

GEF SGP NEWSLETTER

May 2025



Highlight from Region 4 Workshop

Fueling Dreams, Building Futures – Together with RTTC & GEF SGP

The Region 10 Tourism Committee Inc. (RTTC) proudly announced its partnership with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP) for an inspiring initiative titled:

“Strengthening the Capacity of Civil Society Organisations (CSO) to Independently Lead Community Development Efforts Through Accessing Grant Funding.”

This initiative formed part of a broader mission aimed at empowering community-based groups and local organisations by equipping them with the tools, knowledge, and confidence they needed to lead and champion environmental-centric development initiatives within these communities.

Targeted in-person capacity-building sessions were conducted across all 10 administrative regions of Guyana. These interactive workshops provided participants with:

- A comprehensive understanding of the eligibility criteria and application requirements for GEF SGP funding
- Step-by-step guidance on drafting an effective concept note and full project proposal
- Tips for developing sustainable, community-driven projects aligned with environmental protection and social development

These sessions attracted CSOs, youth leaders, Community-Based Organisations, and Non-Governmental Organisations who were eager to make a meaningful impact within their community through the design and implementation of environmental projects.

Sessions held iterative and a virtual capacity building session is planned for the 3rd Quarter of 2025 ahead of the new funding phase “Call for Projects”



Highlight from Region 1 Mabaruma Workshop

Highest Participation from Regions 1 & 4

The enthusiasm for this initiative was evident, with Regions 1 and 4 recording the highest number of participants.

In Region 1 (Mabaruma and Mocura), a total of 66 individuals participated – 24 men and 42 women – representing 36 civil society organisations (CSOs) and 7 community-based organisations (CBOs).

Meanwhile, Region 4 saw an even higher turnout, with 100 participants – 48 men and 52 women – representing 59 CSOs and 10 CBOs.

This strong participation reflected the growing commitment of grassroots organisations in these regions to advance community empowerment and champion environmental stewardship.

Stronger Together!

The Power of Capacity Building for Grassroots Greatness

Behind every thriving community project is a team that's equipped, empowered, and ready to lead. That's where capacity building comes in – it's not just a buzzword, it's the foundation of sustainable impact. Whether you're a youth leader, member of a community-based organisation (CBO), or running a small NGO, capacity building turns good intentions into great results.

Why Capacity Building Matters

Capacity building is how we go from potential to power. It's about giving local groups the skills, tools, knowledge, and confidence to take the lead on community development. When civil society groups are equipped to manage their own projects, seek funding, and drive innovation, lasting change becomes possible.

Here's why it's crucial:

- **Promotes Self-Sufficiency:** Reduces reliance on external aid by enabling local leadership
- **Ensures Continuity:** Helps communities keep projects alive long after initial funding ends
- **Builds Confidence & Leadership:** Empowers local voices to engage with decision-makers and shape their future
- **Enhances Impact:** Strengthens the design, implementation, and sustainability of projects that address real community needs



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Core Elements of SGP Capacity Building – At a Glance

- **Proposal Development**–Training on crafting strong concept notes and full project proposals
- **Understanding Funding** - Guidance on GEF SGP eligibility, application requirements, and aligning with development goals
- **Project Planning**–Support in setting goals, creating activity plans, and designing monitoring frameworks
- **Organisational Skills**– Tools for budgeting, resource management, stakeholder engagement, and reporting
- **Networking & Peer Learning**– Opportunities to collaborate, share ideas, and learn from other community leaders



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Biodiversity: The Web of Life



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International Day for Biological Diversity – May 22, 2025

Biodiversity refers to the incredible variety of life on Earth – from tiny microorganisms in the soil to majestic trees, vibrant coral reefs, and the animals that call them home. It includes all living organisms, the ecosystems they form, and the genetic diversity within species. Biodiversity is not just about nature – it's about survival, resilience, and well-being.

Why Biodiversity Matters

Healthy biodiversity is essential for life as we know it. It:

- Supports food systems by providing pollinators, pest control, and healthy soils
- Protects water sources through natural filtration by wetlands and forests
- Regulates the climate by storing carbon and mitigating floods and droughts
- Provides medicine – over 50% of pharmaceutical compounds are derived from natural sources
- Drives livelihoods through agriculture, fishing, tourism, and crafts
- Enhances resilience – diverse ecosystems bounce back better from environmental shocks

Biodiversity is the foundation of resilient communities and sustainable development. Its loss not only affects wildlife but threatens food security, public health, and economic stability.

Local Action, Global Impact: SGP Projects in Focus

Across Guyana, the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) has supported numerous community projects that directly protect and restore biodiversity. Here are two initiatives making a difference:

Project Title: Strengthening Capacity to Support Local Implementation of Fisheries Monitoring and Management in The North Rupununi Wetlands

Grantee: North Rupununi District Development Board

The Arapaima Management Project has made significant strides in restoring Guyana's iconic Arapaima population through community-led conservation, sustainable fisheries management, and strong local partnerships. Achievements include the development of a formal Arapaima Management Plan, the formation of fisheries committees, participatory stock assessments, and improved enforcement, all contributing to a steady increase in Arapaima numbers and new economic opportunities through sport fishing.

Despite challenges like limited funding and logistical hurdles, the project reinforced the power of community ownership, traditional knowledge, and eco-tourism as tools for long-term sustainability

Since 2019, the North Rupununi District Development Board (NRDDB), in partnership with the Sustainable Wildlife Management (SWM) Project, has continued these efforts by:

- Conducting population and stock assessments for Arapaima and other key food fish
- Updating the Arapaima Management Plan for inclusion in the regional Fisheries Management Plan
- Drafting inland fisheries regulations and developing co-management strategies
- Defining sustainable use zones to guide future fishing activities

These efforts are helping to ensure the continued conservation and sustainable use of freshwater fisheries in the North Rupununi, protecting both biodiversity and local livelihoods.

Project Title: Community Managed Research and Conservation of Giant Armadillos and Giant Anteaters in Eastern Deep South Rupununi

Grantee: South Rupununi Conservation Society

The aim of the project is to create an internationally recognised, sustainable community-based conservation management system to reverse the population decline of the Giant Anteater and the Giant Armadillo in 3 communities, using the generation of traditional knowledge and scientific data from community-led research.

Expected Results

- Creation of up to 120,000 Ha of Community Conservation Zones (CCZs), to stabilize the population of giant anteaters and giant armadillos in the South Rupununi, with measures in place for long-term population protection
- Creation of Village Conservation Agreements in each village

Increased awareness of sustainable ecosystem use⁵

- Giant anteater conservation zones registered on the international ICCA Registry, and if successful, the WD-OECM through the Protected Planet Initiative
- Recording and sharing of the mythologies of the Giant Anteater and Giant Armadillo.



Celebrating 12 Years of Impact

SGP Guyana at the Heart of Grassroots Change



GEF SGP Guyana Team

On April 26, 2025, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP) Guyana proudly marked 12 years of transformative action, community empowerment, and environmental stewardship.

Since launching in 2013, SGP Guyana has served as a catalyst for change, empowering local communities to take ownership of development and environmental solutions that are rooted in local knowledge, cultural identity, and sustainability.

A Decade (and More!) of Meaningful Impact

Over the past 12 years, SGP Guyana has:

- Supported over 40 community-led projects
- Partnered with Civil Society Organisations, including:
 - Community-Based Organisations (CBOs)
 - Indigenous Peoples and Communities
 - Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)
- Addressed critical areas such as:
 - Biodiversity conservation
 - Climate change adaptation
 - Land degradation
 - Sustainable livelihoods

Each project has been designed with and for the communities they serve – building leadership, preserving nature, and improving lives.

A Shared Journey of Growth and Gratitude

SGP's strength lies in the passion of its people – the women, youth, elders, and grassroots leaders whose ideas have blossomed into solutions.

“When local communities are equipped with the right tools and resources, they become powerful stewards of their environment.”

As we celebrate this 12-year milestone, we extend heartfelt thanks to:

- Our community partners, whose dedication drives every success
- Our stakeholders, for continued collaboration and trust
- The SGP family, for their tireless work behind the scenes

Looking Ahead

SGP Guyana remains committed to supporting bold local action that leads to global good. With new opportunities on the horizon, the next chapter promises stronger partnerships, innovative projects, and deeper impact.

Here's to 12 years of progress – and many more ahead.

Stay Connected With Us!

Follow our journey and join the conversation:

