

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the GEF Small Grants Programme, I would like to thank and congratulate the entire GEF SGP – the Central Programme Management Team in New York, the National Coordinators, Programme Assistants, and especially volunteers serving as members of National Steering Committees in all the country programmes, and above all NGO and CBO grantee partners – for their dedication, commitment, and hard work in supporting our investments in the global environment and securing benefits for future generations.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Babur', with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

# FOREWORD

**Mr. Yannick Glemarec**

Executive Director  
UNDP GEF



UNDP has been a stalwart supporter of SGP since the beginning, first as a proponent of a special GEF window for civil society organizations in the global south, and then as its implementing agency for the next 20 years. SGP was launched in 1992, the year of the path-breaking United Nations Conference on Environment and Development – the Rio Earth Summit – which brought together the UN system, member states, and civil society organizations to confront critical planetary environmental and development challenges and create the foundations for achieving sustainable development. Since then, SGP implementation and results have helped participating countries to meet their obligations under multilateral environmental agreements, three of which – the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification – were adopted at the Rio Earth Summit.

SGP has demonstrated that small community led projects can ultimately produce big impacts, by helping to foster innovative ways of addressing and solving environmental and sustainable development problems that can have lasting impact. In Uruguay, a biogas project initially implemented with local dairy farmers has now been replicated in several other communities, municipalities, and regions, following the successful testing of the renewable energy bio-digester technology. As a result, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries is implementing two large projects on productive rural development and adaptation to climate change with funding from the Inter-American Bank and the World Bank, respectively. These projects have incorporated SGP overall lessons as well as the bio-digester technology adapted and validated by SGP which has now been nationally disseminated through the publication of a manual on its construction and use. Similarly, SGP demonstration projects in the area of renewable energy and energy efficiency have been replicated and scaled up, attracting the interest of governments and other donors, and ultimately influencing the development of national energy policies and laws in countries as diverse as Bulgaria, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Ghana, India, Jamaica, Kenya, and Pakistan.

With established country programmes covering more than 125 countries, and with the support of UNDP's country office system, SGP is today unrivaled in scope for providing access to funding to civil society organizations (CSOs) for community-based initiatives worldwide that protect the global environment and realize sustainable development objectives. SGP's global portfolio today includes more than 14,500 projects that have supported communities to take action to confront worsening environmental, climate, economic, and social crises and to propose locally grounded solutions. Through its deep engagement with civil society and community-based organizations, SGP has become the public face of the GEF and the UNDP, particularly at the local, community level.

It is essential that global conventions, as some of the most powerful mechanisms for change, are negotiated in light of local knowledge and innovations. SGP projects and their impacts are the fruits of experimentation, innovation, and incubation of good ideas, methods, and techniques within thousands of communities. The lessons and good practices that have emerged from SGP's two decades of work yield a deeper understanding of the community-based approach and its benefits for local peoples and society worldwide. We are pleased to invite you to reflect on these experiences as the global community meets once again in Rio to embark on the development of the next generation of global conventions and articulate a vision for a sustainable future. We hope that this publication will interest the environment and sustainable development community, and will demonstrate to practitioners, decision-makers, and partners in government, civil society, and donor agencies the value of SGP's approach over its twenty-year history and its continuing significance today.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Yves', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

# INTRODUCTION

## **Mr. Delfin Ganapin**

Global Manager  
GEF SGP



Back in 1992, the call was issued for “thinking globally, acting locally.” In the Rio Earth Summit’s Agenda 21, acting locally was highlighted in the role that major groups must play to address critical environmental problems and achieve sustainable development. The restructured Global Environmental Facility (GEF) became the financial mechanism to support action for the newly agreed environmental conventions. Marked by these milestones, buoyed by the strong advocacy of civil society, and building on UNDP’s initial work with communities and civil society organizations, the Small Grants Programme (SGP) responded to the call for local action.

This publication recounts the ground gained in the course of the last twenty (20) years in supporting communities and civil society organizations in their efforts to implement environment-cum-development initiatives. In essence, it is a celebration of two decades of communities and civil society organizations proving themselves capable of the task, of their hard work, of the risks they took together with their partners and supporters, and of all SGP stakeholders demonstrating that sustainable development can be achieved.

While SGP is mentioned throughout this text, the name does not refer to a self-contained entity. SGP is a modality with many stakeholders – funding from the GEF, implementation by UNDP, execution by UNOPS, partnerships with many donor agencies, decentralized decisions taken in more than 125 countries by civil society and government leaders, and field implementation of more than 14,500 projects by community-based organizations and non-governmental organizations. The testimonials from diverse partners and grantees establish the fact that SGP is owned by a variety of stakeholders. From the poor and vulnerable communities that are at the heart of the programme, to the civil society partners and government and donor agency supporters, this is a moment to recognize everyone’s contribution as constituents in a global network committed to local action on global environment and sustainable development concerns.

This publication reviews the history and evolution of SGP and its structure, governance, and multi-faceted approach, developed through adaptive management processes. It provides a succinct account of its principal features – such as the diverse partnerships which are its mainstay – and the results and benefits it has achieved. Here it is important to emphasize that SGP has stayed true to the mandate of the GEF to provide local and global environmental benefits and to the three pillars – environmental, economic, and social – of UNDP’s sustainable development mission. SGP has supported



communities to respond to environment and development challenges with sustainable livelihoods, community nature-based enterprises, and microfinance approaches that alleviate poverty, provide income, increase food security, and enhance overall well being.

While the inclusion of project and country programme examples is only a representative selection, there is some universality to SGP's community-based approach. Thus many of the cases featured here also resonate with similar critical concerns and situations experienced in other countries. In fact, the efforts and results of many mature SGP country programmes and the wide networks of successful projects are important resources that SGP can share with others.

When speaking of accomplishments, it must also be emphasized that behind every success is often a long journey replete with difficulties and sacrifice. This publication wishes to recognize the trials and efforts, as well as the achievements of SGP grantee-partners and their civil society and government supporters. At the same time, we hope that this presentation of the programme's unique governance structure and operations, as well as stories of success and multiple benefits, will inspire others to do the same.

This publication is thus an invitation to join SGP – as grantee-partners or as part of its support system for resource mobilization, knowledge sharing, and policy advocacy. There is no question that much has been accomplished, but much more remains to be done. The challenges we have confronted since 1992 have grown in complexity and magnitude, requiring concerted action and greater participation and commitment by all, if we are to ensure a sustainable future for the coming generations.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'A' followed by a series of smaller, cursive letters.

# ACRONYMS

CBA	community-based adaptation to climate change
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBO	community-based organization
CFA	Community Forestry Association
CO	Country Office (UNDP)
CPS	country programme strategy
CSO	civil society organization
COMPACT	Community Management of Protected Areas for Conservation
CPMT	Central Programme Management Team
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FSP	full-size project
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	greenhouse gas
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für International Zusammenarbeit GmbH
ICCA	indigenous peoples' and community conserved areas and territories
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LCB	Local Consultative Body
LDC	least developed country
LIFE	Local Initiative Facility for Urban Environment
MOA	memorandum of agreement
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MEA	multi-lateral environmental agreements
MSP	medium-size project
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NC	National Coordinator

NGO	nongovernmental organization
NHI	national host institution
NSC	National Steering Committee
OFP	Operational Focal Point
OP	operational phase
PA	Programme Assistant
POP	persistent organic pollutant
RedLAC	Latin American and Caribbean Network of Environmental Funds
REDD	Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
RC	Resident Coordinator
RR	Resident Representative
SCS	South China Sea
SGP	Small Grants Programme
SGP-PTF	Small Grants Programme for Operations to Promote Tropical Forests in Southeast Asia
SLM	sustainable land management
SIDS	small island developing states
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
UN	United Nations
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNCSD	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
WB	World Bank
WH-LEEP	World Heritage Local Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Programme
WHS	World Heritage Site

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## I. INTRODUCTION TO SGP





## INTRODUCTION TO SGP

Launched in 1992, the year of the Rio Earth Summit, the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme (GEF SGP), implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and executed by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) has worked with communities and civil society around the world to grapple with critical global environmental problems. With a presence in more than 125 developing countries and having provided more than 14,500 grants worldwide by 2012, SGP's cumulative experience and results have demonstrated that supporting communities in their efforts to achieve more sustainable livelihoods is not only possible, but necessary for achieving global environmental benefits.



SGP has made a long-term commitment to local and community sustainable development that produces global environmental benefits, taking “local action, global impact” as its mission statement. By channeling financial and technical support directly to community-based organizations (CBOs) and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in poor and often remote areas for initiatives that conserve and restore the environment while enhancing people's livelihoods and well being, SGP's approach integrates the three pillars – social, economic, and environmental – of sustainable development. SGP has shown that community action can maintain the fine balance between human needs and environmental improvement. As such it exemplifies the principle of “thinking globally, acting locally.”

Over the past two decades, SGP has linked matters of local, national, and global importance through a transparent, participatory, and country-driven yet globally coherent approach to community-based project planning, design, and implementation. Grants are approved by voluntary, multi-stakeholder national steering committees. Grants are made directly to CBOs and NGOs in recognition of the key role they play as a resource and constituency for sustainable development concerns. The decentralized structure of SGP encourages maximum country and community initiative and ownership, and the local demand-driven nature of SGP projects contributes to future sustainability.

Yet SGP is much more than simply a fund that provides small grants to CBOs and NGOs for environmental and community improvement. By building partnerships and networks across civil society, promoting policy dialogues with government at all levels, incorporating the needs of poor and marginalized communities in national sustainable development planning, and encouraging public awareness and engagement, SGP seeks to foster an enabling environment within countries for addressing global environmental issues and achieving sustainable development goals. SGP has thus helped countries to simultaneously support local, community-based initiatives while meeting national commitments and global obligations.

The maximum grant amount awarded by SGP per project is \$US 50,000, with a historic average of about \$US 25,000 per grant. Although grant awards are relatively small, they have been effective in demonstrating sustainable and innovative approaches to global environmental problems at

the community level, as evidenced by four global evaluations (1995, 1998, 2003, 2008). SGP grant making also generates additional funding and resources that enhance grantee ownership and create wider partnerships. SGP has matched programme funding from the GEF – a 20-year total of approximately \$US 450 million – with cash and in-kind contributions from community, NGO, government, private sector, and donor partners for a total financial commitment of over \$US 900 million since the programme's inception.<sup>1</sup>

SGP primarily works in five GEF focal areas: conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, mitigation and adaptation<sup>2</sup> to climate change, protection of international waters, reduction of chemicals such as persistent organic pollutants (POPs), and prevention of land degradation, including sustainable forest management. Over time, SGP's community-based, intersectoral, and multi-level approach has been tested to be effective across participating countries, making the programme an efficient and capable delivery mechanism for channeling funds from other donors, including governments, for supporting sustainable development concerns, such as water supply and sanitation, disaster risk reduction and response, and civil society capacity development through a host of related initiatives.

SGP's principal objectives are to:

- Support communities and CSOs to understand and practice sustainable development strategies that protect the global environment
- Develop, implement, and learn from community-level approaches that reduce threats to the global environment through replication, scaling up, and mainstreaming
- Build partnerships and networks to strengthen local and national capacities to address global environmental problems and promote sustainable development
- Gather, share, and apply lessons from these community-based experiences, innovations, and strategies

---

**Protect our forests, manage our resources well – that is the source of life and sustainability for the future of our families.**

Mr. Simon Purizaca  
President, Asociación Peruana de Pequeños Productores Ecológicos, grantee, Peru

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1 GEF funding for SGP is close to \$US 670 million, which includes the fifth operational phase and fees.

2 Adaptation to climate change activities are funded by the GEF Strategic Priority for Adaptation and other donors.

## The Global Environment Facility

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) unites 182 member governments — in partnership with international institutions, civil society organizations (CSOs), and the private sector — to address global environmental issues. Established in 1991, the GEF is today the largest funder of projects to improve the global environment. The GEF has allocated \$10 billion, supplemented by more than \$47 billion in co-financing, for more than 2,800 projects in more than 168 developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

An independent financial organization, the GEF provides grants to developing countries and countries with economies in transition for projects related to biodiversity, climate change, international waters, land degradation, the ozone layer, and chemicals. These projects benefit the global environment, linking local, national, and global environmental challenges and promoting sustainable livelihoods.

The GEF partnership includes 10 agencies: the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); the World Bank; the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO); the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO); 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. The Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel provides technical and scientific advice on the GEF's policies and projects.

The GEF serves as financial mechanism for the following conventions:

- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)
- UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
- The GEF, although not linked formally to the Montreal Protocol on Substances That Deplete the Ozone Layer (MP), supports implementation of the Protocol in countries with economies in transition



SGP Bolivia



## The United Nations Development Programme

Since 1966, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been partnering with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crisis and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. On the ground in 177 countries and territories, UNDP offers global perspective and local insight to help empower lives and build resilient nations.

UNDP works in four main areas:

- Poverty Reduction and Achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
- Democratic Governance
- Crisis Prevention and Recovery
- Environment and Sustainable Development

In all areas of its work, UNDP encourages the protection of human rights and the empowerment of women, minorities, and the poorest and most vulnerable. UNDP receives voluntary contributions from nearly every country in the world.

Because of its mandate and its strong, continuous and neutral presence in most developing countries, UNDP coordinates all United Nations (UN) development activities at the country level as manager of the UN Country Team.











## II. HISTORY AND EVOLUTION





## HISTORY AND EVOLUTION

The demand for SGP emerged from the negotiations for the establishment of the Global Environment Facility that took place in 1991 during the lead-up to the first United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, June 1992). What became known as the Rio Earth Summit stemmed from a process that was very much driven by global civil society, particularly environmental movements and NGOs worldwide. Representatives from civil society as well as UNDP called for a window for NGOs in the nascent GEF, which would have otherwise primarily supported large projects where communities and civil society are not the major decision makers. Civil society representatives had first-hand experience in working with local and national environmental NGOs in developing countries and understood their potential in relation to the GEF. The UNDP Division for Nongovernmental Organizations had insights and expertise from implementing a number of civil society programmes that worked directly with NGOs and CBOs. A collective realization that the GEF would be a unique opportunity to fund civil society environmental actions led to marshaling the necessary support among NGO, government, and multilateral allies to create the SGP.

UNDP designed and proposed the SGP based on its experience in conceptualizing and implementing Partners in Development (launched in 1988) and its association with three other programmes. Partners in Development had already tested the modality of national committees and directly supporting local NGOs and community groups to engage in micro self-help initiatives, institutional strengthening, and dialogues among NGOs and governments in 73 countries. The Africa 2000 Network, mandated by the UN General Assembly in 1986 and operational in 1989, and the Asia-Pacific 2000 Network, launched in 1991-1992, supported grassroots environmental and sustainable development activities through small grants to NGOs and community groups in their respective regions. The Local Initiative Facility for Urban Environment (LIFE), launched in 1992, promoted local dialogues among municipalities, NGOs, and CBOs and awarded small grants to improve the urban environment.

Due to the foresight of committed NGOs and the GEF, and building upon UNDP's accumulated knowledge and practice with related programmes, SGP was launched in 1992 on the eve of the Rio Earth Summit as a dedicated GEF grant window for NGOs and other CSOs in developing countries.

### Adaptive management model

GEF SGP has evolved significantly as a global programme over the past twenty years (1992-2012). Its history can be traced through a pilot and five subsequent operational phases, which correspond to funding replenishments from the GEF, as a process of global and local adaptive management. Adaptive management involves conceptualizing and testing strategies and assumptions, analyzing and adapting to experience and change, and capturing and sharing learning – which in turn contribute

to the first step.<sup>3</sup> In this sense, participatory experimentation and learning as much from mistakes as from successes have characterized SGP's approach. The catchphrase "learning by doing" epitomizes how SGP builds on each successive phase of actual on-the-ground practices in a process of experiential learning. What began as a pilot initiative in 1992 is now a significant programme with valuable, time-tested lessons to share about delivering global environmental and local sustainable development benefits through efficient, decentralized, participatory, and transparent mechanisms.

## SGP Timeline



## Viability of a community-based approach (1992 – 1998)

In its early phases, GEF SGP demonstrated the viability of a decentralized, country-driven, community-based approach for making grants to NGOs and CBOs in three GEF focal areas: biodiversity, climate change, and international waters. During the pilot phase (1992–1995), the first SGP country programmes were established in 33 countries and hosting arrangements were made in UNDP Country Offices (CO) or nongovernmental national host institutions (NHI). Initial global guidance on project submission, selection, and reporting was developed and disseminated, focused on applying GEF focal area criteria at the local level. The maximum grant amount was set at \$US 50,000 – which proved to be an appropriate ceiling for NGO and CBO funding over the next twenty years – with average grant amounts of well under \$US 20,000 in these phases.

National Coordinators (NCs) were recruited and became active liaisons with SGP's civil society constituencies. NCs promoted SGP throughout their countries and articulated GEF focal area criteria in terms that would be understood by prospective NGO and CBO project proponents, a special challenge when working with poor communities at the margin of subsistence. Voluntary, multi-stakeholder National Steering Committees (NSCs) were formed, comprising majority nongovernmental representatives, and applied initial project review and selection procedures, including open deliberations and decisions taken by consensus.

The 1995 Independent Evaluation of the GEF Small Grants Programme Pilot Phase emphasized that it had been a "genuine success, although important weaknesses were identified — the very purpose of a pilot." The evaluation found that most country portfolios lacked strategic focus and had not

<sup>3</sup> On adaptive management, see the Conservation Measures Partnership's *Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation*.

<sup>4</sup> Published as *Joint Evaluation of the Small Grants Programme* (2008).



adequately considered project sustainability or linkages with GEF full-size projects. Additionally, the evaluation remarked on insufficient administrative and financial systems and inadequate staffing at both global and national levels. The evaluation concluded, however, that SGP was “a reasonably efficient and cost-effective method to provide funding for community-focused environmental and capacity-building projects...[and] an effective, prototype foundation” was being laid for expanding support to community-based activities in the GEF focal areas. The evaluation recommended that SGP be given operational status.

Through the pilot phase and first operational phase (1996-1998), NSCs approved over 1200 projects across participating countries, which grew from 33 countries in 1992 to 45 in 1998. By the end of the period, SGP good practices as well as pitfalls to be avoided were encapsulated in a set of Operational Guidelines that covered administrative, financial, and operational matters and formed the basis for programme implementation since then, with regular review and revision as necessary.

SGP was able to show that it was not only possible but optimal for all grant-funding decisions to be taken in country by duly constituted NSCs, thereby fostering national ownership and decentralized, participatory decision making. SGP demonstration projects indicated that local action by NGOs and CBOs could contribute to addressing global environmental problems through raising public awareness and piloting effective approaches in the GEF focal areas. The Second Independent Evaluation of the SGP (1998) confirmed SGP’s niche in the environment and development world:

There is no comparable mechanism for raising environmental awareness and building capacity across such a broad spectrum of constituencies within the recipient countries. National ownership of the SGP and commitment to its participatory principles is clearly demonstrated by the talented and experienced people attracted to become NSC members, as well as the enormous voluntary inputs elicited by the programs from all levels of society.

### Strengthening strategic grant making (1999 – 2004)

Based on the experiences and lessons learned during its initial phases, GEF SGP adopted more focused and strategic approaches to enhance impact and sustainability of its interventions. At the same time, it expanded its reach to 73 countries during the second operational phase (1999-2004). These approaches were conceptualized and deployed through global frameworks for strategy, monitoring and evaluation, and resource mobilization, all of which were elaborated in consultation with NCs and NSCs.

Among other objectives, the global strategic framework assisted country programmes to better reconcile local community needs with global environmental priorities, integrating sustainable livelihoods into innovative processes that achieve global environmental benefits. Sustainable livelihoods synthesized SGP’s approach since its inception, allowing the programme to integrate the three pillars of sustainable development – environmental, economic, and social. Because GEF funding can only support activities in the GEF focal areas that generate global environmental benefits, the resource mobilization framework helped the global and country programmes to raise cash and in-kind co-financing to cover non-GEF portions of SGP projects. These included social and economic matters such as community organization, gender empowerment, and income generation. An agreement was reached whereby SGP would match GEF funding 1-to-1 through globally consolidated co-financing. This provided the latitude to conceptualize, implement, and learn from integrated sustainable development initiatives. Through the monitoring and evaluation framework, country programmes worked with project partners on tracking and reporting progress and results, and reported in turn to the global level.



SGP Benin

In order to undertake grant making in a more strategic manner, country programme strategies (CPS) were developed by NCs and NSCs that responded to the global frameworks and adapted them to national and local environmental, economic, and social contexts. The CPS guided grant making based on national priorities and local needs in alignment with the GEF focal areas. They also identified specific geographic and thematic areas of focus in an effort to increase efficiencies and the likelihood of sustaining results beyond a project's end by promoting synergies among thematic or geographic clusters of grants.

SGP NCs and NSCs continued to support assiduously civil society involvement in global environmental issues. NCs assisted NGO and CBO project proponents to develop better and more targeted proposals, designing proposal formats and methodologies to encourage improvements, innovations, and access by communities. NSCs provided multi-faceted strategic guidance to country programmes coupled with the transparent and accountable selection of over 4300 projects across participating countries, with NGOs receiving 70 percent of SGP grants and CBOs and other CSOs 30 percent as in previous phases. The Third Independent Evaluation of the SGP (2003) found that: "The NSC has proved itself over a decade to be an effective permanent mechanism for project selection, policy guidance, and program promotion."

SGP partnerships and networks proliferated and public awareness of global environmental problems was heightened. SGP's partnership with the United Nations Foundation (UNF) in the Community Management of Protected Areas for Conservation project (COMPACT, 2000-present) essayed an approach that clustered community-based initiatives in specific, globally significant landscapes. COMPACT strengthened conceptual and practical approaches to community-level conservation and livelihoods in and around World Heritage Sites – which can be readily adapted for other protected areas and landscapes. This has contributed to greater public recognition of the ecological importance and cultural value of these sites (see the discussion of COMPACT in Chapter VII).

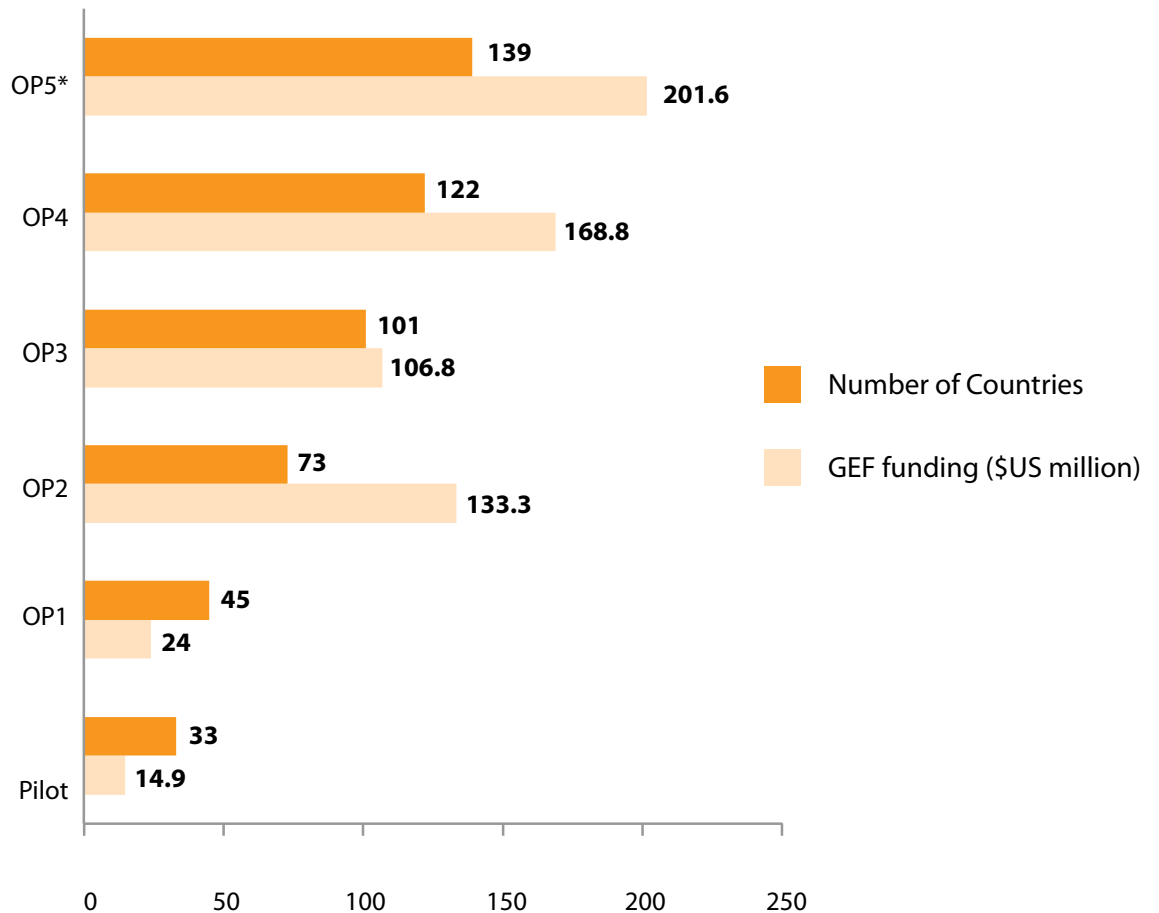
SGP's modality was adopted by the European Commission-funded and UNDP-managed Small Grants Programme for Operations to Promote Tropical Forests in Southeast Asia (SGP-PTF, 2000-2007), which built on SGP principles, practices, and learning. SGP regional partner Southeast Asian Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture executed the programme. Following SGP practice, decisions about approval of grants to NGOs and CBOs were taken by NSCs, and GEF SGP and SGP-PTF collaborated closely on the ground in supporting community-based sustainable forest management and forest governance.

SGP’s 10th anniversary publication, Hands-on Action for Sustainable Development, summed up the programme’s first decade:

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.’

The Third Independent Evaluation of the SGP (2003) also pointed to SGP’s critical value for the GEF in making the global environmental thematic accessible and meaningful to communities and localities worldwide: “In many countries SGP has become the permanent public face or even de facto ambassador of the GEF.”

**GEF SGP funding and participating countries**



\*Includes all expected new OP5 countries, current operating countries are over 125. This figure does not include closed country programmes, e.g., Lithuania and Poland. Funding figure is preliminary and includes upgraded countries.

## Expansion and programmatic consolidation (2005 – 2011)

In response to ongoing demand, especially from small island developing states (SIDS) and least developed countries (LDC), GEF SGP rapidly expanded to 101 countries in the third operational phase (2005-2007) and to 122 countries in the fourth operation phase (2007-2011). Concomitantly, the programme improved its ability to reach the poor or poorest communities, which received 72 percent of SGP projects, a significant gain from the 57 percent in the early phases. SGP also made a concerted effort to increase grant making directly to CBOs by strengthening community organizational and institutional capacities to implement projects. As a result, 39 percent of grants were awarded to CBOs (compared to 27 percent initially), 60 percent to NGOs, and the remaining one percent to other CSOs. In some countries, such as **Costa Rica**, there has been an even more striking shift – from 90 percent NGO grant recipients in the pilot phase to 90 percent CBO by the end of 2011.

Even as SGP nearly doubled in size and launched country programmes in many challenging country contexts, it continued to be a cost-effective instrument for the generation of global environmental and local benefits, a key finding of the Joint Evaluation of the Small Grants Programme (2008) (please see box below). Country programmes maintained transparent, credible, and accountable operations, with some 14,000 grants awarded, supervised, and monitored since 1992, in often quite difficult and demanding conditions. In 2009 and 2010, Deloitte & Touche LLP conducted a comprehensive independent audit of 78 SGP country programmes that found no significant financial or management issues. Despite many new country programmes and ones in quite challenging situations, the audit report remarked on the ability of almost all country programmes to stretch and efficiently apply limited resources: “A culture of thrift was noted amongst country programmes, whereby the allocated dollars, both for grants and administrative expenses, appeared to be tightly controlled.”



SGP Costa Rica



During its second decade, SGP consolidated thematic and programmatic approaches that would enhance impact in the GEF focal areas while contributing to sustainable livelihoods for local peoples. SGP country programmes replicated and scaled up promising community-level projects and leveraged both successes and failures to influence local and national policies. SGP country programmes made important advances in working with communities on the new GEF focal areas of land degradation and chemicals (persistent organic pollutants) while supporting innovations in biodiversity, climate change, and international waters. These included producing, certifying, and marketing biodiversity goods; scaling up renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies tested at the community level; introducing community-based adaptation to climate change (CBA) with funds from the GEF Strategic Priority for Adaptation and other donors; and supporting community contributions to international waters protection, for example, in the South China Sea and the Nile River Basin.

SGP COMPACT also expanded its reach to new globally significant protected landscapes and consolidated its proven and innovative methodological and programmatic models (see *COMPACT: Engaging Local Communities in Stewardship of Globally Significant Protected Areas*). SGP-PTF completed operations in **Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam** with a series of publications that analyzed and articulated important lessons learned and recommendations about community forest conservation, sustainable use, and forest management. Concerns about gender and indigenous peoples, always key elements of SGP's approach, took on renewed significance through specific guidance that was developed and applied globally and locally. In the following sections, SGP programmatic consolidation and innovation over the past decade will be examined in more detail. The programme's progress and accomplishments are captured in the conclusions of the latest SGP evaluation presented in the box below.



SGP Indonesia

### **SGP is a vital part of GEF: Conclusions of the Joint Evaluation of the Small Grants Programme (2008)**

The most recent global evaluation of SGP, conducted by the GEF and UNDP Evaluation Offices and published in 2008, confirmed the increasing success of the programme in supporting community-based initiatives that produce both global environmental benefits and local benefits for communities and the ecosystems upon which they depend. The GEF joint evaluation presented a series of conclusions to that effect:

#### **SGP has a slightly higher success rate in achieving global environmental benefits and a significantly higher rate in sustaining them than GEF medium- and full-size projects.**

The GEF joint evaluation found that 90 percent of SGP projects since programme inception were rated satisfactory, with benefits from 80 percent of the projects likely to be sustained into the future.

#### **SGP has contributed to numerous institutional reforms and policy changes in the recipient countries to address global environmental issues.**

The GEF joint evaluation found that the SGP emphasizes replicating, scaling up, and mainstreaming local community activities. The SGP contributes to local and national policy formulation and implementation, links communities with wider markets, and serves as an incubator of ideas and technologies that are subsequently adopted by other communities and organizations.

#### **SGP has contributed to direct global environmental benefits while also addressing the livelihood needs of local populations.**

The GEF joint evaluation found that SGP country programs are generating substantial global environmental benefits in five GEF focal areas – biodiversity, climate change, international waters, land degradation, persistent organic pollutants – while affording considerable local benefits to communities.

#### **SGP has made significant progress in targeting its efforts to help the poor.**

The GEF joint evaluation found that since SGP inception, 60 percent of its projects overall have directly or indirectly targeted the poor or the poorest, and that the proportion has grown over time – 57 percent in the pilot phase and OP1, 55 percent in OP2, and 72 percent in OP3.

#### **SGP country programs, especially the older ones, are effective in promoting the GEF agenda.**

The GEF joint evaluation found that especially more mature country programmes had the capacity to substantially influence national policies, while all country programmes were involved with policies at the local level. The SGP's effectiveness in promoting the GEF agenda can be attributed to its decentralized structure, transparency in decision-making, and continued presence in the participating countries.

