



GEF SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME

UNDP OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES OPERATIONAL PHASE 8

Purpose of this Document

Launched in 1992, the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP), implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on behalf of the GEF Partnership, is a GEF Corporate Programme that finances community-led initiatives to address global environmental and sustainable development issues. SGP was specifically designed to generate innovative and impactful local actions by empowering civil society organizations (CSOs¹) and community-based organizations with a strong focus on social inclusion, including Indigenous Peoples, youth, women and girls, and persons with disabilities.²

The Operational Guidelines are intended to assist and orient SGP National Coordinators (NCs), Programme Assistants (PAs), National Steering Committee (NSC) members, GEF Operational Focal Points and other country level partners, UNDP Country Offices, National Host Institutions (NHI), and the SGP Central Programme Management Team (CPMT).

The Operational Guidelines are based on the experience and knowledge gained at the country and global levels over 30 years of SGP programme implementation. The Guidelines provide the basic policy framework for all SGP operations, including the structure, implementation, reporting lines, and governance of the programme. They also address the project cycle, eligibility requirements, and grant disbursement.

Details on the programme and project monitoring, evaluation, and reporting are covered in the SGP Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy, and are briefly summarized in this document. Additional administrative guidance on the processing of low value grants (LVGs) by UNDP Country Offices have also been developed. These documents are attached to the Operational Guidelines as Annexes.

The Guidelines are meant to apply to all SGP Country Programmes. It is recognized that different contexts and situations may require different responses and adaptations. Any questions about the application of particular provisions of the guidelines should be referred to the SGP Central Programme Management Team.

¹ CSOs in this context refer to national and local civil society organizations, including community-based organizations, Indigenous Peoples, farmers associations, scientific and academic institutions, women's groups, youth and children organizations, and groups representing persons with disabilities.

² During GEF-8, the GEF Secretariat has developed a set of SGP 2.0 guidelines explaining the implementation arrangements for countries who elect to work with other GEF agencies.

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List of Acronyms

| | |
|--------|---|
| BAC | Budget Account Classification Code |
| CBO | Community-Based Organization |
| CCF | Country Cooperation Framework |
| CO | Country Office |
| COA | Chart of Account |
| COB | Country Operating Budget |
| CPMT | Central Programme Management Team |
| CPS | Country Programme Strategy |
| GEF | Global Environment Facility |
| LVG | Low Value Grant |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| MOA | Memorandum of Agreement |
| MOD | Miscellaneous Obligation Document |
| NC | National Coordinator |
| NCE | Nature, Climate and Energy Unit |
| NFP | National Focal Person |
| NFG | National Focal Group |
| NGO | Non-governmental Organization |
| NHI | National Host Institution |
| NPFE | GEF National Portfolio Formulation Exercise |
| NSC | National Steering Committee |
| OP | Operational Programme |
| PA | Programme Assistant |
| PO | Purchase Order |
| REQ | Requisition |
| SBAA | Standard Basic Assistance Agreement |
| SGP | Small Grants Programme |
| SOPs | Standard Operating Procedures |
| SRC | Sub-Regional Coordinator |
| SRSC | Sub-Regional Steering Committee |
| SPS | Sub-Regional Programme Strategy |
| TOR | Terms of Reference |
| UCP | Upgraded Country Programme |
| UNCBD | United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity |
| UNCCD | United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNOPS | United Nations Office for Project Services |
| UNFCCC | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change |

PART 1 COUNTRY PARTICIPATION IN SGP

1. A country that wishes to participate in the SGP with support from the UNDP may submit a letter of interest signed by the GEF Operational Focal Point addressed to the UNDP with a copy to the GEF Secretariat.³ Participation of new countries to the SGP is subject to a number of criteria including inter alia the GEF Council guidance through the SGP implementation arrangement paper, project document for the concerned operational phase, available funding, concurrence by the UNDP, and other relevant decisions and guidance.
2. The process for setting up a new SGP Country Programme includes the preparation and review of the country application, organization of an appraisal mission, consultations with civil society organizations and other stakeholders in the country.
3. Key eligibility criteria for countries to participate in SGP include:
 - 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 support of SGP's implementation modality according to the SGP Operational Guidelines;
 - Presence of local NGOs and CBOs;
 - Potential for strong civil society organizations and government relations, and positive support for local civil society organizations;
 - Commitment for resource mobilization for the programme from the government, UNDP Country Office, and other partners' support efforts to attract other co-funding sources;
 - Positive enabling environment.

