

**SGP** The GEF  
Small Grants  
Programme

25  
years



50  
YEARS

*Empowered lives. Resilient nations.*



# The A to Z of the SGP

A GUIDE TO THE GEF SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME

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The Global Environment Facility (GEF) was established on the eve of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, to help tackle our planet's most pressing environmental problems. Since then, the GEF has provided \$14.5 billion in grants and mobilized \$75.4 billion in additional financing for almost 4,000 projects. The GEF has become an international partnership of 183 countries, international institutions, civil society organizations, and private sector to address global environmental issues.

The GEF's 18 implementing partners are: Asian Development Bank (ADB), African Development Bank (AFDB), Development Bank of Latin America (CAF), Conservation International (CI), Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Foreign Economic Cooperation Office - Ministry of Environmental Protection of China (FECO), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Fundo Brasileiro para a Biodiversidade (FUNBIO), Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), West African Development Bank (BOAD), World Bank Group (WBG), World Wildlife Fund U.S. (WWF).



The Small Grants Programme (SGP) is a corporate programme of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) since 1992. SGP grantmaking in over 125 countries promotes community-based innovation, capacity development, and empowerment through sustainable development projects of local civil society organizations with special consideration for indigenous peoples, women, and youth. SGP has supported over 20,000 community-based projects in biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation, prevention of land degradation, protection of international waters, and reduction of the impact of chemicals, while generating sustainable livelihoods.



# INTRODUCTION



Woman using solar cooker in the Band-e Amir National Park. Credit: SGP Afghanistan.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP), implemented by the United Nations Development Programme, has been providing support for community-based innovation and empowerment for more than two decades. Its unique approach to *Community Action*, *Global Impact* has proven to be effective in helping communities respond to environment and development challenges while improving their livelihoods and reducing poverty.

To effectively continue supporting and responding to the needs of thousands of communities, the SGP is continuously evolving.

The purpose of this Guide is to provide comprehensive and accessible information about the SGP. The information included in this Guide is an up-to-date account of the functioning, operations and grant-making priorities.

The first chapter gives an overview of the programme, its unique focus on poor and vulnerable communities, its global objectives as well as the rationale behind the need for the establishment of the programme. The second chapter presents facts and figures about the programme, highlighting key conclusions from its independent evaluations.

The structure of the GEF SGP is decentralized and country-driven, yet aligned with the overall global direction of the programme. The third chapter describes the roles and responsibilities of each of the interrelated levels of coordination, from the global to the country programmes.

The fourth chapter summarizes the SGP areas of work, which include biodiversity, climate change, land degradation, international waters, chemicals and waste. The strategic initiatives for the current 4-year operational phase, which guide the programme's grant-making, are also explained.

The fifth chapter provides an explanation about the importance and the development of the Country Programme Strategies, the strategic framework for the programme's operations within a country.

The step-by-step process to apply for SGP funding is detailed in the sixth chapter, which also includes the types of grants and the eligibility criteria.

The seventh chapter describes the monitoring and evaluation requirements at the project, country programme and global levels. Results achieved at each level contribute to measuring the impact achieved by the SGP.

The cumulative experiences and innovations implemented through SGP grants have produced a wealth of knowledge, which is captured and shared through the knowledge management system and the OP6 knowledge platforms described in chapter eight.



Chapter nine explains the various communications channels used by SGP to reach different audiences and stakeholders – from governments and UN agencies, to the media, the private sector, and the general public.

Because the SGP generates outcomes that extend beyond each project, its role in scaling up, replication and mainstreaming is explained in chapter ten, including the recent launch of the CSO-Government dialogue platforms. Chapter eleven explains the requirements and types of co-financing for SGP projects, which can range from cash contributions and technical advice to manpower. Chapter twelve explains the United Nations rules and regulations on ethics and professional standards.

This Guide is intended for all SGP staff and partners. It is an information tool for National Coordinators to explain the programme to interested communities, civil society organizations and other national stakeholders in all participating countries. It is also intended to help government counterparts, new and existing National Steering Committee members, as well as new National Coordinators, find all the relevant information about the SGP in this Guide. Donors, the private sector and other interested stakeholders can also benefit from learning about the numerous ways to participate and partner with the programme.

We hope all partners find this Guide useful to continue building successful and strong partnerships through the SGP.

# CONTENTS

<b>ACRONYMS</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>I. THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME</b>	<b>4</b>
Why a GEF SGP?	6
Aligning to the GEF 2020 Vision	9
<b>II. A SNAPSHOT OF THE SGP</b>	<b>10</b>
Programme Growth	12
Diversity of Co-financing Partners	13
Diversity of Grantee Partners	13
Social Inclusion	14
Portfolio Distribution by Focal Area	14
<b>III. THE STRUCTURE OF THE SGP</b>	<b>16</b>
Global Level Coordination	17
GEF SGP Steering Committee	17
Central Programme Management Team	18
United Nations Development Program	18
United Nations Office for Project Services	19
National Level Coordination	19
National Steering Committee	19
Country Programme Team	20
UNDP Country Office	21
National Host Institutions	21
<b>IV. SGP FOCAL AREAS</b>	<b>24</b>
Biodiversity	25
Climate Change	25
Land Degradation	25
International Waters	25
Chemicals and Waste	26
Cross-Cutting Areas	26
Strategic Initiatives	26
Grantmaker+ Strategies	27

<b>V. COUNTRY PROGRAMME STRATEGY</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>VI. HOW TO APPLY</b>	<b>32</b>
Types of Grants	33
Eligibility Criteria	33
Applying for SGP Funding: Step by Step	34
<b>VII. MONITORING AND EVALUATION</b>	<b>38</b>
Project Level	39
Country Programme Level	40
Global Level	41
<b>VIII. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>44</b>
Project Level	45
Country Programme Level	45
Global Level	46
Knowledge Management Platforms	46
<b>IX. COMMUNICATIONS</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>X. SGP ROLE IN SCALING UP, POLICY INFLUENCE AND CHANGE</b>	<b>50</b>
Replication and Scaling-up	51
Policy Influence	51
Empowering Communities	52
CSO-Government Platforms	52
<b>XI. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION</b>	<b>53</b>
Types of Co-financing	54
SGP as a Delivery Mechanism	55
<b>XII. ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS</b>	<b>56</b>
Recourse Mechanism	58
<b>XIII. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>ANNEX</b>	<b>62</b>
SGP Operational Guidelines	63



# ACRONYMS

<b>CBD</b>	Convention on Biological Diversity
<b>CBO</b>	Community-based organizations
<b>CSO</b>	Civil society organization
<b>CMPT</b>	Central Programme Management Team
<b>CPS</b>	Country Programme Strategy
<b>GEF</b>	Global Environment Facility
<b>GHG</b>	Greenhouse gas
<b>ICCAS</b>	Indigenous and community conserved areas
<b>KM</b>	Knowledge Management
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>NC</b>	National Coordinator
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>NHI</b>	National Host Institution
<b>NSC</b>	National Steering Committee
<b>OP</b>	Operational Phase
<b>POPS</b>	Persistent organic pollutants
<b>REDD</b>	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
<b>SAP</b>	Strategic Action Program
<b>SGP</b>	Small Grants Programme
<b>TAGS</b>	Technical Advisory Groups
<b>UNCCD</b>	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNEP</b>	United Nations Environment Programme
<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>UNOPS</b>	United Nations Office of Project Services






Belize Marine Tour Guides preparing for Underwater Photo Training. Credit: SGP Belize.



# I. THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME

A diver in a black wetsuit and blue fins is underwater, holding a white camera. A large, spotted fish is swimming to the left. The background is a dark blue underwater environment with some rocky structures.

The Small Grants Programme (SGP) is a corporate programme of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). It provides support for community-based innovation and empowerment.

The SGP's unique approach is based on three closely inter-connected pillars: global environmental benefits, poverty reduction and community empowerment. The eradication of poverty has been identified as the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. In a vicious cycle of poverty leading to environmental degradation and then to more poverty, poor communities become the victims themselves. But it is also at the community level where solutions and effective action can emerge.

Globally threatened Dusky Grouper is now in the list of species restricted for hunting thanks to the work of the Underwater Research Society and Mediterranean Conservation Society with SGP support. Credit: SGP Turkey.

The SGP is implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) since 1992. SGP grant-making in 125 countries<sup>1</sup> promotes community-based innovation, capacity development, and empowerment through sustainable development projects of local civil society organizations with special consideration for indigenous peoples, women and youth.

The programme supports biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation, prevention of land degradation, protection of international waters, and reduction of the impact of chemicals and waste, while generating sustainable livelihoods.

Since its establishment, the SGP has provided more than 20,000 grants, demonstrating that global environmental problems can best be addressed when local people are involved and direct community benefits and ownership are generated.

The SGP provides financial and technical support to local communities, community-based organizations (CBOs) and civil society organization (CSOs) mostly in poor and often remote areas for initiatives that conserve and restore the environment while enhancing people's livelihoods and wellbeing. The principle of "thinking globally, acting locally" has put the essence of sustainable development into action, based on the interconnected pillars of environmental protection, poverty reduction and community empowerment. As such, the SGP made *Community Action, Global Impact* its mission statement.

Most of the SGP grant-making is channeled through regular grants of up to US\$50,000, but averaging US\$25,000 per project. To further support organizations and communities in need of strengthening their capacity and experience in project design and management, there are also planning grants, which range from US\$2,000 to US\$5,000. More experienced country programmes can also access to strategic project grants, of up to US\$150,000 and for regional or global initiatives.

Although grants are relatively modest, they have been effective in demonstrating innovative approaches to global environmental problems at the community level.

By working through small-scale interventions, the SGP can readily support community-based experimentation and test innovation. This approach proved to be effective in meeting community needs. Successful community strategies can then be replicated and scaled up through networking with other communities and civil society organizations, attracting in turn additional donor support. Global environmental benefits are generated through the cumulative effect of small-scale, community-based efforts and strategies.

For more than two decades, the GEF 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, with a majority of civil society members, encouraging maximum country and community initiative and ownership.

Funding for the programme is provided by the GEF. Since the programme's inception, the SGP has provided more than US\$541.7 million<sup>2</sup> in grants, complemented by more than US\$686 million in cash and in-kind co-financing from communities, national and international NGOs, national and local governments, multilateral organizations, bilateral donors and the private sector partners.

The GEF SGP is much more than just a funding programme. 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, the SGP seeks to foster an enabling environment within countries for addressing global environmental issues and achieving sustainable development goals.

<sup>1</sup> As of November 2016, 125 countries are participating in the SGP: 110 country programmes and 15 upgraded country programmes (see Section 6, Box 4).

<sup>2</sup> Until November 2016.





SGP's main objectives are to:

- Support communities and civil society organizations 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 establish networks to strengthen local and national capacities to address global environmental problems and promote sustainable development.
- Gather, share and scale-up successful community-based innovations and strategies to showcase effective solutions to a wider set of stakeholders.

## Why a GEF SGP?

The call for “thinking globally, acting locally” was reaffirmed all over the world in 1992. One of the reasons why acting locally was emphasized is because the active participation of communities in addressing critical environmental problems often holds the key for promoting effective stewardship of natural resources and sustainable development. This was the rationale behind the need for a programme to support communities and local civil society organizations (CSOs) when the GEF was established. Engaging with and making communities and local CSOs active participants in sustainable development would not only contribute to GEF’s goal but greatly enhance its on-the-ground activities. The SGP was established in response to the call for local action.

But the SGP was not only conceived as a programme to provide funding for communities and local CSOs within the GEF. Its establishment in 1992 coincided with the Rio Earth Summit, where the critical linkages between the economic,

<sup>3</sup> [www.thegef.org](http://www.thegef.org)



environmental and social components were addressed, all of which have a direct connection to poverty and livelihoods. The notion that poverty is a major cause and effect of global environmental problems<sup>5</sup> was embraced as well, providing the sustainable development mandate of the SGP. The rationale for this is that poverty directly impacts on the global environment given that poor and vulnerable populations are dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods, becoming the first victims of environmental degradation.

Another crucial element to the SGP is based on one of the key principles emanating from the Rio Earth Summit—that environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens<sup>6</sup>. This is because the direct involvement of local communities helps to secure the long-term sustainability of actions. This same principle has been reiterated by all the Rio Conventions the GEF serves—the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the United Nations Convention on Combating Desertification. The Rio+20 Summit in 2012 reaffirmed these principles, stressing that the direct and active involvement of concerned citizens is vital in achieving sustainable development and emphasizing support for not just the poor but also the most vulnerable sectors<sup>7</sup>.

Other international experts, organizations and donors have also highlighted the relevance of supporting community-based approaches as a critical element for success. In addition, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on climate change, which set the path towards a more sustainable world by 2030, recognize CSO participation and engagement as critical elements for their successful implementation (see Box 1).

Since its inception, more than 20 years ago, the GEF SGP has sustained its role as the only dedicated direct access funding modality of the GEF that provides innovative, flexible and responsive support to environment and sustainable development efforts of communities and local CSOs with priority on the poor and most vulnerable.



Today, the SGP's unique approach to global environmental protection is more relevant than ever. With growing population and deepening levels of poverty, a vicious cycle exists that increases an ever greater need to exploit natural resources unsustainably. Addressing the scale and scope of global environmental issues require a wide range of simultaneous, integrated, innovative and multi-focused approaches. This is what the SGP delivers by mainstreaming and scaling up of community-led efforts, which in turn contribute to improve livelihoods and reduce poverty.

<sup>4</sup> [www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org)

<sup>5</sup> Our Common Future, Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987)

<sup>6</sup> Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992), Principle 10.

<sup>7</sup> Rio+20 outcome document (2012) Our Common Vision



## BOX 1: Communities at the Core of Success

Various international experts, organizations and donors emphasize the importance of supporting and engaging communities and local CSOs as a key factor for success. Some examples include:

- Professor Elinor Ostrom, Nobel Prize in Economics in 2009, argued that rather than imposing a singular ‘panacea’, shared resources can be managed sustainably and equitably by local communities, because local people *have the strongest incentive to get the solution right*<sup>8</sup>.
- J. Norman Reid summarized his extensive experience with community participation at the United States Department of Agriculture. He concluded that *community participation is a condition for success. Communities that engage their citizens and partners deeply in the work of community development raise more resources, achieve more results, and develop in a more holistic and—ultimately—more beneficial way. Community participation, then, is critical to community success*<sup>9</sup>.
- The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development assessed donor support for capacity development in environmental issues. Some of the lessons learned from that assessment were *CBOs can be instrumental in shaping consensus-building processes which can lead to improved resource management. It is the local communities themselves who should ultimately generate, share, analyze, prioritize and contribute to, or control, decision-making*<sup>10</sup>.

In addition, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement on climate change recognize the importance of CSOs participation and engagement for their successful implementation:

- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which defines 17 SDGs, makes A Call for Action to Change Our World by involving governments, the United Nations system, local authorities, indigenous peoples, civil society, business and the private sector, the scientific and academic community. *It is an Agenda of the people, by the people and for the people – and this, we believe, will ensure its success.* Moreover, SDG 17, Revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, stresses that *a successful sustainable development agenda requires partnerships between governments, the private sector and civil society. These inclusive partnerships built upon principles and values, a shared vision, and shared goals that place people and the planet at the centre, are needed at the global, regional, national and local level*<sup>11</sup>.
- The Paris Agreement, which commits all countries to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change, recognizes *the need to strengthen knowledge, technologies, practices and efforts of local communities and indigenous peoples related to addressing and responding to climate change, and establishes a platform for the exchange of experiences and sharing of best practices on mitigation and adaptation in a holistic and integrated manner*<sup>12</sup>.



<sup>8</sup> Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action, Elinor Ostrom (1990)

<sup>9</sup> Community Participation: How People Power Brings Sustainable Benefits to Communities; J. Norman Reid (2000)

<sup>10</sup> Evaluation and Aid Effectiveness 3: Donor Support for Institutional Capacity Development in Environment: Lessons Learned, OECD (2000)

<sup>11</sup> Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Para. 52 and SDG 17 (2015)

<sup>12</sup> Paris Agreement, Para. 136 (2015): <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/l09.pdf>



## Aligning to the GEF 2020 Vision

For the last two decades, the GEF has supported multiple efforts to protect the global environment. Yet pressures on the global environment are set to increase in the coming decades. Thus, the GEF developed a strategy to address growing environmental threats on a global scale. The GEF 2020 Strategy<sup>13</sup> sets a blueprint for key priorities and actions for the GEF for 2020 and beyond. Its vision is based on the following three pillars:

- **Addressing the drivers of environmental degradation.** The GEF will proactively seek interventions that focus on the underlying drivers of global environmental degradation and support coalitions that bring together partnerships of committed stakeholders around solutions to complex environmental challenges.
- **Supporting innovative and scalable activities.** The GEF will support innovative ways of doing business that are complementary to other institutions' activities and focus on activities that are scalable across multiple countries, regions, and sectors through policy, market, or behavioral transformations.
- **Deliver the highest impacts, cost-effectively.** The GEF will keep a clear focus on maximizing the global environmental benefits it generates from its funding by pursuing cost-effective solutions to major environmental challenges through its partner agencies.

To effectively deliver on its vision for 2020 over the long term, one of the key areas of action to be prioritized by the GEF is mobilizing local and global stakeholders. This will be achieved through:

- a. Seeking a stronger engagement with **civil society organizations, including indigenous peoples**, to develop knowledge and mobilize public action for achieving an enhanced impact on key drivers of environmental degradation.
- b. Forging close relationships with **national and local governments**, who in turn play a key role in mobilizing national partners and establishing cross-country partnerships. These partnerships will be critical to enhancing the focus on drivers of environmental degradation.
- c. Continuing to strengthen its focus on **gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment**.

The SGP is contributing to the GEF 2020 vision by building on its effective approach to supporting local action, protecting the global environment while enhancing livelihoods and empowering communities. In continuing to do so, the SGP has proven to be one of the most effective and efficient modalities to access GEF resources<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> [www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/publication/GEF-2020Strategies-March2015\\_CRA\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/publication/GEF-2020Strategies-March2015_CRA_WEB.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Joint Evaluation of the GEF Small Grants Programme (2008)



# II. A SNAPSHOT OF THE SGP



Dryer panel to reduce use of firewood. Credit: SGP China

The GEF SGP has contributed to generating global environmental benefits while addressing the livelihood needs of local populations<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> Joint Evaluation of the GEF Small Grants Programme (2008)



The programme has established a structure and system that are committed not only to achieving global environmental benefits but also to addressing the socio-economic objectives of improving livelihoods, reducing poverty, promoting gender equality, and empowering women. Its results at the local level are rather impressive, with high percentages of projects contributing to livelihoods, poverty reduction, and gender issues<sup>16</sup>.

The SGP has been effectively testing and implementing sustainable and innovative approaches at the local level, through awareness raising, sharing of knowledge and developing or strengthening of institutional capacities<sup>17</sup>. Due to its unique approach to community empowerment, the SGP has given significant attention to community-level benefits and livelihoods, which is yielding positive results<sup>18</sup>.

Most importantly, the programme has generated outcomes that extend beyond the project level<sup>19</sup>. SGP projects have leveraged their impact through replicating, scaling up and mainstreaming.

Through broader community awareness and engagement, the programme has contributed to creating an enabling environment within countries<sup>20</sup> and to numerous institutional reforms and policy changes to address global environmental issues<sup>21</sup>.

Networks of actors from civil society organizations; local, provincial, and national governments; academic institutions; other global organizations; and the private sector have been developed and built as a result of SGP projects. Some of these networks resulted in ground-breaking coalitions and partnerships<sup>22</sup>.



Furthermore, the SGP has generated outcomes that are subsequently scaled up by or mainstreamed into Medium Sized or Full Sized Projects<sup>23</sup>, or otherwise replicated with funding from other sources other than the GEF, which has contributed to broader impacts at local, regional, and country scales<sup>24</sup>.

The programme's relevance to developing countries is based on the way in which it links, global, national and local level issues through a transparent, strongly participatory and country-driven approach to project planning, design and implementation<sup>25</sup>, which in turn ensures national ownership of decisions and interventions. As a result, the SGP is considered as unmatched by other environmental programmes in terms of its innovation, flexibility and responsiveness<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> Joint GEF-UNDP Evaluation of the Small Grants Programme (2015)

<sup>17</sup> Joint Evaluation of the GEF Small Grants Programme (2008)

<sup>18</sup> Joint GEF-UNDP Evaluation of the Small Grants Programme (2015)

<sup>19</sup> Joint GEF-UNDP Evaluation of the Small Grants Programme (2015)

<sup>20</sup> Independent Evaluation of the GEF SGP Pilot Phase (1995)

<sup>21</sup> Joint Evaluation of the GEF Small Grants Programme (2008)

<sup>22</sup> Second Independent Evaluation of the GEF SGP (1998)

<sup>23</sup> Joint Evaluation of the GEF Small Grants Programme (2008)

<sup>24</sup> Joint GEF-UNDP Evaluation of the Small Grants Programme (2015)

<sup>25</sup> Third Independent Evaluation of the GEF SGP (2003)

<sup>26</sup> Second Independent Evaluation of the GEF SGP (1998)

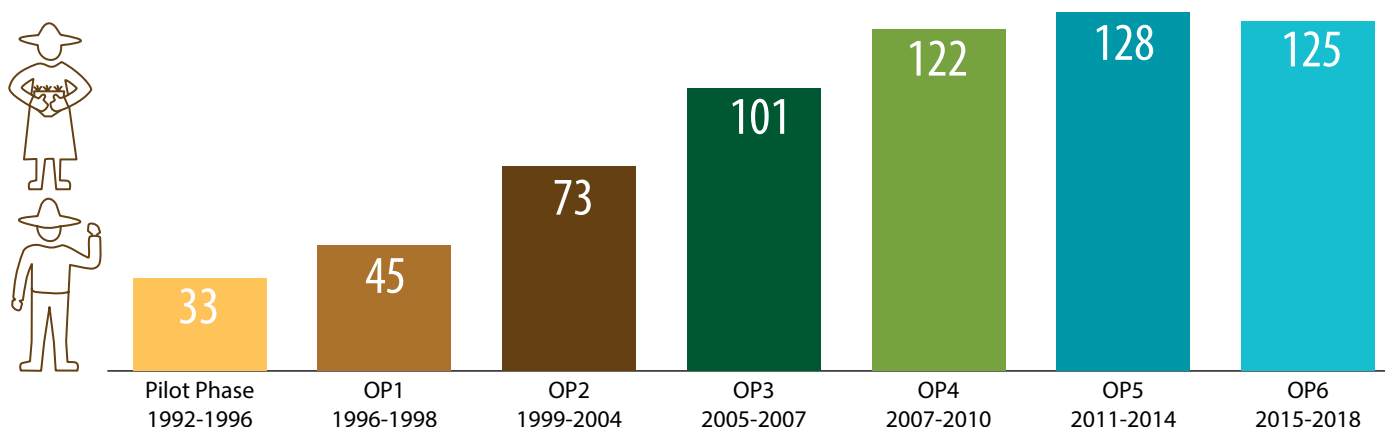
## Programme Growth

The successes and achievements by communities and local organizations generated increasing demands for participation from countries. As a result, SGP has steadily grown across its Operational Phases (OP).