#### **All country programs reviewed had interaction with other GEF projects.**

This GEF joint evaluation conclusion represents a significant improvement over the 53 percent rating reported in a 1998 study that surveyed operational and advisory links between SGP and GEF projects. SGP projects are aligned with the objectives of larger GEF projects, and SGP project outcomes can be scaled up or mainstreamed into medium-sized or full-sized GEF projects. SGP can also contribute to the design and implement components of larger GEF projects.

#### **SGP is a cost-effective instrument for the GEF to generate global environmental benefits through NGOs and community-based organizations.**

The GEF joint evaluation came to this conclusion based on an analysis of management costs, co-financing, comparison with small grants components of larger GEF projects, project life cycle, and project grant efficiency.

The Small Grants Programme has proven over time to be extremely successful in engaging community organizations and civil society organizations that would otherwise not have had access to some seed money to allow them to engage in activities that do a number of things. Of course, the one we are the most interested in is achieving global environmental benefits because that is the mandate of the GEF. In fact, it goes much beyond that and helps communities improve their standard of living and to find other means to improve their living conditions. This is very beneficial because it promotes development, social inclusion, and better understanding of the relationship between people and their environments – and how they can gain local improvements by working on issues of global relevance. Indeed, SGP is valuable for the GEF and it has been recognized as such. It is the only programme that has a new cycle at every replenishment. At every replenishment, the GEF Council has increased the size of the core fund and new countries have been able to start participating. Everybody is in agreement that SGP should continue and grow. From all of these points of view, SGP has been an important programme for the GEF, continues to be so, and we support it strongly.

Mr. William Ehlers  
Team Leader, External Affairs, GEF Secretariat

### Towards the Future (2011 onwards)

GEF SGP has now begun the fifth operational phase (2011-2014) as it embarks on its third decade.

In this phase SGP is leveraging the experiments, experiences, and achievements of the past two decades to further explore innovative and improved responses to the great variety of evolving needs at local and country levels. The aim is to mainstream the generation of global environmental benefits into local and national sustainable development practice. SGP, in particular through mature country programmes, is further strengthening its delivery mechanism which provides small grants to NGOs and CBOs. It intends to become more effective and responsive in meeting local needs and national priorities and supporting the achievement of global environmental benefits.

SGP grants continue to support targeted community-based interventions in the five GEF focal areas with the emphasis on:

- Sustainability of protected areas and indigenous and community conservation areas and territories (ICCAs)
- Sustainable biodiversity-based production
- Low carbon, climate resilient technologies
- Sustainable management of carbon stocks with linkages to community-based REDD+ initiatives
- Community-based adaptation and disaster risk reduction
- Sustainable land management
- Transboundary water body management
- Community phase-out of POPs and other toxic chemicals



- Increasing local benefits generated from environmental resources
- Mainstreaming gender considerations in community-based environmental initiatives

SGP is also supporting interventions in two new GEF multi-focal areas: capacity development and sustainable forest management.

At the same time, SGP seeks to expand partnerships with other initiatives and programmes with a two-fold objective: to direct resources effectively and efficiently to grassroots stakeholders, and to infuse socioeconomic development projects and programmes with environmental considerations, thus forging a truly sustainable development approach. Strategic projects that extend community-based efforts to achieve sub-national and national level impacts have been incorporated into SGP support options. A global framework for knowledge management and sharing lessons has been launched, thereby providing a platform for communities and local CSOs to be more actively involved in global environmental governance.

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**I have seen this programme in the field and I must say this is a very, very vibrant programme. The involvement and the enthusiasm are there and that is what is taking it forward.**

Mr. Hem Pande  
Joint Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests, and GEF OFP, India

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**III. PROJECT PORTFOLIO AT A GLANCE**



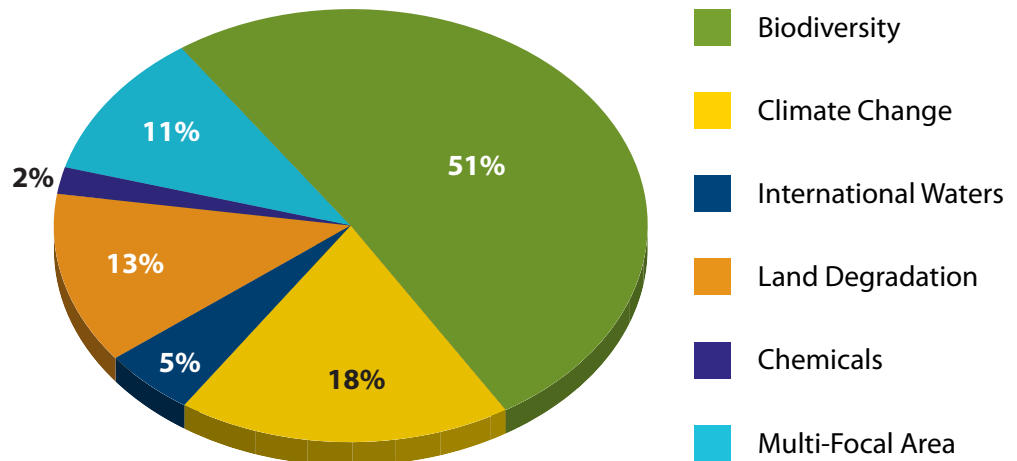
## PROJECT PORTFOLIO AT A GLANCE

GEF SGP's global project portfolio comprises over 14,500 grants awarded since 1992 across more than 125 participating countries in five GEF focal areas: biodiversity, climate change, international waters, chemicals, and land degradation. The portfolio also includes multi-focal area projects that incorporate two or more focal areas and, most recently, community-based adaptation to climate change activities funded by the GEF Strategic Priority for Adaptation and other donors. SGP projects follow the guidance of the conventions for which GEF is a financial mechanism as well as other MEAs.

The extraordinary breadth and depth of the portfolio are bound by project adherence to GEF focal area priorities and SGP commitment to furthering sustainable livelihoods and attaining other sustainable development benefits.

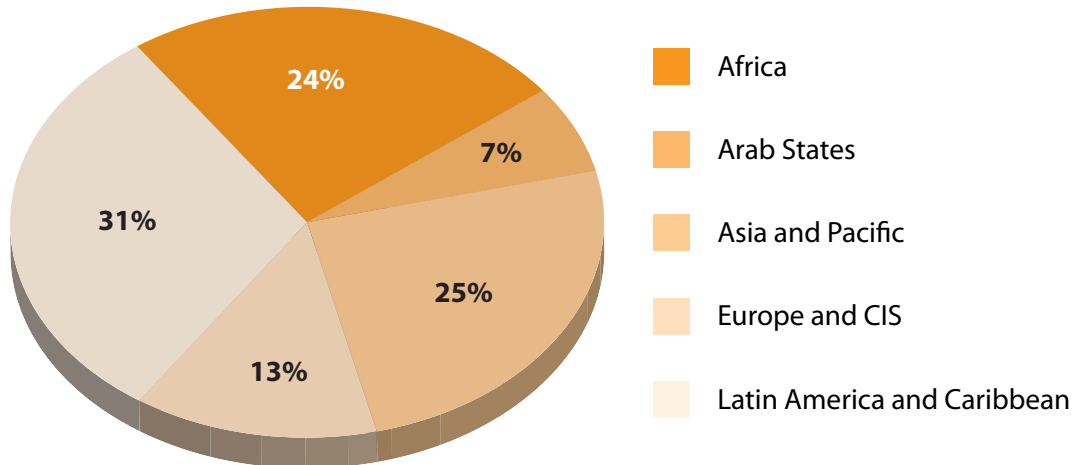
Biodiversity has historically been the major preoccupation of communities and country programmes across the globe, comprising slightly more than half of the overall portfolio. However, the share of biodiversity projects has declined over time, from nearly three-quarters of the portfolio in the pilot phase to less than half in the most recent phase, as new focal areas were introduced and the capacity of SGP stakeholders to design targeted interventions in different focal areas increased. Grants on climate change mitigation and increasing the resilience of communities and ecosystems to climate impacts have constituted the second largest area, with about 20 percent of the portfolio, followed by land degradation and multi-focal area projects. International waters and chemicals projects have had smaller but consistent shares.

**SGP global project portfolio (1992-2012)**



The majority of SGP grants have been awarded in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean, reflecting the magnitude of the regions and the large number of country programmes they contain. Africa and Asia and the Pacific each cover about a quarter of the global portfolio, while Latin America and the Caribbean a little more than 30 percent, due to a greater number of mature country programmes that have been operational since the pilot phase and consequently have relatively more projects. Arab States and Europe and CIS are the smallest regions, both in number of country programmes and of total projects.

### Regional distribution of SGP grants (1992-2012)



### Biodiversity

GEF SGP biodiversity grant making is in line with the three overarching objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), for which GEF is the financial mechanism: the conservation, sustainable use, and equitable sharing of benefits of biodiversity. SGP projects demonstrate the viability of indigenous, local, and improved practices for the conservation and sustainable use of ecosystems and natural resources. They promote the stewardship by communities and indigenous groups of ecosystems, species, and conservation landscapes, including in and around formal protected areas as well as indigenous and community conserved areas and territories (ICCAs).<sup>5</sup> They also support the sustainable transformation of biodiversity within an equitable, sustainable livelihoods framework.

<sup>5</sup> ICCAs are natural and modified ecosystems containing significant biodiversity, ecological services, and cultural value, voluntarily conserved by indigenous peoples and local communities through customary law and practice. ICCAs and their contribution to biodiversity conservation are recognized in the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas as legitimate conservation sites that deserve support and inclusion in national and international systems. SGP, along with the CBD Secretariat, IUCN, UNEP, and others, has been a key supporter of the ICCA Consortium, an international association dedicated to promoting the appropriate recognition and support to ICCAs. For more information, please consult: <http://www.iccaforum.org>.



SGP biodiversity projects have contributed to:

- Community-based conservation of terrestrial and marine protected areas, including WHS
- Reduction of threats to endangered ecosystems and species, including control of invasive species
- Sustainable management and conservation of ICCAs and community forests
- Restoration and protection of agrobiodiversity, i.e., native crops, landraces, and seed banks
- Recovery, documentation, and recognition of indigenous and local biodiversity knowledge and practices
- Community biodiversity enterprises, such as production of biodiversity goods, apiculture, and ecotourism



SGP Jordan

## Climate change

GEF SGP grant making in the climate change focal area is consistent with the guidance of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), for which GEF is a financial mechanism. The goal is to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by promoting renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable transport at the community level and removing the technical, financial, capacity, and policy barriers to their development, deployment, and dissemination. SGP climate change interventions also strengthen the resilience of communities and ecosystems to severe climate events and variability.

SGP-supported NGO and CBO climate change actions have contributed to:

- Local and national renewable energy and energy efficiency policies
- Community financial mechanisms for affordable and cost-effective renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies
- Technology transfer for adopting low carbon technologies at the community level
- Adoption of renewable energy technologies, such as solar panels, solar heaters, micro hydro-power plants, and biomass generators
- Adoption of energy-efficient technologies for houses, buildings, and industry, including fuel wood-efficient stoves
- Local sustainable transport initiatives promoting mass transit, non-motorized transport – e.g., healthier and safer walking and cycling – emissions monitoring and reduction, and liquid biofuels





## International waters

In the international waters focal area, GEF SGP supports community-based efforts to restore and protect international waters through integrated water resources management and integrated coastal management on a local scale. SGP also supports through community level work the implementation of regional Strategic Action Programmes (SAP) by GEF projects in the East Asian Seas, South China Sea, the Pacific, and the Nile River and Niger River basins.

SGP grants for international waters projects have contributed to:

- Prevention or reduction of transboundary water pollution
- Reforestation and restoration of water catchment areas
- Fresh water conservation and efficient water use
- Sustainable management of coastal habitats
- Restoration and sustainable management of fisheries
- Rehabilitation of critical ecosystems such as coral reefs, mangroves, and sea grasses

## Land degradation

The focus of GEF SGP's land degradation portfolio is on sustainable land management, sustainable forestry management, and food security, in line with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), for which GEF is a financial mechanism. The portfolio covers sustainable agriculture, forestry, and pastoralism, among other practices that address degradation of agricultural, range, and forest landscapes by introducing new techniques, conserving soils, and improving productivity. SGP projects aim to link indigenous and scientific knowledge with proven traditional and current practices.

SGP community-based land degradation projects have contributed to:

- Sustainable agricultural practices, such as crop diversification and rotation, improved tillage, and soil and water conservation measures
- Sustainable forestry practices, such as reforestation and rehabilitation of degraded forests, agroforestry, and community forestry
- Sustainable grazing practices, such as strengthening traditional rangelands management, improving livestock management, and alternative livelihoods for pastoralists in overgrazed areas
- Community watershed management, water harvesting, and micro irrigation systems
- Fire control and management
- Protection of oasis ecosystems and stabilization of dunes in desert environments

## Chemicals

The chemicals focal area supports the implementation of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). It does so by raising public awareness about the harmful environmental and health consequences of POPs, building local capacity to mitigate and clean up chemical contamination, and developing and applying effective community-based techniques to prevent, reduce, and phase out POPs.

GEF SGP chemicals projects have contributed to:

- Preparation of National Implementation Plans for the Stockholm Convention
- Capacity to manage, reduce, and eliminate POPs through the POPs training module (<http://www.sgp-pops.org>)
- Local and national awareness of POPs through informational campaigns and the media
- Integrated pest management and organic farming to reduce and eliminate chemical fertilizers and pesticides
- Reduction and elimination of toxic chemicals used in small industry and mining
- Prevention of open burning of solid waste, such as plastics, rubber tires, and medical waste, and restoration of degraded landscapes



SGP funds have really helped as a bridge that has enabled us to cross from environmental deprivation and poverty to sustainable development. SGP has facilitated networks among grantees that are in the same geographical area and beyond and this has provided opportunities for learning from each other, improved project delivery, and enhanced project success. This has been strengthened through conducting “look and learn” tours among grantees. GEF SGP stakeholder workshops have helped to build capacity to manage our projects and as a platform for networking.

SGP has provided lots of information on its thematic areas and has raised awareness on the global environmental challenges. Through the SGP project, our knowledge on environmental issues has been strengthened. For instance our project called Two By Two, that is dealing with waste management, has benefited in acquiring knowledge on POPs/chemicals, the effects of burning waste, and the benefits of proper waste management.

Through SGP we have been empowered to manage our own destiny and we are no longer dependents but drivers of development.

Mr. Otto Billy  
Conservation Society of Monavale (COSMO), grantee, Zimbabwe



SGP Maldives



## Community-based adaptation

GEF SGP community-based adaptation (CBA) projects increase the ability of local communities to adapt to the numerous and varied effects of climate change, and to improve their resilience as well as that of the ecosystems and natural resources upon which they depend.

Since 2008, SGP has been efficiently delivering community-based adaptation projects for a range of donors and institutions, including:

- Strategic Priority on Adaption Community-Based Adaption Project (funded by GEF, implemented by UNDP, in partnership with UNV, with additional support from the governments of Japan, Switzerland, and AusAid)
- Mekong-Asia Pacific Community-Based Adaptation Project (funded by AusAid), implemented in 20 countries
- Small Island Developing States Community-Based Adaption Project (funded by AusAid), which covers virtually all eligible SIDS
- African Adaption Programme (funded by the government of Japan, implemented by UNDP) working in partnership with SGP in 3 countries

SGP CBA projects have contributed to:

- Testing and validating community-based risk and vulnerability assessment methods
- Building capacity of project proponents to understand the long-term impacts of climate change
- Strengthening skills of CSOs, local practitioners, and government ministries in CBA
- Understanding the key role of volunteers in implementing adaptation measures at the community level
- Building the resilience of communities, ecosystems, and resource-dependant livelihoods, including preparation and implementation of disaster risk management plans
- Replication of successful community practices and integration of lessons into national and sub-national policies







**IV. STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE**





## STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

GEF SGP's structure is designed to provide programmatic and operational consistency at the global level across participating countries while allowing for maximum ownership, flexibility, and participation at the national and local levels.

### Global coordination



Like all GEF programmes and projects, SGP is mandated and its funding replenishments approved by the governing GEF Council, which represents through 32 constituencies the 182 member countries of the GEF. GEF considers SGP to be a corporate programme with the specific mandate to support civil society organizations (CSOs) in participating countries. At the global level, the SGP Steering Committee, composed of representatives from the GEF Agencies and chaired by the GEF CEO, provides overall guidance and direction to the programme. SGP is implemented by UNDP on behalf of the GEF Agencies.<sup>6</sup> The UNDP GEF unit at UNDP headquarters in New York has fiduciary oversight for all of its GEF activities, including SGP, and the UNDP GEF Executive Coordinator and Deputy Executive Coordinator are accountable to UNDP and to the GEF Council for the use of GEF resources. A Central Programme Management Team (CPMT) supervises and manages the SGP global programme. As executing agency, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) provides administrative, financial, legal, operational, and procurement services. CPMT works closely with UNOPS to facilitate the work of SGP country programme teams.

### **Central Programme Management Team**

A streamlined CPMT at UNDP headquarters provides global oversight to SGP's global operations and decentralized country programmes. CPMT comprises a Global Manager, a Deputy Global Manager, Programme Advisors on the GEF focal areas, a Programme Specialist for knowledge management, and 2 Programme Associates. Together they provide global supervision and day-to-day programmatic and operational guidance to over 125 participating countries, as well as preparing and launching country programmes in new countries. CPMT developed and regularly updates a set of Operational Guidelines that govern SGP global and country operations, outlining in detail standard practices and assuring consistency and accountability at all levels of the programme.

<sup>6</sup> The ten GEF Agencies are: Asian Development Bank, African Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Inter-American Development Bank, International Fund for Agricultural Development, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, World Bank.

In consultation with the country programmes, CPMT prepares the global SGP project document for an operational phase. After GEF Council approval and GEF CEO endorsement, the project document guides the programme in terms of strategic priorities and outcomes and serves as the basis for developing country programme strategies.

The SGP Global Manager and Deputy Global Manager are responsible for overall SGP management, strategic direction, and policy development. CPMT staff are responsible for regional coordination and support country programmes on substantive and technical matters related to focal areas and thematic directions, capacity and partnership development, knowledge management and communications, and monitoring and evaluation. CPMT also reviews and approves country programme strategies and annual reports. As such, CPMT ensures consistent results across more than 125 participating countries and can thus report in a globally coherent manner to the GEF Council and to SGP's civil society constituencies.

CPMT is responsible for resource mobilization at the global level and advising country programmes on their own resource mobilization efforts. As such, CPMT is actively involved in global dialogues and sharing SGP models, innovations, and lessons learned. Creating and sustaining links with regional and global networks related to focal area themes thus are also important CPMT activities.

## National and local ownership

At the national and local levels, GEF SGP operates in a decentralized and country-driven manner through a voluntary National Steering Committee (NSC) and country programme teams composed of a National Coordinator (NC) and, in most cases, a Programme Assistant (PA). SGP country programmes are hosted primarily by UNDP Country Offices, but also by national host institutions (NHI).



China has been facing complicated environmental and development challenges. SGP comes to China at a critical time to support hundreds of growing CSOs in addressing biodiversity, climate change, land degradation, chemical pollution, and transboundary water issues in a bottom-up manner. It reaches the most vulnerable people in areas not easily reached by the large conservation and development projects to solve the conflicts between development and conservation on the ground. Beyond a financial mechanism, SGP also serves as a nurturing center for the CSOs and local communities to develop their capacities for sustainable livelihoods and sound resources management. SGP also provides a platform for CSOs, local communities and other stakeholders to share experiences and lessons learned, to build partnerships, to exchange information, to support each other and to feel that they are part of meaningful work. With small grants, SGP has leveraged additional resources to achieve its goals and has generated profound and wide impact in China. The acknowledgement SGP has received from government and other stakeholders will undoubtedly inspire this programme to perform even better in China.

The NSC members come from very diverse backgrounds and contribute their expertise, leadership, insights, experiences, and passion to SGP since the commencement of the programme in China, which guarantees that SGP fits into the country's unique context and benefits the most needy. With its transparent and impartial process, cost-effective management, and voluntary dedication of its members, the NSC serves as a bond between government agencies and CSOs, local communities, as well as other stakeholders to ensure comprehensive participation in environmental protection and natural resources management in China.

Ms. Ye Jiandi

Division Director of Ministry of Finance and GEF OFP, SGP NSC member, China

### ***National Steering Committees***

The heart of SGP's governance structure is the voluntary, multi-stakeholder NSC with a nongovernmental majority. The formation of a nongovernmental majority NSC is the basic requirement for the establishment of a SGP country programme. It allows SGP to fulfill its fundamental mandate to build civil society capacity and to allow full opportunity for civil society to take leadership responsibility. In this way, civil society organizations can be properly represented in a committee that promotes balanced dialogue and consensus decision-making with government counterparts. The NSC exemplifies the country-driven approach by bringing together stakeholders in a process in which both government and civil society agree to work together. Its formation may be considered the first successful outcome of an SGP country programme.

NSC roles and responsibilities are discussed at length in the SGP Operational Guidelines. In keeping with this guidance, each country programme develops in a consultative manner specific NSC terms of reference that are suitable for that particular country context.



NSC nongovernmental members are identified and selected in a consultative process facilitated by the NC and involving the country's CSO community, with the UNDP Resident Representative (RR) assisting in short listing candidates for balanced representation. Selected government ministries and agencies are invited to nominate their representatives. CPMT reviews and approves NSC composition as a means of quality assurance, considering once again the expertise and attributes of individual members and the overall breadth and balance of the committee.

NSC members usually serve 3-year terms that may be renewed as appropriate. Rotation among members is intended to promote transparency and accountability, while renewal makes it possible to keep members who are particularly active and helpful and to ensure the continuity of institutional memory.

NSC membership aims for broad geographic and cross-sectoral coverage of the GEF focal areas, as well as providing substantive expertise on gender, indigenous peoples, and other areas of interest. NSC members typically are influential and accomplished people representing relevant ministries, including the GEF Operational Focal Point (OFP), heads of academic and scientific institutions, the private sector, NGOs, and other civil society organizations. The UNDP RR, or designated focal point, participates in the NSC as does the NHI director. Others, who in an individual capacity can make a significant contribution, also serve on the NSC.

NSC members are expected to have the stature and authority to make decisions on behalf of their institutions, and to have strong, credible, and transparent track records. NSC member organizations cannot access SGP grant funds. It is expected that NSC members will act with utmost impartiality and objectivity in reviewing and approving grant proposals and that they will provide strategic guidance to the programme that is free of bias and undue influence.

The NSC provides overall guidance and direction to the country programme. It reviews, selects, and approves all SGP grants. It also contributes to developing and implementing strategies for country programme sustainability. NSCs, together with NCs and expert SGP stakeholders, develop and apply country programme strategies. NSC members participate in project site visits, when feasible, and contribute to monitoring individual projects as well as general programme progress. NSC deliberations are documented in minutes and decisions are taken by consensus. Across participating countries NSCs provide, in the collective statement of the **Jordan** NSC, "a quality assurance function, ensuring transparency in decision-making and contributing to credible results."

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**The National Steering Committee allowed the SGP to have an optimal mechanism for the transparent selection of projects and for the strategic orientation of the programme. It reached an exceptional level of national appropriation of the SGP – NSC members visit SGP projects on their own initiative. In association with the NC, the NSC designed a strategy, which is based on geographical and thematic concentration, the networking of projects, the consolidation of SGP projects that have been completed and assessed, the programme approach (COMPACT example), and exchanges among projects.**

Dr. Assane Goudiaby  
Institute of Environmental Sciences, Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar,  
SGP NSC member, Senegal

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SGP Cambodia

Over two decades, the NSC has proven to be unparalleled as an optimal and transparent instrument for strategic guidance, project selection, and access to partners and resources to further GEF and SGP mandates in every possible country context. Through their manifold contacts and resources, NSCs are indispensable for building SGP partnerships and capacities, influencing policies, and raising co-financing. In turn, NSC members have also benefited from SGP capacity development, diverse partnerships, and in-depth exposure to global environmental and sustainable development issues.

Global SGP evaluations have remarked on the exceptional quality of the individuals who sit on the NSC and its enduring viability as a voluntary, multi-stakeholder, and majority nongovernmental body. The Third Independent Evaluation of the SGP (2003) underscored the invaluable role of the NSC:

NSC members, often influential figures and decision makers, have become active lobbyists and ambassadors for global environmental issues...The NSC has proved itself over a decade to be an effective permanent mechanism for project selection, policy guidance and program promotion, while making considerable demands on the committee members. The technical capacity of most NSCs has broadened and deepened impressively over time as the SGP has matured and GEF Operational Programs have expanded. NSC members are making an extraordinary contribution that has no equivalent in the GEF family.

### **Country programme teams**

SGP country programme teams are headed by a National Coordinator (NC), often supported by a Programme Assistant (PA). The SGP NC has lead responsibility for managing country programme implementation, with the assistance of the PA, and for ensuring that grants and projects meet GEF and SGP criteria. Voluntary contributions by interns, university students, researchers, and other partners allow such lean country teams to accomplish necessary tasks, especially provision of technical assistance to grantees and participatory monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

NCs engage with partners from the grassroots to the highest levels of government, and are subject to requests for assistance and cooperation from many quarters. NCs are expected to implement the decisions of the multi-sectoral National Steering Committee and follow UNDP CO guidance on administrative and finance matters. It is important to note that NCs and PAs have UN contracts that confer neutrality, are compensated through SGP global core funds, and are considered direct staff of and report to the Global Manager. As such, any potential undue pressure from local parties is buffered and readily deflected. The NC's major tasks include:

- Ensuring broad and open CSO access to the programme
- Preparing the country programme strategy, together with the NSC and SGP stakeholders, that responds to local, national, and global priorities
- Based on global guidance, developing project proposal and reporting formats that are adapted to local conditions
- Launching calls for proposals and managing their influx
- Assisting NGOs and CBOs in preparation of project proposals
- Facilitating capacity development for potential project proponents, grantees, and other stakeholders through peer-to-peer learning, site visits, training workshops, knowledge fairs, etc.
- Conducting rigorous programme monitoring and evaluation through constant interaction with grantees (current and former), periodic project site visits, and updating the SGP global database
- Mobilizing partners and resources, including liaising with SGP's civil society constituencies, local and national government, academic and research institutions, and national and international donors
- Developing and communicating SGP information and knowledge (e.g., lessons learned, case studies, audiovisual documentation)
- Serving as ex officio secretariat for the NSC and convening NSC meetings
- Reporting to the national and global levels

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**The SGP works with local NGOs and CBOs on projects that deliver global environmental benefits as well as help alleviate extreme poverty among rural folks. Almost all the projects have capacity building components as well as alternative livelihood programmes that enhance the living standards of the participants. Many of the project proposals that are received by SGP from NGOs and CBOs set targets that appear to be unrealistic when viewed against the proposed time frames. The NSC has ensured that the targets set by project proponents are achievable by critically reviewing all the proposals. Thus there has been a very high level of efficiency in the operations of the SGP, which has culminated in its great success.**

Dr. James Adomako  
Department of Botany, University of Ghana and SGP NSC member, Ghana

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This is clearly a demanding set of activities that requires unusual dedication and commitment – a fact underscored in the pilot phase evaluation which pointed to the very real potential for national coordinator burn-out given an often overwhelming workload. Yet the NC's role is intrinsic to SGP operations, as highlighted by the Third Independent Evaluation of the SGP (2003): “The competence and energy of the individual selected as NC stands out as the single most important factor determining the effectiveness of the country program and the quality of the grant portfolio. The NCs personify the SGP in every country.”

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Participation in the NSC helped build the capacity of its members, including representatives of state institutions, to review and evaluate in the field projects for environmental protection, biodiversity conservation, and good agricultural practices. This is of key importance for Bulgaria which was challenged to absorb substantial EU funds. NSC served as a venue for building partnerships among stakeholders – state institutions, local authorities, NGOs, and the scientific community. We believe together we managed to select the best 108 proposals of over 290 submitted ideas. This is an excellent example of bringing professionals together to work voluntarily for a common cause – global environmental benefits via local actions.

SGP achieves results with a friendly approach to grantees. The programme has easily understandable guidance and a non-discriminatory process of project approval. Among the unique aspects of SGP is supporting community-based organizations to develop and implement projects – something that is allowed under few donor programmes. The entire SGP Country Programme Strategy is adapted to country conditions and was consulted with different local stakeholder groups.

Ms. Veselka Ignatova  
Ministry of Agriculture, former member of SGP NSC, Bulgaria

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### **UNDP Country Offices**

UNDP Country Offices (CO) host most country programmes, through an institutional agreement with UNOPS, and provide management and operational support, particularly on administrative and finance matters. The UNDP Resident Representative (RR), or delegated focal point, participates in the NSC and contributes to monitoring programme activities, facilitates interaction with the government, and provides linkages with other in-country financial and technical resources. Once the NSC approves a project proposal, the UNDP RR, on behalf of SGP, signs the Memorandum of Agreement with the grantee. UNDP staff work with SGP and provide advice, for example, on environmental, sustainable development, local governance, and gender issues. In some cases, UNDP COs facilitate linkages to other programmes and agencies and, in quite a number of cases, contribute additional financial resources and technical support.

## Perspectives from UNDP

SGP is really doing integrated sustainable development, putting the face on development, by paying substantial attention to social inclusion, community well being, social justice, local economic benefits, local governance, as well as local-to-global environmental linkages. So SGP exemplifies the true meaning of sustainable development, the original Rio meaning of sustainable development, which was the three pillars – social, economic, and environmental.

*Ms. Susan McDade, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, Uruguay*

A recent UN report identified Eastern Europe and Central Asia as the only region of the world to see a large decline in carbon emissions over the past 20 years, while also experiencing the greatest increase in income inequality. I consider SGP as one of the tools that can help stabilize this inequality, by creating green jobs with stable economic income for the countries in this region. Therefore, SGP is highly relevant in this region, for both low- and middle-income countries. The exchange of information and knowledge is always both ways, from less developed to more developed and vice versa. And each country can benefit.

*Mr. Jens Wandel, Deputy Director, UNDP Bratislava Regional Center*

The significance of SGP in China is that it is probably the biggest (if not the only) NGO grant making mechanism officially recognized by the government of China – yet (unlike other mechanisms) it is not run solely by a ministry. In this case the NSC is unique, with a ministry being just one more voice in a steering committee with CSOs present. This is an expression of confidence and openness on the part of the government, particularly the Ministry of Finance. In a real sense the SGP represents another milestone in the history of NGOs in China. The NGOs of China started predominantly in the environmental field – post Rio. To see an institutional mechanism that brings government and NGOs together is indeed progress.

*Mr. Napoleon Navarro, UNDP Deputy Country Director, China*

## National host institutions

A nongovernmental national host institution (NHI) hosts the country programme in place of the UNDP CO in a limited number of countries, and shares the responsibility for SGP implementation with the NC and NSC. Like the UNDP RR, the NHI director participates in the NSC. NHIs are not eligible to apply for SGP grants.

Historically, NHI hosting arrangements are discussed and agreed with stakeholders during country programme start-up missions, and are negotiated according to criteria that are delineated in the Operational Guidelines. For example, this has been the case in the process of setting up new country programmes in SIDS in recent years where NHIs were selected and established through a consultative process.