PART 2 SGP PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

4. **The structure of the SGP, implemented by UNDP, is decentralized and country-driven.** Within the parameters established and approved by the GEF Council under the GEF Programming Direction, SGP Implementation Arrangement and other relevant GEF Council decisions, and the SGP Project Documents for the SGP Operational Phase, the programme seeks to provide maximum country and community-level ownership and initiative. This decentralization is balanced against the need for programme consistency and accountability across the participating countries at the global level for the achievement of the GEF's global environmental benefits that are outlined in the Project Document for the Operational Phase, UNDP programming directions and priorities, alongside the priorities of other bilateral donors and partners which support the SGP.

³ For countries which wish to participate in the SGP during OP8 (2024-2028) with support from other agencies, please refer to the SGP 2.0 guidelines.

5. **The overall programme direction and core funding of the GEF SGP is agreed through the GEF Replenishment meetings for each GEF replenishment phase.** This is followed by decisions at the GEF Council, where details on the SGP implementation arrangement are discussed and endorsed for each GEF replenishment phase. The SGP Operational Phase typically starts during the first half of the GEF replenishment phase, and the global programme runs for several years on a rolling basis.
6. Subsequently, the GEF Council approves the SGP's Project Information Forms (PIFs) and the GEF CEO endorses the SGP Project Document(s) for each SGP Operational Phase.⁴ The SGP is financed by: (i) GEF's set aside finance (Core funds); (ii) the GEF System of Transparent Allocation Resources (STAR); and (iii) co-financing. Cofinancing to the SGP is sought from CSOs/NGOs, bilateral and multilateral donors, foundations, private sector, governments, and others, who play a key role in establishing partnerships, leveraging resources, and providing sustainability to the programme.
7. The SGP Project Documents for the concerned GEF Operational Phase and other donor contribution agreements provide the official framework for SGP operations in line with UNDP programming and policy directions. The project documents are signed between UNDP and the GEF, bilateral donors, and other contributing organizations. UNDP may put in place one or more programme execution arrangements.

I. Global-level structure

8. **Since its establishment in 1992, as a Corporate Programme of the GEF, the SGP has been implemented by UNDP as the GEF Agency on behalf of the GEF Partnership.** UNDP is legally accountable to the GEF Council for the implementation of SGP funds, as well as the management of other SGP co-financing resources that are channeled through UNDP. The global Vertical Fund Unit and Nature Hub at the UNDP Headquarters in New York provide oversight for all of its GEF and other donor contribution agreements, including the SGP.

a) SGP Global Programme

9. **The SGP Central Programme Management Team (CPMT):** Within UNDP's Nature Hub, the SGP is managed as a Global Programme by the SGP Central Programme Management Team (CPMT) at UNDP headquarters. At the country level, SGP Country Programmes are managed in a matrixed reporting arrangement between the UNDP Country Office, and the CPMT at the global level. The CPMT, under the oversight of the BPPS Nature Hub, provides the overall management of the SGP, including strategic, thematic, and operational guidance, and support to the country programmes. All oversight activities are performed by staff who hold no execution

⁴ The SGP Core programme for the GEF Operational Phase is funded as a multi-country project framework, combining Core and STAR funds.

responsibilities for the SGP Global Programme.