The programme started with a pilot phase, with 33 country programmes. Historically, SGP has provided technical and financial support to communities, CBOs and CSOs in 133 country programmes, some of which have been closed for different reasons<sup>27</sup>.

In OP6, the number of participating countries is 125 (see Figure 1). Of this total, 32 percent are Least Developed Countries and 30 percent are Small Island Developing states. Some country programmes which have gained experience in the SGP since its inception were upgraded, to work in a more independent way. Currently, there are 15 upgraded country programmes (see Section 6).

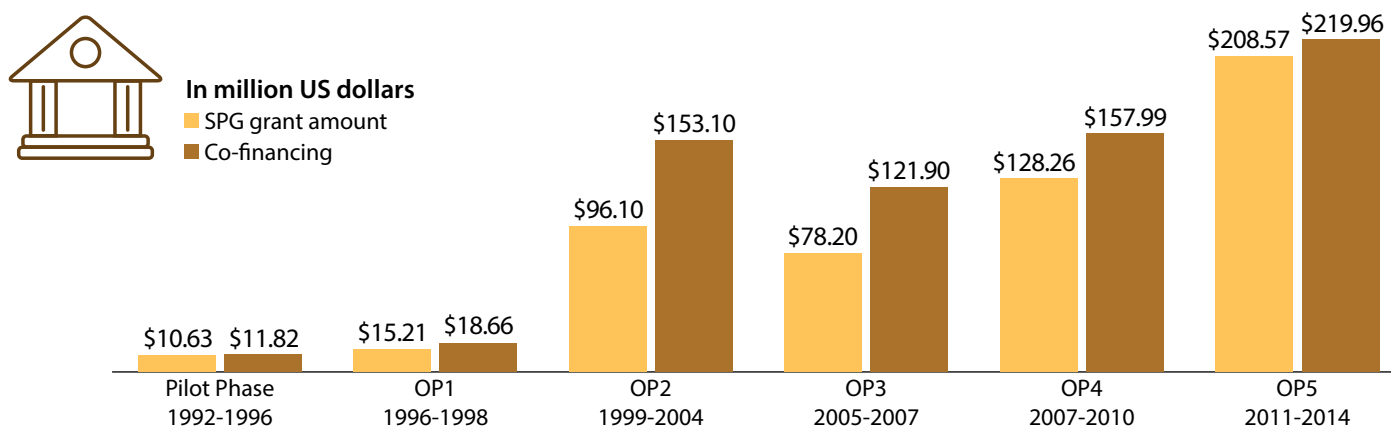
**FIGURE 1: NUMBER OF SGP COUNTRY PROGRAMS BY OPERATIONAL PHASE (1992-2018)**



Funding provided by the GEF supported the programme's expansion during its operational phases. This is because the strategic GEF investments in SGP are considered to have a slightly higher success rate in achieving global environmental benefits and a significantly higher rate in sustaining them than larger GEF projects<sup>28</sup>.

Because GEF investment is solely directed to global environmental activities, co-financing is a requirement to complement SGP project activities. Since the SGP pilot phase, cash and in-kind co-financing have exceeded GEF investments (see Figure 2). The in-kind co-financing contributions from communities themselves are a significant component of SGP success, accounting for about 53 percent of the total co-financing for the SGP.

**FIGURE 2: GRANT AMOUNT AND CO-FINANCING BY OPERATIONAL PHASE (1992-2014)**



<sup>27</sup> The historical number of 133 participating countries includes eight country programmes that have been closed: Bulgaria, Chile, Nicaragua, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Syria.

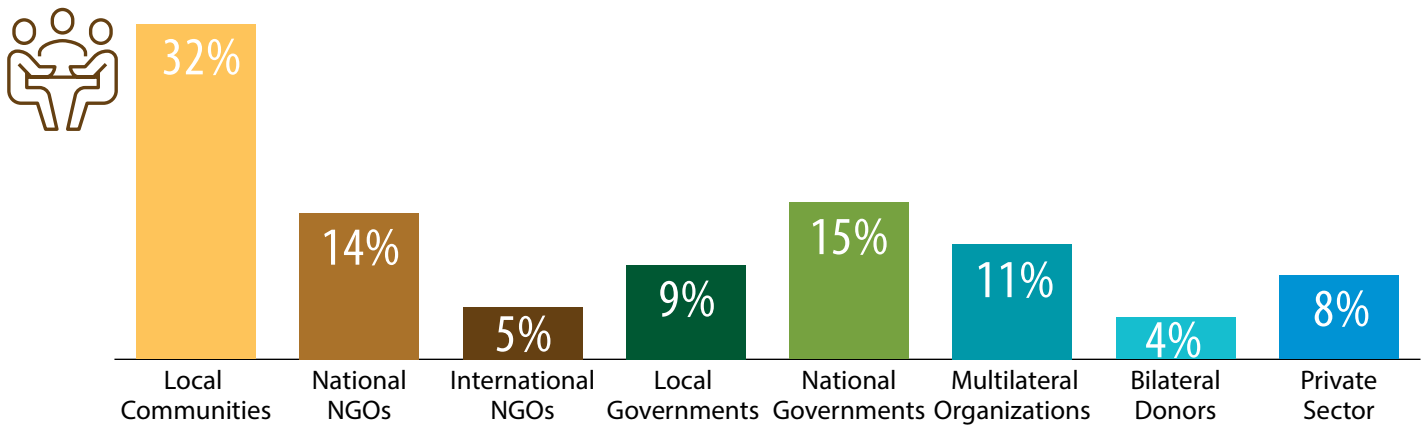
<sup>28</sup> Joint Evaluation of the GEF Small Grants Programme (2008)

## Diversity of Co-financing Partners

Various partners contribute co-financing to SGP projects. Among these partners communities and grantees account for the largest share of co-financing, with 32 percent. National and international NGOs contribute 14 and 5 percent respectively. Local and national government agencies also

partner with communities in the implementation of SGP projects, allocating 9 and 15 percent of the co-financing respectively. Other co-financing partners are multilateral organizations (11 percent), bilateral donors (4 percent) and the private sector (8 percent) (see Figure 3).

**FIGURE 3: SHARE OF SGP CO-FINANCING BY TYPE OF PARTNERS (1992-2015)**

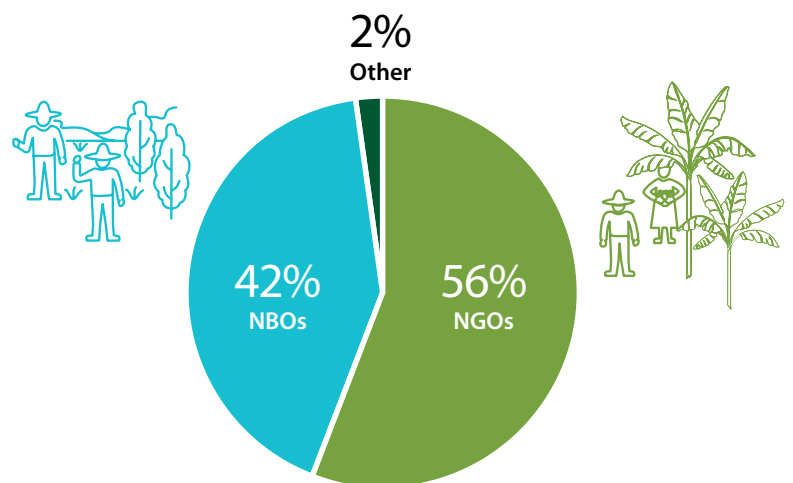


## Diversity of Grantee Partners

The network of recipient of SGP grants, or grantees, is diverse and is targeted to the poorest and most vulnerable communities.

About 56 percent of SGP grants have been implemented by NGOs and 42 percent by CBOs. When local communities lack the organizational capacity to develop and implement their own projects, a national NGO usually partners with them to build their capacities. Based on the experience gained through those partnerships, empowered communities can apply and implement future projects directly. The remaining two percent were awarded to other non-profit organizations, such as academic and research institutions, foundations, and other types of CSO grantees (see Figure 4).

**FIGURE 4: GRANTEE TYPE IN ACTIVE PROJECTS (1992-2016)**



## Social Inclusion

Social inclusion is an important element of community empowerment. By empowering and engaging all members of communities, the SGP ensures that vulnerable and marginalized groups –women, indigenous peoples, youth and people with disabilities– also become active participants in environmental protection and poverty reduction.

Gender equality and women’s empowerment is a critical element of SGP efforts. Women play a fundamental role in creating well-being in their communities and sustainably using natural resources. Thus, women are encouraged to participate and take leadership in community-based projects. Gender-based projects have enabled women to gain greater autonomy together with the collective responsibilities that come with acquiring expertise and leadership, which in turn effectively improves women’s livelihoods. Gender equality and women’s empowerment also provides women and men equal opportunities to participate, work together and benefit from SGP project results.

Indigenous peoples play a key role in SGP efforts. Recognizing the vital role and significant traditional and local knowledge of

indigenous peoples regarding the conservation of biodiversity and the environment, SGP works closely with indigenous communities. SGP respects customary law and practice and supports securing rights to land and resources, as well as participation of indigenous groups in local and national environmental governance.

As current and future actors and stakeholders in environmental protection and sustainable development, youth have become a priority group for SGP. Environmental protection is an intergenerational effort as it requires the expertise of the elders, as well as the formation of the youth as future leaders. Thus, SGP sees great value in investing in youth, who have a unique capacity to shape a more sustainable future. Engaging youth in environmental protection not only creates direct impact on changing their behaviors and attitudes, but also influence their parents, families and communities.

Because of its flexibility to test innovation, the SGP started to support projects by and for people with disabilities<sup>29</sup>. Mainstreaming and engaging these groups enables them to actively participate in community efforts, which in turn improve their livelihoods.

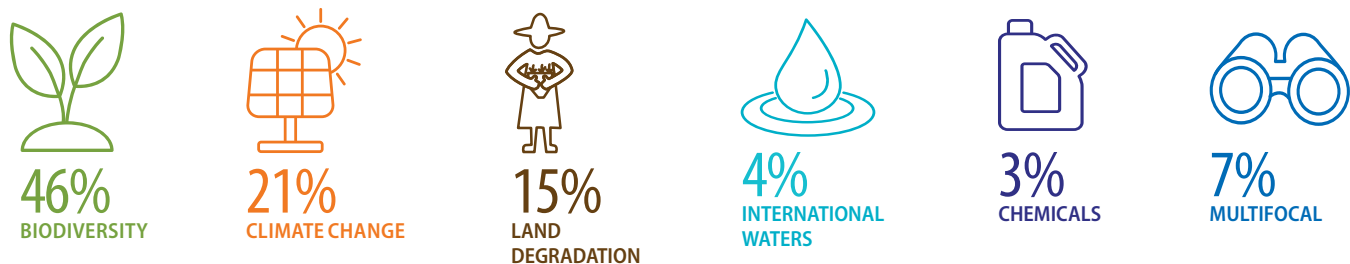


## Portfolio Distribution by Focal Area

The most significant contribution by communities to global environmental protection has been in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, accounting for about 46 percent of the SGP portfolio. Initiatives related to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions or mitigation of climate change also represents an important share of the portfolio, with about 21 percent. Reduction of environmental stresses on international waters has been the focus of four percent of community efforts.

Since their adoption as focal areas in 2002, activities related to the prevention of land degradation gained an important share of the portfolio, with 15 percent; as well as initiatives to eliminate chemicals including persistent organic pollutants (POPs), accounting for three percent. Multifocal areas projects account for seven percent of community-led efforts (see Figure 5).

**FIGURE 5: PORTFOLIO DISTRIBUTION BY FOCAL AREA (1992-2015)**



<sup>29</sup>The term persons with disabilities is used to apply to all persons with disabilities including those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various attitudinal and environmental barriers, hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. UNDESA Enable FAQ – [www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/faqs.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/faqs.htm)





Women watering nursery. Credit: SGP Ghana.



# III. THE STRUCTURE OF THE SGP

Women from the Ngabe indigenous group monitoring forest in a Protected Area. Credit: SGP Panama – Alicia Ibanez.

The structure of the SGP is organized around the need to serve the community level and respond to the country's specific needs while ensuring consistency across participating countries and achieving GEF's global environmental objectives. Thus, it is decentralized and country-driven, yet aligned with the overall global direction of the programme. This balance, which is the essence of the distinct nature of the SGP, is based on the principles of participation, democracy, flexibility, and transparency to encourage maximum country and community level ownership.



The programme's structure is categorized into:

- **Global level coordination**, including the GEF SGP Steering Committee, the Central Programme Management Team, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).
- **Country level coordination**, including the National Coordinator, the National Steering Committee and the UNDP Country Office. In addition, some countries with large portfolios have part time or full time Programme Assistants.

## Global Level Coordination

The SGP is a corporate funding modality of the GEF. Its funding is approved by the GEF Council, composed by the 183 member countries of the GEF and represented through 32 constituencies. The GEF considers the SGP as a corporate programme, with the specific mandate to generate global environmental benefits through community and local solutions implemented by communities, CBOs and CSOs in participating countries. Thus, its funding is approved by the Council every four years, through a project document which includes the framework and specific benchmarks for project achievements for each SGP's operational phase. Main responsibilities of the GEF Council are summarized in Figure 6.

**FIGURE 6**



**GEF COUNCIL**  
**183 member countries represented in 32 constituencies**  
Reviews and approves funding for the SGP for each operational phase.

### GEF SGP STEERING COMMITTEE

At the global level, the GEF SGP Steering Committee provides strategic corporate programme vision and long-term strategy for the SGP, as well as enables linkages with the GEF, its Agencies and CSO stakeholders. The Committee also establishes country participation policies for new country programmes and for upgrading of participating country programmes; supports SGP's resource mobilization efforts; as well as promotes linkages

between SGP and GEF projects. It is composed by the GEF Secretariat as Chair, the UNDP GEF unit, the GEF CSO Network and the SGP Central Programme Management Team as secretariat to the committee. Members and responsibilities of the GEF SGP Steering Committee are summarized in Figure 7.

**FIGURE 7**



**GEF SGP STEERING COMMITTEE**  
**GEF Secretariat, UNDP GEF, GEF, CSO Network, CPMT**

- Provides strategic vision and long-term strategy for SGP.
- Enables linkages with GEF, its Agencies and CSOs.
- Establishes policies for new and upgrading country programmes.
- Supports resource mobilization.
- Promotes linkages between SGP and GEF projects.

### CENTRAL PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT TEAM

The overall management of the global programme is under the responsibility of the Central Programme Management Team (CPMT), which provides operational guidance and support to the participating country programmes.

Based on the experience and knowledge gained both at the country and global levels through years of SGP programme implementation, the CPMT develops and regularly updates a set of Operational Guidelines (see Annex) that provide the basic framework for SGP global and country operations. These guidelines outline standard practices and ensure consistency and accountability at all levels of the programme.

Also, the CPMT is responsible for resource mobilization at the global level. Thus, in consultation with the country programmes, the CPMT prepares the global SGP funding proposal for each operational phase. After GEF Council approval and GEF CEO endorsement, the CPMT prepares a project document that guides the programme in terms of strategic priorities and outcomes and serves as the basis for developing country programme strategies. The CPMT also advise country programmes on their own resource mobilization efforts. To better support country programmes in these efforts, CPMT is actively involved in global dialogues

and sharing SGP models, innovations, and lessons learned which also serves as a basis for global knowledge sharing, partnership development and networking. The CPMT team is also responsible for reporting to other donors that are partnering with the SGP as a delivery mechanism to reach communities (see Section 11).

The CPMT consists of a Global Manager, a Deputy Global Manager, Programme Specialists on the GEF focal areas (biodiversity, climate change, land degradation and sustainable forests, international waters and chemicals), Programme Specialists for communications and knowledge management and for monitoring and evaluation and two Programme Associates. The Programme Specialists for focal areas also act as Regional Focal Points, providing guidance and support to country programmes in their assigned regions.

The SGP Global Manager and Deputy Global Manager are responsible for overall SGP management, strategic direction, and policy development. In particular, the Deputy Global Manager is responsible for providing support to the Global Manager on policy development and strategic directions, leads programme operations, supervises the CPMT staff and acts as the liaison with the implementing partner. The 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. The CPMT also reviews and approves country programme strategies and annual reports, which not only ensures consistent results across all participating countries but a harmonized global reporting to the GEF Council and to SGP's civil society constituencies. The CPMT is also the primary supervisor of the UN-contracted National Coordinators to provide NCs the links to the global programme. SGP staff and National Coordinators are UN-contracted to ensure their neutrality and objectivity in grant making, following UN professional and ethical standards (see Section 12). The composition and key responsibilities of the CPMT are summarized in Figure 8.

**FIGURE 8**

CENTRAL PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT TEAM

Global Manager, Deputy Global Manager, Focal Area Specialists/Regional Focal Points, Communication, Knowledge Management and Monitoring and Evaluation Specialists and Programme Associates

- Develops and updates Operational Guidelines
- Provides support to country programmes
- Mobilizes resources at the global level
- Reviews and approves Country Programme Strategies and annual reports.
- In charge of monitoring and evaluation and reporting to donors
- Leads and implements the global communication strategy reaching out to key stakeholders
- Coordinates and disseminates global knowledge management and sharing, including lessons learned and case studies
- Creates partnerships at the global and regional level Promotes linkages between SGP and GEF projects.

**UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the implementing agency of the SGP. A UNDP GEF Unit at UNDP Headquarters in New York provides oversight for all of its GEF activities, including the SGP. The Central Programme Management Team (CPMT), which supervises and manages the SGP global programme is located at UNDP Headquarters. As implementing agency, UNDP is accountable to the GEF Council for the utilization of GEF resources. The responsibilities of UNDP are summarized in Figure 9.

**FIGURE 9**

UNDP

Implementing Agency

Provides oversight to the global programme; and is accountable to the GEF Council for the use of GEF resources.



## UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR PROJECT SERVICES

The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) is the implementing partner for the SGP global programme and well as for most of the upgraded country programmes. UNOPS provides administrative and financial services to ensure that the SGP is executed in a timely and cost-efficient manner, while providing a neutral financial oversight. In addition, UNOPS provides human resources services including the recruitment of all SGP staff. All of UNOPS services are detailed in the UNOPS SGP Standard Operating Procedures. The SGP Board, composed of UNDP and UNOPS, meets periodically to oversee progress and provide overall guidance. Services provided by UNOPS are summarized in Figure 10.

FIGURE 10



**UNOPS**  
**Implementing Partner**

- Provides financial and administrative management of SGP funds, including project grants.
- Coordinates the recruitment of SGP staff, at global and national level.
- Provides audit and legal services.

## National Level Coordination

At the national level, GEF SGP works through a voluntary National Steering Committee and country programme teams comprising a National Coordinator and, in some countries, a Programme Assistant. Most SGP country programmes are hosted by UNDP Country Offices, but some countries are hosted by a national host institution.

### NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE

The National Steering Committee (NSC) is the main decision-making body of the SGP in a country. Non-governmental members represent the majority of the NSC membership. Strong, experienced, and technically competent civil society representation on the NSC is crucial as a means of keeping the SGP responsive to its mandate to work with CBOs and NGOs. Other NSC members include academic and scientific institutions, the UNDP Country Office and a representative from the government, making

the NSC a truly multi-stakeholder committee. In general, only one government representative on the NSC is required, which is usually the GEF Operational Focal Point who is responsible for overall GEF activities in the country. However, country programmes can have additional government representatives such as Convention focal points.

The NSC is responsible for the overall oversight of the country programme, by providing input, endorsing and overseeing the implementation of the Country Programme Strategy –the guidelines for the implementation and grant making in each country programme (see Section 5).

The NSC reviews, selects and approves projects for SGP funding support.

The NSC decisions are adopted under the principle of consensus, and rarely resort to voting to determine whether a project is approved or a particular course of action is taken. Operationally, the decisions of the NSC are considered final. The objectivity, transparency and credibility of the NSC are of paramount importance to the success of the country programme. Thus, country programmes cannot consider proposals associated with organizations of NSC active members.

Recent guidance recommends that NSC members serve for a period of three years, which can be renewed for a maximum of one additional term. Nomination of the non-governmental NSC members is done in a consultative process with the civil society community in the country and is coordinated by the National Coordinator. The final list of NSC members is reviewed and finalized with the UNDP Resident Representative. The composition of a newly established NSC is subject to ratification by the SGP Global Manager, while subsequent appointments can be ratified by the responsible CPMT Regional Focal Point. The UNDP Resident Representative provides the appointment letters to NSC members on behalf of the SGP. Government representatives to the NSC, which should include the GEF Operational Focal Point office, are assigned by the relevant government agencies involved in the SGP country programme. The UNDP Country Office, through the Resident Representative, is an ex-officio member of the NSC.

All NSC members contribute to their responsibilities on a voluntary basis. Membership and responsibilities of the NSC are summarized in Figure 11.

FIGURE 11

**NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE**

**Representatives from non-governmental organizations (majority), national government, UNDP Country Office**

- Main decision-making body of the SGP in a country
- Provides input and endorsement to the Country Programme Strategy
- Oversees the implementation of the Country Programme Strategy
- Reviews and approves projects
- Helps with resource mobilization
- Leads scaling up efforts through policy formulation and mainstreaming

To support the NSC duties, Technical Advisory Groups (TAGs) can be established. These groups can be convened to provide technical advice for review of particular proposals and specific technical guidance in specialized areas of work<sup>30</sup>. These groups of voluntary experts serve as a technical sub-committee to the NSC. In addition, TAGs may also be formed in response to donor and co-financing requirements mobilized for the SGP country programme. The tasks of the TAGs are summarized in Figure 12.

FIGURE 12

**TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUPS**

**Experts on particular issues Agency**

Provide technical advice when deemed necessary by the NSC (such as focal areas, co-financing).

## COUNTRY PROGRAMME TEAM

SGP country programme teams are headed by a National Coordinator (NC), and in some cases a Programme Assistant. The NC is the link between the local, country and global level, and is responsible for the overall implementation and functioning of a country programme.

The NC provides support to the NSC decision-making process. This means that he/she participates in deliberations, but not in decisions related to the project selection process. The NC usually convenes the NSC and functions as its secretariat. When rotation of NSC members is required, he/she identifies possible volunteers to the NSC.