Country	National Host Institution
Bahamas	Sojourner-Douglass College
Brazil	Instituto Sociedade, População e Natureza (ISPN)
Cook Islands	Cook Islands National Council of Women (CINCW)
Dominica	Archbold Tropical Research & Education Center (ATREC)
Egypt	Arab Office for Youth and Environment (AOYE)
India	Centre for Environment Education (CEE)
Indonesia	Yayasan Bina Usaha Lingkungan (YBUL)
Jamaica	Environmental Foundation of Jamaica (EFJ)
Jordan	Jordan Royal Ecological Diving Society (JREDS)
Micronesia	Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT)
Namibia	Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF)
Tonga	Civil Society Forum of Tonga (CSFT)
Tunisia	Audit Environmental
Tuvalu	Tuvalu Association of NGOs (TANGO)
Vanuatu	Vanuatu Association of NGOS (VANGO)
Zambia	Keepers Zambia Foundation (KZF)

In most countries, UNDP is preferred by civil society and government stakeholders as a neutral and impartial entity that is immune to rivalries and conflicts, such as those that may occur among the NGO community and between NGOs and government. However, as country programmes mature, in line with its mandate to support and strengthen civil society capacities, SGP may transfer country programme hosting from UNDP COs to suitable NHIs, such as well-known and respected national NGOs, environmental trust funds, or research institutions. Actual experience has shown that the NHI modality is a boon for the hosting organizations – promoting access to partnerships, networks, resources, and knowledge, and facilitating engagement with other CSOs and government – as well as for deepening links between SGP and civil society in participating countries.



Due to our role as NHI of SGP Brazil, we were able to learn and understand deeply the reality of local communities in the Cerrado, and then develop an efficient strategy to help conserve biodiversity while improving livelihoods. The SGP is the heart of ISPN's work. Based on this experience, we develop advocacy actions to influence policy-making and knowledge management to mainstream SGP lessons learned. SGP Brazil was the first programme to focus efforts in the Cerrado biome, which is, at the same time, the most biodiverse savanna in the world and an extremely threatened ecosystem in Brazil. After SGP efforts, many other initiatives started to emerge. The most remarkable ones are: design of the GEF Cerrado, a full-size project still under implementation; the inclusion of the Cerrado in the Brazilian voluntary goals for reducing greenhouse emission in 2010; and the recent plan for monitoring Cerrado deforestation. It is easy to connect this progress with SGP's results after 15 years in Brazil. It acts to improve civil society organizations, as well as support and broadcast solutions involving innovative approaches for generating income and conserving nature through the sustainable use of natural resources.

Mr. Fabio Vaz Ribeiro de Almeida  
Executive Coordinator, ISPN - Instituto Sociedade, População e Natureza,  
SGP National Host Institution, Brazil



SGP Brazil Photo: Peter Caton

SGP improves the profile of the NHI. Over the four years that KZF has been NHI, its recognition by government and other development players (local and international) has increased tremendously.

Hosting SGP builds the capacity of the NHI. Through the support rendered to the SGP country team, KZF's capacity to coordinate the programme has improved. In addition, the awareness created about environmental issues around the country is very enriching to KZF.

Through interaction with CBOs and other NGOs, KZF benefits from establishing productive networks among civil society participants. KZF can build on these networks to enhance its participation in addressing environmental challenges in the country.

Experience has shown that while there are numerous environmental concerns in the country, there are equally many ideas to address them. However, funding is a challenge to most of those that would like to offer practical solutions. The fact that SGP operates at the grassroots with rural communities means that immediate tangible benefits can be seen and felt by the people. The SGP therefore provides a good opportunity for everyone to learn from the small things that are happening at the grassroots. Bigger interventions also have a lot to learn from the results of the SGP on the ground.

Mr. John Msimuko, Executive Director, Keepers Zambia Foundation (KZF), SGP National Host Institution, Zambia



SGP Uzbekistan

### **Country programme strategies**

The country programme strategy (CPS) guides programme implementation and grant making in each participating country. Prepared by the NSC and NC, in consultation with SGP stakeholders and national experts, and approved by CPMT, the CPS allows for thorough consideration of national sustainable development priorities and their relationship to the GEF focal areas. It ensures that each grant will emerge from the needs of communities and local peoples while responding to national priorities and furthering the GEF mandate. In many countries, community partners and grantees participate in the strategy formulation. In all countries, CPS follow a global template, adapting it to national and local realities and incorporating critical considerations for working towards sustainable development goals and for meeting key environmental, economic, and social challenges involving poverty, gender, and indigenous peoples.

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**The Directorate General for the Environment considers SGP a crucial partner in the government's strategy for involving civil society in overall environmental management in the country because we have no ambition to be (as an institution) the only ones to address the management of the sector. The work of SGP over the past years has proved very important for increasing public awareness and strengthening the motivations and contributions of civil society organizations to environmental management. Further, the priority areas of the SGP are aligned with the priorities established in strategic country documents, such as the National Environment Action Plan, the National Action Plan to Combat Desertification, and the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.**

*Mr. Moisés Borges, General Director of Environment, Ministry of Environment, Housing and Territorial Planning and GEF OFF, Cape Verde*

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In formulating a CPS, the country programme team is obliged to identify the baseline for SGP interventions and define thematic, geographic, and/or programmatic foci. The application of the CPS helps the country programme to allocate resources and deliver and report on a suite of sustainable development actions that meet local, national, and global requirements and produce tangible results. CPS include a monitoring and evaluation plan with outcomes and indicators to facilitate tracking programme progress and reporting on results, and also address knowledge management and communications.

The CPS is a public document and is widely available in electronic and printed forms. Its participatory development and deployment assist countries to fulfill their obligations under the biodiversity, climate change, desertification, and POPs conventions, for which GEF serves as a financial mechanism, as well as other multi-lateral environmental agreements (MEAs), while providing opportunities to achieve relevant Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).



## Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are processes that are essential to GEF SGP's global and country programme structure. M&E at the global level allows CPMT to capture lessons from the implementation of programmatic strategies as well as individual projects and apply them in the formulation or reformulation of guidance documents and day-to-day advice to country programmes. SGP maintains a comprehensive global project database, including a results-based management system with indicators for each GEF focal area and SGP sustainable development priority. Based on global M&E, CPMT prepares periodic portfolio reviews and case studies for both internal and external consumption, as well as reports to the GEF and other donors.

At the national level, SGP country teams enter detailed information on all projects into the SGP database, with periodic updates on project progress and results. The NC also prepares an annual report assessing overall programme performance that complements the information in the database.

As mentioned, CPS contain an M&E plan for the country programme; similarly, all project proposals include an M&E plan with appropriate indicators that are designed and applied by participants. Participatory M&E is conducted at the project level to keep participants abreast of project progress and alert them to any shortfalls; it also generates information and reports that are reviewed by NCs and against which funding disbursements are made. Country programmes support participatory M&E by holding training workshops and strengthening the capacity of grantees on specific themes and tools. NCs undertake monitoring visits to each project, which help to track project progress, address any problems, and take corrective action as necessary.

Project site visits by NCs and NSC members are the foundation of the close relationship between SGP and its project partners that generally endures well beyond the end of the project. The interaction between country programmes and grantees during project preparation and implementation is the wellspring for the partnerships and networks that are central to SGP's approach and allow the programme to undertake many critical tasks and collaborative efforts beyond grant making.

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**It was a great pleasure and a remarkable event that our project was selected and sponsored by SGP during 2010-2011. As one of the thousands of grassroots NGOs in China, we would say SGP not only provides the financing to these projects; more importantly, SGP gives us a systematic 'learning by doing' opportunity to build our long-term capacity. Honestly, it took us a lot of time to develop the application, periodic project implementation reports, the accounting system and the documentary system. However, when we finalized the project and looked backwards, we have to admit that it was an irreplaceable experience. We prefer to call the SGP a huge training course rather than a simple grant program. All the knowledge and experience we learned from SGP will definitely benefit us in the future.**

Mr. Jiang Xiaodong, Datong Environmental Protection Volunteers Association, grantee,  
China

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## Knowledge management and communications

GEF SGP knowledge management and communications are closely linked to M&E and similarly take place at the global, national, and local levels.

At the global level, SGP promotes producing and sharing knowledge throughout the programme and provides knowledge management and communications guidance to support the compilation and wide dissemination of experiences, lessons learned, and good practices. In addition to the SGP database, the SGP website and other online features are essential for this undertaking. SGP maintains an archive of printed and electronic materials that are created and contributed by CPMT staff, country programme teams, project partners, and others. The materials include portfolio reviews, thematic reports, case studies, articles, fact sheets, project profiles, photographs, videos, interviews, and press releases. They are constantly replenished, processed, and made available through different media and practitioner partnerships.

SGP supports the use of new – and old – media for producing and sharing knowledge. *Insights into Participatory Video: A Handbook for the Field* provides guidance for undertaking participatory video projects with communities and grassroots partners at the helm, and is available in English, French, Spanish, and Russian. Participatory video permits communities to tell their own stories to a global audience. Proposals for SGP funding can also be submitted as videos, enabling access to SGP for those communities with low literacy levels. SGP also produced a toolkit for using free software to create photo stories – short videos composed of photos with narration – that yielded 150 photo stories on SGP projects in participating countries: <http://www.youtube.com/user/smallgrantsprogramme/featured>.

SGP regional workshops continue the tradition of global and regional national coordinator meetings for training on substantive and operational matters and knowledge and experience exchange among peers. These workshops are invaluable for sharing lessons and good practices, learning from different country programmes, building relationships, and setting the stage for future collaborations. Another form of NC training and exchange is SGP's mentoring programme which brings together experienced NCs with new NCs in neighboring countries or in similar country contexts. A new NC spends a week training with an NC mentor, gaining understanding of how a country programme operates, making project site visits, and benefiting from the insights, practical knowledge, and accumulated wisdom of an experienced colleague.

At the national level, country programme teams work with project partners to capture and apply lessons. When feasible, they coordinate exchange visits among projects that could benefit from sharing techniques and experiences, facilitate the establishment of community demonstration sites and training centers to promote horizontal exchange and learning among neighboring – and distant – communities, and organize knowledge fairs that bring together SGP stakeholders – CSOs, government authorities, university students and professors, donors, the media – to learn about SGP projects and activities.

Country programmes routinely produce knowledge and communications materials – project fact sheets, informational brochures, case studies – in local languages for local and national consumption. As country programmes mature, they assess their portfolios and publish more in-depth case studies and analysis of lessons learned.



SGP Mexico Photo: Ana Maria Currea



The GEF SGP had its origins in an innovative set of decentralized, demand-driven management mechanisms that allowed a large multilateral aid organization to reach out to provide small grants to local NGOs and community-based organizations. Tested by UNDP at the end of the nineteen eighties under the Partners in Development and Africa 2000 Network programs, these initiatives demonstrated the potential for a Small Grants Programme operated by UNDP along the same lines to complement the Global Environment Facility's program of large governmental projects. With the strong support of key members of the GEF NGO Committee, UNDP prevailed in persuading the GEF Secretariat to provide funding on a pilot basis in 1992. The rest is the history presented in this publication.

Among the achievements outlined in this report I find most notable SGP vision and structures that put people at the center of development; demonstrated capacity to reach communities in some of the most remote areas of the globe; the evidence it has provided of the value of traditional knowledge and peer-to-peer learning and exchange; and its linking of the grassroots to the policy process through government membership in NSCs and frameworks provided by national environmental plans. Perhaps its most important contribution, however, has been its willingness to experiment and take risks, acknowledging that not every grant will result in success, while building grantees' capacity to adapt to unforeseen circumstances and learning lessons in the process that are often even more important. In this it has served as a kind of venture capital of the GEF in the vanguard of the world's constant search for paths to a future that can sustain life on this planet as we know it.

I consider my last full-time post in UNDP as Global Manager of SGP to have been the most rewarding of a long career in development. I was enormously privileged to have been involved with the initiation of these small grants programs by the newly created NGO Division that I headed at the time. They have affirmed in resounding terms the validity of my belief in the potential of people at the grassroots as drivers of development. Given the right enabling conditions, they can take action to improve their own lives as well as that of their communities and of the wider world. SGP provides a small spark or a bit of additional fuel to the creativity that is key to this process. The multiplier effects of the feelings of self-worth and dignity that people derive from this experience nourish the roots of all human development. I also feel uniquely blessed to have had the opportunity to work with an absolutely outstanding team of SGP National Coordinators, together with the very small group who served at the time in the Country Program Management Team at headquarters.

Finally I would take the occasion to pay particular tribute to two colleagues who, for so many years, were at the forefront of SGP's activities and who, tragically, are no longer with us: Jane Wilder Jacqz, whose dynamism, diligence, and perseverance were key in the establishment and operation of SGP; and Marie Aminata Khan who, in a variety of capacities, was a uniquely welcoming, knowledgeable, resourceful, and responsive presence that inspired us all. Their loss is deeply felt by all of those who knew them.

Ms. Sarah L. Timpson, former Global Manager of SGP







**V. MULTI-FACETED APPROACH**





## MULTI-FACETED APPROACH

The most recent Joint Evaluation of the Small Grants Programme (2008) confirmed the feasibility of GEF SGP's time-tested, flexible, and adaptable mechanism:

*"Country contexts provide the opportunities—and the constraints—for SGP program success. Legal and institutional frameworks, market conditions, prevailing attitudes toward environmental regulation, availability of partners—such as capable civil society organizations—and sources of financing comprise the country context variables that affect SGP performance. In all cases examined, the SGP country programs seemed to be well adapted to country conditions; the SGP has been flexible in its overall approach, and its staff—notably the national coordinators—have demonstrated high levels of skills and commitment. Most SGP country programs are cost-effective instruments that engage community groups in global environmental concerns and contribute to the livelihood needs of local populations."*

This section further elucidates the aspects of SGP's approach that allow the programme to work effectively across remarkably diverse country contexts and local conditions. SGP can best be considered a vehicle for community access, empowerment, governance, and capacity development that is fueled by an extraordinary array of partners and stakeholders. SGP's evolving approach has allowed for learning and adaptation – learning by doing – at all levels.

### Country-driven operations

Every element of GEF SGP's decentralized governance and decision-making structure is designed to foster civil society and community initiative and ownership in support of sustainable development objectives, from the formation of National Steering Committees to the elaboration of country programme strategies to approving grants for local actions to benefit the global environment. The NSC is the fulcrum of SGP's robust country-driven approach as the country programme decision-making body. The Operational Guidelines ensure that international fiduciary standards are met for the administration of resources, but all grant funding decisions are taken in country by the NSCs, which allows for maximum innovation and flexibility at the local and national levels. Constant interaction and consultation between SGP country programme teams and local and national stakeholders ensures that SGP remains highly responsive to local and national needs and priorities.

### ***Efficient, demand-driven grant delivery***

SGP responds to the demand from local communities and NGOs for grants in the GEF focal areas. The permanent presence of SGP country teams and continual access for CSOs mean that NCs and NSCs are well apprised of community needs and understand local contexts. As soon as countries receive their annual

grant allocations, the call for proposals proceeds immediately. Country programmes may also accept and review grant submissions on a rolling basis and create a pipeline. Based on the country programme strategy, the NSC develops grant screening and selection criteria and, together with the NC, adapts the global project template to local conditions and languages. The project template can also be modified to fit innovative formats such as video and photo proposals depending on the needs of proponent communities. Modest planning grants, proposal preparation workshops, and ongoing assistance by NCs and PAs facilitate proposal preparation. Grant review and approval can proceed as soon as the NSC is convened, which is coordinated with the timing of the call for proposals and the deadline for their submission.

SGP's decentralized and country-driven structure means that grant delivery can be accomplished with speed and efficacy, while respecting international fiduciary standards. Because NSCs make all grant funding decisions locally and grant preparation and submission are streamlined, the time-consuming necessity of most global programmes to revert to headquarters for grant appraisal or approval and other bureaucratic processes are avoided.

## A community-based approach

GEF SGP's community-based approach is key for addressing local and global environmental and sustainable development challenges. This means recognizing the elemental role of communities as stewards of nature, enabling the direct connection between sustainable livelihoods and the generation of local and global benefits, and empowering communities to act and participate in their own development. Channeling funds directly to NGOs and CBOs is fundamental for ensuring community ownership and impact.

### ***Community stewardship***

SGP's starting principle is that communities, indigenous groups, and other local peoples are stewards of ecosystems and landscapes. Half of the world's 102,000 protected areas are in the ancestral lands of indigenous and other communities that rely on them for their livelihoods. At least 370 million hectares of forest and forest-agriculture landscapes outside protected areas are under community conservation management. In the developing countries with the largest forest cover, over 22 percent of forests are owned or managed by communities. Indigenous and peasant farmer communities are custodians of the plant and animal biodiversity that is essential for feeding the planet. Communities are key to creating and maintaining climate resilient landscapes yet are the most vulnerable to the devastating effects of climate change. Poverty, inadequate policy frameworks, large-scale agriculture, logging, and mining, infrastructure, industrial, and tourism development, and myriad other factors may have compromised their stewardship. Yet communities worldwide remain intimately bound to ecosystems and the goods and services they provide for their economic and cultural survival. Community local knowledge, natural resources management, and environmental governance are the keys to conservation and sustainable development efforts and maintaining and strengthening climate resilience. This is the crux of SGP's community-based approach and is reflected in global guidance, country programme strategies, and grant making.

### ***Sustainable livelihoods***

For SGP, sustainable livelihoods constitute the means to produce global environmental benefits at the local level. As such, poverty alleviation is a critical entry point for promoting activities that respond to GEF priorities. Most SGP projects link socioeconomic benefits for the community with realizing global environmental benefits. Sustainable livelihood approaches are many and varied depending on the selected GEF thematic and the community context, but may include sustainable small enter-

prises for the production of biodiversity goods, processing of non-timber forest products, alternative income generation related to renewable energy and energy efficiency, sustainable forest or fisheries management, community-based ecotourism, and promotion of traditional medicine.

**SGP's importance lies in its character as a programme geared towards the people. The SGP is composed of projects in which it is possible to directly appreciate the impact on the lives of real people. All of the programmes and projects that GEF sponsors are potentially important; however in the case of the SGP projects, their importance is evidenced by the impact in the life of the target communities and its relevance in the life of the people. So the SGP has double importance: both for the communities and for the visibility of the GEF.**

Mr. Antonio González Norris, Director of Cooperation and International Negotiations and  
GEF OFF, Peru



### **Community empowerment**

SGP aspires to empower communities to act and to participate in their own development. SGP is rooted in the belief that global environmental problems can best be addressed through actions that are designed, implemented, and owned by communities, and with benefits that directly accrue to them. In contrast with “expert-reliant” development interventions, SGP emphasizes building on local ecological and cultural knowledge and practice, facilitating innovation and introduction of new techniques as appropriate, and following community leadership in solving problems. SGP is premised on the notion that through the provision of relatively small amounts of funding, local communities can undertake activities that will make a significant improvement in their well being while generating global environmental benefits.



### ***Seed money for innovation***

SGP works by taking risks as an incubator of ideas and innovations and providing seed money for CBOs and NGOs to take them forward. Because SGP funding is modest and its interventions designed to be initially small scale, it can readily support community-based experimentation. Once the idea has been tested on the ground and proven to be effective in meeting community needs, it can take off by networking with other CSOs, attracting additional donor support, and being replicated and scaled up. Global environmental benefits are produced through the cumulative effect of small-scale, community-based efforts.

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**The spirit of SGP is to listen to the grassroots, that is, to the producers/growers and see what they need. Many times projects are prepared in the capital city and our vision of development is not heard. For us to be able to grow, sometimes we do not need a truck, but rather a plow with horses.**

*Ms. Carmen Ipuche, organic farmer and local leader, Pindó Azul, grantee, Uruguay*

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### **Strengthening CSO capacity**

GEF SGP provides global guidance and tools to assist country programmes in capacity development efforts, such as peer-to-peer learning and exchange in regional workshops for NCs and CPMT, access to relevant case studies and discussion on the SGP website and listservs, among others. In these ways, SGP country teams can pool information and resources about capacity development techniques and methodologies.

SGP country teams build capacities of CSOs and other SGP stakeholders to understand global environmental problems and their local consequences. Capacity development for NGOs and CBOs is indispensable for improving environmental governance and natural resource management at the local, community level. NCs work closely with communities and other potential grantees to build their capacity to identify and design proposals, thereby increasing the chances that proposals meet NSC selection criteria. Project implementation entails constant capacity development through “learning by doing” by participants as well as the participatory technical assistance and monitoring collaboration by NCs, NSC members, volunteers, and other stakeholders. Additionally, SGP capacity development integrates GEF focal area activities into community sustainable development through the establishment of demonstration and learning centers to train local people. Grantees and other SGP stakeholders also participate in consultations, workshops, and exchange visits which contribute to capacity development.

SGP works in countries that have undergone significant political and economic transformations in recent decades, affecting not only governance and economic models, but especially the viability and cohesion of daily community life. In such situations, strengthening CSO capacity and organization are fundamental. In **Albania**, SGP has grappled with the overall uncertainty arising from the transition from more collectivist to more individualist forms of economic activity and its consequences in target communities, for example, the erosion of traditions of sustainable natural resource use and the presence of new migrants from other parts of the country. To build the social cohesion that will allow communities to fully participate, SGP has supported community organization, partnering with communities before and after as well as during the grant period. Similarly, in **Belarus**, CBOs and NGOs – which have only recently emerged as

civil society organizations – as well as local and regional authorities have limited knowledge about the GEF, the MEAs, and even relevant national legislation and regulations. The country programme thus sees as its niche to raise public awareness about these matters, and to support NGO and CBO organization and participation by meeting local authorities, providing advice and information about the SGP and relevant laws and procedures, and helping grantees to create and maintain partnerships with official bodies and other stakeholders. In **Lao PDR**, the presence of NGOs is very limited, with government approval for the establishment of not-for-profit associations coming only in May 2009. The lack of capacity of an organized civil society in its infancy is an immense challenge for the Lao PDR SGP, which has responded by working directly with communities and supporting the creation of CBOs.

### An inclusive approach

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**SGP reaches out to remote communities, poses their problems in a language familiar to them, gives them the freedom to express their views, and brings these to a platform where they are heard and action is taken.**

Ms. Shireen Samarasuriya, SGP NC, Sri Lanka

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### ***Reaching remote and marginalized communities***

Since its inception, GEF SGP has focused on reaching poor and vulnerable communities in rural and remote areas – this is SGP's niche, which has been recognized by the global evaluations as well as stakeholders at all levels. The prospects of reaching and mobilizing SGP stakeholders and partners and working at the community level are especially imperiled in conflict and post-conflict situations, but country programme teams persist and make inroads despite often overwhelming odds. SGP works therefore to connect communities and organizations that in many cases have never before had access to donor funding and resources. Very often these are the poorest and most marginal communities, with the greatest need for capacity development to participate as actors in environment and development processes locally and nationally. Sometimes they are CSOs that have attempted and failed to secure external resources to attend to pressing natural resources management problems and see in SGP an ally. The Third Independent Evaluation of the SGP (2003) noted that: "The fact that SGP works in remote areas that others don't reach often requires that a considerable amount of time is spent traveling on site visits for appraisal, monitoring and evaluation."

As further explained below, communities need not be registered as NGOs or CBOs to access SGP support.

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**In Suriname, the most marginalized communities live in the interior, where basic infrastructure is lacking, most often there is no water supply or electricity, the people do not speak the official language, and with high illiteracy rates (50 – 80 percent). It is possible for SGP to reach out to these communities, where project proposals are discussed over the phone due to the inaccessibility by road.**

Ms. Tanja Lieuw, SGP NC, Suriname

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### ***Rights of indigenous peoples***

SGP recognizes that indigenous peoples have claims to specific and deeply rooted cultural, political, and territorial rights, and supports efforts to reverse their marginalized situation in many country contexts. As with all communities, SGP helps indigenous peoples to resist destructive development in and around their territories, and to promote sustainable alternatives based on indigenous knowledge and practice related, for example, to biodiversity conservation and climate resiliency. SGP respects customary law and practice and supports securing rights to land and resources as well participation of indigenous groups in local and national environmental governance. SGP grants also promote recovery and revitalization of indigenous cultural practices in relation to sustainable livelihoods and sustainable development objectives

SGP follows UNDP's Policy of Engagement with Indigenous Peoples (2001), which was developed in consultation with indigenous peoples, and abides by all the relevant UN system policies. In 2008 SGP helped found the International Community Conserved Areas (ICCA) Consortium at the IUCN World Conservation Congress, and continues to be one of leading supporters of the consortium, which is led by indigenous peoples and local communities.

As a means to increase the ability of local and indigenous communities to access SGP grant funding, the programme has developed flexible project preparation and design processes, such as giving small planning grants to communities to support proposal development, accepting proposals in local languages as well as in participatory video and photo formats that build on oral traditions (in lieu of written project proposals).

In response to the request of indigenous peoples in the CBD Conference of Parties in 2004, SGP, in cooperation with UNOPS, has developed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) modality through which grants can be delivered directly to a community that is not a registered NGO or CBO. SGP currently delivers grant funding through three different types of MOAs signed with grantee-partners: standard (directly with an NGO or CBO), intermediary (where an NGO or CBO acts as an intermediary to channel funding to the community), and legal representative (where an individual or group of community members can directly receive funding as designated representatives of the community).

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**This project accompanies the sister communities as they walk this path of reencountering their values and hidden knowledge and recovering these for the sake of all, Guaraní and not Guaraní.**

Cacique [community authority] Victor Reyes, Guaraní community of Pentí Carandai, grantee, Argentina

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### ***Gender empowerment***

SGP considers gender equality and empowerment to be essential elements for achieving sustainable development and global environmental benefits. In this sense, SGP has developed a global gender mainstreaming policy, which lays out the key features of this approach. It has also established a global partnership with the Huairou Commission to support capacity development on gender and dissemination of gender-related good practices among SGP countries worldwide. At the national level, gender is an integral component of CPS, and SGP country programme teams support all NGO and CBO partners to consider gender in designing and implementing projects. Gender specialists sit



on NSCs in order to facilitate the review of gender-focused projects or components in the GEF focal areas. The aim is not just to ensure the presence or participation of women and girls in projects, but to achieve genuine gender agency and leadership. Many country programmes make it a priority to work with women's groups and other gender-based organizations. In **Senegal**, for example, SGP has specifically targeted women's groups, which constitute almost 60 percent of grantees.

### ***Youth participation***

SGP privileges the participation of children and young people as the bearers of future commitments and efforts for the global environment and sustainable development. SGP projects with environmental education and raising awareness components almost always involve schoolchildren. Children and youth actively participate in campaigns to protect species and local habitats, tree planting, creating home and community gardens, and renewable energy initiatives that provide solar power for studying – and television watching – among others.



### **Participatory management**

GEF SGP global guidance has consistently supported participatory management, starting with the development of the guidance itself, which was done in consultation with NCs, NSCs, and other programme stakeholders. SGP's consistently participatory approach to planning and implementation of projects ensures grantee ownership and commitment. Project priorities and objectives are determined by local CBO and NGO partners themselves, in contrast to top-down approaches where projects are not really owned by anyone – except, perhaps, the funder. Identifying and addressing authentic priority needs helps to unify communities around a set of common goals that will sustain them through project implementation and beyond. Furthermore, the process bolsters leadership by the NGO or CBO grantee or from within the community, and facilitates formation of emerging leaders as part of designing and

creating the project. It is this community ownership, along with the in-kind investment of community time, resources, and labor that leads eventually to the sustainability of SGP projects.

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Zimbabwe SGP's focus is on community-based initiatives and one of its fundamental pillars is that communities set priorities and objectives for SGP projects. This has been achieved in all phases of the project cycle. During proposal development, it is the communities that identify the problems to be addressed and that come up with the intervention strategies. SGP actually makes available a planning grant to assist communities to have meetings and document their proposals. After funding of the project during the trainings, communities discuss their proposals together with the implementation and monitoring plan that they actually follow when implementing their projects. The other critical elements are that they conduct their own self-monitoring at local level and they review and set their priorities. This culminates in the production of progress reports. They also set up their own local structures that include the project committees, which help to monitor and ensure that the project's targets are achieved. In terms of documentation, they determine the lessons that they have learnt and areas of success useful for scaling up and replication. However, what enables the communities to participate and set priorities is the fact that SGP has a bottom-up approach and it focuses on capacitating communities to be in control of their development. This empowerment process and the space they are given to operate enables them to be active participants who are in control of their development and destiny.

Ms. Tsitsi Wutawunashe, SGP NC, Zimbabwe

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SGP designs and develops participatory methodologies that can be used at the community level across country programmes and by other donors and development actors. These methodologies range from programme and project planning and design tools, such as the CPS and the participatory community consultations and assessments that SGP country programmes routinely conduct, to the technologies and approaches that allow SGP projects to achieve local livelihoods and global environmental benefits in the GEF focal areas. The fundamental purpose of these tools and methodologies is to allow communities and other CSOs to take ownership of their capacity development and the transformation of their lives and environments.

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Guatemala SGP has defined its thematic axes as indigenous peoples, direct support to communities with gender gaps, and support for local capacity development in communities with limited literacy. An indigenous community representative sits on our NSC. We have developed our own instruments and methods for providing direct support for these communities, such as the *Almanario* method, which has been successfully employed for a number of years. Groups of indigenous and newly literate women from remote rural communities have successfully planned, designed, implemented, and tracked their projects using this method.

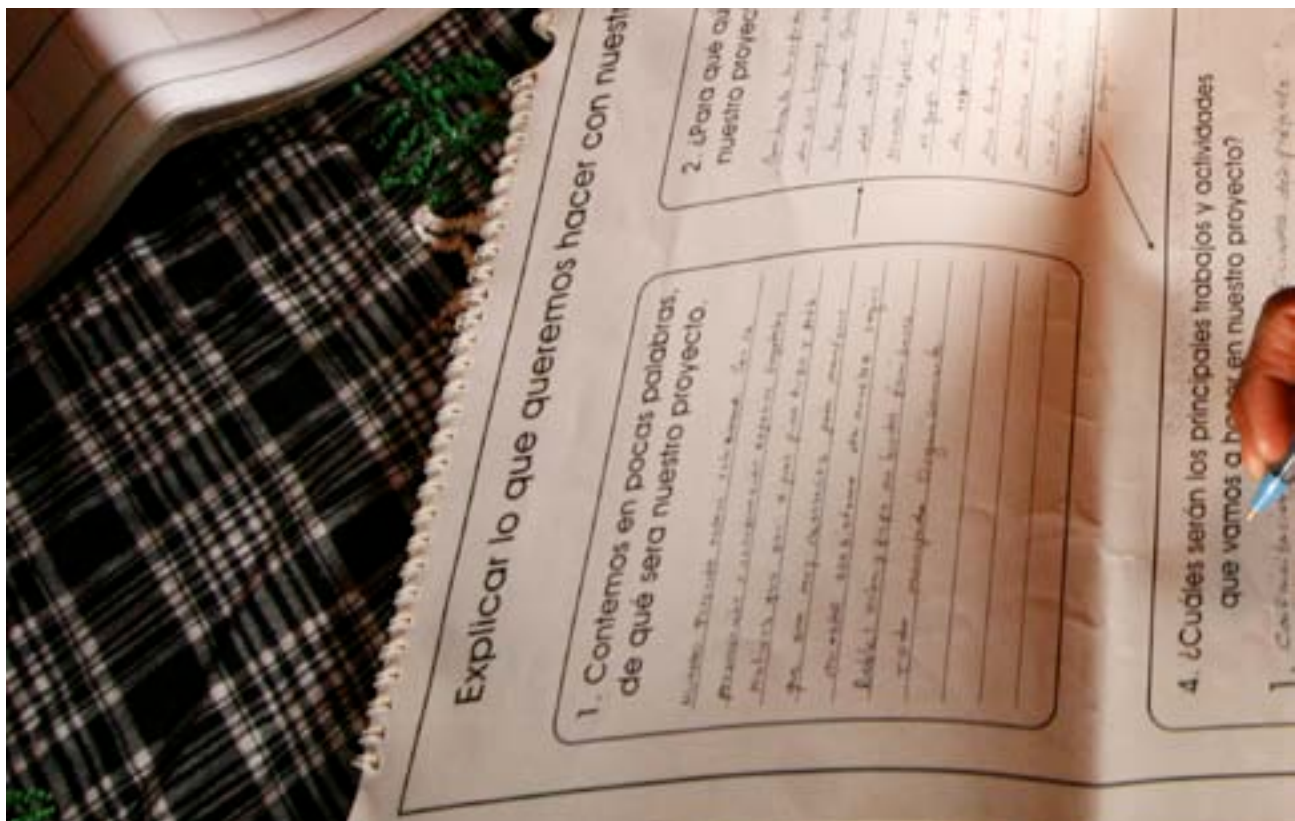
Ms. Liseth Martínez, SGP PA, Guatemala

### Method for community self-determination and gender empowerment in Guatemala

The *Almanario* is an innovative project design, implementation, and monitoring tool developed by the Guatemala country programme, in particular by SGP community partners with support from the NSC and NC. It is rooted in SGP's experience that capable and empowered communities are the best guarantee of project sustainability. The *Almanario* methodology is simple, easy to learn, and easy to translate – from Spanish to Mayan languages, for example. Because of its utility in conveying the wishes, goals, and knowledge of grassroots groups – especially those with limited literacy and education – the *Almanario* approach has been adapted by a number of other countries.

During project design, the *Almanario* guides the community in deciding what they want to achieve, what actions need to be taken, what resources (time, money, and materials) are required, and who will take responsibility for different tasks. Once the project has been approved, the *Almanario* is made available electronically for distribution and is printed in a wall-size version that is centrally posted to help the community to plan, coordinate, monitor, and report on its work.

SGP provides training in the *Almanario* methodology as a means for gender empowerment and to help ensure project sustainability from the very beginning of the process. After the NSC selects a community's project concept, the community is requested to send a woman representative to an *Almanario* training workshop. She will subsequently train her community in using the *Almanario* and also facilitate the participatory formulation of the project proposal. Thereafter she will serve as a liaison between the community and SGP. The *Almanario* approach has thus offered women the opportunity to assume new leadership roles and to participate more fully in community decision-making. In the words of one of the Mayan women trained in *Almanario* use: "This has to be a process of educating the people so that after the SGP goes there is a real change in us as human beings, in what we hope for, a change in our lives..."





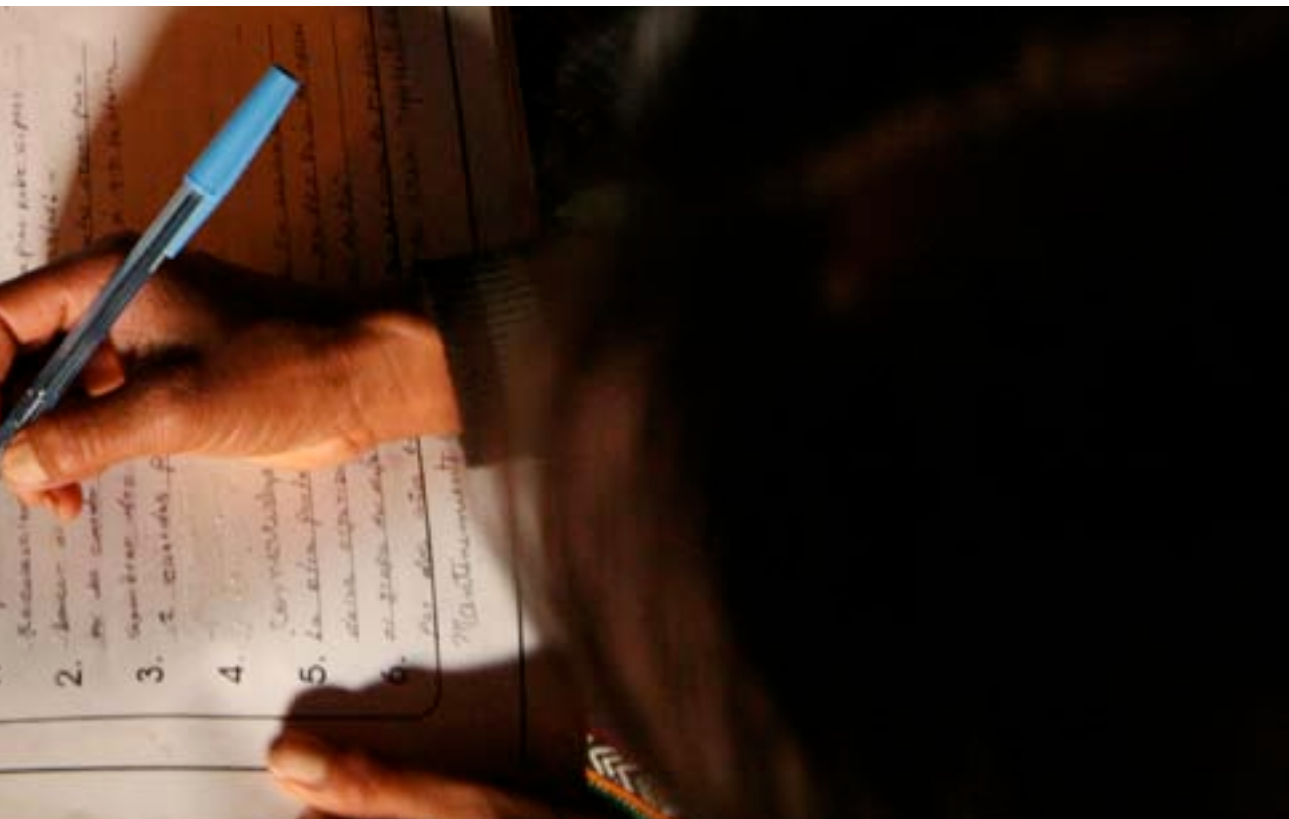
In the end, the Almanario is more than a mechanism to present projects for funding. It reflects a set of values held by the NSC regarding respect, equality, and the dignity of fellow humans and their potential to better the quality of their lives.

*Mr. Alberto Rivera, Ecotourism Council, Universidad del Valle de Guatemala and NSC member*

The Almanario has helped SGP to ensure that its projects are designed, planned, implemented, and managed directly by community members themselves, the majority of whom belong to rural indigenous and women's groups, often without access to funds and projects because they are not familiar with processes that require built capacity to develop proposals in complicated formats. The SGP methodology has allowed a closer relationship to rural areas and their needs. SGP has built the capacities of community members, principally women, and is therefore a strategic ally for reaching the MDGs. SGP helps to guarantee environmental sustainability; contributes to the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger; promotes gender equality and women's autonomy; builds capacity about gender, self-esteem, and eradicating domestic violence; and, finally, creates direct links to civil society at different levels, promoting a worldwide network for development. SGP constitutes an institutional alliance for sustainable development, from the contribution of GEF resources, the participation of UNV, the administration of UNDP, to the involvement of local and national governments and the system of development councils.

*Mr. René Mauricio Valdés, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative*

The gender and sustainability benefits of the Almanario approach have been well studied. See Estela López Torrejón, et al., "Incorporating gender perspective in small environmental projects. The experience of El Almanario in ten indigenous communities in Guatemala," *Iberoamerican Journal of Development Studies* 1(1), 2012; and Sarai Fariñas Ausina, "El Enfoque Almanario como catalizador para el desarrollo de las capacidades colectivas y el fortalecimiento de la agencia fuerte. Estudio de caso en el contexto indígena de Sipacapa. Guatemala," *Cuadernos de Investigación en Procesos de Desarrollo* Número 6, Grupo de Estudios en Desarrollo, Cooperación y Ética, Departamento de Proyectos de Ingeniería, Universitat Politècnica de València, February 2011.



## A strategic and programmatic approach

Demand for GEF SGP projects in every participating country was high in 1992 and remains high today as more and more communities and civil society organizations seek access to resources to address the magnitude of sustainable development challenges. SGP country programmes have had to balance this demand with the need to stretch modest grant funding and make interventions as effective and efficient as possible, while building capacity of grantee partners to successfully implement projects. SGP learned early on to avoid dispersal of efforts by marshalling its resources, working with partners, making programming as targeted as possible to increase the impact of every grant, and to create synergies by grouping grants with related objectives.

Creating thematic and geographic clusters of projects that enhance impact was a key purpose of the country programme strategies, which were incorporated as a global instrument around the year 2000 but, in fact, country programmes tended to make strategic programming decisions since SGP's first operational phase. Moreover, as country programmes mature, they can move away from awareness raising and demonstration grants to clustering grants thematically and/or geographically and encouraging replication and scaling up to achieve greater impacts. In special cases, grants for "strategic projects" that consolidate efforts of several communities and CSOs may be provided at a maximum of \$US 150,000.

The main results achieved by SGP Senegal are related to the approach applied since the first operational phase. The major elements of this approach are as follows:

- Geographic and thematic focus (i.e., protected areas)
- Programme approach (synergetic effect)
- Sustainable livelihood approach (each project includes components of environment protection, income generating activities, and capacity development)
- Replication, upscaling, and mainstreaming good results to expand impacts through building a critical mass of best practices
- Networking of SGP projects in each geographic and thematic focus

Thus, for example, in Saloum Delta National Park, which is a Ramsar site and part of an extensive biosphere reserve, the results of recent projects reinforce those that were implemented a decade or more ago in the same area of geographical and thematic focus. The sustainable, participatory, and community management of the biosphere reserve has improved and the size and quality of marine and coastal ecosystems has increased.

*Mr. Oumar Wane, SGP NC, Senegal*

### **Local-global policy linkages**

SGP supports NGOs and CBOs to implement global environmental policies at the local level and simultaneously leverage their local experience, knowledge, and lessons learned to influence global, national, and local policies. Unlike other programs that work mainly with government ministries to develop and implement national policies and reforms, SGP opens a window for CSOs and communi-

ties to contribute directly to national and international policy and programming processes. In this sense, SGP NGO and CBO partners are participants in a global policy advocacy network.

SGP NSCs often serve as the conduit between community sustainable development activities and national development planning and policy making, especially since NSC members participate in project site visits, and can thus observe first-hand grassroots realities. Consequently, SGP experiences and lessons learnt have been recognized and incorporated in national policy development. SGP grantee and partner networks have also been instrumental in conveying policy messages from the local to the national and global levels – and back again.

### ***Long-term programme presence in countries***

SGP incubation of promising ideas, programmatic approaches, partnership creation, policy advocacy, and above all, relationships of trust and mutual esteem with CSOs and communities are premised in large part on the programme's stable, long-term commitment to community-based sustainable development in countries. Following the adaptive management model, SGP country programmes have had the opportunity to take risks, grow, learn, and adapt. They have become living archives of proven methodologies, technologies, knowledge, and lessons learned. However, they are still "in process," as it were – demand for SGP support and grants is accelerating and greater than ever as global environmental problems and their local consequences intensify.

The Joint Evaluation of the Small Grants Programme (2008) found that:

SGP programs that establish good track records and demonstrate that they are "there to stay" are in a better position to influence broader processes—sometimes with far-reaching impacts. Further, after completion of their start-up phases, programs learn from their experience and retain institutional knowledge. Consequently, they do not have to "reinvent the wheel," which is very often the case for the small grant components of the GEF FSPs and MSPs, which lack such a corporate memory.





### SGP's first decade in Mongolia

When SGP started in Mongolia in 2002, the country had experienced the market economy for only about a dozen years. There were not many NGOs, CBOs, or other CSOs. We approached this situation strategically and started assisting existing organizations and encouraging those who wanted to establish CBOs and NGOs. Last year we evaluated our programme and identified the following stages of a strategic and pragmatic approach that has been essential for us:

1. Creative attempts and assistance in formation of CBOs and NGOs (2002-2004): Activities to rehabilitate degraded lands such as community tree nurseries with drought-resistant species.
2. Learning by doing and capacity development (2004-2007): Focus on tree nurseries and greenhouses, community fruit groves and gardens. First cases of community forestry and community based tourism. Endeavors to rehabilitate nature by activities such as beekeeping. Creation of community conservation areas. Fish conservation attempts.
3. Creation and development (2008-2011): Development of community forestry and community tourism. Community conserved area development. Fish breeding and conservation. Marketing and sale of some biodiversity products (juice, jam, fruit oil, seedlings, seeds, felt items). Application of renewable energy (solar, biogas, water flow operated pumps).
4. Management and development (from 2012 onwards). Objectives: Become a global community center for fighting land degradation. Develop community based natural resources management. Develop community conservation areas for nationwide recognition. Assist as many forestry communities as possible (so far created over 500 countrywide). Develop and use SGP micro-credit schemes for sustainability of old grantees as well as for new grantees.

To achieve the above outcomes and impacts, SGP Mongolia adopted the networking approach. Networking is key to every success and achievement. Networks are essential tools to keep people and grantees together, learn from each other, compete with one another, access local markets as a group, and develop and act in an organized manner. We have promoted 6 networks:



- Community forestry network
- Community tourism network
- Community gardens and tree nursery network
- Community protected areas network
- Beekeeping network
- Fish breeding and conservation network

Each of the networks is facilitated and guided by an NGO located in the capital city, whose major task is to support grantees in accessing local markets to ensure sustainability.

We give great attention and emphasis to field monitoring and evaluation. I believe that field monitoring is essential to the success of any project. I normally start field trips in April or May after the first disbursements have been made to grantees. Each field trip lasts 3-4 days and covers 8-12 grant or proposal sites in one route that is carefully planned to save time and funds. The first site is usually located at a distance of at least 100 km from the capital city. It is my practice to include all possible, new, ongoing, and recently closed grant sites in my travel itinerary to observe results and give advice if needed. Because of long distances, I manage to visit 2-4 projects or proposal sites a day, traveling until it becomes dark. Some statistics from the last 9 years of site visits:

- Total distance travelled: 240,515 km by jeep
- Travelled by horse: about 400 km in total
- Number of trips made: 186
- Number of days spent: 407
- Number of grants and proposal sites visited: 767 (cumulative)

*Mr. Ganbaatar Bandi, SGP NC, Mongolia*













## PARTNERSHIPS

GEF SGP grants are never implemented in isolation, but are rather embedded in a web of partnerships that extend from the local to the national to the global. SGP-inspired partnerships have increased broad-based support for global environmental and sustainable development approaches and policies. They have enabled capacity development and learning at different levels; leveraged both financial and technical resources to strengthen programmatic approaches as well as individual projects; and helped to ensure the sustainability of initiatives. SGP synergies with partners have allowed them access to SGP staff, resources, methodologies, tools, knowledge, and experience; thus SGP partnerships are of mutual benefit.



### Global partnerships

GEF SGP partnerships at the global level include those with UN and other multilateral agencies and organizations, GEF programmes and projects, governments, bilateral and multilateral donors, foundations, and international CSOs and NGOs, among others.

Global partnerships have helped SGP to implement programmatic approaches such as COMPACT, supported by the United Nations Foundation. SGP has also served as a reliable delivery mechanism to channel grant funding to the community level for partners, among them, the European Commission (SGP-PTF); the UNDP Community Water Initiative, supported by various bilateral donors since 2003 to work in 10 countries in the provision of water and sanitation services; and several large GEF international waters projects. Global level partnerships such as with the ICCA Consortium have enabled SGP to better support indigenous peoples and community conservation areas, while affording the consortium relevant lessons learned and good practices from SGP experience.

### SGP partnership with Green Wave

The CBD's Green Wave is a global biodiversity campaign to educate children and youth about the loss of biodiversity around the world and the need to take conservation action. Each year, the Green Wave contributes to worldwide celebrations of the International Day for Biological Diversity on 22 May. In participating schools around the world, children and youth plant a locally important tree species at 10:00 am local time on 22 May, creating a "green wave" across time zones. Participants upload photos and text to the Green Wave website to share their stories with others. An interactive map goes live in the evening at 20:20 local time, creating a second, virtual "green wave." Conscious of the role of future generations in preserving forests and all biodiversity, SGP is a key partner of this initiative, piloting the Green Wave campaign in **Belize, Egypt, Tunisia, Eritrea, Mauritius, Chile, Nicaragua, and Trinidad and Tobago.**



At both global and national levels, partnerships with key government authorities, governmental and nongovernmental policy makers, and influential donors help ensure that well-informed support exists for SGP and that SGP's approach can be mainstreamed into sustainable development practice.

## National and local partnerships

Local and national partnerships with CSOs, government agencies, academic and research institutions, the private sector, and donors allow GEF SGP grantees and country programmes to accomplish their goals, but are certainly beneficial to both parties. The Joint Evaluation of the Small Grants Programme (2008) "found that most of the partners established alliances with the SGP because of the program's knowledge and experience in working directly with communities as a means of influencing national policies."

### From strength to strength in Romania

Our organization, the Romanian Association for Community Development was formed in January 1999 as the first non-governmental organization dealing with community development. Our first projects were mainly focused on facilitating the organization of communities, changing their mentality and helping them to become informed partners of the local/central public authorities. By the time of our first meeting with SGP, environmental issues and community welfare were only occasionally touched upon by our organization, even if basic human resources for these aspects existed.

In 2007, the start of cooperation with SGP was a turning point for our organization. The programme strategy and objectives showed us how an integrated approach involving environmental, social, and economic aspects can lead to more effective actions with greater impact. There followed years of hard but rewarding work for our organization. We benefited from the beginning from the professional and unconditional support of SGP staff. This support covered both technical and managerial aspects.

The support provided during the application process, the open communication, the close monitoring, the continuous availability of the NC and PA to discuss problems occurring during the implementation process, the quick reply, and the detailed justification for any decision make the difference between SGP and any other donor. Another benefit for our organization consisted in the detailed training on implementation and reporting that we received from SGP. We received not only clear recommendations regarding SGP procedures, which are more flexible and less bureaucratic than many other funding programmes, but also key elements to be taken into consideration, valid for any other project we were implementing.

As a result, during the last five years ARDC was involved as applicant, partner, advisor, or just supporter in 21 projects covering five counties in the southern part of Romania with thematic focus on biodiversity conservation, climate change, sustainable land management, and community development. And we want to share this success with SGP, because without its support, all these projects would not have been possible! Thank you!

*Ms. Daniela Calendatu, Executive Director, Romanian Association for Community Development (ARDC), grantee, Romania*



### ***Partnerships support working with communities***

Partnerships with NGOs and CBOs at the local and national levels clearly support GEF SGP's work with communities, which is the case in virtually every project funded to date.

Partnerships with universities, research institutions, government agencies, and NGOs have supported the development of new technologies and methodologies for community-based application. They have provided capacity development, technical assistance, and monitoring of project activities, working in tandem with community partners. In turn, SGP builds partner capacity and knowledge about global and local environmental and sustainable issues as well as encourages the adoption of community-based, participatory approaches by serving as a proven example.

In **Argentina**, 97 percent of grantees are peasant and indigenous CBOs. As a means of building the capacity of often inexperienced CBOs to undertake projects and to provide necessary technical assistance for project implementation and monitoring, strategic alliances have been developed with diverse public and private institutions at local, regional, and national levels. Among them are the National Parks Administration, the National Institute for Livestock Technology, the Subsecretariat for Rural Development and Family Agriculture, the Institute for Small Family Agriculture, the universities of Salta, Catamarca, and Tucumán, and entities within the provincial (directorates of irrigation, water resources, agriculture, cattle raising) and municipal governments.

SGP **Cuba** established a network of academic institutions and teachers who serve as partners for CBO projects and provide technical assistance and co-financing. This network involves four universities and seven research centers in the fields of agriculture and livestock, renewable energy sources, biodiversity, and mountain ecosystems.

In **Zimbabwe**, SGP grantee the Conservation Society of Monavale (COSMO) rehabilitated the Monavale wetland, covering an area of 34 hectares, in cooperation with a number of national and international NGO partners (BirdLife Zimbabwe, BirdLife International, International Lakes Environment Committee, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Wetlands International, and International Crane Foundation). Another key element of success was a series of partnerships with government bodies, including the City of Harare and Ministry of Local Government Physical Planning, which influenced national level policy on the protection of wetlands for the City of Harare. COSMO is now working closely with educational institutions – teacher training colleges, universities – and the government department of urban and regional planning to scale up the protection of wetlands in Zimbabwe.

### ***Partnerships mobilize resources***

Partnerships with local and national governments, other donor programmes and projects, the private sector, and NGOs and CBOs contribute in-kind or financial resources that allow GEF SGP projects to fully cover sustainable development objectives that are critical for their success. They have also provided financial resources for essential programme activities that cannot be undertaken with GEF funds. Partnerships are critical for project sustainability, since they link grantees with governmental and nongovernmental agencies and donors that can provide support once the SGP grant ends.

In **Albania**, a successful partnership was established with Deutsche Gesellschaft für International Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ) to develop small-scale sustainable and environmentally friendly guest-house tourism in Thethi National Park in the northern part of the country. The partnership aimed to create alternative livelihoods in one of the poorest mountain communities located inside a national park. The intervention consisted in improving hosting conditions in the local houses. The GIZ



financed the non-GEF-related components while SGP helped with increasing the energy efficiency of the houses and installation of solar water heaters and solar photovoltaic systems. The experience gained over several years and projects has created a robust model of community development that can be replicated in other areas.

SGP **Thailand** has been a delivery mechanism for Mangrove for the Future's Small Grant Fund since 2008 and for the Water for People Partnership's Small Grants Programme since 2011. The former involves partnerships with IUCN and the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and the latter with the Metropolitan Waterwork Authority under the Ministry of Interior. Mangrove for the Future is a regional initiative that promotes investment in coastal zones of the Indian Ocean and protection of all ecosystems, but mangrove is the flagship. SGP has worked with 24 projects in the southern region of the country, which had been profoundly affected by the tsunami. The Water for People Partnership Small Grants Programme partnership aims to build community capacities and networks to ensure holistic conservation of forest, soil, and water resources in the Mae Klong and Chaophaya river basins, which are integrated ecosystems of the Gulf of Thailand and South China Sea.

SGP **Brazil** received substantial co-financing from the European Commission through the FLORELOS project executed by the NHI, ISPN. The €3.5 million project, Ecological and Social Links among Brazilian Forests through Sustainable Livelihoods in Productive Landscapes, supports project monitoring, knowledge management on the basis of SGP lessons learned, advocacy, eco-social governance, and strengthening networks.

In **Peru**, strategic alliances for co-financing projects have been central to the country programme's development. The UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery has co-funded 18 projects for a total of \$US 200,000. The UNDP's Inclusive Creative Industries Joint Program has co-funded 58 projects for a total of \$US 750,000. The private sector has co-funded 46 projects for a total of \$US 500,000. Women and youth co-manage all the projects co-funded by the private sector.

In **India**, private sector companies, such as Tata, Indian Oil Corporation, Airbus, and Reva Automobiles have come forward to support SGP projects with capital costs for setting up paper recycling plants, transport vehicles for waste management projects, and infrastructure for biogas, smokeless cook stoves, and biomass drivers, among other technologies.

In **Zimbabwe**, partnerships with the private sector include organic farming certification and marketing and support for rehabilitation of areas degraded by mining activities. SGP grantee Kaite Trust worked with EcoCert to attain organic farmer certification for 300 of its member farmers who had been able to meet the International Foundation for Organic Agriculture Movement principles. The project has established partnerships with the private sector for marketing and has created 27 market linkages globally for organically produced herbal products. SGP grantee Streetwise has negotiated an agreement with mining companies and quarry owners to support communities in rehabilitating degraded mining areas. Through this project, community trust funds have been established to receive 10 percent of proceeds from mining activities and will support both environment and developmental initiatives.

### ***Partnerships create networks of communities and CSOs relevant to SGP objectives***

Partnerships among GEF SGP grantees and CSO partners over time yield networks that enable improved natural resource management, capacity development, knowledge exchange, policy advocacy, and sustainability of SGP and related initiatives. These networks expand SGP's reach, involving greater numbers of organizations and communities in activities related to SGP objectives, and lead to greater impacts through replication and policy change.

In **Benin**, SGP grantees, past and present, have formed the SALEM network, which serves to facilitate exchange and sharing of good practices and support CSO capacity development. SALEM has growing respect and influence in relation to both government and international organizations and can therefore play an advocacy role.

Similarly, in **Ghana**, SGP grantees have formed the Traditional Healers Association, made up of 150 CBOs in the northern savannah promoting biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihoods for poverty alleviation, and the Association of Organic Farmers, made up of 30 organic vegetable farmers working with fair trade organizations to promote organic certified products on the local market.

**Brazil** SGP has been a long-time supporter of the Pacari Network of 80 CBOs that are reservoirs of knowledge about medicinal plants, their cultivation and use, and Cerrado (savannah) biodiversity conservation. Two SGP projects supported the cultivation and management of medicinal plants as a strategy for Cerrado sustainability. Project participants defined regional criteria for the self-regulation of popular medicinal plant pharmacies. They built a permanent learning center with the necessary infrastructure and equipment for processing medicinal plants. They also developed products, pharmacies, and markets that contribute to income generation for small farmer families. With SGP support, the Pacari Network engaged in advocacy for policies allowing local communities to practice and sell popular medicine. The Network has documented local medicinal and botanical knowledge with the participation of 260 traditional health providers and produced the Popular Cerrado Pharmacopeia, which has inspired similar efforts in other countries. The Pacari Network is a 2012 Equator Prize winner.

The strategic approach of the **Costa Rica** SGP has been to establish a broad base of projects working on the same issue, and then focus on vertically and horizontally scaling up activities and promoting networks among past and present grantees and other CSOs. The creation of networks leads to improved local and national recognition, better chances for sustainability, and the ability to advocate for institutional and legal changes in the national context related to SGP strategic priorities – forest fire control, biological corridors,



sustainable tourism, and organic agriculture. Networking has also helped to generate synergies with GEF MSPs and FSPs. The National Network of Biological Corridors led to participation in the Technical Advisory Committee on Biological Corridors. The establishment of the National Network of Organic Agriculture influenced the passage of the Law for Promotion of Organic Agriculture; similarly, the National Network of Rural Community Tourism led to the Law for the Promotion of Rural Community Tourism.

### Views from the Brazilian Cerrado

We think the SGP is an excellent programme which gives great support to local and traditional communities that face great difficulties in promoting environmental sustainability, cultural enhancement, and livelihood improvement. The programme offers easy communication between the grantee and the NHI team, with flexibility regarding the use of resources in accordance with community realities.

*Associação Cultural Domínio Descendente, grantee*

We admire SGP because the bureaucracy is simplified when compared with other donors in Brazil. This allows SGP to reach communities that no other donor can reach. The project provided the needed co-financing to combine with the Brazilian Bank Foundation support and then leverage the resources to build our own agro-industry to process Cerrado fruits, cassava, and sugar cane.

*Assentamento Americana, grantee*

We would like to emphasize how significant SGP is in providing support for small initiatives in the Cerrado and in 'debureaucratizing' the application for resources, which allows small groups to access opportunities that are usually wrapped in complex models.

*Onça D'Água, grantee*

The project provided the physical and organizational structure for the community to start producing fruit pulp, sweets, and marmalades made with Cerrado fruits. Now we are supplying municipal schools and selling to other families in the settlement.

*Assentamento Sumatra, grantee*



### **Creating networks of communities and partners to manage natural resources in Madagascar**

SGP Madagascar has supported over 100 CBOs since its establishment in 2007, which contribute to the direct sustainable management of 40,000 hectares of forest, lake, and marine resources and influence 600,000 hectares of protected areas. Based on this experience with grassroots environmental management and a 1996 national law, GELOSE (Gestion Locale Sécurisée), that allows the government to transfer management of renewable natural resources to volunteers who can take on this responsibility, SGP is supporting a networking project involving 260 CBOs that manage an estimated 560,000 hectares of forests, lakes, or coastal and marine resources located in 11 of the 22 regions of Madagascar. Local communities are determined to defend their ideas, rights, and responsibilities by leveraging their experiences and perspectives to form a national network. The aim is to forge a common vision on community-based governance and management of natural resources in Madagascar in order to make strategic proposals to government and partners. The project, which began in 2010, is also supported by the Tany Meva Foundation and the SAHA programme funded by the Swiss Cooperation and the Observatoire National de l'Environnement et du Secteur Forestier, for a total of \$US 120,000.

It is important to let local communities comment on the politics of the state on the governance and management of natural resources. If we have the willingness to listen to them, it may significantly improve the impacts of our politics, strategy, and actions.

*Mr. Julien Noël Rakotoarisoa, Directeur Général of the Forest, Ministry of the Environment*

Despite the interruption of the main financing mechanism for its National Environmental Programme, Madagascar is embarked on an exciting process of analysis and action at the grassroots... With GEF SGP and its partner support, the community organizations that received the power to manage their natural resources as part of the GELOSE law in the last fifteen years are pulling together their experiences, reflecting candidly on their problems, and identifying their way ahead... The time is ripe for being bold! Many even speak of effectively recognizing traditional Malagasy communities – the fokonolona – as key actors in the governance of natural resources...who deserve to receive with collective, inalienable rights the property of their customary territory.... Will this bold vision become reality? Could the proposed Sustainable Fokonolona Funds help to promote it? Only the future will tell... but this surge of fresh ideas and action is truly most promising!

*Dr. Grazia Borrini-Feyerabend and Dr. M. Taghi Farvar, Vice-Chairs, IUCN Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy*

The Small Grants Programme constantly evolves yet maintains its coherence and sustainability of support for the brightest initiatives of civil society and community organizations. It is a vibrant programme, complete with dedicated, hardworking, and highly professional people across the globe. These individuals are the backbone of the programme, which is the result of a truly joint effort in the GEF partnership. What a great honor and pleasure to be a part of this team! It is always my great professional and personal pride to witness the way an opportunity, created by the small grants provided by the programme, unlocks in the real world unlimited creativity in people! It is evident that human creativity in the different regions of our planet is extensive and functions as a tremendous stimulus and resource for resolving environmental problems, and not only those. This is a lesson for everyone, including various governments, that by protecting our environment, we should simultaneously address problems of poverty, injustice, and lack of food or water. We do not believe that change happens overnight, but we can clearly see that in the long run we are truly making a difference in the lives of tens of thousands of people. Delivery of results is the most challenging aspect of almost any initiative. So it is exciting to see that after 20 years in operation, the programme is very strong and capable of producing excellent results.

Mr. Danielius Pivoriunas, Senior Operations Officer, External Affairs, GEF Secretariat











VII. RESULTS AND BENEFITS



## RESULTS AND BENEFITS

GEF SGP has consistently practiced the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development – economic, social, and environmental – and the benefits that accrue are necessarily an amalgam. In producing these integrated benefits, SGP grants are at the core, but SGP country programme teams provide support in many other ways that yield benefits. They offer advice and guidance, accompanying communities and initiatives over many years through visits and other contacts. Country teams exchange knowledge and experience, both organized and spontaneous, and serve to create linkages with other CSOs, government, donors, and academic and research institutions. They facilitate participation in local, national, and international events. Thus SGP has created an enabling environment in countries for community-based sustainable development actions that have wider effects and influence. Communities and CSOs take inspiration from one another to move forward.