10. The SGP Global Manager is responsible for the overall programme management, including strategy, partnership, and resource mobilization. The regional focal points are responsible for country supervision and support; guidance on thematic issues; communication and knowledge sharing; monitoring and evaluation; and partnership development and networking. The Programme Associates are responsible for daily administration and operations, including financial monitoring and reporting; human resources support; communications; organization of meetings; filing; and responses to routine requests for information.
11. **SGP execution arrangements:** From the time of the pilot phase to OP7, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) has been the main executing partner for the SGP. UNOPS has provided UNDP with a range of execution services covering administrative, financial, legal, operational, and procurement functions, working in conjunction with UNDP Country Offices.⁵
12. During OP8, SGP will be implemented under the UNDP Direct Implementation Modality (DIM). Based on country level discussions and assessments of capacities, the most appropriate execution modality is determined for each country, and UNDP will either: (i) plan to directly fund grantees in line with its established Low Value Grants (LVG) Policy which permits direct funding to grantees; or (ii) will do so indirectly, via on-granting (an arrangement where UNDP provides funds to another grant-making institution, such as NGO or an environmental trust fund, which will operate as the executing entity in the country concerned). In line with SGP 2.0 Implementation Arrangements, UNDP will develop execution arrangements most appropriate to the country context. The option of UNDP itself directly funding grantees in countries is based on UNDP's established policies and procedures, while further replicating successful NGO execution arrangements experienced in other countries, depending on the volume of funding and capacity.⁶
13. **Regional Support:** the CPMT Regional Focal Points (RFPs) provide a range of technical advice, operational and management support to the SGP Country Programmes for the concerned region. SGP has adopted the following geographical regions: Africa, Arab States, Asia, Europe & CIS, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Pacific. The execution arrangements at the global and national levels are responsible for administrative and financial issues.

b) SGP Upgraded Country Programmes

⁵ Starting in GEF-8, UNOPS will no longer serve as the main SGP executing agency, although it will continue inter alia to support the closure of prior GEF operational phases.

⁶ Responsible Parties (Agencies, NGOs) will be identified during project implementation to ensure the transition from OP7 to OP8 operations, including a number of NGOs in selected countries where the NHI execution modality will continue to be utilized.

- 14. Starting in GEF-5, several long-standing and mature SGP Country Programmes were recognized as an SGP Upgraded Country Programme (UCP).⁷** Upgrading became operational with the following objectives: (i) to enable the SGP to continue to expand and serve low-income nations without concomitant growth in core funding; (ii) to make better use of the capacities of mature Country Programmes to enrich the younger, less experienced ones; and (iii) to enable mature Country Programmes to access greater financial resources and exercise more programmatic freedom in light of their greater internal capacity.
- 15.** From GEF-5 to GEF-7, the SGP UCPs were financed with GEF STAR resources as standalone full-sized or medium-sized projects, and did not receive SGP core funding. The UCPs were aligned with the overall SGP strategic directions and followed the same operational modalities as the other SGP Country Programmes. At the request of the GEF Council, the Upgrading policy has been discontinued starting in GEF-8.
- 16.** . In line with the GEF Council decision to discontinue the UCP modality in GEF-8, the participating UCP SGP country programmes have been provided with the opportunity to be reabsorbed into the SGP Global Programme, including through the allocation of STAR resources, and access to Core resources.

II. Country-level structure

- 17.** The SGP brings together Country Programmes of participating countries.⁸ **The SGP Country Programme operates in a decentralized and country-driven manner through a SGP Country Programme Team and National Steering Committee in each participating country, with first level oversight provided by the UNDP Country Office.** In some countries, a National Host Institution (NHI), in the form of either a national NGO, environmental trust fund, or academic institution, is responsible for programme implementation in conjunction with the NC, NSC, and UNDP CO. SGP may also operate with a Sub-Regional Coordinator as part of a sub-regional approach, where relevant. Further details on the Country Programme Structure is described in Part 3 below.

⁷ At the request of the GEF Council, the SGP Upgrading policy has been discontinued starting in GEF-8.

⁸ For a full list of participating SGP countries refer: <http://www.sgp.undp.org>

Part 3 OPERATION OF SGP COUNTRY PROGRAMMES

18. This section covers the implementation and operations of SGP Country Programmes. It discusses in more detail the roles and responsibilities of the SGP Country Programme Team (consisted of National/Sub-regional Coordinator and Programme Assistants); National Steering Committee or National Focal Group (for those under Sub-Regional Programme modality); UNDP Country Office; and National Host Institution. It also discusses operational and governance processes in implementing the SGP Country Programme.