One of the responsibilities of the NC is facilitating the development of community-based projects to achieve the benchmarks established in the Country Programme Strategy (see Section 5). Programme sustainability is also under the NC's tasks, including project monitoring and evaluation, coordination of periodic project site visits, and resource mobilization. In addition, he/she disseminates SGP information, including lessons, results and progress reports to all relevant SGP stakeholders at the country and global level.

The NC works with project proponents, providing advice and recommending further development of project concepts, if considered eligible, into project proposals.

Due to the key role that the NC plays in implementing the SGP in the country, his/her selection is of crucial importance. To ensure the neutral role of the NC, the recruitment process is managed by the UNDP Country Office, under the overall supervision of the UNDP Resident Representative, on behalf of UNOPS. The final selection is authorized by the SGP Global Manager. In countries where a Programme Assistant works with the NC, he/she provides technical and/or administrative support to the programme. The NC is involved in his/her selection process, which follows the same general guidelines as for the selection of the NC.

<sup>30</sup> Specialized areas of work could include carbon measurement, payments for ecosystem services, marketing and certification of products, transboundary diagnostic analysis.

The performance of NCs is evaluated annually. His/her performance evaluation is reviewed by the CPMT, the NSC chair, UNDP Country Office, and UNOPS regional teams. The composition and key tasks under the responsibilities of the Country Programme Team are summarized in Figure 13.

**FIGURE 13**

**COUNTRY PROGRAMME TEAM**

**National Coordinator, Programme Assistant**

- Overall implementation and functioning of country programme.
- Coordinates the development of the Country Programme Strategy.
- Provides advice to project proponents.
- Reviews project concepts and recommends further development of eligible proposals.
- Coordinates project visits and M&E.
- Convenes the NSC and supports its functioning and meetings.
- Compiles and disseminates lessons learned and other relevant reports, organizes knowledge exchange events.
- Mobilizes resources for the country programme.
- Facilitates networking with partners and grantees.
- Supports policy dialogues and advocacy efforts.

The complete list of all the SGP NCs can be found in each country programme page at the SGP website<sup>31</sup>.

### UNDP COUNTRY OFFICE

The UNDP Country Office host most country programmes and provides management support to the SGP country programmes. Among these tasks, the UNDP Country Office provides implementation support and broad oversight to the SGP country programme, through its designated focal point, as part of its NSC responsibilities; facilitates interaction with the government; develops links with other in-country financial and technical resources; and supports complementation of SGP activities with its country programming as well as that of other development agencies.

In addition, the UNDP Country Office is also responsible for providing operational support for the programme. For example, once a project is approved, the UNDP Resident

Representative is responsible for signing the Memorandum of Agreement (on behalf of UNOPS), appointment letters to NSC members (on behalf of the SGP), among other functions.

The UNDP Resident Representative in each Country Office assigns a senior staff person to serve as the SGP focal point. The Resident Representative participates in the NSC, or may delegate the representation to the designated SGP focal point. Main responsibilities of the UNDP Country Office are summarized in Figure 14.

**FIGURE 14**

**UNDP COUNTRY OFFICE**

**Resident Representative, SGP Focal Point**

- Act as secondary supervisor of the National Coordinator.
- Serves as a member of the NSC.
- Facilitates interaction with the government.
- Facilitates links with other in-country projects and programmes and supports resource mobilization efforts.
- Signs the Memorandum of Agreement (on behalf of UNOPS).
- Issues the appointment letters to NSC members (on behalf of SGP).
- Supports recruitment of SGP staff in a country.
- Hosts most country programmes.

### NATIONAL HOST INSTITUTIONS

In a few countries, a national host institution (NHI) hosts the country programme. These institutions must be well-established CSOs or academic institutions in the country. This is because the legitimacy and neutrality of a NHI within the national CSO community are essential qualifications to carry out SGP grant-making activities.

In consultation with national stakeholders, a country programme which is starting-up or has gained significant experience with the SGP, may consider hosting the programme in a NHI instead of the UNDP Country Office. The identification of a pool of suitable organizations that could perform the responsibility for hosting the SGP is carried out through a process of competitive bidding by UNOPS. International NGOs would not normally be eligible. Key factors considered in the selection of an NHI include national credibility; good working relationships with other

<sup>31</sup> [https://sgp.undp.org/index.php?option=com\\_countrypages&view=countrypages&Itemid=152](https://sgp.undp.org/index.php?option=com_countrypages&view=countrypages&Itemid=152)



CSOs; substantial involvement and technical expertise in environmental issues related to the GEF focal areas and the Rio conventions; and proven programme management and administrative capacity with systems in place.

When an organization is selected as NHI, UNOPS issues and administers a sub-contract with the organization that outlines the roles and responsibilities to be provided by the NHI. For example, an NHI may provide physical office space, with the NC and NSC carrying full responsibility for programme management or carry full responsibility for managing the SGP country programme. The UNDP Country Office provides support for SGP in-country operations in coordination with the CPMT and UNOPS.

The NHI director participates in the NSC. To ensure transparency and impartiality, NHIs are not eligible to apply for SGP grants. Equally, NHIs do not administer grant funds. The responsibilities of the NHI are summarized in Figure 15.

**FIGURE 15**

**NATIONAL HOST INSTITUTIONS**

- Hosts country programme.
- Provides technical support and administrative services.

The following country programmes are hosted by NHIs, as of 2016:

COUNTRY	NATIONAL HOST INSTITUTION
BRAZIL	Instituto Sociedade, População e Natureza
EGYPT	Arab Office for Youth and Environment
INDIA	Center for Environmental Education
INDONESIA	Yayasan Bina Usaha Lingkungan
JORDAN	The Royal Marine Conservation Society of Jordan
NAMIBIA	Environmental Investment Funds of Namibia
BAHAMAS	Soujourner-Douglass College
TONGA	Civil Society Forum of Tonga
COOK ISLANDS	Cook Islands Red Cross Society

All SGP stakeholders interact with each other, according to its specific responsibilities—from overall policy guidance and advice, project approval and monitoring, to oversight of activities at the national and global level. The SGP organizational chart is summarized in Figure 16.

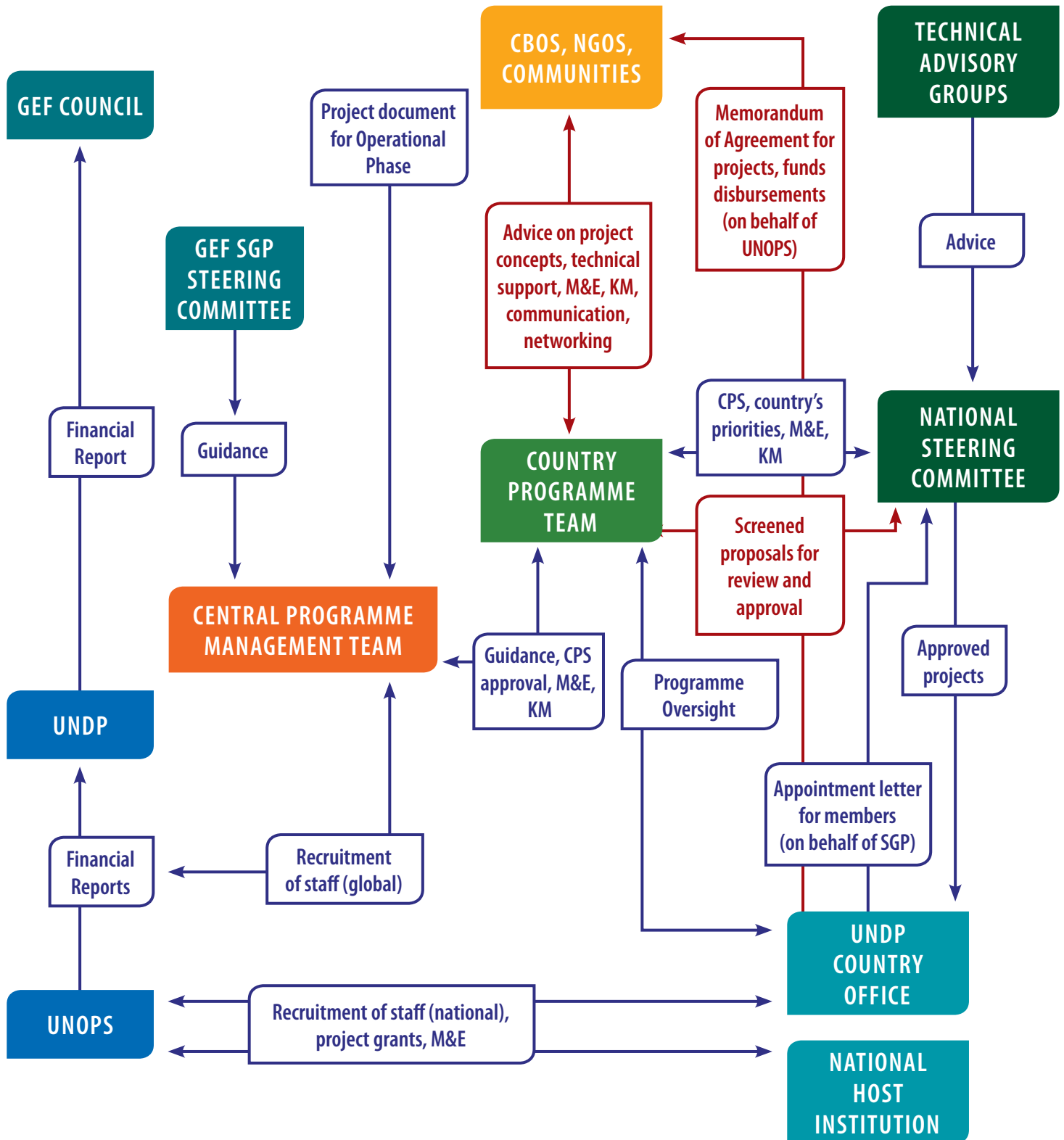




FIGURE 16

## SGP Organizational Chart

- Key Role and Main Responsibilities
- Project-related procedures





# IV.

## SGP FOCAL AREAS

The GEF SGP supports projects and strategies that conserve biodiversity, reduce the risks of climate change, protect international waters, prevent land degradation and eliminate chemicals and waste.

These areas of work, or focal areas, are in line with GEF areas of support. The focus of GEF support is reviewed every four years, to better respond to new guidance from the Conventions the GEF serves—the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and the Minamata Convention on Mercury. The periodic review process also meets strategic guidance from GEF’s donors as well as national priorities from recipient countries.



## Biodiversity

The biodiversity focal area focuses on improving the sustainability of protected area systems and mainstreaming biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production landscapes/seascapes and sectors. SGP projects tackle threats to globally significant biodiversity in all types of ecosystems: arid and semi-arid, coastal and marine, freshwaters and wetlands, forests and mountains.

As an effective approach of conserving biodiversity, SGP has concentrated its efforts on protected areas and indigenous and community conserved areas (ICCAs). The sustainable use of biodiversity-based products is also addressed, targeting sustainable biodiversity-friendly practices in activities that depend on biodiversity resources, such as agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and tourism. Support is also provided for the equitable sharing of benefits derived from the use of biological resources, as well as respect for and preservation of traditional knowledge.

## Climate Change

The climate change focal area aims at reducing or avoiding greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions at the community-level. SGP climate change mitigation efforts are focused on implementing low-GHG technologies and low-carbon transport initiatives.

Support for low-carbon energy technologies ensure that communities have access to renewable energy, while improving energy efficiency, to meet the lighting, heating and cooking needs of poor households; local public facilities, such as rural schools and health centers; and community-based micro enterprises. These technologies include micro-hydro, wind, solar and biomass. Efforts to support low-carbon transportation are focused on providing a sustainable alternative particularly in remote areas, where goods, and people, must be transported to and from markets over long-distances.

Projects addressing adaptation to climate change are supported by other donors other than the GEF SGP (see Box 2).

## BOX 2: Community-Based Adaptation

Local communities are the least equipped to cope with the impacts of climate change, yet will be the most severely affected. The objective of the community-based adaptation to climate change programme is to build community resilience by reducing vulnerability and increasing the adaptive capacity of communities to manage the impacts of climate change. Support for activities on community-based adaptation are funded by partnerships with other donors other than the GEF and delivered through the SGP (see Section 11).

## Land Degradation

The objective of the land degradation focal area is to reverse and prevent desertification and land degradation, and to mitigate the effects of drought in affected areas. SGP projects aim to improve agricultural management to maintain the cover and functionality of agro-ecosystems, and forest ecosystems in dryland areas. Activities supported mainly target rural communities, which are highly dependent on agro-ecosystems and forest ecosystems for their livelihoods.

## International Waters

The goal of the international waters focal area is the sustainable management of transboundary waterbodies through regionally connected community-based activities. Within this focal area, SGP links community-based approaches that support the implementation of intergovernmental agreements or policies, such as national Transboundary Diagnostic Analyses, regional Strategic Action Programmes or larger international water programmes. SGP support is focused on innovative local solutions to reduce pollution, improve water use efficiency, protect water supply and sustainable fisheries using rights-based management.



## Chemicals and Waste

The chemicals and waste focal area aims at the reduction and elimination of the release of harmful chemicals into the environment. SGP efforts are focused on the sound management of chemicals and waste, including POPs and mercury, in ways that lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the global environment. SGP activities include pesticide and waste management, as well as networking and advocacy for environmentally sound use of chemicals and waste.

## Cross-cutting Areas

To promote further synergies among focal areas, SGP also provides support for cross-cutting areas, including:

**Sustainable Forest Management**—the goal of Sustainable Forest Management projects is to reduce pressures on forest resources. SGP efforts focus on sustainable land use, land-use change, and forestry management interventions for forest and non-forest land-use types, to ensure connectivity between ecosystems and restorative activities. Activities will also seek linkages with biodiversity and climate change initiatives.

**Capacity Development**—the goal of the Capacity Development focal area is to enhance and strengthen the capacity of communities and civil society to address global environmental challenges. All SGP projects include a capacity development component. Standalone capacity development projects also receive support, focusing on larger groups of community and CSO stakeholders. These standalone capacity development grants can be used, for example, for the organization of knowledge fairs to showcase the achievements of a country programme; or stakeholder workshops aimed at strengthening capacities for monitoring and evaluation, applying knowledge management and capturing lessons learned, and networking for policy advocacy and effective participation in national planning.

## Strategic Initiatives

SGP will focus its grant-making efforts on four strategic initiatives in OP6 (2015-2018). These strategic initiatives enable the SGP to enhance its impact at a faster rate. Instead of focusing on individual projects by focal area, these initiatives combine multiple focal areas. Thus,

SGP-supported projects under the strategic initiatives complement each other, while building stronger linkages and promoting synergies among them.

Each of the OP6 strategic initiatives are inter-related and inter-connected. Their overall approach will:

- Focus on globally recognized critical ecosystems.
- Set-up innovative institutional and financial support mechanisms to expand the value and impact of projects nationally and globally.
- Systematically develop the capacity of local and national civil society stakeholders, including their ability to manage larger projects and more complex national challenges, as a key factor for environmental sustainability.

SGP country programmes may elect to focus on one or more of the strategic initiatives, depending on country and stakeholder priorities, to achieve greater strategic impact.

The OP6 four strategic initiatives are:

### 1. COMMUNITY LANDSCAPE AND SEASCAPE CONSERVATION

Ecosystems are critical for people. Sustaining ecosystems effectively requires integrating biodiversity, international waters, land degradation, resilience and carbon sequestration approaches in targeted landscapes and seascapes.

The goal of this strategic initiative is to improve the conservation and sustainable use, and management of important terrestrial and coastal/marine ecosystems through the implementation of community oriented landscape/seascape approaches. SGP will identify important ecosystems and use a community-based landscape and seascape conservation approach for their protection and sustainable use. Using a multi-focal approach by involving communities in buffer zones and corridors, SGP will provide connectivity for complex landscape mosaics. Seascape approaches will support the implementation of inter-linked activities to systematically address waterbody environmental degradation.

### 2. CLIMATE SMART INNOVATIVE AGRO-ECOLOGY

Land degrading practices have resulted in land degradation as well as forest loss, which have adverse impacts on farmers'

livelihoods. Achieving multiple environmental benefits as well as enhancing food security requires integrating land degradation, biodiversity, water management, and climate resilience approaches.

The goal of this strategic initiative is to incorporate agro-ecology practices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to test enhanced resilience to climate change in protected area buffer zones and forest corridors in at least 30 priority countries. SGP will target geographical areas that show declining productivity as a result of human induced land degrading practices and the impact of climate change by working in buffer zones of identified critical ecosystems, as well as in forest corridors.

### 3. LOW-CARBON ENERGY ACCESS CO-BENEFITS

Despite numerous and successful efforts, including those from the SGP, currently about 1.3 billion people live without access to electricity and 2.7 million billion still rely on traditional biomass for cooking. Less polluting and/or renewable energy can meet this energy demand, while providing benefits for their livelihoods and health.

This strategic initiative aims at the successful deployment of low-carbon community energy access solutions, with alignment and integration within larger frameworks. Low-carbon energy solutions, including small hydro, bioenergy systems from waste and efficient stoves, aligned with national country strategies can be integrated and scaled up within larger national and international frameworks such as Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions, Low Emission Development Strategies and Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL). SGP will focus on providing bottom-up energy solutions that are low-cost and provide high potential for carbon emission reductions to satisfy the global demand for energy services of people without access to electricity and those that still rely on traditional biomass for cooking.

### 4. LOCAL TO GLOBAL CHEMICALS MANAGEMENT COALITIONS

The unsafe use of chemicals and the unsound disposal of waste impact poor communities, including health impacts, the most. For example, artisanal gold mining is a main contributor to human induced mercury contamination at

the community level. Citizen awareness and networking at national and global levels are key tools towards more environmentally friendly practices and products to reduce the risks of exposure to toxic and hazardous chemicals and waste at the community level.

The goal of this strategic initiative is to demonstrate, deploy and transfer innovative community-based tools and approaches for managing harmful chemicals and waste in a sound manner, with support from newly organized or existing coalitions. Through the establishment of coalitions and networks, SGP will increase the phase-out, disposal and reduction of releases of POPs, pesticides, mercury and other harmful chemicals, as well as the sound management of solid waste, including electronic waste (e-waste). The programme will work jointly with partners, including the International POPs Elimination Network, government agencies, research institutions, the private sector, and international agencies such as World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

## Grantmaker+ Strategies

As much more than just a funding programme, the SGP will also undertake additional strategies in OP6. These strategies aim at enhancing the overall effectiveness of the entire portfolio by expanding the SGP's role beyond grant-making. Thus, these strategies are not eligible for SGP grants. These grantmaker plus (grantmaker+) strategies are:

1. **Promoting Social Inclusion.** SGP will continue to undertake targeted efforts to support greater social inclusion of marginalized groups, including women, indigenous peoples, and youth and people with disabilities (see Section 2).
2. **Global Reach for Citizen Practice-Based Knowledge** programme (see Section 8)
3. **CSO-Government Policy and Planning Dialogue Platforms** (see Section 10)

More information on the SGP focal areas, including case studies, publications and stories from the field can be found at the SGP website<sup>32</sup>.

<sup>32</sup> [https://sgp.undp.org/index.php?option=com\\_areaofwork&view=summary&Itemid=237](https://sgp.undp.org/index.php?option=com_areaofwork&view=summary&Itemid=237)





# COUNTRY PROGRAMME STRATEGY



The Country Programme Strategy (CPS) provides a strategic framework for SGP's operations within a country. It sets key guidelines for allocating resources and guides programme implementation at the national level.

Each participating country programme develops its own CPS, through a multi-stakeholder participatory process, which ensures strengthened country relevance and ownership.



A detailed analysis of key national environment and sustainable development priorities and strategic planning frameworks associated with relevant Rio conventions is one of the pillars of the CPS development. National policies analyzed include the GEF National Capacity Self-Assessment process; the CBD National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans; the UNFCCC National Communications and Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions; the UNCCD National Actions Programmes; and the Stockholm Convention National Implementation Plans.

The other pillar for developing the CPS is the global strategic guidelines set by the SGP project document for each operational phase, and the GEF resource allocation strategy.

The development of the CPS is facilitated by the NC. Based on the detailed assessment of all relevant documents, national circumstances and priorities for the country (e.g.: National Development Strategy, etc.), strategic priorities for the SGP country programme are identified and outlined in a draft CPS. Guidance and input to the draft is then sought from the NSC, key non-governmental stakeholders and government representatives in the country. When all comments are incorporated, the draft CPS is finalized by the NC. The draft is then submitted to the NSC for initial approval, and to the CPMT Regional Focal Point for comments and review, particularly in terms of its alignment with the global strategic directions for the SGP operational phase.

Based on the recommendations by the CPMT, the NC finalizes the CPS and submits it to the NSC for formal endorsement. For final approval, the NC submits the endorsed CPS to the SGP Global Manager or delegated CPMT Regional Focal Point, who have the responsibility of approving the CPS. Once the CPS is approved by the CPMT, it is posted and circulated as a public document.

As a result of the multi-stakeholder consultations and thorough analysis, key priority areas for allocating resources are identified for the country programme. These key areas

## BOX 3: Key CPS elements

The CPS should broadly include the following key elements:

- A description of the country programme's background—including results and accomplishments, situation analysis and past experience.
- The specific country programme niche—describing alignment with national priorities and complementary and synergy with other national initiatives.
- Strategic priorities identified for the country programme in alignment with the strategic directions and initiatives for the operational phase. These priorities include the identification and agreement on selected landscape/seascape, where relevant<sup>33</sup>.
- Expected results framework—including targets, activities and indicators.
- A monitoring and evaluation plan.
- A resource mobilization plan.
- A risk management plan, including those risks related to the implementation of the UNDP Social and Environmental Safeguards Policy.

are aligned with the SGP global guidelines, thus ensuring global coherence while allowing country ownership. In addition, the CPS ensures that each grant will emerge from the needs of communities and local peoples while responding to national priorities and GEF's mandate.

Since every participating country identifies its own priorities to be funded by the SGP, the outcome of the elaboration of the CPS determines which focal areas and strategic priorities will be prioritized, the expected outcome indicators to be achieved and the approximate number of projects to be funded for each focal area and strategic priorities during the four-year period of each operational phase.

<sup>33</sup> The identification and agreement on selected landscape/seascape is optional for SIDS and small landlocked countries.





The CPS also constitutes the basis for the assessment of country programme achievements and impact.

In all countries, the CPS follows a global template, which includes key elements (see Box 3).

Each SGP participating country has an approved CPS. The CPS is a living document, which is revised or updated in each SGP operational phase. Thus, every four years, or as deemed necessary by the NSC, the CPS aligns country programme priorities with GEF policies and priorities, and new guidelines emerging from SGP project document for each operational phase.

New SGP country programmes develop and approve a CPS before any grant-making or other programme activities may take place.

Once approved, the CPS becomes a public framework document to help stakeholders understand the priorities for SGP grant-making in a country. It becomes available in electronic and printed forms, for potential SGP grantees and other interested non-governmental and governmental stakeholders.

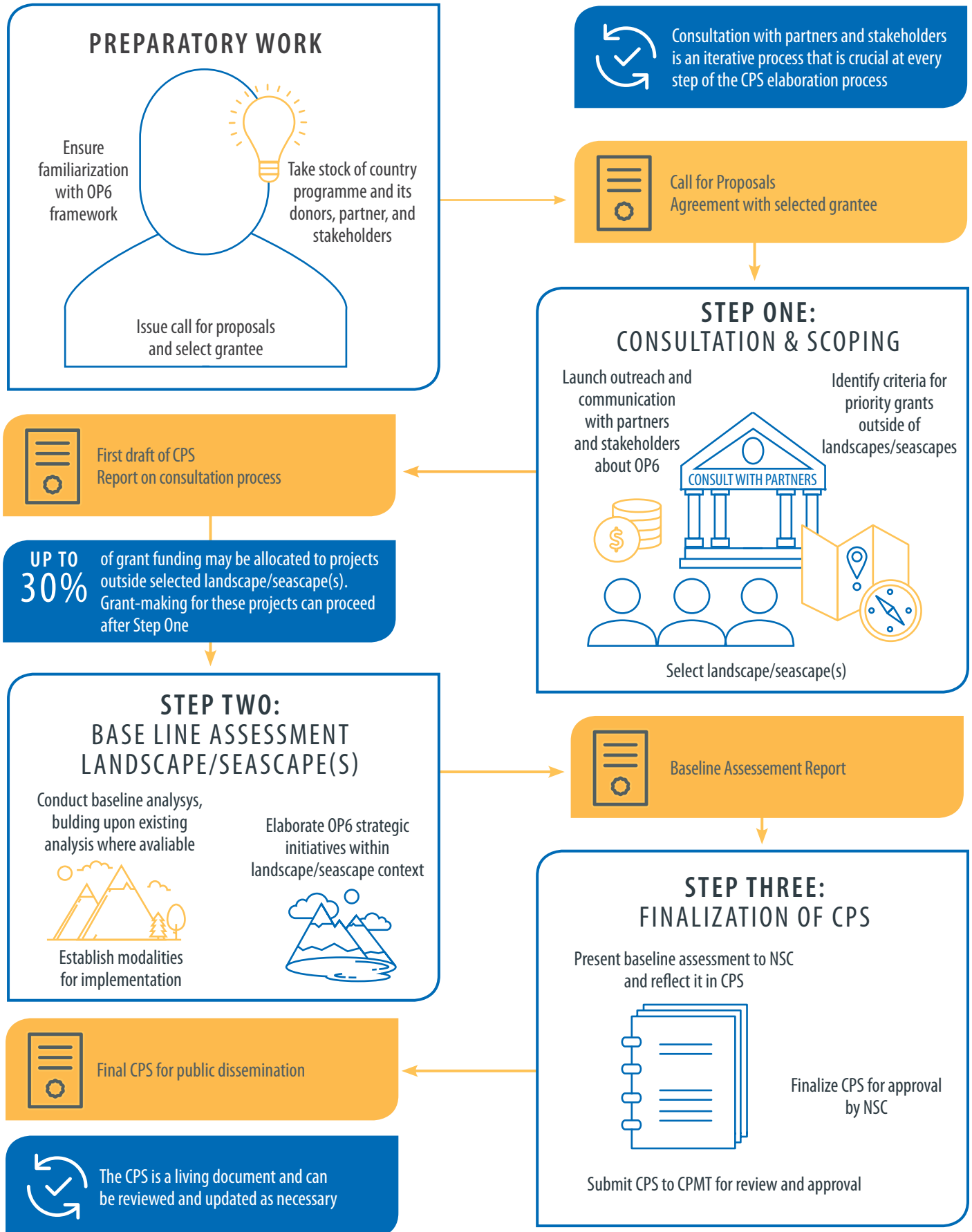
The CPS for every SGP country programme can be downloaded from the country's page at the SGP website<sup>34</sup>.

The CPS process is summarized in Figure 17.

<sup>34</sup> [http://sgp.undp.org/index.php?option=com\\_countrypages&view=countrypages&Itemid=152](http://sgp.undp.org/index.php?option=com_countrypages&view=countrypages&Itemid=152)

FIGURE 17

## The Country Program Strategy Elaboration Process





# VI. HOW TO APPLY



GEF SGP grants are made directly to CSOs and CBOs, as cornerstones to addressing global environmental concerns while enhancing their livelihoods. Encouraging and building partnership among organizations and groups is an integral part of SGP. Thus, less experienced community organizations are also encouraged to take part of SGP activities, assisted by a local or national NGO, who play a key role as a mentors and partners. Indigenous peoples organizations, and marginalised groups can also access to SGP support.

A key guiding philosophy of the SGP has been to reach the marginalized poor and vulnerable communities, especially when there are no other donors present, and where development conditions have not been met. Consequently, access to SGP funds is based on simple, flexible and time-sensitive procedures.

## Types of Grants

The SGP provides three types of grants:

### 1. PLANNING GRANTS—BETWEEN US\$2,000 AND US\$5,000

When the design of a project proposal requires additional support, planning grants are available. These grants usually target proponent organizations in need of strengthening their capacity and experience in project design and management. Depending on the capacity of the proponent, planning grants can be used to coordinate stakeholder workshops or meetings to design the project in a participatory manner, contract an experienced NGO or local consultant to help elaborate the project, to undertake baseline assessments, and to develop a business plan.

### 2. REGULAR GRANTS—OF UP TO US\$50,000 BUT AVERAGING US\$25,000

Most of the SGP grant-making is channeled through regular grants. These grants provide support for activities addressing one or more focal areas and/or strategic initiatives; and can also be used for standalone capacity development projects (see Section 4).

### 3. STRATEGIC PROJECT GRANTS—OF UP TO US\$150,000

More experienced country programmes can also access to strategic project grants. Since the gap between the SGP regular grants and the GEF's Medium Sized Project (of up to US\$2 million) may be too wide, strategic project grants provide a more streamlined mechanism to consolidate efforts of several communities and CSOs. This type of grants facilitate the upscaling of successful SGP experiences, as well as enhancing synergies across multiple SGP projects within or across countries.

## Eligibility Criteria

There are numerous and diverse opportunities to access to SGP funding. The SGP can provide grants to eligible civil society organizations. Priority grant-making is directed at grassroots groups such as CBOs, indigenous peoples, farmers, women, youth and workers. Local authorities should include traditional or indigenous governance units for their proposals to be eligible. International NGOs and private sector companies are not directly eligible for SGP support, but may co-finance a project.

All project proposals submitted to SGP should meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Address SGP focal areas and/or strategic initiatives: all project proposals should explain how the proposed objectives and activities would have a concrete impact and contribute towards the achievements of the goals under the SGP focal areas and/or strategic initiatives (see Section 4).
- Be aligned with the Country Programme Strategy: every project proposals need to explain how it is aligned with the targets and objectives of the Country Programme Strategy (see Section 5) of their country, including being in the selected landscape / seascape.
- Be proposed and implemented by a civil society organization in an SGP participating country. The list of participating countries, as of 2016, can be found in Box 4.





## BOX 4: SGP Participating Countries

### AFRICA

Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Cote d'Ivoire, Congo-Brazzaville, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

### ARAB STATES

Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Tunisia, Yemen.

### ASIA

Afghanistan, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Iran, Lao People's, Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Viet Nam.

### PACIFIC

Cook Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Vanuatu, Fiji sub-region (Fiji, Nauru, Tuvalu), Samoa sub-region (Niue, Samoa, Tokelau).

### EUROPE AND THE CIS

Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine, Uzbekistan.

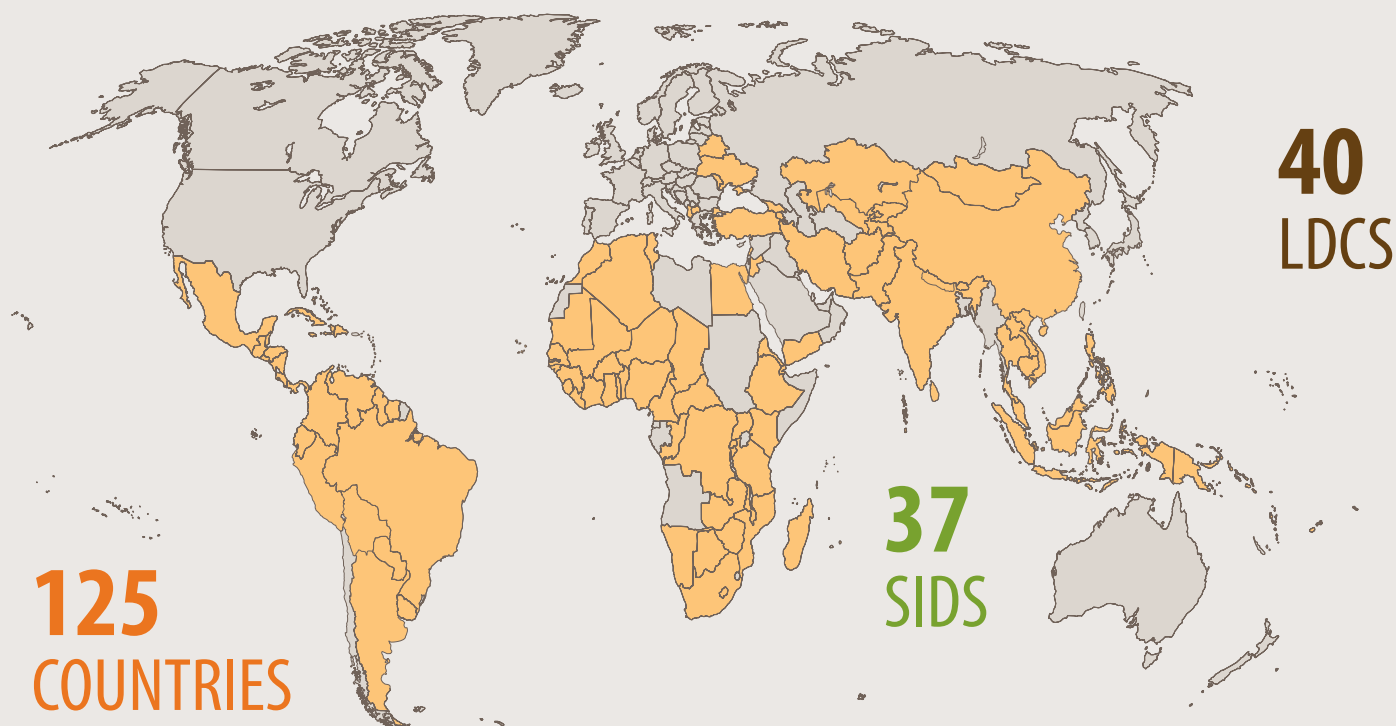
### LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Antigua & Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Colombia, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Panama, Paraguay, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela.

## Upgraded Country Programmes

A Council decision in GEF-4 mandated that SGP Country programmes which have been part of the SGP for more than 15 years and have delivered more than US\$6 million in grants would be upgraded. These programmes are funded through Full or Medium Sized projects utilizing endorsed funds from the STAR allocation of their country. As of 2016, the SGP upgraded country programmes are:

Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Mexico, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand.



## Applying for SGP Funding: Step by Step

SGP's application process for funding projects is adapted to each country's particular situation and procedures. Therefore, the guidance provided below is of a generic

nature. Please contact the National Coordinator in the country you are trying to apply for the specific details on the application process. The contact information of the National Coordinator along with the Country Programme Strategy and other portfolio information for each country can be found on the SGP website<sup>35</sup>.

<sup>35</sup> [https://sgp.undp.org/index.php?option=com\\_countrypages&view=countrypages&Itemid=219](https://sgp.undp.org/index.php?option=com_countrypages&view=countrypages&Itemid=219)

**Regular Grants**—Accessing to SGP **regular grants** involves the following steps:

## 1. CONTACT THE NATIONAL COORDINATOR

An eligible organization interested in becoming a project proponent should first contact the National Coordinator in their country. The National Coordinator provides the Country Programme Strategy as well as project application guidelines and forms. The project proponent should review this Strategy in detail, to ensure that the idea for a project meets the eligibility requirements for that country. The proponent organization can also discuss an idea for a proposal with the NC, since he/she can also offer strategic advice on how to better plan a proposal.

## 2. DEVELOPMENT OF A PROJECT CONCEPT

Once a project idea has been identified and responds to the eligibility for the country, its objectives, expected outputs, outcomes and impact, as well as the budget should be detailed. The budget should include the amount requested for SGP funding and co-financing contributions (in cash and in-kind). These elements should be developed into a brief project concept, with the assistance of the National Coordinator.

Tips and key elements to be considered in the development of a SGP project can be found in Box 5. Additional tips have been illustrated by SGP Indonesia, through the video *Proposal Development: Appreciative Inquiry and Asset Based Thinking*, which can be accessed at the SGP youtube channel<sup>36</sup>.

Although the development of a project concept may be simple for some proponents, it may be challenging for others. The SGP has pioneered numerous innovative and user-friendly modalities to facilitate project development, including alternative proposal formats such as participatory video and photo stories in local languages.

Participatory videos have been particularly useful for some communities with low literacy levels. A handbook with guidance for undertaking participatory video projects with communities was developed with support from the SGP.

## BOX 5: Tips to Develop a SGP Project

The following tips and key elements should be considered by project proponents when developing a SGP project:

- Consider on-going activities (policies, investments, projects) in the area where the project is being proposed. These activities, also referred to as baseline activities, will be the basis to establish those activities to be supported by the SGP and those for which co-financing will be required to reinforce the baseline activities.
- Establish direct linkage between the proposed project and the SGP focal areas and/or strategic initiatives. Be in the selected landscape/seascape, if relevant.
- Consider how the proposed activities will contribute towards achieving the targets and indicators in the overall results framework and include adequate actions for monitoring and evaluation.
- Ensure full participation of all key stakeholders from design to implementation, making sure to incorporate activities to involve all relevant stakeholders, including women, indigenous people, youth and people with disabilities. As per SGP policy, all projects must be gender responsive and conduct a gender analysis.
- Develop clear project knowledge management and communication plans, to capture, share and communicate the project's results and lessons.
- Secure co-financing for those costs related to the community sustainable development needs. Co-financing can be in cash or in-kind, and total about 50 percent of the project's total costs (see Section 11).
- Ensure the sustainability of results so that once the project is completed, its impact will continue for many years.

*Insights into Participatory Video: A Handbook for the Field is available in English, French and Spanish*<sup>37</sup>.

Proponents may express their ideas to the National Coordinator using any format, as long as all the elements and information required for a project concept are provided to the National Coordinator so that he/she can help the proponent to develop a project concept.

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=usTdHXfYF-g>

<sup>37</sup> <http://insightshare.org/resources/pv-handbook>



The proponent organization submits the concept paper to the National Coordinator.

### **3. REVIEW OF THE PROJECT CONCEPT PAPER BY THE NATIONAL COORDINATOR**

The National Coordinator reviews all concept papers received. He/she must ensure that the proposals meet the eligibility criteria and the objectives agreed in the Country Programme Strategy. In some countries, project concepts may be screened by the National Coordinator or jointly with the National Steering Committee.

### **4. DEVELOPMENT OF A PROJECT PROPOSAL**

Once the project concept has been selected, the proponent organization is asked to develop a project proposal.

A project proposal template needs to be completed. Due to the country driven nature of the SGP, each country programme may require some additional elements in their project proposal template. The proponent organization develops the project proposal, making sure that all consultations and partnerships to maximize community ownership have been secured, and key elements have been considered.

The National Coordinator will assist proponents by informing them on how the project proposal can further meet the eligible criteria and other requirements. Some organizations, however, may require additional assistance. In these cases, two options may be considered –partnering with a capable NGO to help in project development and implementation or using a planning grant to access the expertise needed. If a partnership with an intermediary NGO is established, the NGO should usually be a well-established partner that has a track record with the SGP. As for any other SGP grant, a planning grant requires a project document, describing the activities to be undertaken and the responsibilities of the partners involved. The National Steering Committee usually approves planning grants, and in some exceptional cases, can delegate approval to the National Coordinator.

Once completed, the proponent organization submits the project proposal to the National Coordinator.

### **5. REVIEW OF THE PROJECT PROPOSAL BY THE NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE**

The National Coordinator compiles all completed project proposals. He/she then submits all proposals to the National Steering Committee (NSC) for their review.

The NSC analyzes how each project proposal help achieve the objectives and targets set by the Country Programme Strategy. In many cases, a checklist for project review and approval for the NSC has been developed to ensure that all key criteria have meet met and there is coherence with the strategic initiatives of the CPS. The checklist also ensures consistency with UNDP's Social and Environmental standards<sup>38</sup>.

After the revision of the project proposal, the NSC can either approve it outright or provide conditional approval and return it to the proponent organization with a recommendation to formulate and further refine the project. A project proposal is rejected outright when it is seriously deficient in meeting requirements, or there are limited funds available for grant making in the given period and country programme.

Those projects approved by the NSC enter the national SGP portfolio.

**SGP does not charge a fee at any stage of the selection process for a project grant.**

### **6. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION**

Once a project is approved, the grantee organization signs a Memorandum of Agreement with the UNDP Country Office (on behalf of UNOPS). The budget and the timeframe included in the proposal becomes part of the binding agreement between the GEF SGP and the grantee organization responsible for its implementation.

SGP projects normally have a duration of between one and three years. The amounts and schedules for funds disbursement may differ, depending on the nature and length of project activities. However, SGP grants are usually paid in three installments –an up-front payment to initiate the project, a mid-term payment upon receipt of a satisfactory progress report, and a final payment on receipt of a satisfactory project completion and final report.

<sup>38</sup> [www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/Social-and-Environmental-Policies-and-Procedures/UNDPs-Social-and-Environmental-Standards-ENGLISH.pdf](http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/Social-and-Environmental-Policies-and-Procedures/UNDPs-Social-and-Environmental-Standards-ENGLISH.pdf)

Only when a project has been successfully completed, a grantee can submit another one. However, no organization can receive more than US\$50,000 in the same operational phase. The exception to this rule is in cases where there are no other capable CSOs that can implement a needed project in an area or important theme. However, this requires an application for exemption to be approved by the SGP Global Manager.

**Strategic project grants**—Accessing to a SGP **strategic project grant** follow similar overall procedures as a regular SGP grant.

The proponent organization submits either a project concept or a project document to the National Coordinator. He/she sends the project proposal to the relevant CPMT focal area specialist for guidance and additional feedback.

This initial assessment by the CPMT is followed by the NSC review, which is responsible for analyzing and assessing why the proposed project fall under a strategic grant rather than a regular grant. If needed, a planning grant can be awarded to help the proponent organization develop the project document.

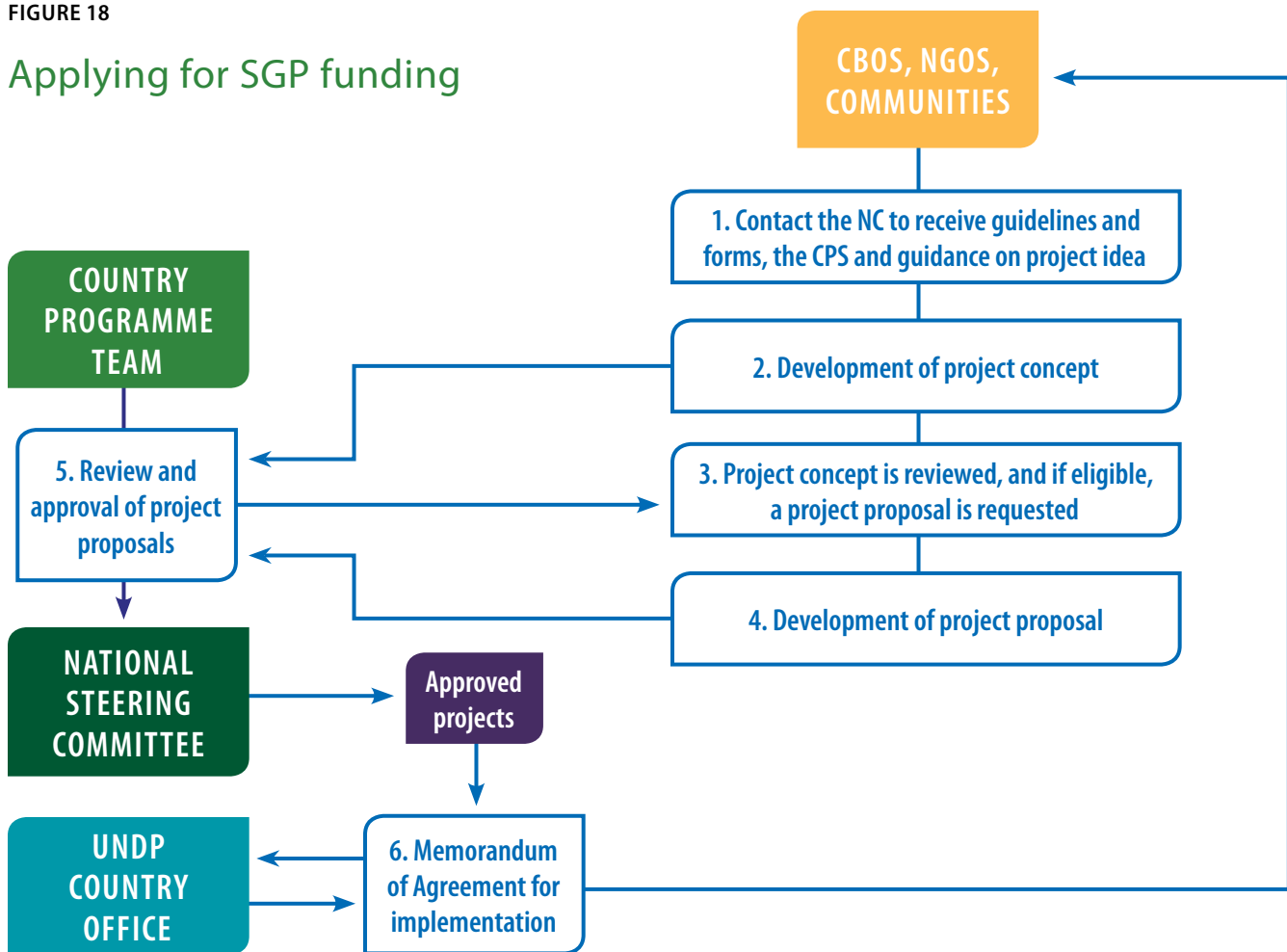
The approval of strategic grants is also under the NSC. For proposals involving more than one country, the NSC in each country programme is responsible for the endorsement of the strategic grant by the proponent organization.