In this sense, SGP's impact is not necessarily a matter of the results of an individual community-based project, or even a cluster of projects in any given moment, but the accretion of experience, learning, and capacity development over a period of years or even decades that brings community efforts together with the support of partners to produce positive changes for ecosystems and the local peoples who depend on them.

This is evidenced in the seed money SGP provides to allow CBOs and NGOs to experiment and test ideas and technologies, in SGP's programmatic approaches, and in its partnerships and networks. In this section the specific environmental, economic, and social benefits or results of integrated SGP programming and projects are highlighted. It is not easy to disaggregate the three pillars in integrated SGP projects – fortunately – so the discussion of each pillar will necessarily overlap with the others.

SGP projects and programmes have made significant environment and sustainable development impacts and have been able to qualify and quantify local and global benefits in the majority of cases. SGP has demonstrated key approaches, technologies, and methodologies in the GEF focal areas that can be taken up by GEF MSPs and FSPs as well as by other partners working on larger scales. In many ways, SGP has been the testing ground for other government and donor programmes. Moreover, through long-term and consistent SGP support – including but not limited to grants – fledgling efforts have transformed into alliances among grantees and other groups that have regional and national convening power and have influenced legislation and policies.

### Environmental benefits

As the primary reason for being of the programme, all GEF SGP projects are designed to produce local and global environmental benefits. In fulfilling this mandate the programme has undoubtedly



been effective, as confirmed by global and country programme evaluations, although the process has required the accretion of painstaking efforts by SGP stakeholders at all levels. The Joint Evaluation of the Small Grants Programme (2008) concluded that:

The SGP is a cost effective way for the GEF to generate global environmental benefits while addressing country priorities and responding to the needs of local populations... SGP's environmental benefits and/or contribution to processes that are likely to result in global environmental benefits are considerable... Thus, a vast majority of grants in the SGP portfolio are contributing directly to global environmental benefits. In some grants, a trade-off between local and global benefits was found, with the grant at first focusing on local benefits in order to create the circumstances in which global benefits could be achieved.

Governments have also recognized that SGP produces global environmental benefits by addressing local environmental and development needs, targeting marginalized, poorer, and indigenous populations, and creating job opportunities and generating incomes, while helping countries to meet their international convention obligations (as evidenced in the country case studies and interviews conducted by evaluators for the Joint Evaluation of the Small Grants Programme (2008) as well as statements herein by GEF OFPs). Many countries systematically refer to SGP environmental benefits in their national communications to the conventions.

SGP global and country programmes work to ensure the generation of environmental benefits through:

- Adherence in global guidance to GEF criteria for realizing sustainable projects that meet GEF requirements in one or more GEF focal areas
- Raising public awareness and mobilizing civil society efforts to address local and national problems in ways that produce global environmental benefits
- Targeted NGO and CBO capacity development to address global environmental issues and their local consequences
- Technical assistance provided to NGOs and CBOs to develop or modify project proposals that fit GEF focal area criteria
- Systematic NSC review of the project proposals against established focal area criteria
- Project site visits to monitor projects for generation of global environmental benefits
- Assessment of project and programme results for achievement of global environmental benefits

While the most immediate or discernable environmental benefits may accrue to communities and local ecosystems and landscapes, the aggregate or cumulative effects of SGP community-based interventions lead to global environmental benefits. SGP supports this process by assisting grantees and partners in replicating and scaling up successful initiatives, creating an enabling environment for broad partnership and network formation, and leveraging effective approaches for wider policy influence.

At a cumulative global level since 1992, SGP has supported over 2,900 projects related to the protection, restoration, and sustainable management of forests. The programme has supported community-based projects that protect over 13,000,000 hectares of forests from human and non-human impacts, and has helped communities restore over 1,700,000 hectares of degraded forest worldwide. It has not been possible thus far to estimate cumulative impacts in terms of other global environmental themes, but the discussion below will highlight the range of environmental benefits produced by SGP country programmes in the GEF focal areas.

### **Biodiversity**

In the biodiversity focal area, GEF SGP has fully adhered to the CBD mandates of conservation, sustainable use, and equitable benefit sharing through nearly 8000 grants awarded globally since 1992.

In virtually every participating country, SGP grants have contributed significantly to protected area management in forest, mountain, and coastal and marine ecosystems. SGP NGO and CBO partners have supported the creation and gazetting of new areas, contributed to improved management of existing areas through advocating for better management plans and their application, and created and strengthened participatory co-management arrangements. SGP grantees have worked to create biological corridors to connect protected areas and conservation landscapes. SGP support has enabled partners to lobby for the creation and expansion of national and regional protected areas systems. SGP has also supported the recognition and sustainable management of ICCAs.

SGP grants have launched campaigns to protect endangered species and threatened habitats, often focusing on flagship species, but equally on lesser known elements of globally significant biodiversity.

SGP projects have improved environmental governance and supported sustainable natural resource management related to forestry, fisheries, and other extractive activities. Communities have established rules and regulations governing natural resource extraction and use. These efforts have protected forest ecosystems through regulating extraction and hunting, protected coastal, marine, and freshwater ecosystems through sustainable coastal zone management, improved fisheries management, and ensured provision of ecosystem services through watershed conservation measures.

SGP projects around the globe have conserved and sustainably used agrobiodiversity linked to the recovery and documentation of indigenous and local knowledge and practice.

To decrease pressure on natural resources in and around protected areas, ICCAs, and community forests, SGP initiatives have promoted a plethora of alternative livelihoods that reflect the cultures and capacities of particular communities. Sustainable livelihoods have taken the form of community biodiversity enterprises that sustainably transform and market biodiversity.

### **Conservation and sustainable management of protected areas**

In **Bulgaria**, as a result of an SGP project working for the conservation of the Dragoman marsh – which is particularly rich in biodiversity, containing 256 bird species – two Natura 2000 sites were declared followed by inclusion as a Ramsar site, protecting more than 20,000 hectares of wetlands of international importance. The project also established the first wetlands visitor center and will be replicated at the adjacent Aldomirovsko marsh with financing from the European Union.

A memorandum of understanding for the creation of **Turkey's** first wildlife corridor was signed in December 2011 between the Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs and SGP grantee KuzeyDoga Society. The corridor will cover 23,500 hectares and will extend 82 km from the Sarikamis Forest-Alla-huekber Mountains National Park to the Posof forests on the Turkey-Georgia border. This corridor will provide additional habitat for large carnivores, connect their isolated populations, and help reduce the human-carnivore conflict. In addition, ecotourism workshops in Sarikamis were conducted for promoting village-based wildlife tourism in the region. Also in Turkey, the Deadwood, Living Forest project has raised awareness on the importance of deadwood for biodiversity conservation. Deadwood is a critical component of forest ecosystems that provides habitat for a range of deadwood dependent invertebrates, birds, mammals, fungi and plants. As a result, Forest District Directorates have changed their management plans and the policy of total clearance of deadwood from the forest floor has been eliminated.

### Strategic approach to community co-management of protected areas in Belize

SGP was the first donor to fund the Friends of Laughing Bird Caye and help put in place an effective co-management system for the Laughing Bird Caye National Park. In 1996, Laughing Bird Caye National Park was declared a protected area and inscribed within the UNESCO designated Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System World Heritage Site. However, there was no on-site management and the area was experiencing uncontrolled tourism visitation and illegal fishing. A small group of local leaders registered a CBO and with the help of a planning grant were able to put together a proposal to obtain additional SGP funding and commence co-management activities to address the challenges. From this small start, spearheaded by an inexperienced but committed group of local community leaders, Laughing Bird Caye National Park is now the best kept marine protected area in the WHS and is a model for other co-management initiatives.

SGP continued this strategic support to NGOs and CBOs for the expansion and consolidation of the national protected area system and protection of endangered species through grants to Friends of Gra Gra Lagoon, Gales Point Progressive Cooperative, Rancho Dolores Environmental Group, and Friends of Mayflower Bocawina to conduct activities such as community consultations, baseline data collection, boundary surveys and demarcation, and advocacy resulting in the establishment of 2 national parks and 2 wildlife sanctuaries, totaling 9,511 hectares. These protected areas covered habitats for important wildlife species, filled gaps in the national protected areas system within the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor, and provided opportunities for local community members to generate income from ecotourism services.

As part of this approach, grants were provided to 10 local community groups to establish and support co-management initiatives. Along with the 4 organizations mentioned above, Friends of Five Blues Lake, Friends of Laughing Bird Caye, Friends of Swallow Caye, Aguacaliente Management Team, Rio Blanco Mayan Association, and Itzamna Society received support for activities such as leadership training and capacity development, signage and trails, office and communications equipment, education and publicity materials, among others. The total area covered exceeds 26,000 hectares. Secondly, grants were provided to partner organizations which successfully instituted mechanisms for protection of the following endangered species: scarlet macaw, yellow headed parrot, West Indian manatee, hawksbill turtle, black howler monkey, harpy eagle, Central American river turtle, and Nassau grouper.

*Mr. Philip Balderamos, SGP NC, Belize*





SGP **Trinidad and Tobago** has historically promoted the voluntary protection of protected areas and species given limited governmental resources for conservation and monitoring. Two grantees, Nature Seekers and North East Sea Turtles successfully developed co-management mechanisms for voluntary protection of endangered leatherback turtles, while Speyside Eco Marine Park Rangers have achieved community co-management of a marine protected area in Tobago. Community empowerment was the basis for developing and implementing these co-management schemes, through capacity development and training of community volunteers and community commitment to monitoring and patrolling activities.

### Reduction of threats to endangered species

In **Botswana**, the storied Khama Rhino Sanctuary breeding programme for both the white and black rhinos, first supported by SGP in 1993, has brought hope to conservation initiatives for endangered species in captivity. Two black rhino calves born in captivity made history as the first addition in 16 years to both the sanctuary and the national head count, while a population of 33 white rhinos make it the highest of any protected area in Botswana.

Also in Botswana, SGP grantee BirdLife has empowered local citizens, especially members of rural communities, to make a contribution to biodiversity monitoring and thereby take a step towards meeting country obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity. Building local capacity on bird survey methodologies and identification through a series of training workshops had yielded 370 “ordinary” citizen-scientists by March 2012, all of whom are committed to undertaking bird counts along fixed transects twice annually. This is an important outcome since there were only 28 volunteers in 2009 when the scheme was introduced.

In **Chile**, an innovative community ecotourism project supported by SGP in the Pehuenche Araucarias de Quin Quen Park conserved and revitalized the endemic and threatened Araucaria tree species through the implementation of management plans, protected nature trails, and community capacity development on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecotourism business development. Efforts by the indigenous Pehuenche community have conserved 11,000 hectares of forests and wetlands that are also present in the area, protecting Araucaria as well as other native species.

### Sustainable natural resources management

In the **Seychelles**, the Praslin Fisherman Association used SGP support to strengthen the management of the spawning aggregation fishery of the shoemaker spinefoot (*Siganus sutor*), a regional endemic rabbitfish that makes up the bulk of the Seychelles artisanal trap fishery. Because it is a high value species with high local demand, it constitutes an important source of livelihood for trap fishermen, but was at risk from over exploitation. Association members contributed to all aspects of participatory research to answer key questions about fishery dynamics, disseminated the results to other fishing communities, and formulating policy recommendations for co-management. The Association doubled its membership, improved its relations with the Seychelles Fishing Authority, and took on a new leadership role in responding to a spate of shark attacks by taking preventative measures involving surveillance, data collection, and netting of the coastline – evidence of growing empowerment for fishermen who had held government authorities in deep mistrust.

SGP **Cambodia** has provided support to 69 community-based resource management committees, which are involved in sustainable management of 572,671 hectares for biodiversity conservation, and 29,115 hectares of land are being sustainably used and managed by project partners.

### Reinforcing indigenous forest management in Iran

In Havareh Khol village in the Zagros Mountains of western Iran, an area of oak forests, rangelands, and farm fields, as well as degraded forests, fuel wood and fodder were traditionally obtained through an indigenous method called galazani in Kurdish. Galazani, or coppicing, entails cutting oak tree branches and some young trees on a 4-year rotation to encourage new growth on a regular basis and thereby sustainably maintain supplies of wood for different purposes.

After the nationalization of forests in 1963, forest exploitation was restricted and many forms of harvesting wood, including galazani, were prohibited with strict penalties for violations. Although governmental authorities tried to introduce alternatives for forest management, those measures were not readily accepted by local people and consequently unsuccessful. For several decades, "fighting against galazani" was the prevailing policy.

With support from SGP and academic and government partners – the Faculty of Natural Resources at Tehran University, and the Department of Forestry in Kurdistan province – the community implemented a project in 2002 to survey and register indigenous forest management techniques and knowledge and create a participatory forest management plan. This led to the improvement and revitalization of galazani as an effective traditional method of forest management. The success of the project attracted further academic attention and influenced a change in national forestry policies. A participatory forest management office was established in the Faculty of Natural Resources at Kurdistan University and in 2003 the High Council on Forests changed the official policy to one of "organizing galazani."

In 2004, the Havareh Khol galazani project received the award for the best national project in the field of natural resources management. A similar SGP project was also implemented in the neighboring area of Armardeh to ensure the continuity of the renewed tradition of improved galazani techniques.

The Havareh Khol galazani process was scientifically analyzed in a number of university theses as well as published in a peer-reviewed journal article, which concluded that traditional forest management can offer sustained yield and can be prescribed for sustainable forest management in northern Zagros with some modifications. See H. Ghazanfari, et al. "Traditional Forest Management and its Application to Encourage Public Participation for Sustainable Forest Management in the Northern Zagros Mountains of Kurdistan Province, Iran," *Scandinavian Journal for Forest Research* 19 (Suppl 4): 65-71, 2004.





### Conservation and sustainable use of agrobiodiversity

In **Bolivia**, multiple SGP projects have conserved native potato varieties and other Andean tubers such as oca (*Oxalis tuberosa*) as well as protein-rich grains and beans such as quinoa and tarwi (*Lupinus mutabilis*) through research, recovery, and revalorization of this agrobiodiversity, which is vital for food security as well as for increasing the climate resilience of agricultural landscapes in the highlands and inter-montane valleys. Also in Bolivia, in the hot and semiarid lowland Gran Chaco eco-region, SGP women partners devised a management plan to continue the Ayoreode cultural tradition of satchel making with the rare *B. hieronymi* plant. They recognized that the raw material was disappearing in the wild and their harvesting techniques were contributing to desertification. Today, the women plant *B. hieronymi* by the thousands. Their actions have led to the creation of a new forest conservation area and designated buffer zone for their economic activity.

SGP has supported numerous apiculture projects in almost every region of the world that are intrinsic to agrobiodiversity conservation. For example, in **Brazil**, Natmel honey is made from bees native to the endangered Cerrado biome. The native bees are crucial for pollination of native flora and maintaining the Cerrado as a healthy, functioning ecosystem. In **Ecuador**, a dry flower honey is currently produced from the nectars of the ceibo (*Erythrina crista-galli*) and algarrobo (*Ceratonia siliqua*) trees, which are important to the Sancán dry forest ecosystem.

In **Turkey**, local farmers in villages around Ankara are using SGP seed money to revert the gradual disappearance of the Ankara Goat (*Capra hircus*) due to genetic erosion by reintroduced breeding, care, and sustainable use practices that have been virtually abandoned. The project intends to show that with some care the Ankara goat can survive and constitute a complementary income source by recovering the Turkish mohair tradition and recreating a niche for fine mohair products.

Grown in isolation for thousands of years, Ethiopian barley, senef gebis, is genetically closest to wild barley. It almost became extinct before various community-based organizations in the Choke Mountain region of Ethiopia began managing its production. Today, with support from SGP, farmers are planting this crop for both home use and sale at the local market since senef gebis is used for making a number of traditional foods. Turkey has also experienced an extreme decline of landraces and crop biodiversity, along with the traditional knowledge to manage agrobiodiversity, over the past decades. SGP has provided seed money to literally preserve seeds with projects that help to highlight and raise



awareness among farmers and consumers about the urgency of conserving crop genetic diversity. As a result, critical antique seeds of wheat, lentil, and linen, for example, were conserved and their production increased. Additionally farmers and consumers were able to debate relevant policies through the Seed Network for Conserving Turkey’s Agrobiodiversity, the product of an SGP project. Community seed banks for in situ conservation in tandem with depositing samples in national and international seed repositories have been important as well in **Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Palestinian Authority, Peru, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam.**

### Conservation through sustainable livelihoods and biodiversity enterprises

SGP **Mexico’s** overall strategy is to conserve the biodiversity and ecosystem services of southeastern Mexico’s large ecosystems and to mitigate climate change through community-based initiatives and actions. These interventions are aimed at developing and implementing sustainable livelihoods, including organic apiculture, sustainable forest management and sustainable harvest of non-timber forest products, alternative tourism, aquaculture, agro-forestry systems that replace or minimize slash-and-burn agriculture, and others that protect ecosystem integrity while producing income.

SGP Mexico has agreements with the federal and state governments of Campeche, Quintana Roo, Tabasco and Yucatan for project co-financing and for employing SGP geographic and thematic approaches in the conservation of shared globally biodiverse ecosystems among two or more states. SGP is collaborating with the state governments to elaborate their biodiversity studies and conservation strategies. In 2009 the state government of the Tabasco established a \$US 650,000 fund to replicate SGP – the Integral Human Development Program to support environmental conservation with projects in coastal and rural communities.

To date 257 organizations – and 10,000 people – have been funded and constitute a climate-resilient network linked by engagement in apiculture, aquaculture, alternative tourism, and forestry activities, conserving nearly 400,000 hectares.



### Mexico SGP biodiversity conservation achievements by hectares under protection (1994 – 2012)

Ecosystem or resource / conservation method	Hectares
Tropical forest under sustainable forest management	84,682
Tropical semi-deciduous forest under community protection	87,543
Cloud forest under community protection	26,500
Agroecology or agroforestry cultivation	5,780
Tropical forest under apiculture management	70,309
Coastal ecosystems (marine environment, coastal dunes, coastal lakes and wetlands) in conservation and use	110,576
<b>Total</b>	<b>385,390</b>

Silk production has been a part of Syrian cultural heritage and economic life since the Roman Empire. Traditional silk products, such as damask, derive their name from the city of Damascus where this fine fabric was manufactured and traded on a large scale for centuries. Today, the silk industry is in decline due to competition from other materials, and olive and apple trees replace mulberry trees. However, a women's unit from a farming association working with SGP **Syria** is reviving the tradition of silk making with mulberry trees which grow without chemical fertilizers and inputs, and are well adapted to the local ecological conditions. The women are earning additional income from their silk products and building their business skills to deliver high quality natural products to the market.

Thaumatococcus is a sweet protein derived from the *Thaumatococcus daniellii* fruit, known as daha or ego among the Akans of **Ghana**. In its purest form thaumatococcus can be used as a sweetener and flavor enhancer. Locals eat the fruit, and the leaves are used as wrappers in the traditional food industry and for thatch. Interest in *T. daniellii* led to a local initiative to sustainably manage a 500,000-hectare wet, evergreen forest in Western Ghana. With SGP support, the CBO Oda-Kotoamso Community Agroforestry Programme now manages the sustainable extraction of the fruit. Only the purest, most potent thaumatococcus is exported to Europe. With assistance from SMARTEX Timber and Plywood Company and the German Development Service, a processing plant was established to further process and export thaumatococcus, providing direct employment to over 30 farmers in the area.

SGP **Ecuador** supported more than 240 families from Afro-Ecuadorian communities in the coastal province of Esmeraldas to recover and conserve 28 native fruit and forest tree species, including a prized cacao species, *cacao fino de aroma*. The project is located within the Chocó bioregion, a tropical humid forest zone of global importance, where deforestation and the consequent loss of local species upon which these communities have traditionally based their livelihoods constitute major environmental and social problems. The project promoted the sustainable processing and marketing of native fruit and wood species, particularly cacao through the construction of 5 ecological drying rooms that, along with other improvements, helped to increase local production. The project fostered the active participation of more than 100 women, three of whom played leadership roles, and strengthened community organizational capacity and cohesion as well as the cultural identity of the Afro participants, historically a marginalized group in Ecuador. The initiative has been sustained through the community microenterprise, Valle del Zázara (<http://valledelzazara.blogspot.com>), which markets products derived from cacao, particularly cocoa and cacao butter.

## Landscape-level conservation by clustering small grants and building social networks

The SGP Community Management of Protected Areas Conservation (COMPACT) partnership with the UN Foundation and UNESCO supports NGOs and CBOs to protect globally significant biodiversity in and around eight World Heritage Sites in **Belize, Dominica, Kenya, Madagascar, Mexico, Philippines, Senegal-Mauritania** border, and **Tanzania** while improving the livelihoods of local peoples:

- Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System, Belize
- Morne Trois Pitons National Park, Dominica
- Mount Kenya National Park, Kenya
- Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve, Mexico
- Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park, Philippines
- Mount Kilimanjaro National Park, Tanzania
- Djoudj-Djwaling Transboundary Biosphere Reserve and World Heritage Site, between Senegal and Mauritania
- Cluster of five protected areas and ICCAs awaiting WHS listing in the dry forests of southwestern Madagascar



COMPACT has allowed SGP to address biodiversity conservation in larger ecosystems and landscapes through a programmatic approach that encompasses mosaics of land types and uses and diverse arrays of communities and stakeholders. Since its inception in 2000 with support from the United Nations Foundation (UNF), COMPACT has demonstrated that the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in and around WHS depends on the constructive engagement of local communities, local authorities, and other stakeholders. This conservation planning and action contributes to sustainable livelihoods and poverty alleviation, thereby creating synergies with the overall SGP project portfolios in the participating countries.

COMPACT has developed a participatory methodology for designing and implementing conservation and sustainable use activities at the landscape level, rooted in both scientific and local knowledge, and deployed through multi-stakeholder consultations throughout the process. Three closely linked elements – a baseline assessment underpinning a COMPACT conceptual model and site strategy – guide grant making and supply the basis for monitoring and evaluation of progress and results.

COMPACT governance at the local level parallels that of SGP, and is similarly decentralized, democratic, and transparent. Under the direction of the SGP country programme, a Local Coordinator and Local Consultative Body (LCB) manage COMPACT in each site, serving as key links between local communities and stakeholders and the SGP NSC. The LCB represents key stakeholders, including local government and protected area authorities, local communities, NGOs, local research institutions, the private sector, and donors, and helps to facilitate dialogue, coordination, and consensus at the site level.







The LCBs have been central in the hundreds of partnerships that COMPACT has been able to establish between park authorities, government bodies, NGO networks, utility companies, hoteliers, tourism associations, foundations, national universities, research centers, and many others.

COMPACT has helped build a broader grassroots constituency for the conservation of World Heritage Sites and COMPACT grantees have become advocates for protected area conservation as a result of increased understanding and exposure to the entire landscape. The COMPACT landscape approach has thus served as “learning laboratories” or centers of excellence for SGP grantees and stakeholders.

Sample accomplishments include:

In **Belize**, COMPACT supported a significant shift in attitude of fishermen and others in the coastal communities that depend on the Belize Barrier Reef System. Fishermen once opposed to marine protected areas are now among their greatest advocates. Many are leading efforts to improve fisheries management policies and expand the boundaries of marine protected areas within the Belize Barrier Reef System.

In **Dominica**, indigenous Kalinago youth in Carib territory are involved in research and documentation on traditional herbs and fruit with the aim of creating small biodiversity enterprises, contributing to the diversification of the national tourism industry, and preserving the traditional ecological knowledge of the Carib people for future generations.

In **Kenya**, numerous donors have found the COMPACT modality appealing and have pledged further financial resources to supporting WHS conservation. The Mt. Kenya Donor Forum, initiated by COMPACT, helped to secure some \$US 35 million from donors such as the European Union to complement COMPACT projects in the WHS.

In **Madagascar**, COMPACT is working with the Tany Meva Foundation, a national environmental trust fund, to engage and empower local and indigenous communities in their stewardship of key sites, through co-financing local projects and joint grantee capacity development and participatory monitoring.



SGP **Mexico** estimates that with COMPACT support a total of 60,000 hectares of community lands connected to the Sian Ka’an Biosphere Reserve (over 10 percent of the area) have been put under sustainable management and use, at a cost of roughly \$US 12 per hectare.

In the **Philippines**, COMPACT supported indigenous groups to secure territorial rights through Certificate of Ancestral Domain claims, restore degraded forest habitat and river banks, and monitor and protect the forest in accordance with customary law, while enhancing local livelihoods, community development, and cultural integrity.

In **Senegal** and **Mauritania**, COMPACT is contributing to stronger bi-national cooperation in managing the Djoudj/Djawling Transboundary Biosphere Reserve by supporting a regional network of grantees and partners and cross-border exchanges. Critical habitats for birds and other wild-life have been restored, and pressure on natural resources within the reserve is starting to ease, evident in reduced deforestation and recovery of fish stocks, while local livelihoods have improved through an array of income-generating activities.



In **Tanzania**, the COMPACT site strategy informed the development of the Kilimanjaro National Park Strategy, the Kilimanjaro National Park Outreach Programme Strategy, and the Kilimanjaro Regional Development Strategy, strengthening partnerships between stakeholders and linking communities with government planning processes. The creation of the COMPACT Kilimanjaro Network of grantees will help sustain community-based efforts once COMPACT support ends by providing a forum for information and knowledge exchange and for joint resource mobilization.

In partnership with the UNF and Conservation International's Verde Ventures programme, COMPACT has also launched the World Heritage Local Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Programme (WH-LEEP) to provide biodiversity-friendly loans for sustainable community-based enterprises in and around WHS. In this pioneering initiative, business development support and a loan guarantee agreement are provided by the donor organization to encourage financial intermediary organizations to work with new start-up nature-based businesses.

COMPACT's work at the landscape level offers both SGP and UNESCO valuable examples of community conservation efforts in and around World Heritage Sites. The landscape conservation model also applies to the co-management and governance of other kinds of protected areas and ICCAs. Similarly, the COMPACT approach has much to offer the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas, particularly in terms of community engagement, benefit-sharing, and governance, and can help guide new strategies for engaging with and supporting community stewardship of protected areas.

For more information on the COMPACT methodology and programme results, see *COMPACT: Engaging Local Communities in Stewardship of Globally Significant Protected Areas*.



## ***Climate Change***

The GEF SGP climate change portfolio extends to some 3000 grants. SGP projects have reduced GHG emissions and tested and applied innovative renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable transport methodologies and technologies at the community level, leading to replication and wider impact. Local demonstration efforts have been taken up by governments and donors and replicated on wider scales, influencing changes in national energy and transportation policies. Disaster risk reduction programmes that anticipate and alleviate damage from natural hazards have contributed to the climate resiliency of communities and ecosystems and lessons learned and good practices have been scaled up to municipal, provincial, and regional levels.

### **Mitigation of GHG emissions**

In **Egypt**, composting of agricultural waste, as opposed to burning it and causing GHG emissions, is a climate change initiative that has been replicated more than 40 times, and it is anticipated that it will be further replicated.

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**Our project, Recycling Agricultural Waste into Compost to Protect the Climate and Improve the Lives of Bedouin, aims to stop burning agricultural wastes and so influence climate change through lessening of emissions through the shredding of agricultural waste and recycling it into organic compost.**

**The project has been very successful in raising awareness against burning and has given the means to those who want to actively be responsible for their environment. Awareness depends on women of the targeted area and through them, dissemination to their family members active in agricultural production, both men and women. The project is concentrating on a small area so that we can be assured that its effect is felt and that the local community is able to promote it and survey its progress.**

**Direct benefits are that jobs have been created – the workers who operate the machinery and produce the compost and also those who are responsible for the awareness component. Also benefits are that in the area of work, agricultural waste is not being burnt.**

**Indirect benefits of the project have been the lessening of use of chemical fertilizer by using the organic compost the project produces and so lessening cost of agriculture to the farmer, and also the improvement of soil quality and protection of subsoil water from runoff from detrimental nitrates.**

**Local manufacturing has been supported through opening a market for producers to develop the machinery used in this project through transfer of know-how, rather than the machinery used in the past that was imported from abroad.**

**We hope to encourage people to start similar projects in other areas by sharing the experience and the know-how and assisting them in going through the steps needed without trial and error.**

**Our community now enjoys air free of gases emitted from agricultural waste burning and the residents now have less lung allergies and disease.**

Eng. Inas Omar, Board member, Nahdet El Mansouria Association for Development, grantee, Egypt

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### Renewable energy

In the **Dominican Republic**, the renewable energy projects supported by SGP since 1994 (solar energy and hydroelectric) have had a huge impact on people's well being, building commitment to natural resource conservation and local empowerment. As a result of this experience, the support of the Dominican government and international cooperation was obtained to replicate and scale up these types of systems of electricity generation in isolated areas. Similarly, SGP experience has influenced in a positive manner policy formation supporting the development of small-scale renewable energy with the participation of local communities.

**And we learn from our mistakes – the best example was when SGP began to work with community micro-hydro projects. Nobody thought that it was going to work, but now there are projects that have been operating for more than 15 years. In the process many errors were committed, but they have been resolved over time. SGP experiences with micro-hydro projects were replicated throughout the country and have now been scaled up with the support of the European Union and an investment of €2.5 million.**

Mr. Alberto Sánchez, SGP NC, Dominican Republic

SGP **Kenya** supported a micro-hydropower project in Tungu Kabiri, a rural community north of Nairobi. The project demonstrated appropriate, off-the-grid energy options through the installation, training, and operation of a micro-hydropower system and a micro-enterprise shopping center. By addressing limitations and barriers that hindered decentralized power schemes, the successful results of the project contributed directly to the National Energy Policy. The Ministry of Energy, having been involved in this project, initiated a process to establish standards and a code of best practices for the small hydro sector. Consequently, communities were able to install over 50 pico- and micro-hydropower systems in various parts of the country.

In **Lao PDR**, a micro-hydropower project has helped to protect forest watersheds and promote sustainable livelihoods in a Hmong village. “Everyone is responsible for not cutting down or burning the trees, so that we generate enough electricity with hydropower for everyone and for generations to come,” said Somvang Lee, the head of the village. He is proud of what has been achieved and believes that the training for villagers, in terms of project management and technical capacity development, has also significantly contributed to the success of the hydropower system. To ensure the sustainability of the project, each household contributes 6,000 Lao Kip (about \$US 0.75) per month to maintain the hydropower turbine and protect the watershed forest.

In **Jamaica**, SGP support helped establish the Caribbean Maritime Institute as a learning center for renewable energy that produces wind energy and potable drinking water, launched in March 2012. With the use of wind turbines made from recycled material – 45-gallon oil drums – the system is designed to produce potable water from rain, brackish and sea water that will be purified on-site to minimize distribution losses and increase the efficiency of the water resource system. Additionally, renewable energy sources will be used to run reverse-osmosis devices for producing the potable water. This will reduce the cost of electricity and water for community use. The project is intended to initiate a system for the replication of this low-cost technology, by building capacity and empowering communities in the manufacture, sales, and maintenance of the unit. The project has influenced policy in that the technology has been incorporated into national energy policy. It has also been replicated on a Jamaica Defense Force base in the Pedro Keys, funded by Canadian International Development Agency.

### Energy Efficiency

SGP **Pakistan** supported the research and design for the low-cost, energy-efficient, and disaster-resistant housing solution popularly known as the “Benazir Model,” which has been replicated by UNDP and the provincial government of Sindh. Five hundred housing units have been built in the disaster-prone districts of Karachi, Thatta, and Badin by local communities on their own land, at a cost of \$US 3,900 per house, with most houses owned by poor widows and women heads of households. Development and construction of the houses provided on-the-job training for workers in understanding and applying the energy-efficient and climate-resilient model as well as in equipping the houses with solar lanterns and street lights. This innovative and sustainable housing solution was showcased as a best practice at the 2009 World Bank Global South-South Development Expo.

In **India** SGP grantee Nehru Foundation for Development produced a booklet on “Low Carbon Lifestyles” that was released during the 2010 Commonwealth Games. More than 300,000 copies were printed and shared with more than 2000 institutions and over 100,000 people, both the general public and students in schools and colleges. SGP grantee the Foundry Association developed a “Toolkit on Energy Conservation Opportunities in Foundry Industry,” released by the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs during the 59th Indian Foundry Congress held at Chandigarh in February 2011. The toolkit has reached some 3,500 foundry units in the country with the rationale to adopt simple energy efficiency measures. Five units have already invested nearly Rs.20 lacs (\$US 45,000) with the resulting reduction of nearly 10,000 mts. of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in one year.

### Sustainable Transport

In **Jordan**, an emissions monitoring and reduction project worked to introduce vehicle emissions testing. The grantee conducted intensive monitoring of vehicle emissions and used the results to highlight the risks to human health and global climate caused by pollution resulting from motorized transport. The study results formed the basis for new government standards, and monitoring has become part of the government’s vehicle annual testing requirements. In **Morocco**, another emissions monitoring and reduction project used applied research and policy analysis, capacity development,



and awareness raising to support the implementation of a government decree against air pollution. The project designed and implemented an air pollution test for vehicles, which was tried in several Moroccan cities. Volunteers were trained in the procedure, and the test was eventually carried out on 100,000 motor vehicles. Providing baseline data on Moroccan emissions of air pollution and GHG from the transport sector, this project provides a basis for future action.

In **Lithuania**, three SGP projects joined together to create an ecotourism bicycle route along the Nemunas River, a scenic natural area in the south of Lithuania. The projects worked with municipalities and environmental NGOs to develop bicycle ecotourism routes along the river, attracting international and national tourism and promoting rural livelihoods. Development of bicycle tourism avoids over-motorization of the tourism sector – avoiding GHG emissions while preserving the scenic charm and tranquility of the region, thus safeguarding the factors that attract people to the region in the first place. The grantees helped local governments, CBOs, and other stakeholders to work together in planning the route, while building the capacity of local people to benefit from tourism through crafts, hospitality, restaurant, and other small industries. The direct influx of money to the communities as a result of the projects is tens of thousands of dollars per year. Additional funds from national donors and the European Union have allowed activities to be upscaled to improve and pave the routes.

In **Kyrgyzstan**, three demonstration projects created bicycle rental stations in the cities of Colpon Anta, Talas, and Karikol. Increasing access to bicycles among residents for whom they were previously out of reach, the rental schemes also provided employment for a number of workers. Partnerships were made with municipalities to integrate bicycle use into local transport policy. The schemes are also an important addition to the regional tourism industry. In Iran, a community project promoted the culture of using bicycles as an alternative and environment friendly means of transportation as well as a sport. The project is training community members in safe cycling practices and basic repair, and is working with city councils to establish safe cycling paths and identify recommended routes. Financial mechanisms were designed to increase public access to bicycles, and rallies, cycle races, conferences, and other events were held to popularize the sport. To enhance the sustainability of project interventions, the grantee also built community capacity to form its own recreational cycling and advocacy organization.



### Turning sunflowers into biofuel enterprises in Ghana

The Gomoa East District and Awutu District of the Central Region contain the coastal savannah ecosystem with remnants of conserved pristine semi-deciduous tropical forest. The biodiversity of these traditional forests and watersheds is threatened by the effects of shifting agriculture, wildfires, illegal logging, and uncontrolled hunting. It was estimated that if nothing were done within the next decade, a protected area and essential habitat for over 600 different species would be lost.

Long dry periods of more than 5 months exacerbate land degradation and its consequences – soil erosion, water scarcity, reduced agricultural productivity, and decreased nutritional value of food crops. This causes severe hardship for the local populations which depend on agriculture for their survival.

In order to sustain the land and improve livelihoods, with SGP support the Tema Cooperative Sunflowers Association developed the capacities of 50 rural farmers in Gomoa Adzente and 10 surrounding villages to integrate renewable energy production into sustainable land management and rehabilitate degraded community lands through sunflower processing, apiculture, and food crop production. The farmers have organized themselves into registered farmer-based organizations that are investing in marketable products yielded by the project.

The project has yielded 1,000 tons of sunflower feedstock annually for sunflower oil and biodiesel production with a new sunflower processing mill. By the second year, the project produced and supplied 2,500 liters of biodiesel for the two tractors used by member groups. The project also produced 120 liters of organic honey from the sunflower farms and bottled them for sale. “The multiple services from the project have improved our wellbeing considerably and besides, it has brought us together,” said Maame Aba Yaa Kru, a member of the community biodiesel group.

Within two years of operation 200 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent were avoided and some 50-60 bags of chemical fertilizer, which would have been used in the fields, was replaced by the cake residue from the sunflower oil. Over 1500 hectares of protected land have been restored and 110 hectares of farmland have been placed under sustainable land management.

The project has established three local enterprises to upscale and replicate the project: 1) The farmer-based organizations that are concerned with the sustainable production of sunflower feedstock. The Ministry of Food and Agriculture has assisted the groups to acquire five tractors on hire purchase. 2) Tropical Agricultural Marketing and Consulting Services owned by the farmer groups, which has been registered as a private company to process and market the biodiesel. 3) A yet to be registered enterprise to integrate livestock production to utilize the cake residue from the production of sunflower oil and promote the sale of glycerin to pharmaceutical and cosmetics companies.

The Volta River Authority has expressed the desire to purchase 1.6 million tons of sunflower biodiesel annually to feed its thermal plant in Aboadze in the Western Region in Ghana. Samples of the biofuels were tested by the Ghana Standard Board and the Volta River Authority and found to meet all the environmental specifications. Furthermore, the Ministry of Energy is currently encouraging investments in biofuel as part of the national energy policy. The project has also encouraged the Ministry to pursue Cabinet approval for the Renewable Energy Policy.

Mr. Raymond Babanawo, GEF OFP, commented: “SGP is an important partner in environmental management in Ghana, because the program creates opportunity for local communities to demonstrate ownership of processes and initiatives to address local environmental challenges that usually have implications for their livelihoods.”



SGP Ghana

### ***International Waters***

GEF SGP has supported some 800 international waters projects that reduced pollution of trans-boundary waters, conserved and sustainably managed fresh water, coastal, and marine resources, and rehabilitated critical ecosystems.

SGP has proven to be an effective delivery mechanism for large, in some cases multi-country, programs and projects in different GEF focal areas, but several international waters initiatives stand out. For large-scale projects that focus on national or even international programming and policies, but lack the means for on-the-ground implementation, SGP offers the critical link with civil society and local communities. SGP's grounded engagement with communities and proven participatory methodologies help these projects to achieve their objectives through pilot initiatives and demonstration sites that can be tested and replicated in the field by local actors. SGP's community-based approach offers the prospect of translating national and global agreements and policies into local practice by working in local cultures and languages.

### **Conserving and sustainably managing fresh water resources**

SGP implemented the micro-grant component of the GEF Nile Transboundary Environmental Action Project in the Nile River Basin. A total of 234 projects were funded with more than \$4.4 million to address environmental issues in **Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda**, including community-level land, forest, and water conservation, wetlands and biodiversity, water quality monitoring, and environment education and awareness. For example, activities focusing on water treatment, such as the recycling and re-use of grey water, maximized the availability and quality of clean water resources for Nile River villages. By treating grey water, local communities were able to better protect fresh water sources and prevent their contamination.

Community projects around Lake Victoria in **Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda** made major efforts to clear and control water hyacinth, an invasive weed that blocks fishing grounds, hinders navigation, clogs water intakes, and compromises water quality.

## Rehabilitation of critical ecosystems in the South China Sea

SGP supported the implementation of the Strategic Action Programme (SAP) in the South China Sea (SCS) based on a 2008 partnership agreement with the UNEP GEF Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and the Gulf of Thailand full-size project involving **Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam**. The Strategic Action Programme for the South China Sea identifies as the top regional priority the loss and degradation of coastal habitats – primarily mangroves, seagrass, and coral reefs – with targets for the areas that should be protected and brought under sustainable management by 2015. With total funding of \$US 1.1 million (50 percent each from SGP and the SCS project), 31 SGP grants were awarded across six countries. SGP also raised over \$US 800,000 in co-financing.

Most countries bordering the South China Sea designate inshore waters up to 3 or 5 nautical miles from shore as small-scale fishing zones. In practice, large, commercial fishing boats frequently intrude inshore using destructive fishing gear, including trawls and push nets in sensitive habitats, which has also had a dramatic impact on the small-scale hook-and-line or crab pot fishermen. As result, conflicts frequently arise between the small-scale fishermen and commercial boats. Moreover, over-fishing and consequent declining stocks mean that small-scale fishermen are in need of alternative sources of income, better control over their fishing grounds, and improved, environmentally sustainable, fishing techniques.

SGP-SCS grants enabled communities to improve their environmental and natural resource management practices, especially of fisheries. Community-based project implementation committees have assumed permanent responsibilities in mangrove replanting programmes, sustainable management of crab stocks, monitoring and regulation of fishing in designated zones, exclusion of commercial (illegal) fishermen from coastal waters designated as small-scale fishing zones, and related activities. Projects that focus on critical habitats all involve some form of community-based coastal zone management. In addition, most SGP-SCS projects include alternative livelihoods and sources of income, for example, through the promotion of village-based ecotourism focusing on mangroves, seagrass, and lowland rainforests.

The projects have brought 2,079 hectares of seagrass, 2,388 hectares of coral reef, and 12,618 hectares of mangrove under sustainable management, which represent 8, 4.5, and 0.7 percent, respectively, of the overall 2015 SAP targets. Moreover, practices developed by these projects have been adopted for replication by provincial governments, most notably in Thailand and Indonesia. Provincial and national governments have also designated some projects as learning or demonstration centers and project leaders as resource persons.



The partnership has been effective and beneficial to both parties: for South China Sea SAP implementation in terms of significant contributions to achieving SAP priorities and targets; and for SGP country programmes through the provision of an inter-governmentally approved framework for local implementation of international waters projects. SGP was able to commit grants funds efficiently – 92 percent of the South China Sea grant funds were committed within 9 months of the signature of the agreement. Partnerships between SGP and full-size GEF international waters projects can be highly effective in mobilizing community involvement in the achievement of SAP targets. The SGP-SCS arrangement could be used as a model for future partnerships in other regions.



## Land Degradation

GEF SGP has supported some 2000 land degradation projects over the past decade. These projects demonstrated sustainable agricultural, forestry, and grazing practices to rehabilitate degraded fields, forests, and pastures. Because of its crosscutting nature, many projects in the other GEF focal areas have had beneficial impacts for reverting land degradation, for example, the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, climate resilient landscapes, soil and water conservation, reforestation and community forestry, elimination of agricultural chemicals, composting, fuel-efficient stoves, and recovery of indigenous knowledge and practices.

### Sustainable agricultural land management

SGP **Cuba** funded an initial grant and then, based on its promising results, a follow-up grant to the community of Macambo in Guantánamo province in the semiarid southeastern part of the country to diminish the effects of desertification and drought by replanting heavily degraded areas with the native *Jatropha curcas* L. plant, interspersed with short-cycle food crops. A small-sized processing plant was built to transform *Jatropha curcas* seeds into oil for soap making and to undertake laboratory tests for biodiesel production. The results obtained were instrumental in upscaling the interspersed planting and growing scheme through the BIOMAS-CUBA project, co-financed by the Swiss and Cuban government for nearly US\$ 2 million. Among other biomass uses, this project includes the cultivation of 100 hectares of *Jatropha curcas* and the assembly of a pilot plant for biodiesel production, through the technology developed by the SGP projects, with an estimated annual output of 100 tons of biodiesel upon project completion.

In **Armenia** SGP supported the initiative of the Parakar community administration to rehabilitate community farmlands through application of lagoon-type biological ponds for domestic wastewater treatment. In terms of global environmental benefits, 100 hectares of degraded lands are being restored and penetration of about 12 tons of nitrogen and 6 tons of phosphorus into the groundwater aquifer prevented. Apart from addressing urgent environmental issues, the project is significantly improving local people's well-being and livelihoods; about 45 households will gain an average \$US 700-1,200 annual income, depending on the crop yields on the once degraded farmland.

This technology, which treats household wastewater to achieve irrigation quality, was adapted for Armenian conditions and a local company designed the treatment structures. Domestic wastewater treatment via biological ponds is an attractive non-conventional wastewater treatment technology for small communities in the Ararat Valley area. It is innovative, simple, effective, and relatively cost-effective to build and operate, and can ensure substantial savings through its application. The project enjoys strong local ownership, with about 70 percent of the total project budget coming from the community.

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**This project is of high importance for the community residents, since it aims to solve several problems at once – social, health, and environmental. Unlike the option developed under the master plan of the Parakar community with an estimated cost of \$US 1.5 million, this option is rather cost-effective and environmentally friendly. It will also contribute to the development of small businesses in the community, as a community-owned entity will be established to operate the treatment system and develop fish industry in the future.**

Mr. Samvel Vardanyan, head of Parakar community, grantee, Armenia

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### Sustainable pasture management

Land degradation has been a key focal area in **Mongolia**, and the following example effectively captures an approach that has been replicated several times successfully: To provide livelihood alternatives and restore degraded grazing lands, a herder community in Bayangol soum fenced 2 hectares and planted over 2000 sea buckthorn seedlings along with other fruits, established a wind protection belt area, and created a tree nursery that produces about 200,000 tree seedlings a year. Four years after the creation of the garden, the community has been able to harvest 1.8 tons of sea buckthorn, 300 kg of black currant, and some quantities of other berries for sale. Land degradation and soil erosion have abated and the land is fully recovering. In addition, the community is deeply engaged in the protection of the Haraa river ecosystem and has also started beekeeping. Four neighboring communities and 11 individuals and small companies in the area have replicated the project.

### Sustainable forest management

In **Togo**, the challenges faced by a community partner attempting to conserve and sustainably use forest resources – sustainable fuel wood extraction and gathering, transforming, and marketing non-timber forest products – in a forest adjacent to community homes of many decades, have revealed the importance of community forest rights. Once work was underway, putative non-resident land-owners violently opposed the project. This initial failure led to placing more emphasis on the issues of land tenure, and also to drawing the attention of government authorities to the need for granting titles to community forest and natural resource areas. The situation provides a case study about lobbying and legal pleas for national authorities to reform national policy on land. It also highlights the struggle against land grabbing, by which individuals or national or international firms acquire large areas of land for investment purposes – agro-industry and/or land speculation – at the expense of small farmers and poor communities.

### Chemicals

GEF SGP has supported some 300 chemicals projects worldwide, contributing to the implementation of the Stockholm Convention to prevent, reduce, and eliminate the occurrence of POPs and other toxic chemicals. They have done so by piloting innovative demonstration models, developing the capacity of NGO and CBO grantees, and establishing partnerships to increase the impact of community-based approaches. Eliminating toxic waste dumps and practicing chemical-free agriculture have been high on community agendas.

### Sustainable solid waste management

A dump for domestic solid waste in Guantanamo, **Cuba** was a highly toxic eyesore, severely affecting the health and well-being of the adjoining community of Isleta Sur. Approximately 150 tons of solid waste were burned daily at the dumpsite, generating large quantities of dioxins and furans, noxious vectors, smoke, and other emissions. With SGP support, the community eradicated the source of the pollution and transformed three hectares of waste site into a garden. Fruit trees were planted, compost is being produced, and a plant nursery and recycling facility for rubber, plastics, and metals established. The recycling center provides employment for 40 local residents, including 19 women. The project's community leader, Ms. Irania Martinez Garcia, won the National Environmental Award in 2006, the top annual prize given by the Ministry for the Environment, and the CNN Hero Award in 2007. The project has been replicated in at least 10 other communities in the province and elsewhere in the country.

The publicized success of the Cuba waste-to-gardens project and related experiences have also inspired peer-to-peer learning and a proliferation of SGP projects in different countries (**Albania, Bulgaria,**

**Ghana, India, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Macedonia, Malawi, Mexico, Pakistan, Palestinian Authority, Romania, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Uganda**). These projects involve sustainable waste management to reduce POPs, producing both direct global environmental and local benefits – an example of how good project ideas are replicated, modified, and adapted across the global SGP. Over the past four years, an estimated 2,138 tons of POPs emissions (such as dioxins and furans) from burning domestic, medical, and other types of waste have been prevented. Moreover, these projects have led to the change of practices and policies beyond the community level. For example, in **Lebanon**, an SGP project aimed at stopping the burning of waste – rubber tires and medical waste – in the Nabatiyeh area led to the Minister of Health adopting the project solution such that hospitals are now sterilizing instead of burning medical waste, which releases dioxins. In 2011, the International Labor Organization adopted as priority number one for its green jobs programme in Lebanon the project alternative to burning tires of separating and recycling the rubber and metal tire components.

In **Nepal**, SGP grantee Center for Public Health and Environmental Development (CEPHED) won the 2011 Stockholm Convention PEN Award in the capacity development and outreach category. With the support of SGP, CEPHED undertook a detailed research study on the impact of PCBs on public health and the environment, the results of which were widely publicized. CEPHED also led workshops for raising awareness and capacity development on PCBs. As a result, hospitals began to practice waste segregation and disposal through safer methods than incineration, and the Grill Workers Association has gradually started to phase out the use of PCB-contaminated transformer oil during welding processes.

#### Sustainable chemical-free agriculture

Not only community gardens but community sustainable agriculture has benefited from chemicals eradication efforts. A number of countries, among them **Albania, Armenia, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Cook Islands, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Mali, Pakistan, Peru, Suriname, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, and Zimbabwe**, have undertaken activities to promote integrated pest management and organic fertilizers in sustainable agriculture with multiple benefits. This has not only reduced POPs, but also restored watersheds and waterways, produced more ecological and marketable crops, and improved the health of communities.





### Capacity development on POPs

To strengthen community capacity and knowledge to implement the Stockholm Convention, SGP, in collaboration with the International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN), developed an online training module, available in English, French, Spanish, Russian, and Arabic. The module is designed to help NGOs, CBOs, and all SGP stakeholders translate GEF policies and the Stockholm Convention mandates into meaningful local actions. The module provides information on the Convention's legal and institutional arrangements and examples of community-based POPs management. It emphasizes the importance of local community and NGO contributions to national and international POPs reduction and elimination efforts. The POPs training module consists of seven chapters, followed by a basic self-test. Those who finish and return the self-test receive a certificate of completion. There are more than 920 online users of the training module, and more than 10,000 people who have been trained through offline versions. The online training course is available at [www.sgp-pops.org](http://www.sgp-pops.org).

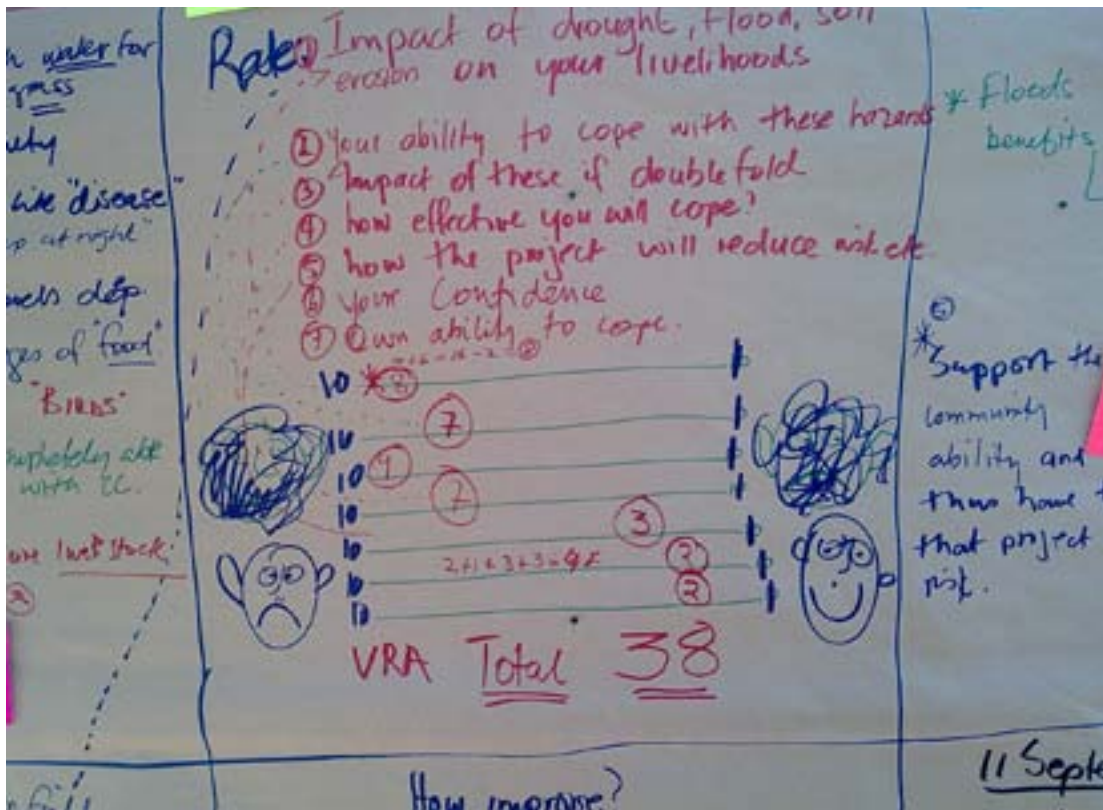
### ***Community-based adaptation***

SGP, as a partner and delivery mechanism for different donors and agencies, has supported more than 100 community-based adaptation projects across 28 countries with approximately \$US 10 million. CBA projects have:

- Trained local practitioners in the Vulnerability Risk Assessment tool that measures community climate change vulnerabilities such that they can be compared and CBA practices monitored and evaluated across projects, communities, and regions
- Improved conservation agriculture techniques, such as conservation tillage or crop restructuring models to adapt to flooding in river plains
- Reforested steep slopes and other vulnerable areas to reduce soil erosion and landslides and better withstand extreme meteorological events
- Improved water resource management in drylands, providing more irrigation water while reducing overall water consumption
- Introduced of healthier, energy efficient stoves that reduce fuel wood use and GHG emissions, as well as indoor pollution
- Enhanced the resilience of fisheries by applying innovative management models based on scientific and local knowledge

### Conservation agriculture

In **Namibia**, a suite of SGP projects has tested innovative methods for conservation agriculture designed to support sustainable land management and community-based adaptation to climate change, specifically conservation tillage and the ripper furrowing method. Under poor soil and scarce water conditions, ripper furrowing prevents soil compaction by cutting a deep furrow. The method captures and concentrates rainwater where it is needed most, delivering higher crop yields. Locally manufactured ripper ploughs are cost effective. Participating communities determined that the method was indeed good for their soils and more than doubled crop yields. Numerous other communities now wish to access support to practice these methods, far exceeding SGP funding capacities. Therefore the next step is to build on this tested good practice for CBA, design and implement a new conservation agricultural model, and put in place mechanisms for its replication nationally. For more information, see: *A Tool to Enhance Conservation Tillage Practices in Namibia*.



### Increasing climate resilience through disaster risk reduction and recovery

In 2002, after Hurricane Isidore's devastating impact on the Yucatán Peninsula, SGP **Mexico** launched the Local Risk Management Program with the support of UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery. The Program mitigates climate change by taking measures to prevent forest fires after hurricanes, and to increase the resilience of communities and landscapes to climate change by including risk management considerations in project design. The evolution of SGP in a region with high incidence of extreme climatic events, some of them with disastrous consequences for SGP projects and partners, led to the program's creation. The program is using the experiences of NGOs and CBOs linked to the Mexican SGP to incorporate tested methods and practices of preventing damage from and adapting to climate change. After several years of capacity-building activities, each SGP microregion and large ecosystem has a pool of trained local experts. Risk factors have been reviewed and eliminated in almost all SGP proposals, and risk management plans as well as adaptation measures have been designed in all SGP communities. This experience has been extended, with external financing, to 647 communities in 32 microregions, involving the federal government and the governments of the states of Chiapas, Tabasco, Campeche, Yucatan, and Quintana Roo.

### Economic benefits

To produce local and global environmental benefits, GEF SGP has consistently emphasized concurrent economic benefits under the broad rubric of poverty alleviation through sustainable livelihoods.

Poverty reduction is a critical crosscutting theme in all country programme strategies, necessary for pursuing the well being of SGP constituencies and the MDGs. Most SGP projects incorporate sustainable livelihoods or income-generating alternative livelihoods as essential elements for both alleviating poverty and furthering the conservation and management of natural resources. Many country programmes have also introduced microcredit schemes and revolving funds as means to enhance

community economic capacity, food security, and gender empowerment. Microfinance and the creation of local environmental funds can also secure the sustainability of SGP interventions. Across the global portfolio, sustainable clean energy production and biodiversity goods and services have become increasingly important as means for community economic survival and improvement.

To enable these economic benefits, SGP country programmes and projects provide training and capacity development on relevant themes, expert technical assistance, links to government and donor programmes, and access to fair trade networks and marketing organizations. As discussed in previous sections, SGP grantees and other CSOs also form networks, for example to promote ecotourism, organic agriculture, and traditional medicine, that increase the possibilities of obtaining economic benefits.

In synthesis, SGP produces the following major economic benefits for participating communities:

**Sustainable livelihoods.** Sustainable livelihood approaches are many and varied depending on the selected GEF thematic and the community context, but may include sustainable small enterprises for the production of biodiversity goods, processing of nontimber forest products, alternative income generation related to renewable energy and energy efficiency, sustainable forest or fisheries management, community-based ecotourism, and promotion of traditional medicine. Most of these approaches, for example ecotourism and alternative tourism, are common to virtually all SGP country programmes.

**Job creation.** In a global survey in 2009, it was estimated that SGP generated more than half a million jobs for local communities around the world.<sup>7</sup> Green jobs are created through training for the production, implementation, and commercialization of renewable energy and energy efficient technologies and systems across sectors; management, recycling, composting, and safe disposal of solid waste in rural and urban areas; testing and application of innovative methods of managing sustainable fisheries and other natural resources; and participation in the co-management of protected areas.

**Microfinance.** This includes microcredit schemes, revolving funds, savings and self-help groups, cooperatives, and local environmental funds. Measures such as microcredit schemes and savings and self-help groups are critical for actual community survival, especially of the most vulnerable. Other mechanisms, such as the formation of cooperatives and revolving funds, allow communities to take the next step in ensuring their sustainable development by accessing new tools and technologies. Local environment funds bring together NGOs, CBOs, local governments, and other actors as sustainable mechanisms for producing local and global benefits.

**Access to markets.** This includes certification of products and producers, marketing, and fair trade networks. Enabling access to markets is critical for all projects that are producing sustainable goods and services. Otherwise enterprises would most likely not be viable even at the local level. Quality assurance is a necessary requirement, especially when marketing food products and pharmaceuticals. SGP projects train grantees on the means to achieve certification as organic farmers, organic honey producers, and traditional medicine purveyors. SGP partnerships facilitate links with private sector companies and fair trade networks that can provide technical assistance and advice.

**Security of land and resource tenure.** The recognition of rights to territories and natural resources is a starting condition to undertake sustainable development action, whether through formal titles and usufruct rights or based in customary law and practice. SGP considers this to be of critical importance when working with marginalized and vulnerable communities and indigenous groups. Therefore the programme has promoted ICCAs, enabled negotiation and resolution of land and resource conflicts, and supported partners to come up with creative solutions to tenancy issues.

7 The tally includes part-time, full-time, seasonal, and temporary jobs.



The GEF Small Grants Programme is a very important one for my country because as an environmental preservation tool it is alleviating poverty. In fact this program allows some of our rural populations, who have never seen modern or conventional light in their lives, to be able to get light through solar energy.

Additionally, since Côte d'Ivoire is a forest country, women are used to cooking their food with firewood, but with the fuel-efficient cooking stove made with local materials through SGP funding, women are now using less wood. And the result is forest preservation and better health.

SGP also allowed for conserving endangered sea turtles, which travel from the Latin American coastal areas to the beaches of West Africa to lay eggs. In African countries, these eggs are often used as food. Having saved these turtle eggs through alternative livelihood projects that can reduce poverty, these species of sea turtles, which would otherwise have disappeared, have been preserved.

Ms. Alimata Kone Bakayoko, GEF OFP, Côte d'Ivoire

### **Microcredit**

**Cambodia** provides a representative example of the range of poverty alleviation measures in a least developed country context. The programme has promoted savings and self-help groups, supported alternative livelihoods (community forestry enterprises, sugar palm production and processing), and sustainably augmented agricultural and natural resource productivity as a means of increasing rural incomes. Some projects have reduced expenses for participants, such as the cost of water and energy by introducing renewable and efficient options, or loan interest payments by supporting revolving funds and microcredit as an alternative to traditional moneylenders or banks.

In **India**, nearly 90 percent of SGP projects are in remote rural areas in communities on the edge of subsistence. As in Cambodia, lack of access to microcredit and the reliance on moneylenders compounds the problems of the rural poor. Therefore, during SGP proposal development, the national host institution Centre for Environment Education (CEE) facilitates information and access to rural credit systems. This strengthens the capacity and credibility of NGOs and CBOs and enables communities, especially women, to have a greater command over resources, increase food security and self-sufficiency, make more productive use of savings, and enlarge their capabilities in terms of skills, productivity, and inventiveness. This is in fact an empowerment process that allows communities and women to participate actively in their own development. The availability of credit also enhances the adoption of new technologies (e.g., improved cook-stoves, solar water heating systems, oil expellers), benefitting both the environment and the poor. SGP grantee Foundation for Ecological Security has developed a model for strengthening community institutions for protection and conservation, which has been mainstreamed with the government of India's National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. This has meant additional co-financing, increased employment opportunities for local peoples, and more direct involvement of local peoples in conservation practices around protected areas.





SGP **India** projects are therefore routinely linked with government programs to leverage more resources, with more than 80 percent promoting women-led self help groups. Members save \$US 2 per person per month, and the savings are linked to bank credits. Women are better able to meet their consumption and production needs through timely, cheap access to funds. Over the past three years, through 70 SGP projects involving 500 villages (60,000 households and 400,000 people), 1200 women self-help groups have been established with 25,000 members, savings of nearly Rs.30 lacs (\$US 62,000), and nearly Rs.12 lacs (\$US 24,500) in credit secured from government and private sector banks. These modest but tangible benefits are a direct contribution to enhancing the livelihoods of poor and marginal communities and accrue in parallel to the local and global environmental benefits produced.

### ***Revolving funds***

In **Kyrgyzstan** SGP provided seed money of just \$US 8000 to the Jamaat Bai-Tilek CBO to organize a “mutual benefit” or revolving fund to build and install solar collectors and water heaters.