I. Arrangements at the country level

19. The SGP operates at the country level under the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement (SBAA) between the recipient Government and the UNDP. For all country programmes participating in the SGP global programme, UNDP will ensure oversight of the programme in line with its policies and procedures. Under its Direct Implementation model, UNDP will also ensure appropriate execution arrangements (either through UNDP and/or through responsible parties engaged by UNDP). Owing to the SGP's decentralized operating structure, the negotiation and maintenance of appropriate and supportive in-country institutional arrangements is of critical importance for effective programme implementation.

a) Oversight and execution of SGP Country Programme

20. The UNDP Country Office provides oversight, strategic direction, supervision and support to the SGP Country Programme at the country level. The UNDP Resident Representative (RR) provides oversight to the SGP Country Programme Team and serves as supervisor to the SGP National Coordinator (NC) at the country level. The RR may choose to assign a senior staff person (typically the Deputy Resident Representative) to serve as the SGP focal point. The UNDP RR or his/her designated delegate participates in the NSC on behalf of UNDP. The UNDP CO also plays a key role in facilitating the establishment of a new SGP Country Programme, as well as closing it when necessary. In addition, the UNDP CO facilitates interaction with the host government, develop links with other in-country projects and programmes, and supports scaling up and resource mobilization efforts.

21. In summary, the UNDP CO provides operational support (under a Country Office Support letter of agreement), for a range of services including:

- Recruitment, appointment and supervision of SGP country programme staff in conjunction with the SGP CPMT at the global level
- Hosting the SGP Country Team office
- Participates as an institutional member of the SGP National Steering Committee (NSC)
- Issuance of appointment letters of NSC members, based on CPMT approval, in alignment with the SGP Operational Guidelines

- Engagement in the preparation and/or revisions of the SGP Country Programme Strategy (CPS) as part of the SGP NSC
- UNDP RR signs the Memorandum of Agreements (MOA) of SGP grants, and the CO processes the payments for Low Value Grants ⁹
- Promotion of policy and programme linkages with the government and other partners for scaling up of SGP project innovations and tools
- Support for resource mobilization and inclusion of SGP as a delivery mechanism in larger GEF FSPs, projects and programmes

b) Hosting Arrangement for SGP Country Programmes

22. There are two basic hosting arrangements for the country programme: UNDP Country Office or National Host Institution. Hosting Arrangements are reviewed and discussed between the CPMT at the global level, and the UNDP Country Office at the country level, working in close consultation with country stakeholders. The final selection of the hosting arrangement is approved by the SGP Global Manager.

23. The UNDP CO provides oversight support for in-country operations, in coordination with UNDP Nature Hub/BPPS and CPMT at the global level, for all types of hosting arrangements.

24. UNDP Country Office as SGP host institution: In most countries, the SGP Country Programme is hosted by the UNDP CO. The SGP Country Programme office may be physically located within or outside the UNDP Country Office premises, as appropriate.

25. SGP National Host Institution: In keeping with the spirit and mandate of the SGP to develop and foster the capacities of CSOs in participating countries, the SGP Country Programme may be hosted by a CSO as the host institution, as relevant. Based on consultations with stakeholders, the SGP Country Programme can be hosted in an NHI, which may be a non-governmental organization, environmental trust fund, or academic institution at the national level. The NHI cannot be a government institution. Based on transparent criteria¹⁰ and selection process, the SGP Global Manager approves the NHI, in consultation with UNDP CO, NSC, and key national stakeholders.

⁹ In case an NGO or equivalent NHI is selected as a responsible party, the sub-grant agreements (MOAs) may be signed between the NHI and the grantees. UNDP provides funds to this entity as a “grant-making institution” which will operate as the executing entity in the country concerned insofar as the entity meets the SGP implementing agency fiduciary and other standards.

¹⁰ Criteria for NHI selection include: (i) national stature and credibility; (ii) good working relationships with other CSOs, including participation in environment/development networks; (iv) demonstrated compatibility with the procedures, objectives, and grant-making functions of the SGP, GEF, and UNDP; (v) significant experience in community-based, participatory environment and development; (vi) substantial involvement and technical expertise in environmental issues related to the GEF and the Rio conventions; and (vii) proven programme management and administrative capacity with systems in place.

- 26.** The identification of a pool of suitable NHIs is typically carried out during the SGP appraisal mission conducted by the CPMT or UNDP Global Team, working closely with the UNDP CO. The mission reviews and assesses the list of available and interested organizations in consultation with key stakeholders, and/or through a process of competitive bidding coordinated between the CPMT, UNDP CO, as appropriate. Local representation of international NGOs would not normally be eligible. The legitimacy and neutrality of potential NHIs within the NGO community at the country level are essential qualifications to carry out SGP grant-making activities.¹¹
- 27.** A contract will be concluded between the NHI and UNDP that outlines the technical support and administrative services to be provided, as well as the applicable operating budget. The relationship with an NHI may range from the provision of physical office space with an NC holding a UN contract; to one where the NHI carries the full responsibility for managing the SGP Country Programme, including for the recruitment of an NC, and on-granting in line with the UNDP capacity assessment conducted. The extent of responsibility of the NHI will be clearly defined in the contract for services signed between the NHI and UNDP, or the responsible party, and may evolve over time.
- 28.** If the NHI resumes full responsibility including the recruitment and contracting of the NC, he/she is an employee of the NHI, and reports to the head of the NHI. If the NC hosted by a NHI holds a UN contract, the staff reports in a matrixed reporting line with the UNDP Country Office at the country level, and CPMT at the global level.
- 29.** The NHI will submit a standard annual report for review by the UNDP CO and UNDP Global Team. If performance is considered satisfactory, the NHI contract can be renewed annually by approval of the UNDP CO and UNDP Global Team. In certain cases, where the selected NHI does not fully meet performance expectations, and upon consultation with country stakeholders, the contract may be terminated, and hosting will be transferred either to the UNDP CO or to another NHI.
- 30.** The NHI Representative may also participate as a member of the NSC. To ensure transparency and impartiality, the NHI is not eligible to apply for SGP grants.

II. SGP Country Programme Team

- 31. The SGP Country Programme Team consists of a National Coordinator/Sub-regional Coordinator (NC) and Programme Associate (PA),** depending on the size and complexity of the Country Programme.

¹¹ For NGO or NHI execution, the Implementing Partner selection needs to follow the UNDP Partner Capacity Assessment Tool (PCAT) and the HACT assessment procedure, available in the UNDP Programme and Project Management Chapter of the POPP, under [Select Implementing Partner](#) (procedure 2.0) and [Select Responsible Party and Grantee](#) (procedure 3.0)

a) National/Sub-regional Coordinator

- 32. Roles and Responsibilities:** The NC is responsible for the overall functioning of the SGP in each participating country, and for the implementation and achievement of the SGP Country Programme Strategy for the relevant Operational Phase. Key responsibilities include inter alia to: (i) facilitate the development of the Country Programme Strategy (CPS) for each operational phase; (ii) assist CSOs in every step of the project cycle management, including development, implementation, and monitoring; (iii) serve as the ex officio secretariat for the NSC; (iv) oversee/undertake the financial, operational, and database management; (v) resource mobilization; (vi) communication and knowledge management; (vii) support scaling up efforts, policy dialogue and advocacy; and (viii) global reporting to the CPMT, UNDP; (ix) responding to audits, and other tasks as stipulated in their ToR. The NC is also responsible for all country programme expenditures. The NC is expected to have full-time dedication to the SGP and avoid all possible conflicts of interest.¹²
- 33. Selection and Contract:** The UNDP CO is responsible for the announcement of the vacancy and formation of the recruitment panel for the NC at the country level. The CO submits the interview report, including the three top applicants, to the CPMT Regional Focal Point (RFP). In consultation with the CO, the SGP Global Manager is responsible for the final selection of the NC. The UNDP CO typically administers the selection and contracting of the personnel. In some cases, the NC contract administration can be covered under the terms of the contract with the NHI. In this case, the NHI's human resources management rules apply to the NC. Regardless of the arrangement, the selection of the NC is done through a publicly advertised and competitive selection process.
- 34. Reporting and performance assessment:** The NC reports in a matrixed arrangement to the UNDP Country Office at the country level, and CPMT at the global level. The NC reports to the UNDP RR (or his/her designee) for day-to-day matters, and the CPMT RFP in accordance with the SGP Operational Guidelines. The performance of NCs is evaluated annually. The evaluation is undertaken through an SGP Performance and Results Assessment (PRA) in three parts: (i) a self-assessment by the NC; (ii) performance assessment inputs from the NSC and UNDP RR; and (iii) review and assessment by the RFP, for final sign-off by the Global Manager. For NCs that are administered under an NHI agreement (and do not hold a UN contract), the NC is accountable to the head of the NHI. The NHI as an institution reports to the UNDP CO and CPMT on their performance as part of the annual reporting of the NHI.
- 35. Representation:** The NC often represents the SGP in local, national, and global meetings, workshops, and other events in the country, and may be accompanied by members of the NSC.

¹² The NC should not accept any other functions unless a cost-sharing arrangement can be negotiated with the UNDP CO or NHI, and is reviewed and approved by the CPMT.

However, for legal and financial purposes, only the UNDP RR or his/her Officer in Charge (OIC) may represent the SGP in-country. Where the UNDP hosts the SGP country programme, only the UNDP RR or his/her Officer in Charge (OIC) can sign the SGP grant Memoranda of Agreement (MOAs) and other co-financing arrangements. The NC does not have the authority to officially sign legal and financial agreements. The NC may however sign non-binding collaborative agreements between SGP and other projects and programmes. Under NHI arrangements, the signature of the MOA may be assigned by the director of the NGO as the Implementing Partner/Responsible Party selected by the UNDP. The NC should consult with the UNDP CO and CPMT-where relevant, if there is any doubt on the rules and procedures with respect to signing legal documents and associated procedures.

b) Programme Assistant and other support personnel

36. As part of the SGP country programme team, a Programme Assistant (PA) may be recruited based on a set of criteria agreed by the UNDP Global Team in conjunction with the CPMT and UNDP CO, including the overall size of the SGP Country Programme portfolio (comprising of GEF funds, bilateral cost-sharing agreements, and instances where the SGP serves as a delivery mechanism), and specific country needs. Under the standard ToR, the PA provides operational support and is responsible for the financial, administrative, and database management for the SGP country programme, and reports to the NC.
37. The process of hiring the PA will follow the same overall procedure and modality as the NC noted above. Working closely with the UNDP CO, the NC shall be involved in the advertisement, review and selection process, and the panel recommendation will be forwarded to the CPMT RFP and SGP Global Manager for final approval. The NC is responsible for the supervision and performance assessment of the PA.
38. In certain cases, a part-time PA and/or consultant with the required background may be recruited for a limited period to contribute and provide required assistance for the management of the SGP Country Programme. These arrangements are discussed and agreed with the CPMT through the annual work planning (AWP) and country operational budget (COB) exercise.

III. Sub-Regional Programme

39. **When deemed appropriate, SGP could also function as a Sub-regional Programme**, with a Sub-Regional Coordinator and PA that cover multiple countries. The decision to have a Sub-regional Programme, instead of country programmes, will be determined by the CPMT in consultation with the regional stakeholders. The Sub-Regional Coordinator 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 at the country level. The composition and function of the NFG follows the same as the NSC.

IV. National Steering Committee

40. The National Steering Committee serves as the main decision-making body of the SGP at the country level, and provides overall strategic direction, guidance and programming support to the Country Programme.

Roles and Responsibilities:

41. The NSC is the central governance element of the SGP contributing to the strategic directions, resource mobilization, and policy influence of the programme. The NSC member's roles (refer to the standard TOR for the NSC for further details) include to:

- Provide overall guidance and strategic direction of the SGP Country Programme, including the development, periodic revision, and implementation of the Country Programme Strategy (CPS)
- Link the SGP operations to the relevant global, regional, and national policies and strategies of the GEF, and other third-party co-financing
- Support resource mobilization efforts for the SGP, at all levels
- Support scaling up efforts to mainstream SGP lessons learned and successes in national development planning and policy-making
- Participate in project monitoring and evaluation (subject to availability of funds)
- Ensure participatory, democratic, impartial, and transparent procedures for project review, selection, and approval
- Other aspects of programme implementation at the country level in accordance with the SGP Project Document for the relevant Operational Phase

42. No SGP project may be undertaken at the country level without the approval of the NSC.

Operationally, the decisions of the NSC are considered final provided they are consistent with the SGP Operational Guidelines, the SGP Project Document for the GEF Operational Phase and the Country Programme Strategy, including cost-sharing from bilateral donors. 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. However, neither the NSC nor its individual members as programme volunteers, hold any legal or fiduciary responsibility for the SGP.