Once approved by the NSC, the project follows the same contractual procedures as for a SGP regular grant.

The step by step process to apply for SGP grants is summarized in Figure 18.

FIGURE 18

## Applying for SGP funding





# VII. MONITORING AND EVALUATION



The impact of the SGP is measured through the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of its activities. The SGP M&E system complies with the GEF M&E standards, including specific, measurable, attributable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) indicators for implementation and results. SGP also complies with UNDP M&E standards and contributes to achieving the UNDP Strategic Plan.

SGP's M&E system reflects the programme's nested structure and its approach to monitoring and adaptive management applies relevant indicators and tools and resources at three specific levels: global programme level, country portfolio level, and grant project level.

The SGP Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system reflects the integrated set of programme functions and levels that constitute the GEF Small Grants Programme: community projects are nested within country programmes which are in turn nested within the global programme. In the SGP, the global programme provides the overall strategic programming framework and provides guidance on other non-grant activities that guide, enable or support programming at country and community levels. Targets and indicators are set at the beginning of the beginning of each operational phase at the global level, through a SGP Results Framework. At the country level, each country develops a vision for the implementation of the operational phase strategies and identifies targets and indicators that are relevant in the country and develop the Country Programme Strategies.

Country Programme Strategies (CPS) are developed and formulated by National Coordinators and National Steering Committees within this general framework, adapting the global programme's objectives to country level conditions and contexts, in particular to selected landscapes and seascapes for focused support. At project level, the impact of community projects and strategies are measured by project indicators that cumulatively help achieve the country targets. Community organizations within these landscapes, as part of the participatory landscape strategy planning process, identify community projects and strategic initiatives to be programmed in pursuit of landscape level outcomes as framed in each Country Programme Strategy. In addition to these shared targets and indicators for the SGP as a whole, additional indicators of particular relevance for communities, or country programmes may be identified.

The information gathered through the M&E system contributes to the identification and sharing of lessons and good practices. Based on the evaluation of these lessons and practices, the SGP measures the effective delivery of global environmental and sustainable development benefits as well as the impact achieved at the project, country programme and global levels.

Each level – project, country programme and global—has specific M&E reporting requirements. These are:

## Project Level

The results achieved by a grant project are measured by the M&E plan included in every project along with a budget allocation. There are three key elements to all M&E plans—*what* to measure, *how* to collect the data and *when* to do it.

A set of indicators provide *what* to measure. These indicators provide a quantitative way to measure the impact achieved by focal area and/or strategic initiative. The indicators selected should be listed in the M&E plan of each SGP project, and should be in line with the indicators and targets included in the Country Programme Strategy for that country.

SGP prioritizes participatory M&E. Grantees are therefore active participants in M&E activities, going beyond measuring the effectiveness of a project by promoting increased ownership of activities. Where needed, guidance and capacity development activities provide grantees with training and tools for participatory M&E and adaptive management.

Regarding the *how* to measure impact, there are various methods and tools to do it. Some which have been successfully used by SGP grantees include:

- 'Before and After' pictures: regular photographic documentation of the project, so that you can see the evolution and impact of the project, before and after the project to show progress and results in a visual way.
- Participatory 3-dimensional Models (P3DM) of landscapes and seascapes: This community-based mapping method integrates indigenous spatial knowledge with data on elevation of the land and depth of the sea to produce stand-alone, scaled and geo-referenced 3D models.

Three key stages of project implementation determine *when* M&E reports need to be produced:

- **At project concept planning and proposal stage.** The proponent organization may need to collect baseline data which would be used as part of the project concept or proposal. The costs of these activities can be covered under the project planning grant, if required, or the



project grant. In addition, when the project starts, the NC prepares a description of the project, which is then incorporated into the global project database. Project proposal site visits may also be undertaken by the NC depending on project size and complexity and any risk factors.

- **During implementation.** The grantee organization is required to produce Project Progress Reports. These reports document progress and are required to be submitted at each disbursement request. The number of reports depends on the agreed disbursement schedule, and could be two or three during the lifetime of the project. The project grant covers the production of these reports. Each project is visited by the SGP country team or an NSC member, at least once in the project's lifetime, to track progress, address problems and, if necessary, recommend alternative actions.
- **At project completion.** Following the completion of project activities, the grantee organization is required to produce a Project Final Report. This report documents the results of activities, and impact achieved. The NC uses the project final reports to report to the NSC on achievement of country programme targets, as well as to report to the SGP annual monitoring report.

Key M&E products at the project level are summarized in Figure 19.

**FIGURE 19: M&E AT PROJECT LEVEL**

### CBOS, NGOS, COMMUNITIES

- **At project submission**—collect baseline data and select indicators (present M&E plan in project proposal)
- **During project**—Report on project progress (through Progress Reports, accompanying each disbursement request)
- **Upon project completion**—Report on project results and impact (Submit Final Report)

## Country Programme Level

SGP country programme teams, as well as the NSC, undertake monitoring of the grant portfolio on an ongoing basis. The results of every project are reflected in the global project database. Once a year, they report through the Annual Country Reports (an online survey sent by CPMT) on the results of the projects completed each fiscal year. These reports are useful tools to benchmark overall progress of the country programme against the objectives set in the CPS, allowing each country programme to take appropriate measures and adaptive management decisions. The National Coordinator (NC) also provides financial updates to UNOPS, and thematic updates based on specific information needs of the CPMT.

In addition, the National Steering Committee (NSC) meets to review progress of projects that received support as well as the achievement of results by completed projects. This assessment enables the NSC and the NC to review the overall needs for the country programme in the following year.

At the beginning of each phase, when the country programmes are developing the Country Programme Strategy, they review the results achieved during the previous phase and those findings inform the direction of the CPS. In addition, once per operational phase, country programmes are encouraged to undertake an evaluation of the projects supported by the country.

In case a risk is identified, an audit may be undertaken. SGP, through the implementing partner, undertakes selected country level audits conducted by an independent audit firm.

M&E activities at the national level are summarized in Figure 20.

**FIGURE 20: M&E AT COUNTRY PROGRAMME LEVEL**



## Global Level

The CPMT measures progress on impacts achieved at the global programme level, by tracking targets and indicators in the in the Results Framework for an operational phase.

On an annual basis, the CPMT produces an Annual Monitoring Report<sup>39</sup> to assess the overall implementation and achievement of results of the global programme. The Annual Monitoring Report includes various sections:

- An overview of the global programme, including the number of participating countries; funding provided by the GEF and co-financing; funding provided by

other donors; breakdown of ongoing portfolio by focal area and region in the portfolio; and level of new grant commitments during the reporting year.

- An analysis of progress achieved by focal area and strategic initiatives, during the year, based on the indicators for the operational phase, including selected examples from projects.
- Progress and results achieved during that year on Grantmaker+ initiatives, Knowledge Management and Communications (see Section 8 and 9, respectively). It also reports on the replication, scaling up and policy influence results (see Section 10), including examples from projects.
- Review of progress in the implementation of the operational phase, including partnerships and resource mobilization, challenges faced and solutions undertaken; review of risks and assumptions; and financial delivery.

Global portfolio monitoring and thematic portfolio reviews are also periodically produced to measure impact achieved. The analysis of the portfolio serves as a basis to identify key projects, which are used to generate case studies to showcase results achieved.

Every three months, UNOPS provides financial reports to UNDP through Programme Delivery Reports. These reports are used by UNDP to compile its financial reporting to the GEF Council on the use of GEF resources. When required, CPMT also produce reports to donor partners on funds contributed as co-financing.

At the end of each operational phase, an Independent Evaluation of the SGP is done by the Evaluation Offices of UNDP and the GEF.

M&E activities at the global level are summarized in Figure 21.

The Global SGP M&E system is summarized in Figure 22.

<sup>39</sup> [https://sgp.undp.org/index.php?option=com\\_docman&view=list&slug=key-sgp-documents&Itemid=258#.WCXmQKKGmXh](https://sgp.undp.org/index.php?option=com_docman&view=list&slug=key-sgp-documents&Itemid=258#.WCXmQKKGmXh)





FIGURE 21

## M&E at global level

### CENTRAL PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT TEAM

- Manage global project database.
- Produce Annual Monitoring Report.
- Undertake Global Portfolio Monitoring and Global Thematic Portfolio Reviews.
- Report to donors on partnership programmes.
- Contribute to UNDP and GEF reports, including annual reporting to the global conventions.
- Quality assurance of SGP implementation.
- Application of Social and Environmental Safeguards Policies.

### UNOPS

- Contribute quarterly financial reports to UNDP.
- Provide financial data for reporting to co-financing partners.
- Manage audit process.

### UNDP

- As a member of the Global SGP Steering Committee review programme achievement of results.
- Quality assurance of SGP implementation.
- Application of Social and Environmental Safeguards Policies.
- Financial reports to the GEF.

### GEF

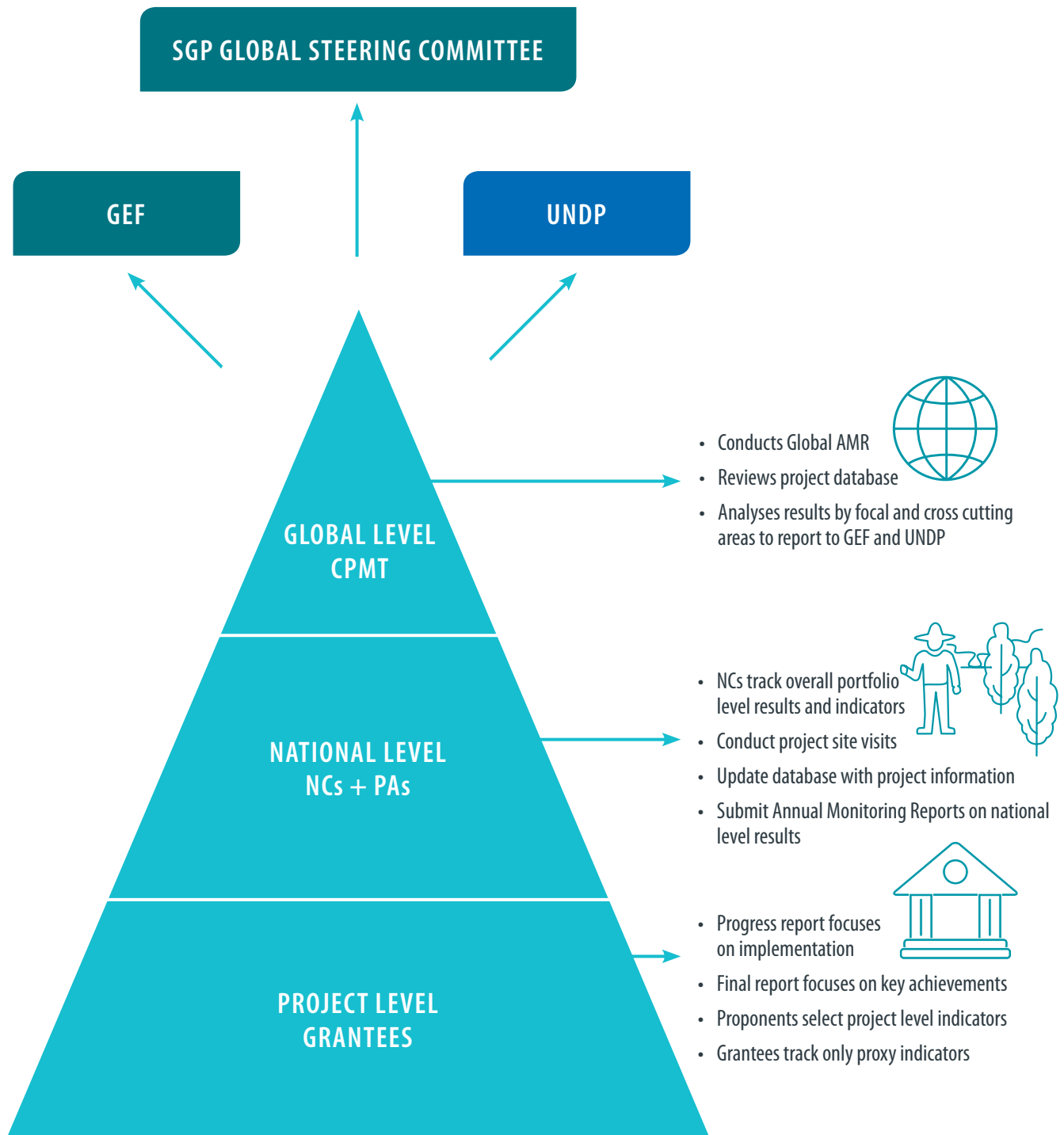
- As a member of the Global SGP Steering Committee review programme achievement of results.
- Include SGP inputs into GEF Annual Monitoring Report.

### GLOBAL SGP STEERING COMMITTEE

- Reviews overall programme achievement of results.

FIGURE 22

## Global SGP M&E system





# VIII. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT



The cumulative experiences and innovations tested through SGP grants have produced a wealth of knowledge.

Generating, capturing data and knowledge, and organizing it for sharing and dissemination are the key elements of the knowledge management (KM) system. Through KM, the SGP is able to inform and influence policy, learn from strengths and weaknesses, and replicate and upscale best practices.

The target audience for KM products is broad, and includes the GEF Council, the GEF Secretariat, the GEF Agencies, NGOs, CBOs, Indigenous Peoples organizations, national governments and policy-makers, NSC members and country programme teams, other donors, researchers and academia, the media and the private sector. Continuous feedback from these multiple partners allow for new and additional KM products to be produced.

Information and data for KM is acquired through M&E activities and through specific activities to capture knowledge. The project, country programme and global levels contribute distinct knowledge products to the KM system. These are:

## Project Level

Sharing successful experiences goes beyond the simple reporting required in every SGP grant. SGP projects often become demonstration sites and training centers where local communities carry out knowledge exchange. Experienced communities share techniques and tested methods with other communities, development practitioners and local policymakers. The peer-to-peer learning between local communities has been an effective method to share knowledge, help communities learn from each other and an effective tool for replication and up scaling of best practices.

Innovative new tools for producing and sharing knowledge have been pioneered by SGP, and are increasingly being used by communities. Two of these innovative tools—participatory video and photo stories—enable communities to tell their own stories to a global audience. To empower communities to tell their experiences through short videos, a toolkit has been developed to create photo stories, which can be accessed at the SGP website<sup>40</sup>. More than 200 experiences and voices on SGP projects have been captured by grantees through photo stories. These can be accessed at the SGP website<sup>41</sup>.

## Country Programme Level

Country programme teams provide guidance and develop capacity of local communities and standardize the uptake of information, lessons learned and best practices. The SGP knowledge platform is rooted at the national level, where country programme teams work closely with communities to collect lessons from projects. Based on these experiences, country programmes routinely produce knowledge materials in local languages, including project fact sheets, informational brochures and case studies, to disseminate at key national events and conferences. Examples of Fact Sheets can be found in the SGP website<sup>43</sup>.

Consultations, training and knowledge exchange between communities and other key stakeholders are organized. A successful practice has been the organization of knowledge fairs at the country level to bring together SGP stakeholders, including CSOs, government authorities, university students and professors, donors and the media, to learn about SGP projects and activities in a country.

Also, country teams support demonstration sites and knowledge centers around successful projects; inform, contribute and influence local, regional and national policy with the best practices of SGP in the country; establish partnerships to upscale and replicate successful projects and best practices; and maintain database updated with the latest information on projects.

New country programmes often take advantage of more experienced ones, by taking part of the SGP's mentoring programme, which brings together experienced National Coordinators (NCs) with new NCs in neighboring countries or in similar country contexts. A new NC spends one 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.

<sup>40</sup> [https://sgp.undp.org/images/PHOTOSTORY\\_TOOLKIT\\_FINAL.pdf](https://sgp.undp.org/images/PHOTOSTORY_TOOLKIT_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>41</sup> [https://sgp.undp.org/index.php?option=com\\_hwdmediashare&view=category&id=59&Itemid=254](https://sgp.undp.org/index.php?option=com_hwdmediashare&view=category&id=59&Itemid=254)

<sup>42</sup> [https://sgp.undp.org/index.php?option=com\\_docman&view=list&slug=fact-sheets&Itemid=257#.V5swJKKGMXg](https://sgp.undp.org/index.php?option=com_docman&view=list&slug=fact-sheets&Itemid=257#.V5swJKKGMXg)



## Global Level

The CPMT provides guidance on how to capture and disseminate knowledge and conduct knowledge exchange at the local level so that it can be aggregated at the global level; as well as organizes global workshops to exchange knowledge and provide training.

The SGP website (<https://sgp.undp.org>) is the main channel through which KM is shared at the global level. It serves as a knowledge platform to showcase experiences and promote learning within and across communities and countries. The SGP website is regularly updated with case studies, fact sheets, project profiles, photographs, videos, interviews, and press releases, among other products that analyze experiences from project implementation. It is also a virtual community of practice, and facilitates discussions and interaction between members of the SGP network and other partners and experts within countries and globally.

Best practices are captured into numerous publications produced at the global level which are shared at key national and international events and conferences. These publications can be found in the SGP website<sup>43</sup>.

Case studies are another tool to capture knowledge and information from projects in a systematic way. A template to document case studies has been created by the CPMT to enable all participating countries to document their experience in a format that can be easily aggregated and shared with multiple GEF SGP stakeholders and partners. The template includes a series of simple questions, based on the project proposal template, including the following elements: challenges, environmental impact, socio-economic impacts, policy impacts, sustainability, replication, gender mainstreaming, indigenous peoples and lessons learned. Case studies can be accessed at the SGP website<sup>44</sup>.

Through Communities Connect (<http://data.comunitiesconnect.net>), a collaborative knowledge-sharing platform implemented in partnership with the GEF CSO Network, the SGP promotes solutions created by communities and civil society organization to sustainable development issues. The platform aims to facilitate peer-to-peer learning for communities and civil society organizations, and includes materials contributed by SGP and its grantee partners, GEF CSO Network members, UNDP and other organizations.

A step-by-step video<sup>45</sup> on how to upload products to the platform have been created by the CPMT to facilitate contributions to the platform.

## Knowledge Management Platforms

As part of the SGP Grantmaker+ strategies, a **Global Reach for Citizen Practice-Based Knowledge** initiative will be implemented in OP6. The initiative includes two knowledge platforms aimed at enhancing knowledge exchange at the global level as well as the exchange and transfer of capacity on new innovations between communities and other partners. These platforms are:

- **Digital Library of Community Innovations for the Global Environment** to feature tested methods and technologies developed by SGP and other partners and CSOs. The library will showcase a collection of case studies and how-to guidelines of SGP supported innovations, and include background evidence and indicators of what has and has not worked. The platform will prioritize the documentation and dissemination of practices that have the potential for replication in other countries, allowing other communities and stakeholders to learn from successes as well as from failures. The collection of these experiences will also facilitate technology uptake and help transfer technical expertise from a community in one country to other communities, CSOs, policymakers and development practitioners. This platform is expected to include, at least, one case study and/or how to guidelines on an innovative SGP practice per country programme.

<sup>43</sup> [https://sgp.undp.org/index.php?option=com\\_docman&view=list&slug=publications&Itemid=255#.V5s2MqKGMXg](https://sgp.undp.org/index.php?option=com_docman&view=list&slug=publications&Itemid=255#.V5s2MqKGMXg)

<sup>44</sup> [https://sgp.undp.org/index.php?option=com\\_docman&view=list&slug=case-studies&Itemid=256#.V5tDLKKGMXg](https://sgp.undp.org/index.php?option=com_docman&view=list&slug=case-studies&Itemid=256#.V5tDLKKGMXg)

<sup>45</sup> [www.youtube.com/watch?v=CN-y5R0eh4M](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CN-y5R0eh4M)

- **South-South Community Innovation Exchange Platform** to promote knowledge exchange between SGP countries. Since all SGP grant-making and associated knowledge exchange happens at the national level, the platform will encourage communities to mobilize and take advantage of development solutions and technical expertise available in the South. The establishment

of knowledge exchange arrangements between communities and CSOs will be sought with the purpose of replication of good practices among countries and regions. This platform is expected to initiate knowledge exchange arrangements across country programmes on new community innovations between communities, CSOs and other partners.





# IX. COMMUNICATIONS



Community receiving media training. Credit: SGP Indonesia.

The SGP works with thousands of community organizations in 125 countries, speaking numerous languages, facing different situations and implementing diverse actions and strategies.

Communicating results achieved by these community efforts enables the SGP to showcase the value of working at the community level as well as to increase the recognition of community-based actions. Various communications channels are used to reach different audiences –from governments and UN agencies, to the media, the private sector, and the general public.

The SGP website provides overall information on the programme, its areas of work, the countries where the programme operates and its unique approach to working with communities. The website features a designated country page for each SGP country programme that provides information on the entire project portfolio, key results, stories, videos and testimonials, as well as the country programme strategy, contact information, and links to SGP country programme's own websites, which are often in local languages. A mapping functionality has been recently added to allow users to see the location of projects in each country. The website also includes numerous resources for grantees, partners and other interested stakeholders, such as publications, videos, case studies and fact sheets.

The programme has steadily expanded its social media presence. Through its Facebook channel, that is also linked to many country programme's Facebook channels, the SGP shares news and pictures on its projects. Also, the SGP's youtube channel also showcases voices and stories from projects as well as training videos for grantees.

The SGP is a regular contributor of stories and news to the UNDP global and local websites, as well as to the GEF website, which helps increase the visibility of the programme. Some of these stories include high-profile visits to SGP projects and award winning projects. These regular stories and articles also encourage country teams to share more news on their activities and successes.



The SGP also communicates its results through news media. The programme has established good relations with key media outlets, which helped increase the media coverage for SGP country programmes in all forms of media –TV, radio, print and digital. A simplified template to develop news articles about SGP projects was developed, to help grantees share their stories with local and national news media organizations. Local and national media campaigns help SGP grantees to raise awareness about global environmental problems and the work of SGP.

Showcasing SGP results and projects at key events and global forums also helps the programme gain exposure and recognition at the international level as well as promotes broader adoption of best practices from its grantees. For example, the SGP regularly takes part of the exhibitions at the annual meetings of the Conference of the Parties of the Conventions the GEF serves.

To create a clear and harmonized message about the SGP throughout the numerous media used to communicate its results, branding guidelines<sup>46</sup> were developed by the CPMT. These guidelines facilitate the production of communication products to be shared across SGP partners as well as disseminated around the world. The guidelines include standardized templates for publications, letters, banners, fact sheets, videos, brochures and newsletters, business cards, among other communication products.

<sup>46</sup> [www.sgp.undp.org/index.php?option=com\\_docman&view=document&layout=default&alias=283-gef-sgp-branding-guidelines&category\\_slug=key-sgp-documents&format=html&Itemid=258#V5J8cKKGMXg](http://www.sgp.undp.org/index.php?option=com_docman&view=document&layout=default&alias=283-gef-sgp-branding-guidelines&category_slug=key-sgp-documents&format=html&Itemid=258#V5J8cKKGMXg)



# X.

## SGP ROLE IN SCALING UP, POLICY INFLUENCE AND CHANGE



Belize solar engineer woman installing solar power. Credit: SGP Belize – Barefoot College.

The role of the GEF SGP extends far beyond providing grants to communities and CSOs. By building partnerships, enhancing capacities, demonstrating innovative methods and strategies and promoting policy dialogue, the GEF SGP has led to an enabling environment within participating countries for achieving sustainable development and addressing global environmental issues.



## Replication and Scaling-up

The extensive knowledge gained from GEF SGP provides the opportunity to build on best practices and lessons learned through replication and up-scaling, which in turn expands the impact of its portfolio. The multi-stakeholder nature of the NSCs in each country is a key component in contributing to replicate and up-scale best practices identified in the portfolio. These voluntary national committees include a majority of civil society organizations as well as various government sector agencies, UNDP, and the private sector, providing opportunities not only to build a reliable relationship among all these diverse stakeholders, but to support the replication and up-scaling of the most successful projects and practices. The active participation of government officials in GEF SGP activities has often helped in increasing co-financing coming from both national and local governments.

UNDP, the GEF agencies and other donors also play a critical role in the scaling up of good practices through its linkages with and contribution to the development of GEF Medium and Full Sized Projects or by adopting and adapting GEF SGP approaches, principles and methodologies. In some cases, SGP has assisted in the creation and implementation of small grants components of large GEF projects.

SGP projects that become demonstration sites of innovative methodologies or technologies are yet another proven tool to promote replication and up-scaling of good practices. By using small grants as venture capital to test out new approaches, successful projects become demonstration sites where other communities, government officials and even private sector companies go to learn from the experience, and can replicate similar initiatives in their own communities.

## Policy Influence

The valuable experiences that the GEF SGP has accumulated enabled communities to directly contribute to influencing local, national, regional and international policy processes. The models and strategies implemented at the local level have been valued and incorporated in local and national policy development; and have influenced changes in local policy instruments and regulations and contributed to national policy formulation.

The broad network of GEF SGP grantees and partners has been critical for convening and influencing policy dialogues. National consultative dialogues related to key international environmental processes and relevant national bodies involved in environment and sustainable development issues have been also benefited from the participation of SGP grantees and NSC members enabling them to influence national policy-making and development planning.

NSC members, often influential figures and decision-makers at the country level, have played a critical role in promoting partnerships at all levels. They became active lobbyists and ambassadors for global environmental issues, at the local, national and global level. Key government and non-governmental representatives, policy-makers, and donors are kept up-to-date and engaged at the country and global levels, which in turn, helps ensure that well-informed support exists for the SGP and its unique approach can be mainstreamed into sustainable development policy and practice.







## Empowering Communities

The GEF SGP has been at the forefront of empowering communities by supporting local action to address the critical links between environment, development and sustainable livelihoods. Empowered communities have increased capacities to incorporate the value of natural capital in the way decisions are made, and actively engage with multiple stakeholders –from other communities to local and national governments, the private sector, CSOs, donors– in implementing solutions.

Capacity development, a key element in all SGP projects, is a crucial component in empowering communities to address global environmental issues while at the same time securing sustainable livelihoods. Through increased capacity and empowerment, communities, CBOs, NGOs, women and indigenous peoples organizations, among many other SGP partners, have established different platforms of dialogue and participation on national and local issues, which extend to the global level, creating an effective global network and establishing strong coalitions to share knowledge and experiences, exchange good practices, and contribute to institutional and policy change.

## CSO-Government Platforms

As part of the SGP Grantmaker+ initiatives, **CSO-Government Policy and Planning Dialogue Platforms** will be implemented in OP6.

Many country programmes have successfully influenced national local and national policy formulation, based on its multi-sectoral National Steering Committees. The establishment of CSO-Government policy and planning dialogue platforms will further leverage existing and potential partnerships, as well as serve to build trust and foster joint working relationships between civil society and government partners. In particular, these platforms will assist governments in establishing and institutionalizing the link of SGP communities to development plans and policy reforms that may affect them. Through the active participation in these dialogue platforms, civil society organizations will provide inputs on key policies for environment and sustainable development.

Case studies<sup>47</sup>, stories<sup>48</sup> and voices<sup>49</sup> from SGP grantees on scaling up, policy influence and change can be found in the SGP website.

<sup>47</sup> [https://sgp.undp.org/index.php?option=com\\_docman&view=list&slug=case-studies&Itemid=256](https://sgp.undp.org/index.php?option=com_docman&view=list&slug=case-studies&Itemid=256)

<sup>48</sup> [https://sgp.undp.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=36&Itemid=253#WCSrV6KGMXg](https://sgp.undp.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=36&Itemid=253#WCSrV6KGMXg)

<sup>49</sup> [https://sgp.undp.org/index.php?option=com\\_hwdmediashare&view=category&id=59&Itemid=254](https://sgp.undp.org/index.php?option=com_hwdmediashare&view=category&id=59&Itemid=254)



# XI. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION



Resource mobilization is a requirement for all GEF SGP activities. An SGP grant can therefore be considered as seed money to mobilize and leverage additional funding from other sources. Resources mobilization also increases the capacity of communities, by mobilizing their own social capital, which then, makes them better prepared to scale-up the project and manage larger funds and resources. Mobilizing additional resources also provides country programmes with the autonomy to scale-up and expand successful interventions, some components of which may not be eligible for GEF funding.



Co-financing sources should be seen as true partners. There are numerous sources to mobilize resources and promote these partnerships, including traditional donors, such as bilateral donors and multilateral agencies within and outside of the UN system; regional banks; international and national foundations and NGOs; national and regional universities; national and local governments; multinational and national private sector companies; as well as communities themselves. These partners can provide different types of co-financing –from cash contributions and technical advice to manpower.

## Types of Co-financing

Co-financing for GEF SGP is broadly categorized into cash and in-kind contributions.

### CASH CONTRIBUTIONS

Cash contributions are payments made in cash to a programme or project, and include the following modalities:

- 1. Joint.** Donors contribute funds to finance SGP activities globally or to support individual projects. These funds are usually combined with funds from SGP to cover the costs of a given set of project outputs. Co-financing funds can be used to finance planned activities that cannot be supported by GEF funding. Thus, SGP can redirect more resources to finance other activities such as livelihoods, poverty reduction and empowerment activities, leading to greater impact and effectiveness.
- 2. Parallel.** Donors join with SGP in a common programme, but administer their resources separately. Thus, parallel financing is considered as a cooperation and coordination mechanism for the joint implementation of a common project or programme agreed by the donor and SGP. Parallel financing is advantageous in certain cases due to its administrative simplicity. In most cases, parallel financing is mobilized by the grantees themselves, especially for the single project proposal.
- 3. Sequential.** When donor partners are risk averse, SGP provides the initial funding to build capacity and demonstrate success of community action, that can be followed by funds by the partners for continuation, replication and scaling up.

### IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

In-kind contributions are a non-cash contribution in the form of goods and services made to a programme or project. In-kind contributions, in particular from communities themselves, enhance community ownership, making grantees true partners in SGP projects. These are non-cash donations to a project, without which a specific planned project activity could not be implemented or managed. In-kind contributions are usually provided by the grantees themselves or other partners, and can include but are not limited to:

- Manpower costs (technical assistance from science institutions and experts, lecturers, professionals, project staff, including volunteers).
- Use of office equipment and software.
- Use or provision of data/license/patent to the grantee.
- Use of land.
- Use of constructions/buildings (office space) or vehicles.

The calculation of in-kind contributions values should be based on average commercial prices that are applicable in the region where the project is being implemented. For example, if a grantee includes the work of a project accountant as in-kind contribution, the value should be calculated using appropriate man-day rates valid or used in the country or district at the relevant level of input, calculated per days or months.

There are activities that do not qualify as in-kind contributions. These include passive attendance on training courses, meetings, seminars, etc. (i.e. attendance with no input, as a member of the audience or group); provision of pre-existing data/expertise/knowledge tools (i.e. not generated within the duration of the project) which are publicly available; and provision of all possible in-kind contribution items, if these are already paid, and the payment documents can be presented, provided that the purchase date is within the project duration (as such, these items then are treated as cash co-financing).

The monetary value of all in-kind contributions –goods, knowledge, tools, information and services –directly benefiting a specific project must be properly calculated, accounted for and reported.

## SGP as a Delivery Mechanism

GEF SGP grants are never implemented in isolation, but are rather part of a broader network of partnerships.

The effective SGP approach has been used as a delivery mechanism for GEF Full Sized Projects<sup>50</sup>. Larger GEF projects are able to bring community and CSO components into its activities by having a readily available mechanism for community based grant-making and engagement available. These partnerships also provide the SGP with a framework

for scaling up. The Nile Transboundary Environmental Action Project and the Partnership for the Environmental Management of the Seas of Southeast Asia are examples of GEF Full Sized Projects that used the SGP as a delivery mechanism.

In addition, donors trust the flexible, country-driven SGP approach and either partner with or utilize the GEF SGP as an efficient delivery mechanism to reach the local and community level. SGP partnerships at the global level include those with UN and other multi-lateral agencies and organizations, governments, bilateral and multilateral donors, foundations, and international CSOs and NGOs, among others. Examples of partnership programmes delivered by SGP can be found in the SGP website<sup>51</sup>.



<sup>50</sup> GEF Council Document (C.46.13): GEF Small Grants Programme – Implementation Arrangements for GEF-6 (2014)

<sup>51</sup> [https://sgp.undp.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=102&Itemid=228#WCR-PaKGMXg](https://sgp.undp.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=102&Itemid=228#WCR-PaKGMXg)



# XII. ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS



The success of the SGP relies on much hard work and positive impact at the local and global level, which can potentially be tarnished when the overall reputation of the SGP is jeopardized. This is the reason why all SGP staff, at the national and global level, is contracted by UNOPS.

The UN rules and regulations on ethics and professional standards apply to all SGP staff –from the Global Manager to the National Coordinators. By following the UN rules and core values (see Box 6), the impartial and independent functioning and decision-making of the programme is ensured.

As UN staff, all SGP personnel are expected to observe and perform their functions consistent with the highest ethical standards. Non-compliance with the established UN ethical standards bears a great risk to the SGP and to the personnel. Thus, all SGP personnel, including NSC members, are required to sign the Ethical Conduct Statement.

Due to the importance of ethics and professional standards for the independent and effective functioning of the SGP, it is required that a continuous discussion on potential conflict of interest situations and the UN ethical standards is initiated within the NSC. This should ensure that any arrangements involving potential conflict of interest exposure or unethical conduct are immediately detected and reported.

A **conflict of interest** occurs when one's private interests interfere with the proper performance of one's professional functions or obligations as a United Nations official.

A conflict of interest can be:

- a. Actual: Private interests interfere with official responsibilities
- b. Apparent: People may reasonably think that private interests interfere with official responsibilities
- c. Potential: Private interests may interfere with one's official responsibilities.

These conflicts of interest can be, for example, when outside relationship or personal financial assets might interfere with the professional obligation. Other cases may arise in situations where SGP personnel is seen to benefit, directly or indirectly, or allow a third party, including family, friends or someone they favor, to benefit from SGP personnel's decisions.

There is also conflict of interests for NSC member's organizations. During the NSC member's term, his/her organization cannot apply for SGP grants.

If any SGP personnel believe that he/she may have a conflict of interest, he/she has to promptly and fully disclose the conflict to the UNOPS SGP Cluster Manager, and refrain from participating in any way in the matter to which the potential conflict relates, until the conflict has been resolved satisfactorily.

## BOX 6: United Nations Core Values

The UN core values are followed by SGP staff in the day-to-day work, by ensuring:

### INTEGRITY

- Make decisions without consideration for personal gain
- Resist political pressure in decision-making
- Ensure that official power or authority is not abused
- Seek to promote the SGP's interests at all times
- Take prompt and effective action to deal with unprofessional or unethical behavior

### PROFESSIONALISM

- Demonstrate the highest standards of competence
- Be conscientious and efficient in meeting goals and commitments
- Show persistence when faced with problems or challenges

### RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY

- Work effectively with people from all backgrounds
- Treat colleagues fairly and equally, with dignity and respect
- Show respect for and understanding of diverse points of view
- Examine our assumptions and avoid stereotypes
- Show no discrimination against any individual or group

In addition, UNOPS developed recommendations ensure compliance with the UN ethical standards for extreme cases of conflict of interest and unethical behavior, including:

- A situation when SGP personnel or the NSC members may be offered payments by the grantees in lieu of providing technical advice to influence the grant approval process; or the grantees and suppliers may attempt to provide the SGP personnel or the NSC members unduly offerings to influence the process. These cases are considered **bribery**, and the recommendation for the NC is to reject a proposal to award a contract and refrain from providing any sort of technical advice.
- Cases where there is an attempt to influence the process of grant making or executing contracts by means of threats of injury to person, property or reputation, are





considered **extortion of coercion**. The recommended course of action for the NC is to cancel or terminate an agreement and inform UNOPS and the CPMT that the grantee has engaged in corrupt practices in competing for a grant project.

- Two instances are considered **fraud**. In the event that the NC identifies that information or facts have been misrepresented for the purpose of influencing the process of grant proposal, the NC shall refer the issue to the national authorities where the grantee is legally registered as a business entity, after seeking legal advice. It is also considered fraud when government officials may use their rank and/or authority to influence the outcome of a process. In such situations, the NC shall monitor the conduct of government officials so that in no way the work and decisions of the Country Programme Team or the NSC is influenced.
- Other instances involve **collusion**. These can happen if the agreement between grantees designed to result in proposals are developed at artificial prices that are not competitive. When the NC faces a situation like this, it is recommended that he/she communicates to

grantees during the call for proposal document that all NGOs/CBOs/CSOs shall adhere to the highest ethical standards, both during the proposal process and throughout the execution of a grant agreement. Other cases of collusion refer to NSC members, who cannot take compensation for technical advice, and thus, the NC shall monitor their behavior. In addition, the NC shall monitor NSC members who cannot also be a member of the board of the grantee organization.

## Recourse Mechanism

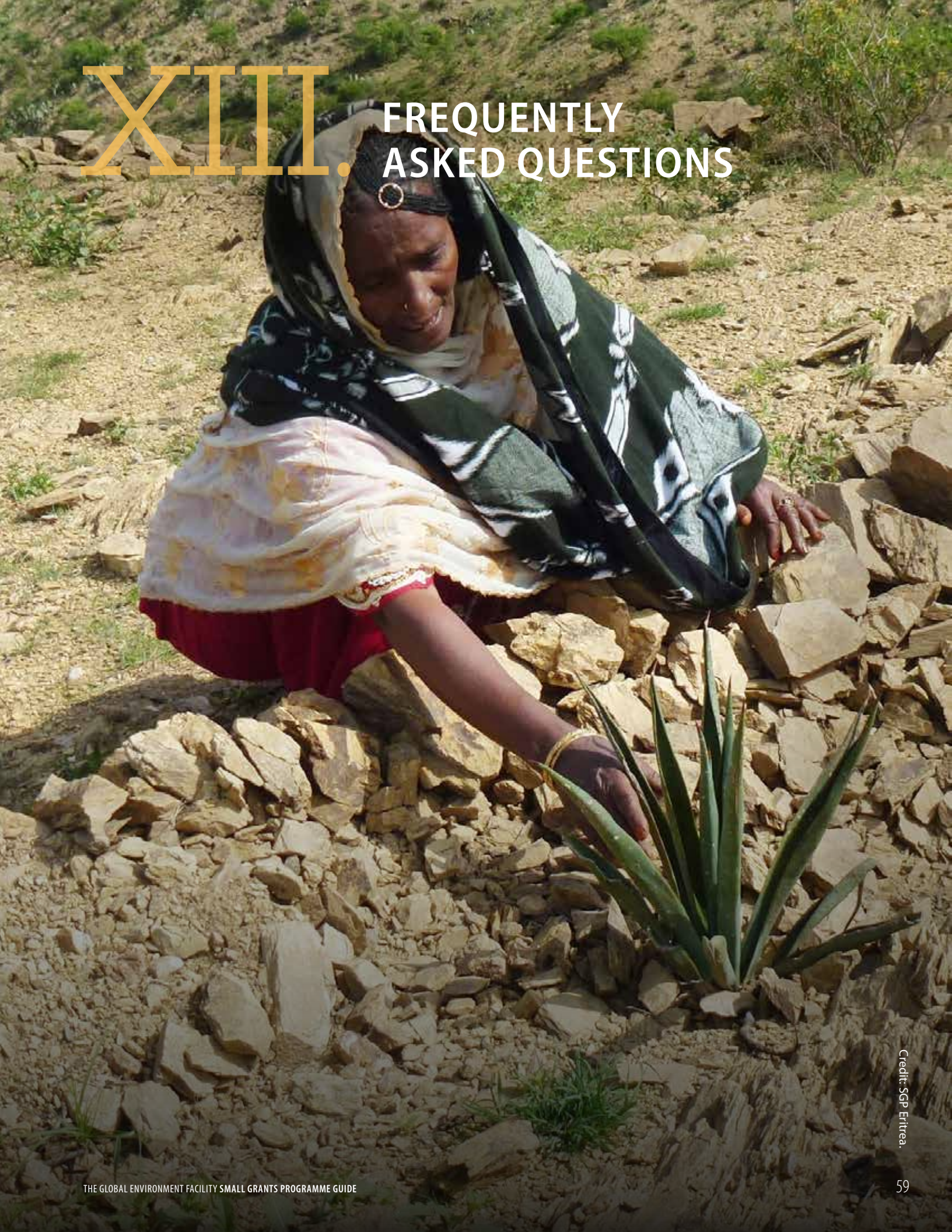
SGP places special importance on integrity, transparency and accountability. For instances when questions or concerns on any SGP decisions or actions occur, there is a mechanism to raise issues and seek recourse.

Due to the country driven structure of the SGP, any issues, questions or concerns should be raised, first, at the country level. In case the concern was not properly responded at the country level, or if the concern is related to the global level, the issue should be raised directly with the CPMT. More information on the recourse mechanism can be found at the SGP website<sup>52</sup>.

<sup>52</sup> [https://sgp.undp.org/index.php?option=com\\_rsform&view=rsform&formId=3&Itemid=1254](https://sgp.undp.org/index.php?option=com_rsform&view=rsform&formId=3&Itemid=1254)



# XIII. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS





### ***Is the GEF SGP a global programme?***

Yes, the SGP is corporate program of the GEF. It is a global program rooted at the country level and targeted to support local action. Thus, in many ways, the GEF SGP is a hybrid programme, as it serves the grassroots from within a global structure, while also promoting country ownership at the country level.

### ***How many countries participate of the SGP?***

Currently, 125 countries are participating of the SGP: 110 country programmes and 15 upgraded country programmes.

### ***How can a country participate in the SGP?***

A formal request to the GEF SGP Steering Committee has to be submitted by the government, with accompanying endorsement by the UNDP Country Office, after ensuring the country meets the following eligibility criteria to participate in the SGP:

- Existence of environmental needs and threats in GEF focal areas.
- Ratification of at least one of the global environmental conventions: the Convention on Biological Diversity; the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change; the UN Convention to Combat Desertification; and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants.
- Government commitment in the participating country and support for the programme's implementation modality according to the operational guidelines.
- Potential for strong government-NGO relations and positive support for local Civil Society Organizations.
- Commitment to resource mobilization.

### ***Why are GEF SGP grants small?***

SGP projects are designed to be small and support innovation and self-implementation by poor and vulnerable communities and local civil society organizations in need of capacity building. While SGP grants are initially small, successful community-based projects serve as models for replication and scaling up and provide important approaches for development to be relevant on the ground and, thus, sustainable. 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.

### ***Do all country programmes have a Country Programme Strategy?***

Yes. Every SGP country programme has a Country Programme Strategy (CPS), which is updated and revised every operational phase, or when the National Steering Committee deems necessary. The development and approval of a CPS is a requirement for the start of grant making in the country programme.

### ***Are all SGP grants approved by the National Steering Committee?***

Yes. The National Steering Committee approves all SGP grants in a country. This ensures that projects implemented in a country are in line with the priorities set by the country, through the Country Programme Strategy, while allowing the country programme to take ownership of decisions and initiatives implemented.

### ***Can an organization from a member of the National Steering Committee submit a proposal for SGP funding?***

No. During the term of a member of the National Steering Committee (NSC), his/her organization cannot apply for SGP grants. It is considered conflict of interest. Once his/her term as member of the NSC is completed, the organization can submit a proposal for SGP funding.

### ***Do all SGP grants require co-financing?***

Yes, SGP grants require co-financing to improve the capacity of the community/CSOs grantee partner to mobilize their social capital and take ownership of the project. While cash co-financing is desired, those grantee partners that can't provide such co-financing must at least be able to provide in kind co-financing.

### ***Does the grantee organization receive all funds for the project upon signing the Memorandum of Agreement?***

No. The amounts and schedules are part of the Memorandum of Agreement, based on the nature and length of project activities. The first disbursement should not be more than 50 percent of the total project grant amount.

***Can an organization without a bank account receive a SGP grant?***

Yes. There are some organizations that do not have the capacity to engage in a legal contract, directly receive the funds due to the lack of a bank account, or simply lack the capacity to be a direct grantee. In these cases, another CSO can serve as an intermediary by receiving the funds on behalf of the actual beneficiary. The intermediary CSO should usually be a well-established partner that has a track record with the SGP.

***It is mandatory to open a designated bank account for a SGP grant?***

No. A grantee can use the organization's existing bank account to receive a SGP grant. The only requirement is that the grantee organization keeps accurate financial management and accountability of SGP funds.

***How long does it usually take to implement an SGP project?***

SGP projects normally have a duration of between one and three years. However, it is for the community or CSO grantee partner to propose the timeline to complete and accomplish the targeted results proposed in the project proposal.

***Can a grantee organization receive more than one project grant during an operational phase?***

A grantee can submit another project concept only when a project has been successfully completed. However, a grantee organization cannot receive more than US\$50,000 in the same Operational Phase.

***If the CSO has received a grant in previous Operational Phases, can they still receive a grant for a strategic project?***

Yes. Strategic projects are expected to consolidate promising and successful approaches and methodologies with project partners from earlier SGP Operational Phases. SGP encourages the consolidation of projects by former SGP grantees whose capacity has increased. The proponent organization can apply for one strategic project grant per Operational Phase.

***Does the National Coordinator report to the government?***

No. All National Coordinators are UN-contracted and report to the CPMT and the UNDP Country Office. National Coordinators are recruited by the UNDP Country Office, on behalf of UNOPs. Their selection is approved by the SGP Global Manager. Being UN-contracted, National Coordinators are expected to be impartial and objective, in accordance with UN professional and ethical rules. However, National Coordinators are expected to provide regular updates about the programme to the government stakeholders.

***What is the recommended membership size of the National Steering Committee?***

National Steering Committees generally have between 7-15 members, with an average membership of around 10. There is no specific recommended number of members, as membership varies by country and context. However, the National Steering Committee should be large enough to include a majority of civil society members, as well as members from the government and UNDP. Membership can also include experts in the key technical areas, and focal points for gender, youth and Indigenous Peoples, where relevant.

***Can members of the National Steering Committee continue contributing to the SGP after serving their term?***

Yes. Members of the National Steering Committee who already served his/her mandate can continue to contribute their experience and particular expertise, as part of the Technical Advisory Group, and help guide country programme activities.

***How can an organization access to funding for upscaling a successful SGP project?***

When a successfully completed SGP project proved its potential for scaling up, seeking the advice of the National Steering Committee is a good starting point. Some projects can be scaled up through a GEF Medium Sized Project. The idea should be discussed with the GEF Operational Focal Point who is responsible for overall GEF activities in the country. Usually, he/she is a member of the NSC. The idea can also be presented to other development agencies and partners working in the area, as well as the government.



# ANNEX

Irrigation for water use efficiency. Credit: SGP Egypt.



# SGP OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

## PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

These Operational Guidelines are intended to assist GEF SGP National Coordinators/Sub-Regional Coordinators (NCs/SRCs), National Steering Committees (NSCs), Sub-regional Steering Committees (SRSCs), National Focal Groups (NFGs), UNDP Country Offices and National Host Institution (NHI) staff as well as the SGP Central Programme Management Team (CPMT) and the Global Coordinator of the SGP Upgrading Country Programmes in programme implementation. They are based on the experience and knowledge gained both at the country and global levels through years of GEF SGP programme implementation. They provide the basic framework for operations in relation to the structure, implementation, and administration of the programme. They also address the project cycle and grant disbursement. Programme and project monitoring, evaluation, and reporting are covered in the GEF SGP Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.

The guidelines and models set forth herein are meant to apply generally to all GEF SGP Country Programmes. It is recognized, however, that different contexts and situations will require different responses and adaptations. Any questions about the application of particular provisions of the guidelines or need for adaptation should be referred to the GEF SGP Global Manager and Central Programme Management Team (CPMT) or the Global Coordinator of the SGP Upgrading Country Programmes. On administrative and financial matters, questions may be answered by the UNOPS SGP Standard Operating Procedures and, if necessary, to the respective UNOPS SGP Portfolio Manager.

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>BAC</b>	Budget Account Classification Code
<b>CBO</b>	Community-based Organization
<b>CCF</b>	Country Cooperation Framework
<b>CO</b>	Country Office
<b>COA</b>	Chart of Account (ATLAS)
<b>COB</b>	Country Operating Budget
<b>CPMT</b>	Central Programme Management Team
<b>CPS</b>	Country Programme Strategy
<b>GEF</b>	Global Environment Facility
<b>IOV</b>	Inter-office Voucher
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>MOA</b>	Memorandum of Agreement
<b>MOD</b>	Miscellaneous Obligation Document
<b>NC</b>	National Coordinator
<b>NFP</b>	National Focal Person



<b>NFG</b>	National Focal Group
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental Organization
<b>NHI</b>	National Host Institution
<b>NPFE</b>	GEF National Portfolio Formulation Exercise
<b>NSC</b>	National Steering Committee
<b>OP</b>	Operational Programme
<b>PA</b>	Programme Assistant
<b>PO</b>	Purchase Order (ATLAS)
<b>REQ</b>	Requisition (ATLAS)
<b>SBAA</b>	Standard Basic Assistance Agreement
<b>SGP</b>	GEF Small Grants Programme
<b>SOPs</b>	Standard Operating Procedures
<b>SRC</b>	Sub-Regional Coordinator
<b>SRSC</b>	Sub-Regional Steering Committee
<b>SPS</b>	Sub-Regional Programme Strategy
<b>TOR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>UCP</b>	Upgrading Country Programme
<b>UNCBD</b>	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
<b>UNCCD</b>	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNOPS</b>	United Nations Office for Project Services
<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

## **PART I: GEF SGP PROGRAMME STRUCTURE**

1. The structure of the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP), implemented by UNDP, is decentralized and country-driven. Within the parameters established by the GEF Council and reflected in the Project Document for an Operational Phase, the programme seeks to provide for maximum country and community-level ownership and initiative. This decentralization is balanced against the need for programme consistency and accountability across the participating countries for the achievement of the GEF's global environmental objectives, and the SGP's particular benchmarks as stated in the Project Document for each Operational Phase.
2. The SGP is a global and multi-focal area GEF project, approved for funding by the GEF Council on a rolling replenishment, implemented by UNDP on behalf of the GEF partnership, and executed by UNOPS. In the case of Upgraded Country Programmes, UNOPS execution is the recommended option although a country-specific execution modality utilizing a national non-governmental organization or a consortium of non-governmental organizations, selected by UNDP through a competitive process, can be utilized<sup>53</sup>. Within the UNDP framework, the SGP, as a global programme, is handled differently from UNDP

<sup>53</sup> As per policy approved by the GEF Council Meeting (November 10-12, 2009, Washington DC) based on GEF/C.36/4 Small Grants Programme: Execution Arrangements and Upgrading Policy for GEF-5 (see para 19 and paras 52 - 53). This has been reaffirmed through the approval of the GEF Council Paper GEF/C.46/13 of April 30, 2014\*GEF Small Grants Programme: Implementation Arrangements for GEF-6.

<sup>54</sup> For more information about global programming, please see the UNDP Programming Manual, especially Section 8.3. The Programming Manual is available in UNDP Country Offices and at the following website: [www.undp.org/osg/pm/index.htm](http://www.undp.org/osg/pm/index.htm)

core national or regional programmes.<sup>54</sup>

3. The GEF Council approves SGP Project Information Form (PIF), GEF CEO Endorsement request, and SGP Project Document for the SGP Global Programme as well as for all Upgrading Country Programmes for each GEF Operational Phase. The SGP Project Document, whether for the global program or upgrading country programmes, provides the framework for SGP operations in accordance with the GEF mandate, including specific benchmarks for project achievements. It also sets forth many of the programme and financial reporting requirements for which UNDP has legal responsibility.
4. Globally, the SGP brings together country programmes of participating countries across all world regions. The key eligibility criteria for countries to participate in SGP are:
  - Existence of environmental needs and threats in GEF focal or thematic areas;
  - Ratification of at least one of the global environmental conventions including the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants; and United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD);
  - Government commitment in the participating country and support for the programme's implementation modality according to the operational guidelines;
  - Potential for strong government-NGO relations and positive support for local Civil Society Organizations;<sup>55</sup>
  - Commitment to resource mobilization: the UNDP/CO and government share available funding for SGP delivery from both GEF and non-GEF sources, and support efforts to attract other co-funding sources;
  - Positive enabling environment.

#### *SGP HEADQUARTERS STRUCTURE*

5. A UNDP/GEF Unit at UNDP Headquarters in New York provides fiduciary oversight for all of its GEF activities, including the SGP. Key UNDP Headquarters staff include the UNDP GEF Executive Coordinator, and his/her Deputy, who are legally accountable to UNDP and to the GEF Council for the utilisation of GEF resources.
6. Overall management of the SGP Global Programme, including operational guidance and support to the country programmes, as well as the identification and establishment of SGP Country Programmes in new countries, are conducted by the SGP Central Programme Management Team (CPMT). The CPMT is composed of a Global Manager and Deputy Global Manager; Programme Specialists responsible for matrixed country support and focal area guidance, knowledge management, and monitoring & evaluation; Programme Associates;

<sup>55</sup> For the purpose of the SGP and its grant making, CSOs refer to national and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with priority on community-based organizations (CBOs), indigenous peoples, farmers, scientific community, women's groups, and youth and children organizations.



as well as external consultants, as needed. The SGP Upgrading Country Programmes (UCPs), given their financing modality as GEF Full-Size Projects, are managed by a UNDP-GEF UCP Global Coordinator, who provides technical assistance, strategic advice, and resource mobilization support and promotes substantive and strategic alignment and coordination of the UCPs with the Global SGP Programme.

7. The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) provides programme execution services including administrative, financial, legal, operational, procurement and project management for the SGP as described in detail in the UNOPS SGP Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).<sup>56</sup> The UNOPS SGP Cluster Coordinator and his/her team work closely with the SGP Deputy Global Manager and CPMT staff, as well as with the SGP UCP Global Coordinator.
8. The SGP Global Manager and his/her alternate, the SGP Deputy Global Manager, are ultimately responsible for the overall management, strategic direction, policy development and resource mobilization efforts of the SGP Global Programme. The Programme Specialists are primarily responsible for guidance on GEF focal areas and thematic directions, Country Programme support, regional coordination responsibilities, knowledge sharing, partnership development and networking. As necessary, the Global Manager and Deputy Global Manager may delegate certain functions to the Programme Specialists.
9. SGP regional teams, composed of at least one staff member from CPMT and from UNOPS, as well as the regional senior SGP National Coordinator as needed, may provide a range of technical advice, operational, management and administrative support to country programmes in each of the six SGP world regions,<sup>57</sup> divided as follows:
  - Africa
  - Arab States
  - Asia
  - Europe & CIS
  - Pacific
  - Latin America & the Caribbean
10. While for the Global Programme, the CPMT regional focal point focuses primarily on GEF technical and programmatic matters, and the UNOPS regional focal point is responsible for administrative and financial issues, the SGP regional team works collaboratively in advising country programmes with regard to all substantive and operational matters. The regional teams also review the annual SGP country staff performance and recommend ratings for review by the Deputy Global Manager, and his/her counterpart in UNOPS, prior to endorsement and finalisation by the Global Manager.

<sup>56</sup> [https://intrafed.unops.org/ORGANIGRAMME/NAO/SGP/SGP\\_MANUAL/Pages/default.aspx](https://intrafed.unops.org/ORGANIGRAMME/NAO/SGP/SGP_MANUAL/Pages/default.aspx)

<sup>57</sup> For a full list of participating SGP countries see: [http://www.sgp.undp.org/index.cfm?module=ActiveWeb&page=Web-Page&s=contry\\_profile](http://www.sgp.undp.org/index.cfm?module=ActiveWeb&page=Web-Page&s=contry_profile)

11. For the Upgrading Country Programmes, the division of labour between the SGP UCP Global Coordinator and UNOPS is similar to those above, as are the collaborative arrangements between UNDP-GEF and UNOPS.
12. SGP Programme Associates are responsible for daily administration, filing and archive management; financial record-keeping and reporting to donors; human resources support; external communications; organisation of meetings; and responses to routine requests for information. The Programme Associates monitor completion of SGP work-plans, and assist in CPMT activities, correspondence, and other assigned tasks.

### **SGP COUNTRY PROGRAMME STRUCTURE**

13. The SGP operates in a decentralized and country-driven manner through a National Coordinator or Sub-regional Coordinator (*both hereafter to be referred as **NC***) and National Steering Committee or National Focal Group for those in sub-regional programme modality (*both hereafter abbreviated to **NSC***) in each participating country, with some modification in the case of countries in a sub-regional programme modality<sup>58</sup>, with financial and administrative support provided by the UNDP Country Office (CO). In some countries, a National Host Institution (NHI) or host NGO<sup>59</sup> is responsible for programme implementation in conjunction with the NC and NSC. At the country level, the SGP operates under the overall UNDP SBAA agreement, although the SGP Global Programme is not considered a part of the CCF or UNDP core functions at the country level.
14. The NSC is composed of voluntary members from NGOs, academic and scientific institutions, other civil society organizations, the UNDP CO, and government, with a majority of members coming from the non-governmental sector. The NSC provides overall guidance and direction to the Country Programme, and contributes to developing and implementing strategies for Country Programme sustainability.
15. The technical capacity of the individual NSC members is an important criterion in determining its composition, and to the maximum extent possible the NSC membership should include experts in the relevant GEF focal areas of biodiversity; climate change mitigation; international waters; sustainable land management; sustainable forest management and REDD; persistent organic pollutants/chemicals; as well as capacity development. The inclusion of the government GEF Operational Focal Point (OFP) or relevant Convention Focal Point in the NSC is also recommended.

<sup>58</sup> In the case of SGP Sub-regional Programmes, the Sub-Regional Coordinator (SRC) may manage the programme, while projects are reviewed and approved by a voluntary National Focal Group (NFG) with part-time facilitation by a National Focal Person (NFP). Some countries, with substantial grant making, may decide to shift to a Country Programme modality still linked to the subregional group with a full-time NC or a Community Program Officer and the SRC providing subregional coordination and technical support.

<sup>59</sup> National Host Institution or NHI and host NGO are used interchangeably in this document because SGP Country Programmes commonly employ both terms.



16. The NSC is responsible for the review, selection and approval of projects, and for ensuring their technical and substantive quality as regards the strategic objectives of the SGP. In collaboration with the NC, the NSC contributes to the development of the Country Programme Strategy (CPS)<sup>60</sup> in accordance with the relevant GEF Project Document for the Operational Phase and national environmental priorities, and oversees its implementation. NSC members are expected to support the Country Programme in resource mobilization and in mainstreaming SGP lessons learned and successes in national development planning and policy-making. NSC members are encouraged to participate in pre-selection project site visits and in project monitoring and evaluation.
17. The NSC may also constitute a Technical Advisory Groups (TAG) with a pool of voluntary experts on call to serve as a technical sub-committee, for review of proposals and in relation to specific areas of programming and partnership development. The TAG can also be tasked by the NSC to provide specific technical guidance in specialised areas of work, such as carbon measurement, payments for ecosystem services, marketing and certification of products, transboundary diagnostic analysis, and other relevant fields. In addition, the TAG may also be formed in response to donor and co-financing requirements mobilised for the SGP country programme.
18. The SGP NC has lead responsibility for managing the development and implementation of the country or sub-regional programme, for ensuring that grants and projects meet GEF and SGP criteria, and for planning and implementation of upscaling strategies. The NC's primary functions include *inter alia*: (i) assisting CSOs in the formulation of project proposals; (ii) serving as the *ex officio* secretariat for the NSC; (iii) ensuring sound programme monitoring and evaluation, including periodic project site visits; (iv) resource mobilization; (v) communication and dissemination of SGP information; and (v) global reporting to CPMT, UNOPS, responding to audits, and other tasks as stipulated in their ToR.<sup>61</sup>
19. The UNDP CO provides management support to the SGP Country Programme as outlined in this document. The UNDP Resident Representative/Resident Coordinator (*hereafter abbreviated to UNDP RR*) in each UNDP CO assigns a senior staff person (typically the Environment Focal Point or head of the Sustainable Development Cluster) to serve as the SGP focal point. The UNDP RR participates in the NSC or may designate the focal point as his/her delegate in the NSC. Each UNDP CO also contributes to monitoring programme activities – usually through broad oversight by the designated focal point as part of NSC responsibilities – facilitates interaction with the host government, and develops links with other in-country financial and technical resources.

<sup>60</sup> An Upgrading Country Programme is not required to produce a Country Programme Strategy since it produces a Project Document for the Full Size Project financing their Country Programme for the relevant Operational Phase.

<sup>61</sup> See full-length version of SGP NC ToRs.

20. The UNDP CO is also responsible for providing operational support – the RR signature of grant project MOAs (on behalf of UNOPS); appointment letters of NSC members (on behalf of CPMT); local grant disbursements; HR administration; as well as assisting in audit exercises for the programme. The detailed steps for each operational aspect are described in the UNOPS SGP SOPs. The UNDP CO also plays a fundamental role in launching a new SGP Country Programme in terms of endorsement of the government application to be a participating SGP country and in helping CPMT organize the start-up mission. The UNDP CO also plays a critical role in the proper closing of an SGP Country Programme.

## **PART II: IMPLEMENTATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF SGP COUNTRY PROGRAMMES**

### ***IN-COUNTRY INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS***

21. The SGP operates at the country level under the overall UNDP SBAA agreement, however, the SGP Global Programme remains the responsibility of the CPMT/ UNOPS SGP Cluster at Headquarters and, like the Upgrading Country Programmes, is accountable to UNDP-GEF in New York, and ultimately, the GEF Council. There are two basic modalities for SGP hosting arrangements for the country programme that, in consultation with country stakeholders, will be decided by CPMT or the UCP Global Coordinator. In most countries, the programme is hosted by the UNDP CO, although this may also mean that the SGP office is physically located outside CO premises. Where there are issues of accessibility and based on consultations with stakeholders, the programme could be hosted in a National Host Institution (NHI), which may be an NGO or academic institution.
22. In case of NHI hosting, UNOPS issues and administers a sub-contract with the NHI that outlines the technical support and administrative services to be provided, as well as the applicable operating budget. In all cases, the UNDP CO provides needed support for SGP in-country operations in coordination with the CPMT or UCP Global Coordinator and UNOPS. Whatever the hosting arrangements, all Country Programmes respond equally to the relevant Operational Phase Project Document (global or national upgrading) and the global SGP Operational Guidelines.
23. As noted above, NCs of Country Programmes in the Global SGP Programme are guided by CPMT regional focal points for the majority of operational and technical matters, whilst reporting ultimately to the SGP Global Manager. NCs of Upgrading Country Programmes are guided by the Global UCP Coordinator. NCs are also accountable to the UNDP RR for country-level programme expenditures and on matters regarding meeting the ethical and professional standards of the UNDP. The UNDP RR, in consultation with members of the NSC, is responsible for



preparing the annual evaluation of NC performance and recommendation concerning contractual status for review by either CPMT or the Global UCP Coordinator, and UNOPS.

24. In keeping with the spirit and mandate of the SGP to develop and foster the capacities of CSOs in participating countries, it is expected that as individual Country Programmes mature it will be possible to transfer the hosting arrangements from the UNDP CO to NHIs. Any decision for transfer should be based on a full consultative process and analysis of key factors, and must be approved by the CPMT or Global UCP Coordinator in consultation with the UNDP RR. In certain cases, where the selected NHI does not fully meet performance expectations, and upon consultation with country stakeholders, the contract may be terminated by the CPMT or Global Coordinator, and UNOPS, and hosting will be transferred either to the UNDP CO or to another NHI.
25. The relationship with an NHI may range from the provision of physical office space, with the NC and NSC carrying full responsibility for programme management; one in which the NHI is responsible for providing specifically agreed services, such as technical advice and support; through to one where the NHI carries full responsibility for managing the SGP programme. The extent of responsibility will be clearly defined in the contract for services signed by UNOPS and the NHI and may evolve over time.
26. The identification of a pool of suitable NHIs may be carried out through a process of competitive bidding, or by gradually accumulating a list of available and interested organizations in consultation with key stakeholders. Local representation of international NGOs would not normally be eligible. The legitimacy and neutrality of potential NHIs within the national NGO community are essential qualifications to carry out SGP grant-making activities. Once a pool of organizations has been established, the following factors will be considered by the CPMT or Global UCP Coordinator, and UNDP CO to select the best candidate:
  - National stature and credibility;
  - Good working relationships with other CSOs, including participation in environment/ development networks;
  - Demonstrated compatibility with the procedures, objectives, and grant-making functions of the SGP, GEF, and UNDP;
  - Significant experience in community-based, participatory environment and development;
  - Substantial involvement and technical expertise in environmental issues related to the GEF focal areas and the Rio conventions;
  - Proven programme management and administrative capacity with systems in place.

27. The NC is normally an employee of UNOPS whereas the contract is administered locally by the UNDP CO on behalf of UNOPS. In some cases, the NC contract administration can be covered under the terms of the contract with the NHI. The selection of the NC is done through a publicly advertised and competitive selection process. As a general rule, the recruitment process for the NC is managed on behalf of UNOPS by the UNDP CO under the overall supervision of the UNDP RR. This is ordinarily the case even if the NC will be placed in an NHI; however, the NHI, as appropriate and upon approval of CPMT, may manage the NC recruitment. The selection panel submits three of the top applicants to the SGP Global Manager for final selection and decision. The recruitment process and related guidelines are described in more detail in the UNOPS SGP Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).
28. Typically, NHIs do not normally administer grant funds. As Country Programmes evolve and/or upgrade, however, it may become desirable to include direct grants administration as part of NHI responsibilities under UNOPS-issued contracts or other mechanisms, thereby increasing the level of country ownership of, and civil society participation in, the programme. Administrative procedures will need to be devised to ensure that the administration of grant allocations and their transferral to grant recipients remain transparent, accountable and fluid. NHIs cannot be awarded nor use SGP grant funds.

#### *SGP COUNTRY STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES*

29. The NC is responsible for the overall functioning of the SGP in each participating country, and for the achievement of the benchmarks established for Country Programme implementation in the CPS (Global Programme) or Project Document (UCP) for the relevant Operational Phase.<sup>62</sup> The NC is expected to have full-time dedication to the SGP. The NC is responsible for ensuring sound programme and project monitoring and evaluation, and laying the foundation for programme upscaling and sustainability. In project development, the NC may work directly to assist the proponent CSO to access needed support, including the recommendation of support through planning grants. The NC, jointly with the UNDP CO, bear direct responsibility for all local programme expenditures. A critical aspect of the NC job performance is to carefully monitor and supervise these expenditures under the overall supervision of UNOPS and to ensure accountability and transparency.
30. The NC usually represents the SGP in local and national meetings, workshops, and other events, and may be accompanied by members of the NSC. However, for legal and financial purposes, only the UNDP RR or his/her Officer in Charge (OIC) may represent the SGP in-country (on behalf of UNOPS). Only the UNDP RR or his/her Officer in Charge (OIC) can sign SGP grant Memoranda of Agreement (MOAs) and for signing any co-financing arrangements on behalf of SGP. While the NC may

<sup>62</sup>The NC should not accept any other functions unless a cost-sharing arrangement can be negotiated with the UNDP CO or host NGO and validated by CPMT/UNOPS.



initiate and undertake co-financing and other negotiations for the programme, s/he should never officially sign such agreements. The NC, however, may sign non-binding collaborative agreements between SGP and other projects and programs. The NC should consult the CPMT or the Global UCP Coordinator, and the UNOPS SGP Cluster if there is any doubt on signing rules and procedures.

31. The performance of NCs is evaluated annually. The evaluation is undertaken through an online Performance and Results Assessment (PRA) in two parts: a self-assessment by the NC, and a performance evaluation with NSC inputs under the charge of the UNDP RR. These two parts of the evaluation should be completed shortly after the completion of the reporting period. The completed and signed evaluations are submitted to the CPMT or the Global UCP Coordinator. The PRA evaluations are reviewed by the CPMT or Global UCP Coordinator, with UNOPS inputs, and final decisions are then taken for the Global Programme Country Programmes by the SGP Global Manager and Deputy Global Manager on contract renewal, or by the Global UCP Coordinator, as well as other actions that might need to be taken.
32. In most countries, the NC works with a Programme Assistant/Associate (PA). On behalf of UNOPS, the UNDP CO may hire a PA with technical and/or administrative skills and functions depending on local needs. The NC shall be involved in the selection process and the panel recommendation will be forwarded to CPMT and UNOPS for final approval. The NC will be in charge of the supervision and PRA for the PA. In certain cases, consultants with a technical background, especially in the GEF focal areas, may be recruited to contribute to project design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation, and can be delegated by the NC to provide these services to CSOs and SGP projects as necessary. The recruitment process and related guidelines are highlighted in detail in the UNOPS SGP SOPs.

#### ***NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE PROCEDURES***

33. The NSC is a central element of the SGP and provides the primary substantive contribution and oversight to the programme, in coordination with the NC. While staffing and operational management of the SGP is undertaken through UNDP/UNOPS structures, no SGP project may be undertaken at the country level without the approval of the NSC. As such, the NSC must do its best to ensure the technical and substantive quality of SGP grants, and the administrative and financial capacity, either actual or potential, of the CSO grant recipients. The UNDP RR, or his/her delegate, as well as other members of the NSC, are encouraged to provide any relevant information about these concerns, especially the financial and organizational integrity of CSOs. Operationally, the decisions of the NSC are considered final provided they are consistent with these operational guidelines, the SGP Project Document for the GEF Operational Phase and the Country

Programme Strategy (or UCP Project Document). However, neither the NSC nor its individual members as programme volunteers, hold any legal or fiduciary responsibility for the SGP or its activities.

34. The selection of NSC members is normally done by the NC in consultation with the UNDP RR. For new country programmes, the NSC is often established as a result of a preparatory mission or in the initial stages of launching the programme. NSC members should have an abiding interest and commitment to working with communities and share a vision of what sustainable development and *"thinking globally, acting locally"* might mean in terms of linking the GEF focal areas with community needs and concerns. NSC non-governmental members must have high credibility and wide experience working with local communities and CSOs in the country and thus can represent their needs and interests in committee discussions. Strong, experienced, and technically competent civil society representation on the NSC is crucial as a means of keeping the SGP responsive to its mandate to work with CSOs, CBOs and indigenous peoples. These members must also have the requisite knowledge of GEF Focal Areas and/or specific themes such as gender, sustainable livelihoods, and knowledge management. Governmental and donor agency members should hold positions relevant to the work of the SGP and at a level where they could make decisions on behalf of their agencies, particularly when assessing proposals which they are being asked to fund. NSC members on the whole must be able and willing to discuss constructively and develop consensus decisions. The NSC, with the NC, are responsible for ensuring participatory, democratic, impartial, and transparent procedures for project review and approval, as well as all other aspects of programme implementation at the country level in accordance with the SGP Project Document for the relevant Operational Phase.
35. The composition of a newly established NSC is subject to ratification by the SGP Global Manager or the Global UCP Coordinator while subsequent appointments can be ratified by the responsible CPMT Regional Focal Point for global programme countries and by the Global UCP Coordinator for upgrading country programmes. In general, only one government representative on the NSC is required. However, depending on the circumstances, country programmes can have additional government representatives such as Convention focal points, although whatever the case, the majority of members must be non-governmental. The UNDP RR provides the appointment letters on behalf of the SGP.
36. NSC members usually serve for a period of three years. Each country or sub-regional programme must decide whether this term is renewable, and how eligibility for renewal is determined. In general, periodically inviting new members is a sound and healthy policy that brings new ideas and expertise to programme implementation, and roughly one quarter of NSC members may rotate in any given year. Changing the entire membership at any one time should be avoided.



37. Participation in the NSC is without monetary compensation. Travel expenses for project site visits or to NSC meetings can be covered by the SGP country operational budget.
38. NSCs adopt decisions under the principle of consensus and rarely resort to voting to determine whether a project is approved or a particular course of action is taken. To facilitate meetings, the NSC may decide to select its Chairperson(s) in the following way: (i) one of the most committed expert members to Chair for a particular period of time; (ii) members to chair meetings on a rotating basis to enhance each member's participation; and (iii) on a co-chair approach with government and non-government representation to promote civil society leadership and CSO-government collaboration which are institutional objectives of the programme.
39. The NC serves ex officio on the NSC, participating in deliberations, but not in decisions in the project selection process. The NC usually convenes the NSC and functions as its secretariat, including preparing minutes of meetings and maintaining a historical record of programme decisions and implementation. A copy of NSC minutes, signed by the members, and other pertinent material should be filed at the UNDP CO.
40. In as wide a consultation as possible with country stakeholders, the NC shall prepare a long list of possible volunteers to the NSC. From this, the NC in consultation with the UNDP RR prepares the list of NSC members to be nominated for approval by the SGP Global Manager by considering both the expertise and qualifications of the individual candidates, and the overall composition and balance of the committee. While certain institutions (the UNDP, and appropriate governmental ministry or agencies, the NHI) must be represented in the NSC, members should also be chosen who as individuals, including from the private sector and donor community, would contribute significantly to the committee and the programme's various expertise needs (e.g. on GEF focal areas, sustainable livelihoods, gender considerations, communications, resource mobilization, capacity development). The NC, after due consultation with other NSC members of good standing and the UNDP RR, may recommend changes in the composition of the committee to CPMT if it becomes clear that a particular member's participation is not contributing to the programme.
41. The objectivity, transparency and credibility of the NSC is of paramount importance to the success of the Country Programme, and to maintaining good relations among stakeholders. As a general rule, Country Programmes cannot consider proposals associated with organizations of sitting NSC members. A CSO may nonetheless submit proposals when its representative has finished the term of service and is no longer on the Committee. On an exceptional basis, and under specified conditions pre-approved by CPMT or the UCP Global Coordinator, CSOs with members in the NSC can submit proposals.

## COUNTRY PROGRAMME STRATEGY

42. Before any grant-making or other programme activities may take place, each SGP participating country must have an approved Country Programme Strategy or Sub-regional Programme Strategy (abbreviated here to **CPS**). The development/revision of the CPS is designed to ensure congruence with the SGP Project Document for the relevant Operational Phase; the strategic planning frameworks associated with the relevant Rio Conventions;<sup>63</sup> as well as with the GEF National Portfolio Formulation Exercise (NPFE) where relevant.
43. For Upgrading Country Programmes, a standard UNDP-GEF Project Document is produced that reflects the Country Program strategy that is broadly coherent with the SGP Global strategic initiatives announced at the commencement of each Operational Phase. The Project Document is formulated after approval of the corresponding PIF and is approved by UNDP and the GEF CEO as per standard GEF and UNDP procedures. In the development of the Project Document, the same multistakeholder, participatory approach is followed as that of Country Program Strategy development.
44. For new SGP Country Programmes, the development of a CPS is one of the first tasks to be undertaken by the NC and newly-formed NSC. In both new and continuing SGP Country Programmes, it is important to involve key stakeholders in the CPS revision/elaboration process, and to fully engage and involve the NSC. In this regard, the CPS may be considered a living document, and shall be revised or updated in every operational phase of SGP, or as deemed necessary by the NSC, to align country programme priorities with GEF policies and priorities, and those included in the relevant SGP Project Document.
45. As described in the CPS Guidance framework, the development or revision of the CPS serves several broad purposes to:
- Identify the national circumstances and priorities of the country vis-à-vis the Project Document for the relevant Operational Phase;
  - Provide stakeholders with a framework document to understand the priorities for SGP funding for strengthened country relevance and ownership;
  - Provide a strategic framework for allocating resources, especially selection of SGP projects, through a bio-geographic and/or thematic focus;
  - Serve as the framework for Country Programme operations and guiding programme implementation;
  - Constitute the basis for the assessment of country programme achievements and impact.
46. The development/revision of the CPS (or UCP Project Document) should be undertaken as a participatory process that engages the full range of non-governmental and government stakeholders in the country.

<sup>63</sup> These include the GEF National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA) process; the CBD National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs); the UNFCCC National Communications; the UNCCD National Actions Programmes (NAPs); and the Stockholm Convention National Implementation Plans (NIPs).



The CPS preparation should be seen not only as a document to satisfy global programmatic requirements, but as a country-led process which has value in its own right. The key players in the process are the NC (who facilitates the process, and is responsible for the majority of the drafting), and the NSC (which provides input and guidance throughout the process, and endorses the end product).

47. The CPS should contain: (a) background situation of the country which the SGP country programme has to consider; (b) key objectives vis-a-vis the country situation and the objectives of the global SGP Prodoc for the operational phase; (c) geographic (with maps) and/or thematic focal areas; (d) priority activities to be supported by grantmaking; and (e) expected outcomes, indicators, and M&E plan. For formulation of a UCP Project Document (ProDoc), the standard UNDP-GEF format is followed.
48. Recommended steps to developing the CPS or ProDoc are as follows:
  - NC prepares an initial CPS or ProDoc draft for consultation with the NSC based on the current SGP Project Document or the approved PIF in the case of UCPs;
  - Wide stakeholder consultations held with key CSO, government, academic and other concerned parties to discuss relevant issues (where possible, these consultations to be linked to the National Portfolio Formulation Exercise (NPFE) of the GEF in the country);
  - Incorporation of stakeholder inputs into the draft CPS or ProDoc by the NC, and initial approval of the document by the NSC;
  - Submission of the draft CPS to the CPMT Regional Focal Point for comment and review; draft ProDoc submitted to the UCP Global Coordinator for comment and review;
  - Further CPS or ProDoc revision as necessary based on comments and recommendations by the CPMT or UCP Global Coordinator, respectively;
  - Submission of the revised CPS or ProDoc by the NC for formal endorsement by the NSC;
  - Final approval of the endorsed CPS by the SGP Global Manager, or delegated CPMT Regional Focal Point; final approval of the endorsed ProDoc by the UCP Global Coordinator and submission to the GEF for CEO Endorsement and to UNDP for approval;
  - Posting and circulation of the final version of the CPS as a public document; posting of ProDoc on GEF Website.

### *COUNTRY OPERATING BUDGET*

49. The Country Operating Budget or Sub-regional Operating Budget (abbreviated here to COB) is the financial provision for country, or sub-regional, programme implementation. The COB is prepared by the NC, and reviewed and approved

by the CPMT and UNOPS. The COB should allow the effective operation of the country or sub-regional programme in implementing activities in support of the objectives of the Project Document, as well as to be responsive to specific country circumstances and needs, as reflected in the CPS. In countries where a NHI hosts the SGP, the COB is generally covered by the terms of the contract for services between the organization and UNOPS. The COB process and related guidelines are highlighted in detail in the UNOPS SGP SOPs.

50. The budget for operations of Upscaling Country Programmes is approved as part of the Project Document and is subject to revision on an annual basis along with approval of Annual Work Plans and requests for annual Authorized Spending Limits. UNOPS, as executing agency, manages the budget in direct contact with the National Coordinator and in collaboration with the relevant UNDP Country Office.

### **PART III: IMPLEMENTATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF SGP GRANTS**

#### *SGP GRANTS AND PROJECT CYCLE*

51. Each SGP Country Programme should, after adopting or revising its CPS or Project Document, prepare and issue an SGP programme announcement. Information in the call for proposals should clearly state that the SGP makes grants to eligible CSOs<sup>64</sup>; or to individuals, as in the case of fellowships, with priority for the poor and vulnerable in the GEF focal areas, with a maximum grant amount for a project of US\$50,000<sup>65</sup>. The subsequent process of developing an SGP grant project should then take place in a transparent manner covering the: (i) project preparation guidelines setting forth the eligibility criteria; (ii) application/proposal review process and calendar; (iii) formats for project concept and proposal development, and; (iv) co-financing requirements in cash and/or in-kind.
52. Project concepts from eligible CSOs may be screened by the NC or jointly with the NSC. Each country programme should determine which screening modality it will follow, and periodically review this decision to make sure that the modality chosen is working well. In both cases, project concept selection should be done on the basis of established eligibility and selection criteria in accordance with the CPS or UCP Project Document. At the very least, project concepts should be relevant to one or several of the GEF focal areas and reflect the needs of the community or communities and/or stakeholders that would be involved. Once the concepts have been selected, the proponent organizations will be notified of this decision and asked to develop complete project proposals.

<sup>64</sup> The term civil society organization (CSO) herein refers to the definition of major groups agreed by Governments at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 to include non-governmental organizations (NGOs), farmers, women, the scientific and technological community, youth and children, indigenous peoples and their communities, business and industry, workers and trade unions and local authorities. For SGP, their eligibility for grants follows the practice of the GEF (for the purpose of CSOs attending/observing Council meetings) which defines them as 'non-profit organizations'. Local authorities shall include traditional or indigenous governance units and their proposals to be eligible should refer to meeting the needs of communities under their jurisdiction. Furthermore, international NGOs and for-profit business and industry groups are not directly eligible for SGP support, but may co-finance the Programme's grant projects. Priority grant-making should also be directed at grassroots groups such as community-based organizations (CBOs), indigenous peoples, farmers, women, youth and children, and workers. Those that are especially vulnerable because of poverty, social exclusion, or disability should also be provided priority.

<sup>65</sup> The SGP Country Programme could provide grants above this maximum amount for "Strategic Grants" that can be up to \$150,000 under a special provision for this category of grants and following guidance from CPMT or the Global UCP Coordinator as relevant.

53. It is critical for all project proposals to meet the GEF and SGP criteria. While it is an important part of the NC responsibilities to assist CSOs in proposal development, sometimes additional assistance is nonetheless required. In such cases, two options may be considered: (i) a local consultant may be hired or a capable “assisting NGO” may be contacted to help the CSO/CBO/communities according to terms of reference that the NC elaborates in coordination with the proponent organization; and (ii) the SGP planning grant modality may be used.
54. In support of regional or global scaling up, mainstreaming, replication, and broader adoption of SGP successes and lessons learned, as well as to leverage resources and utilize strategic opportunities at these levels, grants for regional or global initiatives<sup>66</sup> can be provided. For the Global SGP, guidance for proactive or responsive modalities as well as procedures for this will come from the SGP CPMT in consultation with involved SGP Country Programmes and/or relevant Programme stakeholders and partners.

### **PLANNING GRANTS**

55. The NC or NSC may authorize planning grants<sup>67</sup> once project concepts have been selected. CSOs such as CBOs, indigenous peoples’ organisations and communities with little experience in project design and management receive priority to benefit from this assistance. Hence, the planning grant has an important capacity-building function which in itself is an important SGP objective. The NC makes recommendations to the NSC about which proponent organizations would require a planning grant.
56. A planning grant can be used by an eligible CSO to organize stakeholder workshops or meetings to design the project in a participatory manner. The planning grant can be used to contract an experienced NGO or local consultant to work with the project proponents to elaborate the project, to undertake baseline assessments, develop a business plan (for projects with strong sustainable livelihood elements), and through learning-by-doing, build capacity in proposal design including the development of indicators and a monitoring and evaluation plan.
57. Administratively, a planning grant is a grant like any other SGP grant, and therefore can only be made to eligible CSOs. The project document for the planning grant specifies the activities to be undertaken, and the responsibilities of the parties concerned. The NSC generally approves the planning grant, although the NSC can in certain instances also delegate approval to the NC for certain exceptional cases (e.g. time-sensitive activities, smaller amounts). The process follows the modus operandi of SGP facilitative grant-making and is explained in detail in the UNOPS SGP SOPs.

<sup>66</sup> The allocated funds for this should not exceed 10% of the available GEF global core grant allocation for an operational phase.

<sup>67</sup> Planning grants are usually in the range of \$2,000 to \$5,000 depending on the capacity of the proponent and additional work that has to be done. The NSC should decide how to make the provision of planning grants in the most facilitative way such as allowing the NC to make planning grant decisions and reporting on these in NSC meetings.



## PROJECT PROPOSALS

58. SGP provides grants to support activities that help achieve the programme objectives outlined in the CPS and the global SGP project document or the UCP Project Document for the Operational Phase. In terms of helping achieve global environmental benefits, the SGP's starting point is to ensure that each project proposal fits the GEF criteria and that each proposal clearly articulates how project objectives and activities would have a positive effect in the relevant GEF focal areas. To create sustainability and impact beyond the project, SGP projects can combine demonstration, capacity-building, network building, awareness raising, and dissemination of lessons learned as integral components. Given this comprehensive approach, while a logical framework is not formally required, it would be advisable to include a Monitoring and Evaluation work plan in each proposal (see SGP M&E Framework).
59. As a demand-driven programme, SGP projects endeavour to address both the GEF criteria, as well as community needs and initiatives. The SGP usually works with communities and localities that confront a multitude of social and economic development problems that impact on concerns related to global environmental conventions. For SGP interventions to have relevance and utility at the community level, these non-GEF circumstances are taken into account in project design. A key guiding philosophy of the programme has been to reach the marginalized poor and vulnerable communities, especially when there are no other donors present, and where development baseline conditions have not been met. Typically, the SGP will therefore need to mobilize additional resources to help provide the co-financing, technical assistance, capacity-building, gender training, income-generation component, or whatever non-GEF element may be necessary for a project's success. These project components are vital to achieving local acceptance, ownership, and sustainability of SGP interventions.

## FUNDS DISBURSEMENT

60. The maximum amount for an SGP grant is \$50,000 per project.<sup>68</sup> In special cases, grants for "strategic projects" that consolidate efforts of several communities and CSOs could be provided at a maximum of \$150,000. SGP grants generally only cover a portion of project costs, with other components provided by the CSO partner, the community itself, or by other donors. Since SGP grants fund activities that are directly relevant to the GEF criteria, co-financing must be sought for community baseline or sustainable development needs. However, since it would be unrealistic to require a baseline/incremental cost exercise for each individual project, each country should instead endeavour to mobilize enough funding in cash or in kind to "match" the GEF country grant allocation<sup>69</sup>.

<sup>68</sup> In many cases, it may however be advisable to provide smaller initial amounts when the grantee-partners have lower implementation capacity.

<sup>69</sup> The matching of GEF funds with co-financing is finally reckoned at the global programme level so as not to disadvantage new country programmes or those in difficult situations.

61. Once the NSC has approved a project for SGP funding support, a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is signed on behalf of UNOPS between the grantee and the UNDP CO. SGP projects normally have a duration of between one and three years. The amounts and schedules may differ, contingent upon the nature and length of project activities, but in no case should the first disbursement be more than 50% of the total project grant amount (except when justified and prior approval from UNOPS has been received). The MOA and grant disbursement process, the applicable templates, and all related guidelines are found in detail in the UNOPS SGP SOPs.
62. A grantee may submit another proposal upon successful completion of an initial project but no grantee can receive funds exceeding US\$50,000 in a given operational phase. Any grantee which has received the maximum \$50,000 in one Operational Phase, may however submit another funding request in the following Operational Phase if the evaluation of project outcomes are positive.

#### **PART IV: REPORTING AND COMMUNICATIONS**

63. The NC has lead responsibility for communications between the Country Programme and the CPMT or UCP Global Coordinator. In general, the NC reports on substantive and technical matters to the CPMT or UCP Global Coordinator, and on administrative and financial issues to the UNOPS portfolio manager. The NC should keep the UNDP CO informed of progress in programme implementation, usually through the RR and SGP focal point in the UNDP CO. In particular, the NC and PA are expected to maintain a close working relationship with the UNDP CO regarding the COB and grants disbursements which serves to keep the UNDP abreast of SGP developments.<sup>70</sup> The NC should also endeavour to share relevant SGP reports with the GEF Operational and Political Focal Points as well as global environmental convention focal points.
64. Communications among Country Programmes are facilitated through the global, regional, and sub-regional list servers, the SGP global database and workspace, and the SGP website. Recurring global reporting requirements, such as annual reports, are complemented by periodic requests by the CPMT, UCP Global Coordinator and/or UNOPS for information on specific subjects, such as reports under preparation for the GEF Council, or for the relevant global environmental conventions. Full guidance on all project and programme reporting is provided in the SGP Monitoring & Evaluation Framework.
65. SGP country teams are responsible for entering detailed information for all prior and current Operational Phases into the SGP database, including the upload of grant project MOAs. Since the database is the foundation for all reporting and communications at the global level, it is imperative that NCs and PAs input the database as soon as projects are approved by the NSC, and keep it regularly updated on the progress of projects. The SGP database and website also includes

<sup>70</sup> SGP Country Programmes are required to monitor the funds (grants and COB amounts) and expenditures allocated to them. Reporting tools and relevant guidelines are provided by the UNOPS SGP SOPs.

visual documentation of SGP projects and Country Programmes, accounts of lessons learned, and case studies. Project briefs should be stored in the files of every project for easy use and sharing.

66. The NC is required to report on technical and substantive project and programme progress through the Annual Country Report (GEF Project Implementation Review for UCPs). The ACR complements the information that is entered in the SGP database and should cover progress in meeting the year's deliverables as well as other important information including: (i) assessment of the overall progress for the country programme portfolio; (ii) results of project monitoring and evaluation; (iii) key outcomes of SGP-sponsored events; (iv) progress in strengthening working relationships with CSOs, as well as with government agencies and donors; (v) results of resource mobilization efforts; (vi) development of SGP visibility as a GEF programme and activities to share lessons learned and influence policy; and (vii) any special challenges and difficulties faced.
67. The NC shall take all necessary measures to ensure the visibility of the GEF financing. Such measures shall be in accordance with the need to give adequate publicity to the action being implemented as well as to the support from the GEF. A communication and visibility plan shall be outlined in each project document. This should include, inter alia, the compulsory use of the GEF logo on all material, publications, leaflets, brochures and newsletters, websites, business cards, signage, vehicles, supplies and equipment, display panels, commemorative plaques, banners, promotional items, photographs, audiovisual productions, public events and visits and information campaigns. The plan should also include press releases, press conferences and press visits to project sites.
68. The Programme Review is an overall assessment of the Country Programme performance to be undertaken by the NC and the NSC, in consultation with SGP grantees and other stakeholders, at the completion of an SGP Operational Phase. The purpose of the Programme Review is to assess the cumulative progress of the Country Programme in a particular Operational Phase and provide strategic recommendations on the direction for the programme in the next Operational Phase. Once finalized, the Programme Review should be shared by the SGP country team with the country GEF Operational and Political Focal Points and also the relevant Rio Convention focal points.
69. Audits of SGP Country Programmes will be conducted in accordance with the internationally accepted auditing standards, and applicable financial rules and regulations. The SGP audit exercises are designed to improve the transparency, accountability and quality of SGP country and global operations. The audits will cover management, financial, and administrative issues as they relate to the country programme as a whole, and will not normally include provisions for project-level inspection. The principles and processes governing SGP audit operations can be found in the UNOPS SGP SOPs.





**SGP** The GEF  
Small Grants  
Programme

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