The use of coal, dung, and wood is widely spread in rural households for heating, cooking, and boiling water for various purposes. The cheapest and most available is firewood. CBO Bai-Tilek initiated a project, supported by SGP Kyrgyzstan, that aimed to reduce tree cutting and decreasing CO2 emissions to the atmosphere. The idea of the project was to install solar water heaters in households using a CBO revolving fund. For 7-8 months of the year, using only solar energy, these water heaters can satisfy household domestic needs. Due to the high cost of solar water heaters, SGP assisted in the partial acquisition of component parts, and conducted training workshops for CBO members in assembly and installation of solar water heaters. CBO members organized a mutual benefit revolving fund, to which members make monthly contributions in cash. After a certain amount has been accumulated, the CBO buys the necessary parts and installs a solar water heater in the household of one of the members, chosen by lottery. Members of the CBO had the opportunity to bring their innovative idea of mutual aid into life, improve their living conditions, reduce the cost for purchasing fuel and, most importantly, to reduce the burden on the environment and CO2 emissions. Sustainability of the project is based not only on creating the revolving fund. SGP helped us to organize seminars to disseminate the experience of the CBO to other households by demonstrating the usefulness and efficiency of solar water heaters and of creating the revolving fund, training members of other households in installing solar water heaters, and informing the local population about the possibility of reducing impact on the environment through their own initiatives.

Ms. Elmira Aiylichieva, Jamaat Bai-Tilek leader and grantee, interviewed by Ms. Asylkan Duishembieva, SGP NSC member, Kyrgyzstan

In **Yemen** SGP seed money helped several communities on Socotra and Kamaran islands to develop an innovative financing method to pay for the installation and upkeep of solar systems to supply water, including replacing diesel water pumps and rainwater harvesting. Communities collected fees for water use measured by meters in each home and each household also made payments into a

revolving fund to cover maintenance costs, thereby helping ensure the sustainability of the venture. Other communities interested in improving domestic water supply and garden irrigation have adopted this approach. In addition to reducing GHG emissions, the solar technologies improved water quality and safety, and reduced the time and effort of women in fetching water.

### **Local environmental funds**

In **Macedonia**, SGP seed money is creating a model for funding local environmental funds with the support of local authorities and civil society.

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SGP Macedonia has become a leading organization supporting and promoting energy efficiency and use of renewable energy sources, mostly solar, with 10 replicated and one upscaled projects in the country. All projects were completed with tangible results, for example, placing draught-proofing strips round windows and doors, replacing old drinking water taps with new more efficient ones; replacing old and installing new energy efficient bulbs, and so on, in schools, kindergartens, and other public buildings. Project activities were accompanied by theoretical and practical workshops for local inhabitants and authorities and by a broad communications campaign. SGP projects led to the creation of EnviroFunds at the local level, with savings gained from the project and additional money from local budgets. These local funds are available to citizens and local CSOs for environmental projects. This model, established by SGP Macedonia, is generating seed money for local environmental activities that produce results and create genuine cooperation between local government and civil society. Having been presented and explained throughout Macedonia by SGP grantees the model is being used by SGP replicated projects, local governments, and some other donors.

Mr. Zlatko Samardziev, SGP NC, Macedonia

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### **Sustainable community enterprises**

Sustainable community enterprises, such as apiculture, have historically proven to be effective for SGP country programmes to conserve biodiversity while realizing sustainable livelihood and income generation benefits. **Ghana, Brazil** and **Mexico** currently make up nearly 40 percent of apiculture grants funded, but apiculture projects for biodiversity conservation have also been implemented in at least 50 other countries, including **Bolivia, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Comoros, Cote d'Ivoire, Guatemala, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Mali, Morocco, Senegal**, and **Tunisia**. Bee-keeping projects have sought to conserve ecosystems under threat by providing viable alternative livelihoods to less sustainable use of forest and other biodiversity. For example, see the table below in the discussion on Mexico's organic honey certification and marketing programme, which provides the number of hectares of forest area conserved through apiculture. Projects have also conserved native bee species for honey production and, by funding organic agriculture and providing non-toxic methods of pest and weed control, increased crop yields through the maintenance of native pollinators. Apiculture has thus served as a model for simultaneously pursuing sustainable development and biodiversity conservation.



### Integrated biodiversity and cultural enterprises in Peru

The projects financed by SGP Peru are related to the conservation of biodiversity, especially of genetic resources; species at risk of extinction, both flora and fauna; and the recovery of ecosystems that have been degraded or are deteriorating. They also promote sustainable livelihoods, which make the majority of the projects productive, and the CBOs become microenterprises before the projects come to an end. In order to be able to more systematically manage these projects, we developed a micro-entrepreneurial cluster of products based on biodiversity. This involved the participation of successful projects whose goal was to expand the productive base, standardize production processes, provide collective certification, fortify small-scale entrepreneurs, and market their products.

SGP's work has allowed for the recuperation and management of over 100,000 hectares of dry forest, the recuperation of 700 species threatened with extinction and 300 medicinal, aromatic and natural-dye plants. Five private conservation areas are receiving support. The "uyco" color of native cotton, once considered extinct, and approximately 360 native potato species, have been recovered. Of the 221 projects financed to date, 150 have been grants directly to CBOs, with a large percentage going to the indigenous population (Quechua, Aymara, Moche).

SGP works in isolated communities where no other donor provides support. This is the case in the project for the conservation of the colored suri race of alpaca in Nuñoa, Puno, where we work with the Quechua-speaking population. This project promoted the transformation of the fiber of this race of alpaca. In recovering the colors of this species, the soft, silky fiber of the suri alpaca has gained new appreciation. In Puno, home of both the suri and huacaya alpacas, no one sells the colored alpacas that used to be destined for the slaughterhouse because the industry demanded whitened fiber.

As a result of ongoing support from SGP through a second grant, the municipal government declared Nuñoa the world capital of the suri alpaca and presented legislation to promote its conservation. It has also generated other efforts to recover, conserve, and transform the fiber of the colored suri alpaca. Currently, SGP is financing four projects in Puno modeled after this one. They have become a reference point for artisans and other alpaca breeders and herders, and have also helped protect pasture and wetlands through an integrated framework for the conservation of highland ecosystems.

Another successful example is the project for conservation of native cotton in Arbolsol and Huaca de Barro in the district of Mórrope, Lambayeque, whose association of artisans won the 2008 Equator Prize. The project led to this legally prohibited species to be recognized since 2008 as part of the cultural, ethnic, genetic patrimony of the nation (Law 28477). For more details, see the SGP Peru document, *The Kingdom of the Eternal Ecologists*.

*Ms. Emilia Bustamante, SGP NC, Peru*





### Trash into cash in Rwanda

SGP Rwanda specializes in what have been deemed “trash into cash” projects that deal with multi-faceted waste management to produce benefits related to climate change and land degradation. To take just three examples, the first was a pilot project on testing an ecological toilet to avoid contamination of groundwater by pit latrines. The project is now being replicated by the government of Rwanda, and grantee Rwanda Environment Care is collecting human waste from ecological toilets countrywide for processing and sale as organic fertilizer.

The second involved cleaning up and recycling plastic bags that litter the country. After the government of Rwanda banned plastic bags in 2005, community works were organized countrywide to collect them. In 2006, with SGP support, COOPED, one of the garbage collector cooperatives in Kigali began recycling plastic bags into tubes and greenhouse sheeting (the only permitted uses). The business grew rapidly and the cooperative became a company (COPED).

The third involved production of ecological briquettes and compatible clean cook stoves in Kigali by the Cooperative for the Conservation of the Environment. The cooperative recycled organic household garbage into briquettes to be used as an alternative to charcoal and firewood. Around 1500 tons of briquettes are made per year. The cooperative employs 110 people, mostly women, who earn at least US\$ 50 per month, a significant improvement in their standard of living. The employees have been equipped with gloves, protective masks, and boots to protect them from injuries and respiratory problems from manipulating garbage. Ms. Vestine Uwimana, a cooperative member, worker, and mother of 5, recounted multiple economic and social benefits: “Thanks to the project I can pay for food for my family and school fees. I now have access to a bank account; my colleagues and I can save money. I have subscribed to a pension scheme and health and disability insurance.”

U.S. Treasury Assistant Secretary Marisa Lago visited the project in 2011 and shared the following observation:

This is a remarkable, well-integrated project. Site visits like this are critically important for seeing first-hand the application of promising business models. The work being done here speaks volumes about the potential to replicate programs based on commercial operations with positive economic and environmental impact. I so appreciate the involvement of vulnerable women in this program and congratulate you for an initiative that benefits the environment, creates jobs, and helps people access banking and insurance services.



We never thought waste could be turned into something so useful and valuable. Before installation of the biogas digester, we spent about \$US 6000 annually on bottled gas to meet our energy needs for cooking. This amount has been brought down to about \$US 1000 as we use several stoves during peak seasons while we have only one connection point for the biogas. Also, worrying about sewer removal and disposal of waste from the orchard and other biodegradable waste from the kitchen are a thing of the past. Thanks to SGP, with the savings we have some cash available and we are now able to provide credit to more of our member organizations, unlike in the past where we could cater for only two or three organizations per annum. Our only wish now is for SGP to help us bottle the gas in summer when production is high for use in winter when it is low, and also for sale.

Ms. Matebello Motsamai, Manager, Matelile Community Development Centre, grantee, Lesotho

### **Access to markets**

SGP promotes access to markets for its partners at the global and national levels. SGP has recently developed a biodiversity products catalogue, highlighting products from several country programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean. The intention is to move beyond the catalogue format to an online platform in partnership with the Progreso Network, as a means to connect producers with consumer markets and provide an accessible showcase for their products.

SGP has supported the processing, certification, and fair trade marketing of organic honey. In some cases, as in **Mexico**, CBOs have learned by doing and have been able to take control of the entire chain of honey production from harvesting to meeting organic certification requirements, bottling, distributing, marketing with the support of Educe, the local cooperative partner, and exporting through fair trade companies (GEPA and Narimpex AG), principally to Europe. Honey revenues replace income from less sustainable activities, build local capacities, and strengthen linkages between sustainable



SGP South Africa



development and landscape-level ecosystem conservation (as indicated in the table below). The 2011 harvest yielded nearly 400 tons of certified organic honey and additional tons of high quality honey is in the process of being certified.

### Apiculture for biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihoods in Mexico

Facts and figures (in \$US)	1996 - 2006	2007 - 2010
Funding	\$603,771	\$201,257
Organizations with grants	21	28
Beekeepers	1397	1863
Hives	26780	78777
Hives per beekeeper	19	42
Honey production in tons	677	1992
Hive production	25	25
Value of honey produced	\$1,455,787	\$4,282,375
Average annual income per beekeeper	\$1,042	\$2,299
Forest area under conservation	16871	49629
Cost of conservation per hectare	\$36	\$16
Cost of financial and technical assistance (FTA)	\$233,185	\$77,728
Projects providing FTA	10	4
Cost of FTA per beekeeper	\$167	\$167
Cost of conservation per hectare including FTA subsidy	\$49.61	\$5.62

SGP **Brazil** has improved community access to markets, provided technical assistance for 20 organizations to participate in the Caatinga Cerrado Network, and enabled them to increase their marketing capacity in several local and regional fairs, through two co-financed projects: Marketing Cerrado Products, supported by the Doen Foundation, and Sustainable Use of Cerrado Biodiversity, supported by the Finland Fund for Local Cooperation.

In **Sri Lanka**, SGP grantee Sri Lanka Nature Forum is collaborating with stakeholders to establish a certification body for organic agricultural and forest products. The Forum will establish a district-based inspector pool, a training program for inspectors, international activities and trainings, and documentation of local fair trade.

In **South Africa**, SGP projects with indigenous and small farmer communities in Northern Cape Province focused on combating land degradation while conserving endemic wild and cultivated rooibus tea species and promoting tea farming in a climate-resilient fashion. Since 2001, annual tea production has increased from 30 to 70 tons, the tea has attained organic and fair-trade certification, and is being exported to four continents.

Of the services rendered by the project, foremost is launching the mechanism to market products of the farmers by initiating the mobile unit to collect products and sell them in the towns and cities, mainly Colombo, the capital city. Then, having a regular market and a fair price for the farmers' products, and eliminating the middleman. The buyers are also ensured of a quality, genuine organic product. Farmers also found it easier to get permission to do conservation activities in their forests from which they were banned earlier, and develop livelihoods accordingly.

Mr. Priyantha Kumara, National Nature Farming Network, grantee, Sri Lanka



SGP Ecuador

### Social benefits

Because the programme has consistently applied approaches based on considerations of human rights, equity, and sustainability, GEF SGP projects have engendered manifold social benefits across countries.

**Gender empowerment.** Gender is a crosscutting theme that is intrinsic to SGP country programme strategies and the active participation of women incorporated and reported on by all SGP projects, as has been clear in the project examples provided thus far. SGP programming and grant making directly address situations and practices of gender inequality, marginalization, and exclusion as well as take advantage of all opportunities for promoting gender inclusion, capacity development, participation in decision making, and community leadership. Further examples of the multiple forms of gender empowerment that are common across the global SGP portfolio are provided below.

**Participation and leadership by indigenous peoples.** Similarly, addressing the marginalization and exclusion of indigenous peoples and affording indigenous peoples greater voice, participation, and leadership and promoting cultural diversity are key elements of SGP programming. SGP grants have supported the objectives of indigenous organizations and the aspirations of indigenous

communities in strengthening self-determination and improving governance of their communities, territories, and natural resources, examples of which are provided below.

**Improved access to services and resources for marginal and vulnerable communities.** In addition to gender benefits and support to indigenous peoples, SGP has improved the access of marginal and vulnerable communities to services and resources, especially in countries like Nigeria, where over 60 percent of SGP participating communities had never had access to development assistance, and about 40 percent of NGO and CBO grantees had never before secured grants from donors. Improved access is reflected in new relationships with peers, CSOs, governments, donors, and others that arise from participation in the programme, whether through grants or events such as consultations, workshops, and knowledge fairs. Country programmes are constantly engaged in awareness raising, communications, and educational activities on global environmental and sustainable development themes that reach large numbers of people, as well as targeted programming to reach more marginal and remote communities. Thus, through participation in SGP projects, programme activities, and SGP-sponsored exchanges and partnerships, communities and CSOs have gained access to new tools, technologies, and perspectives.

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**Sometimes the exceptional impact of a project is actually tiny in scope. The Panama pico hydroelectric project is one such example. The sheer determination of a community working together in an isolated valley of the Darien region led to the installation of an electrical grid that has transformed the quality of their lives. In-kind or sweat equity contributed to the success of the project. More than 10 kms of wiring and 2 turbine stations that generate light for 43 families is a dream come true for them.**

Mr. José Manuel Pérez, former SGP NC, Panama

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**Strengthened community organization** has been an important result of SGP support in virtually all participating countries and communities. In a number of new country programmes, SGP supported the creation of NGOs and CBOs where there were none, or very few, and facilitated the participation of local and community groups that were not formally registered, for example, in Albania, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Lao PDR, and Mongolia. In Madagascar the more than 100 CBOs supported by the programme were characterized by weak capacity and weak internal organization. Participation in the SGP has allowed them to develop their capacities – for example, to manage projects, deal with banks, and use new technologies – and to organize themselves to contribute to the governance and decision-making concerning their resources. SGP Madagascar reports that many of these CBOs are on their way to establishing organizational and financial autonomy (as discussed in Chapter VI).

**Increased CBO and NGO capacity to undertake projects.** NGOs and CSOs in all participating countries have benefited from increased capacities to design and implement projects. Grantees have gained skills from training on project management, administrative and financial matters, participatory monitoring, business planning, marketing techniques, and knowledge management and communications, in addition to acquiring abilities to employ diverse tools and technologies related to particular project objectives and outcomes in the GEF focal areas.

SGP country programme teams have supported NGO and CBO capacity development by working with CSO and university volunteers and government partners. In Barbados and the OECS and Botswana, SGP has responded to capacity challenges by actively seeking volunteers, mentors, and other stakeholders who can provide different types of support and training as well as by improving



access to information and knowledge generated by the programme and its partners. In Bhutan, limited grantee implementation capacity, due to lack of literacy and education, is a challenge that SGP has met by involving local government entities to provide technical backstopping to projects. In addition, a partnership with Bhutan's Gross National Happiness Commission has allowed SGP to disseminate programme information capturing the essence of SGP projects and their achievements or failures to all 205 village districts in the country, thereby raising broad public awareness of global environmental problems and potential local solutions.

**Better health, food security, working conditions, and housing.** SGP grantees and their communities have benefited from improved health, food security, working conditions, and housing. To give only a few examples:

- Incorporation of fuel-efficient cook stoves that reduce indoor and outdoor smoke and pollution
- Improved solid waste management by cleaning up and safely disposing of POPs and other toxic chemicals in households, neighborhoods, and work places
- Adoption of agroecological and organic farming methods that produce healthier food crops and are safer for farmers
- Improved energy and water management that provides clean energy and water and reduces the time women and children spend on fetching fuel wood and water
- Development of materials and methods for building more climate-resilient and energy-efficient houses

**Attainment of knowledge and expertise.** Closely related to capacity development is the attainment of knowledge and expertise. SGP's learning by doing approach permeates its operations at all levels. SGP grantees and partners have acquired skills and experience that they have been able to parlay into knowledge and expertise that are recognized and have impacts not only in their own communities and localities – which is a significant result in itself, especially in terms of gender empowerment – but also at the provincial, national, and international levels. SGP provides multiple channels for sharing knowledge and expertise and thereby extending their beneficial effects locally and globally. This is done through knowledge fairs, peer-to-peer exchanges, demonstration and learning sites, thematic publications, substantive videos on projects and approaches, participation in national and international conferences, among others. In these ways, through the knowledge and expertise of participants, SGP has been able to demonstrate the efficacy of the community-based approach for achieving local and global environmental benefits and sustainable development results.

### ***Gender empowerment***

Most GEF SGP projects have afforded women and men the opportunity to work together as equals and benefit equally from project results. A quarter of all SGP grants specifically target gender matters and privilege the participation of women. Gender-based projects have enabled women to gain greater autonomy together with the collective responsibilities that come with acquiring expertise and leadership.

We used to depend on men for survival, even for small things like lotion. But now we can sell our products and earn our own money. We are now independent women.

Ms Ngoma Grace

This project has indeed helped me and other women to earn an income. I have so far made a saving of K250,000 (\$US 50) from selling carrots and cabbages and the crops are still yielding. Thanks to Chipata District Land Alliance supported by GEF SGP in Zambia.

Ms. Amai Phiri

Grantees, Community Based Natural Resource Management through Environmental Rehabilitation, Desertification Control for Sustainable Livelihoods, and Reduced Vulnerability for Rural Communities in Chipata District, Zambia



SGP Cameroon

### A beacon of light in Cameroon

The Ntankah Village Women Common Initiative Group is a grassroots organization in Cameroon focusing on gender empowerment, livelihood improvement, and HIV/AIDS care. Ntankah means “light on the hill” in a local dialect, chosen because the group wanted to act as a beacon to women to lead them out of dependency and under-development. The group consists of 24 women members, 14 of whom are infected or affected by HIV/AIDS; together they implemented the SGP Grassroots Women Environmental Protection and Poverty Alleviation project.

The project sought to improve social and economic conditions of women and the entire local population through more sustainable agricultural, forestry, and hunting practices, and by reducing the incidence of slash-and burn agriculture, providing alternatives to hunting and unsustainable extraction, and actively conserving biodiversity. Project activities resulted in greater farm diversity and efficiency, provision of renewable energy sources, and increased incomes, allowing the Ntankah Village Women Group to better care for HIV/AIDS patients, widows, and orphans. Gender empowerment was furthered through active group participation and democratic practices. Benefits of the Ntankah Village Women Group’s activities have reached more than 100 families and about 500 people, including women and children living with HIV/AIDS, and the group received the Red Ribbon Award from the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS in 2008.

SGP and the Barefoot College “Women Solar Engineers” partnership promotes community solar energy through gender empowerment. The partnership supports community and gender capacity development and provision of clean, low-cost solar energy in poor, off-the-grid communities in **Benin, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, and Uganda**. Participating communities form village solar committees with gender participation, and receive training in project management and supervision. This includes providing facilities for solar energy workshops, managing budgets, and selecting suitable woman candidates for solar engineer training. The Barefoot College, a pioneer in demystifying complex technological processes for illiterate students, offers a six-month training course to the women at its campus in Tilonia, India. After learning how to install, maintain, and repair solar panels and batteries, the women solar engineers return to their communities to install solar panels in village households and receive a monthly salary from the village solar committee.

To date 43 women solar engineers have installed solar panels in more than 2700 households, bringing light to more than 15,000 individuals in 35 villages. Communities have also taken the opportunity to install solar lighting in schools, hospitals, food processing plants, local administration offices, and community centers, thereby creating the conditions for green jobs. The environmental benefits of the solar energy projects in all participating countries include reduced deforestation, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and air pollution. SGP Mozambique estimates that annual kerosene consumption fell by 27,375 liters and annual fire wood consumption by 91,250 metric tons, resulting in an overall decrease of 82,125 Kg in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per year. Communities in Ghana and Benin managed to replace 95 and 50 percent of kerosene lamps with solar powered lighting, respectively; and communities in Niger and Benin succeeded in eliminating kerosene lamps completely. The gender social and economic benefits are also clear: Women trainees felt empowered to acquire complex technical skills and return as qualified solar engineers to serve their communities, where they are respected as experts. Pursuing the training in a multi-cultural setting in India also broadened their horizons. Most have managed to translate their new livelihood activity and status into better incomes and to take on community leadership roles.





Our organization implemented the Engaging Rural Grandmothers in Solar Electrification of Their Own Village project. SGP support has allowed our organization to demonstrate locally the training at Barefoot College. In 2008, we got funds from the Norwegian Church Aid and sent 4 women to India for training. After their return and success in installing solar panels in their villages, we used them as trainers for 4 other women from another village with SGP support in 2009. The training went well and it was a real success. We then ordered solar panels from Barefoot College and the locally trained women were able to electrify 70 houses in their village. We are really proud of that. We thank SGP for having taken the risk to let the women who went to India be trainers for their fellows in another village.

With SGP support the community reduced its dependency on kerosene and firewood as sources of energy for lighting. In addition, the social economic welfare of the 4 trained women was improved. They earn monthly salaries from repairing solar systems. The availability of solar electricity enabled rural women to engage in extra income generating activities such as weaving, making basket mats, beads and necklaces. The academic performance of schoolgirls was improved. Community members especially women feel more safe at night. The project is also helping us to increase awareness on the importance of solar energy in boosting socio – economic welfare among the rural women.

There are so many benefits and we are now replicating the project in other areas with different donors without being obliged to send women to India again. We also appreciate the way we interact with SGP staff. They are ready to help any time. They even give us advice on how to mobilize more funds and build partnerships. We were also trained on SGP project management and had the opportunity to meet with all the organizations that have received SGP funds.

Ms. Christine Muhongerwa, Executive Secretary, Safer Rwanda, grantee, Rwanda

In **Ecuador**, a project initiated by three women's organizations from the Lupaxi-Convalecencia, Cintaguzo, and Pulucate Alto communities recovered local varieties of native tubers such as oca, mashua, melloco, and potatoes, as well as beans and quinoa, and traditional knowledge about them as a means to conserve agrobiodiversity, diversify production, and ensure food security through agroecological crop cultivation. The project also increased the production of native forest plants for use as windbreaks and living fences. The project results were integrated into the Development Plan of the province of Chimborazo. Managing and implementing the project contributed to women's training and skill development, strengthened women's organizations, and promoted women's leadership within the community and in the region.

### **Women increase biomass fuel efficiency in Bhutan**

The tiny eastern Himalayan Buddhist Kingdom of Bhutan is often referred to as the last Shangri-la due to its pristine environment and unique natural and cultural heritage. About 72.5 percent of the total land area is under forest cover, which includes 26.2 percent protected areas and another 9 percent as biological corridors.

However, this environment faces many threats, one of which is the increasing demand for biomass energy. Tsirang District in the west-central part of Bhutan, because of its high population density and limited size of government forest area, is severely affected by the fuel wood shortage. Approximately 75 percent of the energy for cooking and heating in the district is obtained from firewood.

A typical traditional mud stove consumes approximately 7.5 tons of fuel wood per household annually. Due to increasing fuel scarcity local women are obliged to travel long distances to collect wood. Moreover, women and children suffer from eye and respiratory problems caused by prolonged exposure to smoke and indoor air pollution from cook stoves.

SGP supported the Biomass Fuel Efficiency Project to reduce the demand for fuel wood by introducing fuel efficient cook stoves to rural communities in Bhutan with the help of the main collectors and users of this fuel: local rural women. A local CBO, Tsirang Women Group, undertook the project, training and equipping 14 of its members as "trainers of trainers" who, in turn, trained 700 women to install 1000 improved stoves in households, which have also been trained to maintain and repair the stoves.

The use of improved cook stoves burn as much as 50 percent less fuel wood compared to the traditional ones, leading to a reduction of approximately 3,800 tons of fuel wood per year or 6,954 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent. In addition to the gender benefits of a project run by and for women – e.g., reduction in time spent on collecting fuel wood, new skills, increased income, and leadership responsibilities in the home and the community – the local population has benefited from a decline in indoor and outdoor pollution and smoke-induced diseases.

The Tsirang Women Group gained the support of the nearby Dzongkhag District Administration to replicate the project and install 1520 additional cook stoves. The initiative's success has been disseminated widely in the country through SGP study tours, stakeholder workshops, and exchange of lessons among grantees.

SGP Bhutan



### ***Indigenous peoples***

As has been noted in a number of project examples, GEF SGP has supported indigenous peoples to conserve, sustainably use, and benefit from biodiversity; improve land and resource security and resilience; strengthen, document, and share indigenous knowledge, cultures, and practices; and influence local and national policy in their favor. Since 1992, SGP has delivered about \$US 60 million to indigenous groups, amounting to about 15 percent of the overall portfolio.

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**SGP is sensitive to the needs expressed by the communities that turn to our program as an ally for advancing their proposals. SGP works with organizations that have little or no experience and in places where other donors will not risk their resources. A clear example are the indigenous communities that typically receive economic support as passive beneficiaries but rarely as active agents. SGP is one of the few programmes that have established agreements to provide resources that indigenous communities themselves manage.**

Ms. Lilliam Jarquin Chavarria, SGP NC, Nicaragua

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In **Cameroon**, SGP programming specifically targets the Bakola and Bagyeli pygmies, Mbororos (transhumant pastoralists), migrant farmers, fishermen, and mountain dwellers because they are all marginalized in terms of resource rights and suffer land-use conflicts, for example, between pastoralists and farming communities. In southern Cameroon, Bakola indigenous groups live on the edges of the Dja Forest Reserve. The Bakola are hunter/gatherers and do not practice agriculture. However, due to logging and mining, vast areas of forest have been destroyed, resulting in severe scarcity of the natural resources that the Bakola use for food, medicine, and shelter. To provide livelihood alternatives, SGP projects have promoted “biodiversity conservation through cultivation” practices, such as home gardens and agroforestry plantations. This approach to conserving biodiversity allows the Bakola to maintain their forest home without being completely reliant on forest resources.



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**SGP has been a great help in attaining a number of our goals: the conservation of 450 hectares of forest, the strengthening of our culture and, through a lodge, the ability to receive those who wish to learn more about our culture. SGP offers support for indigenous peoples to work on our own projects, through a relationship marked by friendship, comradeship, companionship.**

Mr. Guillermo Elizondo, Coordinator, Bribripa Kaneblo Association, Salitre Indigenous Territory, grantee, Costa Rica

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SGP **Indonesia** supported the Orang Rimba (people of the jungle), an indigenous community that resides in a forest in the Bukit Dua Belas National Park in Sumatra, to strengthen their capacity to protect the forest and conserve important biodiversity. Given their low level of literacy, the community used participatory video techniques to create their project proposal, as well as to monitor the project. This flexible approach allowed this indigenous community to implement the project with successful results in the protection of Sumatran lowland forests – their last remaining forest home. Orang Rimba suggested building a living fence to protect their forest from illegal logging and rubber tree and palm oil plantations. SGP also provided funding for a solar panel for the forest school. The project contributed to protecting the habitats of endangered species such as the Jambi giant trees (*Dipterocarpus sp.*), the Tapir (Tapirus indicus), the Hornbill bird (Buceros virgil), and the Siamang Gibbon (*Hylobates agilis*).

SGP **Malaysia** works with the Semelai group living around the Tasek Bera wetlands, the country's only Ramsar site, to help the Semelai form their own organization and develop the skills and infrastructure necessary to earn income from ecotourism ventures.

SGP projects have also sought to preserve traditional knowledge and practices for conservation of native medicinal plants and non-timber forest products. These projects have valorized indigenous peoples' knowledge and management of biodiversity in undertaking inventories of herbs and plants to create pharmacopoeia and documenting healing and medicinal practices. In **Mexico**, SGP COMPACT funded a cluster of projects that promote Mayan culture and biodiversity knowledge through the study and management of plant species used in traditional Mayan medicine; dissemination of indigenous law by traditional Mayan judges in 40 communities in and around the Sian Ka'an WHS; and the preparation of a bilingual Mayan-Spanish dictionary on biodiversity and place names of Sian Ka'an with some 1400 vernacular terms and toponyms.

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**SGP targets small NGOs working with poor and isolated communities – especially involving marginalized minority ethnic groups – and makes them active partners in SGP projects by promoting capacity development and encouraging their integration in a multicultural, multiethnic, and multireligious environment.**

Ms. Tania Mihu, SGP NC, Romania

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## Reaching remote, indigenous communities in Honduras

Moskitia is itself an isolated region of Honduras and Rondin is a Miskito community that is even more isolated within Moskitia. The community had never before received funds directly from any source, nor had it ever assumed the responsibility for managing a project – NGOs had always handled projects. With SGP, the community began a project to control forest fires in Rondin, and it managed to control fires in some 23,000 hectares. Then more Miskito communities, such as El Salto, Sircirtara and Buena Vista, began

joining Rondin's successful experience. Each community now has nurseries with 10,000 seedlings for forest restoration purposes. Two more communities, Pranza and Suji, have also asked to become part of the process, which will allow for control of forest fires in 110,000 hectares. Currently, these projects have a solid collaborative relationship with and are accepted by the government. During the period of forest fires, the Institute of Forest Conservation coordinates its fire control work with the Rondin community.



The Association of Miskita Women strategically sought to generate employment for widows and single mothers through the restoration and conservation of the great Karatasca wetlands by removing and managing solid waste. The project was a major success and has now reached

other municipalities, such as Brus Laguna and Ahuas. The network of some 1600 women won the National Environmental Prize for these conservation efforts. Recycling of the material collected (plastics, iron, aluminum, copper) yielded sales of \$US 64,000. Wetlands restoration also led to the reduction of malaria by 35 percent in the city of Puerto Lempira, according to the Ministry of Public Health.

*Mr. Hugo Galeano, SGP NC, Honduras*

SGP has been a fundamental component of UNDP's programme in Honduras over the 10 years that it has been in operation here. Thanks to its unique and tested mechanism of channeling funds directly to community organizations, SGP has benefitted thousands of people in poverty, generating sustainable incomes, promoting environmental conservation, encouraging social control over natural resources, and fostering self-esteem. In some areas of the country, for example in the Moskitia, SGP has become UNDP's principal representative and has played a key role in not only promoting community development but building capacities for leadership, influencing policies, and taking positions on serious public issues that are often forgotten – such as the tragedy of the thousands of disabled Miskito scuba-divers. Much before the current global debate on the need to combine sustainability and inclusion in development in order to build resilience, SGP promoted this approach discreetly but very successfully, turning itself into a pioneer programme that has much to teach us. It is enough to listen to the direct accounts of the communities themselves to understand that SGP's impacts go far beyond a mere productive or conservation initiative. The very process of the collective design of the project, the transparent co-management of funds, the establishment of social accounting mechanisms, the pride and self-confidence generated, the promotion of women's active participation, the growing consciousness among communities that development can and must go hand in hand with the conservation of natural patrimony – all of these elements contribute to building resilient communities and territories in which nature and humans can learn to support one another and live in peace.

*Mr. Luca Renda, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative, Honduras*

## Replication and scaling up

As has been demonstrated by most of the programme and project examples presented, replication and scaling up proven initiatives and models are fundamental aspects of GEF SGP's work. Building on good practices and lessons learned, SGP projects have grown and expanded over time, extending their reach and impact. This has been accomplished through synergies with GEF MSPs and FSPs and other donors, including larger national or international NGOs, local and national governments, and the private sector. In this regard, the networks and contacts of the NSC and the NC are critical for engaging stakeholders in the process. In addition, it is important to note that creating the enabling conditions for replication and scaling up is certainly a matter of additional funds and support, but also requires constant and consistent M&E, capacity development, and sharing experiences, learning, and knowledge.

**Replication of effective and innovative models tested by SGP.** The Mekhe Solar Cooker project in **Senegal** is an example of a good practice that has been strategic through replication. Through the project 260 local artisans were trained in the construction of the solar cookers while 300 women were trained in the use of this technology. Each solar cooker saved an average of 3 metric tons of equivalent carbon dioxide, which is equivalent to 12 trees per year. The Minister of Biofuels, Renewable Energy and Scientific Research is mobilizing resources to make the solar cooker project a platform for the research, production and use of solar energy. The project has been replicated in 8 communities in Senegal and would be easy to replicate in other countries.



SGP Senegal



GEF SGP gives us possibilities to improve our welfare and to bring about positive changes and sustainable development. Actually, implementing environmental initiatives with SGP's support, we received not only environmental benefits, but advantages in many spheres of our lives. We started our initiative thanks to GEF SGP and now we work on our own, helping other communities to replicate our successful experience.

Ms. Tatyana Nemtsan, Director, Akbota, grantee, Kazakhstan

**Replication through SGP demonstration sites.** Replication is also enabled through SGP projects that serve as demonstration sites for innovative methodologies and technologies, which other communities, government agencies, universities, and private sector companies visit to learn from the experience. This is the case of a marine biodiversity project in **Tunisia** that piloted and tested a sustainable fisheries model in the Gulf of Gabes. Thousands of fishermen learned about building cement and steel artificial reefs that help to create critical habitats and conserve marine ecosystems as well as support sustainable fisheries. The reef model was replicated some 1500 times, a successful result for marine biodiversity conservation.

**Replication through SGP follow-up funding.** In some countries where SGP has mature portfolios, country programme teams have been replicating and scaling up successful projects by providing follow-up funding to grantees that have demonstrated excellent results in their first project and have organized themselves to expand their work. In **India**, SGP developed guidelines to facilitate replication and scaling-up and has applied them for second phases of 30 projects using co-financing obtained by the programme from government, donor, and private sector sources.

**Replication of programme methods and tools.** SGP **Ecuador's** methodology and best practices were replicated in two MDG interagency programmes: Conservation and Sustainable Management of the Natural and Cultural Patrimony of the Yasuní Biosphere Reserve, implemented by the Ministry of Environment, allocated \$US 544,000 to SGP; and Cultural Diversity for Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion, implemented by the Ministry of Natural and Cultural Heritage, allocated \$US 297,000 to SGP. These programmes helped increase the visibility of SGP in the United Nations system and with the Ecuadorian government while providing substantial additional resources for targeted work to produce sustainable development impacts. In **Mauritius**, SGP project criteria and templates have been consulted and adapted in the context of the establishment of the government's fund for a sustainable Mauritius - Maurice Ile Durable. Also in Mauritius, the Ministry of Environment has approved a project on planting endemic trees in all schools in the country, which is a replication and scaling up of one component of the SGP Pilot Project for Marine Environmental Education and Resource Centers for Beaches.

**Scaling up through NGOs.** NGO grantees may employ SGP funding to test small-scale approaches and methods that are subsequently scaled up through larger projects. NGOs not only benefit from SGP seed money that is the impetus to test innovative approaches that may be scaled up, but also from the direct interaction with the grassroots that is the hallmark of SGP and that provides the basis for expanding activities. In addition, NGOs participate in a learning network composed of SGP grantees that offers lessons about implementing community-based projects at small and larger scales.

Our organization benefited from sharing experiences and expertise with other SGP grantees. For example, we shared the strategies on how to better implement community-based projects in China through mobilizing village leaders' active participation into decision-making processes of the project. The circle formed by organizations that are involved in the SGP can actually be a learning community, which offers many interactive opportunities for our organization.

Our organization pilots a community-based development project through the SGP in order to accumulate and offer experiences for carrying out a similar large-scale project in the near future. Although SGP is relatively mini- or small-scale, the experiences and skills learned through implementation of the SGP project can never be undervalued. As a matter of fact, the large project is composed of and based on a variety of mini- or small-scale activities, just like SGP.

Our local grassroots community directly benefits from skills training, local farmers' capacity building, and innovative thinking in relation to sustainably integrated community development.

Dr. Li Changxiao, Chongqing Ecology Society, grantee, China

**Scaling up initiatives with donor funding.** In **Kenya**, several SGP grantees have received support from the European Union to scale up their initiatives. For example, the Kijabe Environment Volunteers (KENVO) received \$US 150,000 to expand and improve ecotourism facilities, and the Kwetu Training Center received support to expand marine conservation activities. In **Ghana**, two SGP projects have been scaled up by the African Development Bank under the Integrated Aquatic Weeds Management for the Protection of International Waters project being implemented by the Environmental Protection Agency of Ghana.



**Scaling up with support from the UN system.** As in the **Ecuador** example above, SGP approaches and methodologies have been adopted by UN-supported programmes implemented by national ministries. SGP pilot projects test innovative approaches that, if successful, can motivate UN agencies such as UNDP to design larger programmes. These programmes build on SGP's proven community-based approach to sustainable development and apply it on a wider scale.

**Replication and scaling up of SGP projects through larger GEF projects.** GEF agencies build on SGP experience to replicate and upscale good practices in the development of medium- and full-size GEF projects. This is the case of the Community-Based Conservation for Wetlands Biodiversity (COBWEB), a GEF MSP in **Uganda** that replicated and scaled up SGP's Katonga Wetland Conservation Project, an initiative that had important impacts in raising awareness regarding the significance of wetlands as biodiversity hot-spots in semi-arid areas.

In **Kyrgyzstan**, two GEF MSPs replicated and scaled up SGP experiences, the UNEP Sustainable Land Management in the High Pamir and Pamir-Alay Mountains and the UNDP Sustainable Management of Endemic Ichthyofauna of Issykkul Lake Basin projects. Based on site visits to SGP projects, the MSPs designed community micro-project components and used SGP selection criteria and project templates.

In **Belarus** the experience gained in three SGP projects conserving the unique biodiversity of low mire and meadow ecosystems through sustainable agricultural practices (mechanical and hand bush- and grass-mowing) was adopted by a UNDP GEF full-size project. In 2009 about 8 hectares of meadow in the Pripyat river basin were hand-mowed by SGP participating farmers. The GEF FSP applied this approach over a territory of 200 hectares. FSP monitoring showed that the technique is not only profitable for farmers but it also prevents bog degradation and has led to an increase in populations of the aquatic warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*) and other Red Book-listed waterfowl. SGP-tested machine mowing in the Sporovskoe Reserve was replicated by a UNDP GEF FSP in the Zvanets Reserve, another Ramsar site where the biggest population of aquatic warbler is located.

In **China**, the community-based approaches of an SGP project on integrated wetland resources management in Poyang Lake have been replicated by a component of the GEF FSP Wetland Protected Area System Strengthening for Biodiversity Conservation that is undertaking activities in the Poyang Lake National Nature Reserve.

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**SGP support at the grassroots level is critical for the overall UNDP country programme, both in Uzbekistan and globally. This is because, SGP projects provide the testing ground for innovation and piloting that can be scaled up at a larger level. Secondly, SGP provides the critical, evidence-based, on-the-ground experience that is essential for UNDP to develop more large-scale and comprehensive programmatic interventions. Third, all of SGP's interventions are people-centered and link the critical three pillars of sustainable development. They therefore contribute to UNDP's mandate on sustainable human development. In Uzbekistan, where there is an absence of an independent civil society, SGP is one of the few players working with communities in the country. The experience of SGP has helped me in my capacity as RC/RR to use concrete grassroots examples to advocate for a community-based approach to sustainable development and for closer linkages between the work of UN agencies.**

*Ms. Anita Nirody, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, Uzbekistan*

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In **Egypt**, in cooperation with the UNDP GEF project on wetlands in Kafr El Sheikh governorate, SGP funded 8 wetlands projects for biodiversity conservation in Lake Burullus through building community awareness of legal fishing procedures and providing alternative livelihood sources based on sound management of natural resources. SGP also closely coordinated activities with another UNDP GEF project on energy efficiency and funded 32 projects to promote energy-saving bulbs in different Egyptian governorates. The projects succeeded in significantly increasing the number of consumers using the energy saving bulbs and helped meet overall government targets for energy efficiency. Promotion of energy-efficient lighting is now being commercialized and is moving toward being a mainstream commercial activity.

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**GEF SGP has built capacities of environmental NGOs and offered them great opportunities to expand their activities to include working on global environmental issues and seriously contribute to national environmental initiatives. After the significant contribution of NGOs funded by SGP in achieving GEF full-size project outputs and outcomes, in particular in the areas of energy efficiency and protected area management, the role of SGP became an integral part in the design of the management arrangements of any new UNDP GEF project in Egypt.**

Dr. Mohamed Bayoumi, Environment Officer, UNDP, Egypt

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## Policy impact

Through GEF SGP, CSOs and communities have contributed directly to local, regional, national, and international planning and policy processes. SGP experiences and lessons learned have been recognized and incorporated in local and national policy development, and have influenced changes in municipal and provincial regulations, national laws, and international environmental processes. SGP grantee and partner networks have been vital for convening and influencing policy dialogues from the local to the national and global levels.

At all levels, partnerships with key government and nongovernmental authorities and policy makers, as well as influential donors and other allies, help ensure that well-informed support exists for SGP and that SGP's approach can be mainstreamed into sustainable development policy and practice. NSCs have played a critical role in this regard. Moreover, as expressed by the Joint Evaluation of the Small Grants Programme (2008), SGP's long-term commitment to localities and countries allow it to make greater policy impacts across participating countries: "SGP programs that establish good track records and demonstrate that they are 'there to stay' are in a better position to influence broader processes—sometimes with far-reaching impacts."

The positive policy effects of SGP's long-term and active presence in countries can be readily seen in all the GEF focal areas, as has been illustrated by the majority of project examples provided thus far and is further demonstrated below.

**Impact on local and national strategies and policies in GEF focal areas.** It would be safe to say that SGP has influenced the development of local and national strategies and policies in the GEF focal areas in all participating countries. In **Cape Verde**, SGP projects contributed to the development of 6 national environmental policies or priorities: Integrated Water Management Plan, National



Adaptation Plan of Action, National Environmental Action Plan, National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, National Marine Turtle Conservation Plan, and National Fisheries Management Plan. In **Tanzania**, as mentioned, the COMPACT site strategy informed the development of the Kilimanjaro National Park Strategy, the Kilimanjaro National Park Outreach Programme Strategy, and the Kilimanjaro Regional Development Strategy. Such policy dialogues strengthen partnerships between stakeholders and directly link communities with government planning processes.

Although SGP has policy impact across the GEF focal areas, it has been especially notable in the biodiversity and climate change focal areas that comprise the bulk of SGP's global portfolio.

**Biodiversity policies and regulations.** SGP biodiversity projects in most countries have had major policy impacts at the local and national levels, particularly in promoting the creation and expansion of protected areas and biological corridors and establishment of co-management arrangements (exemplified by cases from **Belize, Bulgaria, Costa Rica, Mexico, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago**, and **Turkey**). SGP projects have also supported sustainable management of natural resources through the negotiation and establishment of appropriate regulations, such as seen in **Belize, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Ghana, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Mexico, Philippines, Senegal, Seychelles, Tanzania**, and **Togo**. It is worth reiterating that these biodiversity conservation and sustainable use policy impacts have taken place in almost all participating countries.

**National energy policy and law.** SGP projects in the areas of renewable energy and energy efficiency have influenced the development of energy policies and laws at the national level in **Dominican Republic, Egypt, Ghana, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Pakistan**, and **Uruguay**, among others, as shown in previous examples. In **Bulgaria**, the Black Sea Energy Research Centre implemented the Development of Regulatory Strategies for Balanced Growth of the Utilization of the Potential for Generation of Electricity from Renewable Energy Sources (RES) project with SGP support. The project contributed to the development of the National RES Plan of Bulgaria, incorporating a substantial number of proposals made by the grantee, e.g., on promoting the use of renewable energy sources for heating – which was

usually not addressed in national energy planning – promoting decentralized production of renewable energy, and coordinating development planning between investors and energy networks.

SGP policy advocacy and change has taken multiple forms over the past 20 years. Some of the most important means are direct policy advocacy, knowledge production for policy change, academic and research policy change, and policy advocacy and change by networks inspired by SGP.

**Direct policy advocacy.** SGP provides support for direct policy advocacy activities in the GEF focal areas by CBOs and NGOs at local and national levels. In **Kenya**, an SGP grant supported the Forest Action Network to facilitate the participation of local communities in the development of the forest policy through workshops, focus group discussions, and dialogue with relevant staff from the Ministry of Environment and Forests. Also in Kenya, Ngare Ndare, a successful Community Forest Association (CFA), received an SGP grant to implement its management plan, and was subsequently used as a model of a well-organized and functional CFA by the Kenya Forest Service.

**Knowledge platforms to effect policy change.** SGP **Ghana** has created knowledge platforms to provide verifiable standards for community forests to be certified as being responsibly managed and to develop quality forest management models for community forests in Ghana, including participatory models. These knowledge platforms have also facilitated the formation of local governance bodies for forest management and the involvement of a number of technical and non-technical staff in the formulation of the forest management standards. Above all, they have recognized and highlighted the permanent involvement, voice, and views of communities in forest management planning and policies.

**Influence on academic and research policy.** Participation of university students and researchers in SGP projects as volunteers providing technical assistance, guiding participatory research, or supervising M&E has often had an impact on their institutional research agendas. In **Kyrgyzstan**, the Institute on Walnut and Fruit Species Gardening of the National Academy of Sciences incorporated two research themes into its academic work plan based on involvement with two SGP projects: Traditional (Non-chemical) Ways to Combat Entomophages and Changes in Morphology of Cultivated Apple Species by Scion of Red Book Apple Species. In **Iran**, as recounted earlier in this chapter, SGP support for galazani (indigenous forest management through coppicing) led to the establishment of a participatory forest management office in the Faculty of Natural Resources at Kurdistan University.

**Policy advocacy and change through networks.** SGP **Costa Rica** has supported grantee and partner networks to participate in the development of national laws and policies on biological corridors, organic agriculture, and rural community tourism. SGP **Brazil** has provided long-term support to the Cerrado network of NGOs and to periodic Cerrado encounters where urgent issues related to the conservation of the Cerrado biome – the most biodiverse savannah in the world – and the communities that depend on it are discussed, debated, and publicized. In 2003, the Minister of the Environment attended the Cerrado encounter to announce the sustainable Cerrado plan, the development of which had been supported by SGP through funding the participation of 3 official representatives of local communities and 3 alternates in the national commission on the Cerrado. In 2009, the Minister of the Environment announced in the Cerrado encounter that clearing of the Cerrado savannah and woodlands was occurring at a rate twice that of the Amazon and included the Cerrado in the National Policy on Climate Change to voluntarily reduce emissions by 40 percent in the biome.



The GEF NGO Network congratulates the GEF Small Grant Programme on its 20th anniversary this year. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have been the main beneficiaries of the programme since 1992. We strongly believe that global environmental problems can best be addressed when local people are involved and direct community benefits and ownership are generated. SGP provides the avenue for this to happen.

The fact that SGP has been recognized as one of the most successful programmes of GEF proves that community-level strategies are effective in addressing global environmental concerns. CSOs worldwide have benefitted from SGP, which has given them the opportunity to show their effectiveness in addressing environmental problems as well as enhance their capacity. More importantly, SGP has emphasized the ownership by the communities and local NGOs and has recognized the needs of women and indigenous peoples.

One of the key actions of SGP is the sharing of lessons and knowledge from the innovative community-level strategies. The GEF NGO Network welcomes more emphasis to be given to knowledge sharing to help upscale the work of SGP and expresses its willingness to work together with SGP to bring this to a new level.

Given the success and wide recognition of the programme, the Network hopes SGP will continue to evolve and expand with increasing support from GEF and other supporters. We also hope that more SGP country programmes will be hosted by national CSOs and that CSOs enhance their role in the governance and outreach of SGP.

Mr. Faizal Parish, GEF NGO Network Central Focal Point















## CONCLUSIONS

The GEF SGP works through a combined country-driven yet globally coherent strategy, relying on the essential contributions of a diverse range of partners over the past 20 years. Local communities are the implementing partners on the ground. They commit their time, resources, and labor, and provide knowledge, innovative ideas, and in-kind co-financing for SGP projects. CSO partners provide strong advocacy, strategic direction, and technical guidance, contributing to SGP projects as grantees and by strengthening CBO capacities. Governments, by entering into partnerships with civil society, allow for a multi-stakeholder approach and national ownership. They dedicate funds and other resources, incorporate good practices and lessons from SGP, and facilitate replication, scaling up, and policy change. These partnerships have resulted in small actions achieving greater impacts, particularly in the national policy and planning spheres and in the wider implementation of innovative models that produce local and global benefits.

UNDP and its country office system provide essential and multi-faceted implementation assistance; UNDP mainstreams SGP lessons and good practices into its overall sustainable development programming. UNOPS assures the application of professional and strong fiduciary standards in the execution of the programme. The GEF, as the primary source of funding, and other donor partners sustain the programme as a key delivery mechanism for fast, efficient, and effective grant making to grassroots communities. The overall success of the programme lies in bringing together different partners at different levels, all committed to empowering local stakeholders with equity and sustainability, where each partner contributes its comparative advantage in terms of funds, expertise, influence, and reach.

It is clear that a “people’s GEF,” which is the role that SGP has taken on, continues to be critical as a necessary vehicle for furthering the GEF mandate from the ground up. SGP has been able to deliver both local and global environmental benefits. Equally, it has produced integrated sustainable development results through the generation of environmental, economic, and social benefits for communities worldwide.

With its committed local, national, and global stakeholders, SGP offers itself as a proven mechanism that facilitates local solutions to global environment and development challenges. For two decades in over 125 countries, it has honed its ability to engage productively with an extraordinarily diverse array of communities, civil society organizations, and government partners. SGP also offers the following important lessons learned.

### SGP lessons for sustainable development

**Community-based approaches are key for addressing local and global sustainable development challenges.** Community-based approaches recognize and emerge from community stewardship of ecosystems and community reliance on natural resources for livelihoods and cultural and

social well being. Empowering communities to participate in their own development and improving access to services and resources for marginal and vulnerable communities are enabling conditions for achieving sustainable development objectives. Channeling funds directly to NGOs and CBOs is fundamental for ensuring community ownership and impact. Community identification of problems and solutions and community ownership of the process are keys to sustainability.

**Sustainable livelihoods, rooted in community knowledge, practice, and innovation, constitute the basis for sustainable development** at the local level, and can have much wider and greater impacts through replication and scaling up. Sustainable livelihoods make the link between community needs and environmental sustainability. Sustainable livelihoods depend on environmental governance, natural resource management, poverty alleviation, income generation, and other social and cultural concerns. They integrate the three pillars of sustainable development to produce environmental, economic, and social benefits for communities and the local and global environment.

**Community-based projects are more effective when they contribute to environmental, sustainable livelihoods, and empowerment objectives.** Such integrated initiatives eventually result in higher returns on the investment of grant funds. Relevance to urgent needs, capacity development, organizational unity, and ownership are hallmarks of community-based approaches that unlock local resources and make them available to combine with grant funds. Sustainability is built on the economic side with livelihoods and further bolstered on the policy side by empowered communities that can organize and advocate for their needs. All in all, the combination of local resource infusion and sustainability makes for high aid effectiveness.

**Community-based grant making recognizes the critical importance of indigenous and local knowledge.** As such, a “one size fits all” approach is unrealistic. Working with communities and local CSOs requires an appreciation of diversity – of community and local organizational forms, of indigenous and local knowledge and practices, and of the myriad ways communities and local organizations communicate and work together. Institutions that provide funding and technical assistance should therefore allow ample flexibility for communities to access funds and resources and to deal with permits, clearances, and the like. To the contrary, if requirements for access become increasingly inflexible and involve adherence to fixed proposal templates, indicators and M&E, cash co-financing, and government clearances, then they necessitate even greater investment in capacity development, support networks, and personnel to work with grantee-partners in both the design and actual implementation stages.

**It is necessary to invest in both management support systems and project grants.** There is a tendency to equate cost-efficiency with a reduced management-to-grant cost ratio. This may well be the case when grant making is more of a contest and the most capable proponent with the best proposal wins the prize. However, in working with poor and vulnerable communities that are at the frontlines of environment and development problems and where empowerment, equity, and sustainability are critical concerns, relevant proposals will not simply materialize on the programme officer’s desk.

**Adaptive management and learning by doing are critical for effective programmes and initiatives.** For programmes to thrive and continue to be useful to communities and other stakeholders for achieving sustainable development results, adaptive management approaches are important. These include: testing strategies and assumptions, participatory experimentation, learning as much from mistakes as from positive results, and capturing, sharing, and applying learning through knowledge platforms and networks. Incubating ideas by providing seed money, taking risks, and testing community-based models on the ground – learning by doing – allow programmes to maintain flexibility and innovation, and produce better results.



SGP Burkina Faso

The path to sustainable development, especially when poor and vulnerable communities are involved, is characterized by ups and downs rather than a linear progression of successes. The adaptive management approach therefore learns from failures as much as it builds on successes. The grant making support system needs to value community resilience and commitment to forge ahead when it considers sustaining community access to funding and other resources.

**Strategic partnerships and networks are indispensable** for generating and sustaining local and global benefits. Diverse partnerships can leverage scarce monetary and nonmonetary resources to achieve better results. Resource mobilization efforts can yield powerful and positive partnerships across sectors and levels. Partnerships and networks support capacity development, exchange of lessons and good practices, and policy advocacy.

**Governments and civil society can work together effectively.** A civil society and government multi-stakeholder approach bolsters national ownership and the sustainability of initiatives. CSOs and governments can work in tandem to support and sustain community stewardship of ecosystems and natural resources. By working together, CSOs and government create enabling environments for mainstreaming successful initiatives and good practices into local and national sustainable development plans and policies.

**Successful grant making is about building institutions.** Grant making for poor and vulnerable communities is more than a matter of projects. A proactive approach directly links country strategies with local action through knowledge management, multi-sectoral alliances, networking, and policy advocacy. This requires the conjunction of an experienced and dedicated country team, a venue for civil society leadership, government openness to inclusive participation, and coordination with grantee-partners to take on present and future challenges. In short, it entails building institutions for sustainable development.



**Grant fund delivery mechanisms should ensure transparency, accountability, and credibility.**

This means remaining independent of undue influence, hidden agendas, or political concerns, which is only possible if deliberations and decision-making are undertaken in an open forum with clear rules and procedures, defined roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders, and strong fiduciary and risk management.

**Sustainability requires long-term commitment from the grant making modality, grantees, and partners.**

To achieve sustainable environment and development outcomes, for these to eventually create positive impacts within and beyond the community, to provide mature projects that can serve as foci for learning and policy advocacy, and to build a critical mass for national transformation, the grant making modality must provide continued funding or help grantee-partners access other funds and resources. The management of transitions from a project or country programme phase to the next level are thus always important planning considerations.

**Community-based small grants complement large, national initiatives.** The provision of small grants for community-based projects provides a good complement to large, national-level projects and programmes. It enables quick action to be undertaken and concrete results to be shown, particularly in cases where implementation of a large project is predicated on more time for negotiations and formulation. An early start with small grants to NGOs and CBOs also provides tested design elements for larger projects that wish to deliver local environment and development components.

**Replication, scaling up, and policy influence are central to achieving results and enhancing impact.**

These processes are neither automatic nor just a matter of additional funds. The starting point is introducing the notions of replication, scaling up, and policy influence into the design and strategic approach of projects and programmes. Creating the enabling conditions for successful projects and good practices to be replicated, scaled up, or influence policies requires constant and consistent M&E, capacity development, and gathering and sharing lessons and knowledge. Equally important are the support of partnerships, networks, donors, and government at different levels.

**Local action can lead to global impact when facilitated by a global support system** that brings together community-based projects as part of a global network. It is much more feasible to consolidate many small actions when they are aligned in terms of overall approach, objectives, and standards, when they participate in a global knowledge sharing platform, and when they are connected to global institutions and multi-lateral agencies. Providing a global support structure is not just a management concern, but to a large degree a sustainable development imperative. Communities and CSOs are able to participate in global environmental governance by virtue of being linked to a global support system that integrates effective local actions.

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**We knew we would not be around in 30 years when the Borassus palm we planted reaches full maturity, but our children and grandchildren will be there to reap the benefits.**

Dalasi Kafo Women's Group, Kabekel Village, grantee, Gambia

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## SGP potential to contribute to Rio+20 themes and outcomes

A critical challenge for the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 was to actively involve major stakeholders in sustainable development efforts. Such collaboration remains a major challenge for Rio+20. Of particular concern is the matter of equity since poor and vulnerable communities in the developing and least developed countries are at the forefront of environmental and development dilemmas yet often lack adequate capacity to address them. What is needed is a focused and proven mechanism that provides access to resources for sustainable development at the local level, and that not only targets environmental objectives but in its implementation also creates sustainable livelihoods and social empowerment.

SGP can make a valuable contribution to the Rio+20 process and beyond through its demonstrated experience and capacity in integrating the three pillars of sustainable development and dedication to strengthening governance – transparency, accountability, and participation – to protect the global commons through local action. SGP's overall philosophy is guided by three exemplary global public goods – sustainability, equity, and human rights – that will undoubtedly shape deliberations at UNCSD and beyond. For the past 20 years SGP has joined environmental, economic, and social elements in grounded, community-based projects that respond to cohesive country programme strategies which effectively combine global and national priorities with the local needs of vulnerable and marginalized communities, particularly the poor, women, and indigenous groups. In parallel, SGP has developed its own sustainable development architecture, characterized by its decentralized, country-driven, multi-stakeholder structure and operations.

In a context of increasing inequality, scarce resources, accelerating environmental degradation, and climate change, SGP is an example of good practice in the overall architecture of aid in terms of country ownership, transparency, and accountability. SGP's established presence at the country level and near universal coverage are reasons donor partners who wish to channel funding to local communities efficiently and effectively, have made use of the SGP grant-making modality. As has been demonstrated, SGP grant making produces sustainable development benefits that integrate environmental, social, and economic concerns. SGP community and civil society partners have developed capacities to design and implement projects that address not only environmental, but social, cultural, and economic problems. Thus SGP can serve as an effective and competent delivery mechanism to meet sustainable development challenges. In this vision, communities and civil society are crucial for the sustainable development process and communities are the agents of their own transformation.

SGP has endeavored to guide its two decades of implementation according to these critical needs. With these needs intensifying in the coming years, grant-making modalities such as SGP should likewise intensify and speed up their provision of resources and support. True to its design as a partnership of different stakeholders committed to a common cause, SGP extends its hand to other actors and institutions for joint efforts to promote sustainable development in the next two decades.

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Having been involved in the negotiations to establish the SGP within the GEF as an NGO member of the US delegation and having been an ally in the formative years of the programme – especially through linkages with TNC’s work with local NGOs, debt-for-nature swaps, and the creation of the first conservation trust funds – I remain a keen fan of SGP. I was fascinated to see the phenomenal growth of the programme in its second decade, compared to its first, and can only hope that its growth will be as exponential in the third!

SGP was a key piece of the evolution from the time when NGOs clamored to be involved with biodiversity conservation yet met with resistance from governments and international organizations to the time when they serve as an inspiration for small and medium-size grant programs. It’s important to go back in time and analyze the growth of civil society-led financial mechanisms.

A recent book review in the *New York Times* recommended the new idea of foreign aid being channeled by in-country civil society groups – well it’s not a new idea at all! It’s been around for at least 20 years through SGP and conservation trust funds. It’s ironic but it proves that we have not adequately publicized the successes of these mechanisms.

The time may be ripe for these mechanisms to get more recognition. There are large numbers of people who are going to be affected by increasing weather disasters, coastal flooding, and sea level rise, and there have to be representative local mechanisms aimed at local populations, aimed at actual local needs.

So the concept that SGP helped pioneer years ago is going to continue to grow and has to continue to grow if climate funding is going to reach the people who suffer the greatest impacts. The inspiration that SGP has provided and the synergies with environmental trust funds – which are definitely sister organizations – has potentially opened the door for SGP country programmes to become mechanisms for channeling climate funding.

TNC follows the climate finance negotiations very closely and we have increasingly noted the growing concern that donors have about the lack of qualified recipients that can distribute funding to the people who most need it. This issue is not being adequately addressed, and so we are encouraging donors to look at in-country mechanisms such as environmental trust funds – and I am going to definitely steer them to the SGP!

What would it take to strengthen SGP in-country mechanisms with expanded staff capacity, with separate funding? Could there be a partnership to do that in return for access to this ready-made capacity, knowledge, sophistication, and experience in country that would be absolutely impossible to replicate? What better network to invest in and take to the next level!

Mr. Randall Curtis, Senior Policy Advisor, International Government Relations, The Nature Conservancy (TNC)

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Cover: background: SGP Panama

Cover: Circles: clockwise from top right: SGP Peru; SGP Thailand; SGP Cameroon; SGP Burkina Faso; SGP Morocco

Interior: p.12-13: SGP Peru; p. 14 circles: top, SGP Jordan; middle, SGP Guinea; bottom: Delfin Galapin; p. 18-19: SGP Yemen; p. 20: top, SGP Zambia; middle, SGP Tunisia; bottom: SGP Romania; p. 30-31: SGP Mongolia; p. 32: top, SGP Tanzania; middle, SGP Dominican Republic; p. 40-41: SGP Nepal; p. 42: top, SGP Mongolia; middle: SGP Haiti; bottom, SGP Cambodia Photo Delfin Galapin; p. 58-59: SGP South Africa Photo Ana Maria Currea; p. 60: top, SGP Egypt; middle: SGP Thailand; bottom: SGP Argentina; p. 74-75: SGP Cape Verde; p. 76: top, SGP Armenia; middle: SGP China; bottom: SGP Benin; p. 84-85: SGP Mexico Photo Ana Maria Currea; p. 86: top, Costa Rica; middle, SGP Maldives; bottom, SGP Pakistan; p. 136-137: SGP Cambodia; p. 138: top, SGP Samoa; middle, SGP Mali; bottom: SGP India; p. 144: SGP Burundi

# THE GEF SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME

Funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) as a flagship programme, the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) is implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on behalf of the GEF, and is executed by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). Launched in 1992, the SGP supports activities of non-governmental and community-based organizations in developing countries towards biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation, protection of international waters, reduction of the impact of chemicals and prevention of land degradation, while generating sustainable livelihoods.



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