43. The objectivity, transparency and credibility of the NSC is of paramount importance to the success of the SGP Country Programme, and to maintaining good relations among stakeholders. As a general rule, SGP Country Programmes cannot consider proposals associated with

organizations of sitting NSC members. A CSO may nonetheless submit proposals when the associated NSC member has finished the term of service and is no longer on the Committee. On an exceptional basis, based on approval by the SGP Global Manager, CSOs with members in the NSC can submit proposals.

- 44.** In accordance with the UN rules on ethical conduct, all members of the NSC must declare any conflict of interests, actual or potential, with respect to concepts or proposals submitted for consideration. All NSC members must sign a Declaration of Conflict of Interest (COI) statement at the time of their appointment, as well as for each sitting of the NSC which reviews and approves projects. A conflict of interest may involve a range of circumstances including inter alia: (i) the presence of relatives or family members connected with the proposal; (ii) a financial or personal interest in the applicant organization; (iii) political, reputational and/or other ethical considerations.

Composition

- 45. A majority of NSC members should be from the non-governmental sector.** The NSC is composed of voluntary members from the CSO sector (including NGOs, academic and scientific institutions, Indigenous Peoples, women groups, and others); UNDP Country Office (RR and/or the designated SGP focal point in the CO); and the GEF Operational Focal Point (or his/her designee), and others including private sector, donor institutions, experts, and limited number of additional government members as appropriate.
- 46. The UNDP RR and GEF OFP are considered to be institutional members. All other NSC members are invited to join in their personal capacity.** To the maximum extent possible the NSC membership should reflect expertise on relevant GEF focal areas of biodiversity; climate change mitigation; international waters; sustainable land management; sustainable forest management; chemicals and wastes, and other thematic areas that the country programme is focused on. One of the NSC members should be designated as the focal point to provide expertise on gender issues. It is also recommended to designate a youth and Indigenous Peoples focal point in the NSC.
- 47.** In general, only one government representative (GEF Operational Focal Point or Political Focal Point) is required as an institutional member. Depending on the circumstances, additional government representatives such as the Ministry of finance, Convention Focal Point(s), and/or other relevant members may be considered. Governmental members should hold positions relevant to the work of the SGP and at a level where they could contribute to strategic and technical discussions, particularly when assessing and approving proposals.
- 48.** Based on the experience of multiple SGP Operational Phases, it is recommended that the NSC is composed of about 7 to 12 members. However, variance from this could be accepted as membership could vary by country context. Membership should be large enough to include a

majority of civil society members, as well as members from the government and UNDP CO. Other than the GEF OFP and UNDP RR, no other NSC member can nominate an alternative representative in their absence.

- 49. The NSC may also constitute a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) with a pool of voluntary experts on call to serve as a technical sub-committee to review 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 specialized areas of work. In addition, the TAG may also be formed in response to donor and co-financing requirements mobilized for the SGP country programme. The composition of the TAG should also reflect the multi-sectorial approach of the SGP, incorporating a mix of experts drawn from civil society and the government.**

Selection and Appointment

- 50.** For new country programmes, the selection of NSC members is led by the UNDP CO with support from the NC, in close consultation with the CPMT and a wide circle of stakeholders. The composition and appointment of a newly established NSC is subject to review by the CPMT RFP and final approval by the SGP Global Manager, while subsequent appointments and updates can be approved by the responsible CPMT RFP. The UNDP RR provides the appointment letters on behalf of the SGP.
- 51. For an existing NSC, the selection and rotation of new NSC members will be facilitated by the UNDP RR or his/her designated delegate, with support from the standing NSC and NC, in consultation with a wide and representatives group of stakeholders at the national level.**
- 52. Nomination and selection of non-governmental NSC members should be undertaken in a transparent manner through as wide a consultation as possible with country stakeholders. Unless an exception is granted by the CPMT based on the country context, an open call for nomination of NSC member** (i.e. email among CSO networks and partners, communication through the print media, radio and other relevant channels) along with clear selection criteria and the due process for selection will be undertaken. The existing NSC reviews the nominations and provides a recommended composition to the UNDP RR, considering both the expertise and qualifications of the individual candidates, and the overall composition and balance of the committee. The UNDP RR, in consultation with the NC, will review and agree upon the recommended list of new NSC members, which is then submitted to the CPMT for final approval, and inclusion in the global SGP database.
- 53.** The NSC non-governmental members must have high credibility and wide experience working with CSOs, CBOs, and Indigenous Peoples in the country and can thus represent the needs and interests of the constituency 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, monitoring and evaluation and knowledge management.

54. The NC, after due consultation with other NSC members of good standing, including the UNDP RR, may recommend changes of the NSC member if it becomes clear that a particular member's participation is not contributing to the programme. An NSC member who does not participate in three consecutive meetings, without citing a valid reason, may be considered for rotation or renewal. The final decision is endorsed by the SGP Global Manager, and a letter to the outgoing member should be signed by the UNDP RR.

Term of Service

55. **NSC members serve for a period of three years, with a possibility of one-time renewal.** Serving more than two terms in a consecutive manner is not allowed, unless approved by the SGP Global Manager on an exceptional basis. It is recommended that at least one term gap (3 years) is provided before the individual may come back as a NSC member, even in a new capacity. Inviting new members is a sound and healthy policy that brings new ideas and expertise to programme implementation. Rotation of the members should be planned on a regular basis, and roughly one quarter (2-3 members) of the NSC may rotate in any given year in order to avoid drastic change in members at any one time.
56. Participation in the NSC is voluntary, without monetary compensation. Travel expenses for project site visits or to NSC meetings can be covered by the SGP country operational budget (COB) as relevant and should be reflected as part of the annual work plan and COB planning exercise.

Decision Making

57. NSCs adopt decisions under the principle of consensus and rarely resort to voting to determine whether a project is approved, or whether a particular course of action is to be taken. NSC members on the whole must be able and willing to discuss constructively and develop consensus decisions. In order to make consensual decisions, it is recommended that participation of the majority of NSC members, including a balanced representation of non-governmental and government members, is secured.
58. **To facilitate the meetings, the NSC may decide to select its Chairperson(s)** by having: (i) one of the most committed members to Chair for a particular period of time, but strongly recommended for no more than one term or 3 consecutive years; or (ii) members to Chair meetings on a rotating basis to enhance each member's participation. In case the Chair is selected from the government, a co-chair approach between the government and non- government representation is highly recommended to promote civil society leadership and CSO-government collaboration which are institutional objectives of the programme.

59. The NC serves in an ex-officio capacity on the NSC, participating in deliberations, but not in decisions regarding project selection. The NC usually convenes the NSC and functions as its Secretariat, including inter alia in (i) answering technical questions from the NSC members on a range of topics relating to the functioning of the SGP as a global programme; (ii) providing clarifications on the pipeline of project concepts and proposals received, including planning grants provided; as well as (iii) with respect to the existing cohort of approved SGP projects under implementation. With the help of the PA, if applicable, the NC prepares the summary of the main NSC decisions and discussion and uploaded to the SGP database. A copy of the NSC summary of key decisions, presented in the standard SGP template, including list of appraised project concepts and decisions, must be reviewed and signed by all the members present.

V. Country Programme Strategy

60. Each SGP participating country must prepare a Country Programme Strategy or Sub-regional Programme Strategy for the operational phase (abbreviated as the CPS) that is reviewed and prepared by the NSC and UNDP CO, for final approval by the CPMT at the global level. The development/revision of the CPS is designed to ensure (i) strategic grantmaking and other activities at the country level; (ii) congruence with the SGP Project Document and strategic initiatives for the concerned Operational Phase; (iii) alignment with strategic planning frameworks associated with the relevant Conventions and national policies, plans and strategies; (iv) adherence to social and environmental safeguards (SES), risk management; as well as (v) coordination with the GEF, other major partnerships and programmes, where relevant. 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.

61. The CPS shall be updated in every Operational Phase of the SGP, or as deemed necessary by the NSC, to align country programme priorities with those included in the relevant SGP Project Document in line with the priorities of the GEF, third party co-financing, and other national policies, programmes and plans. Based on wide stakeholder consultations, a draft of the CPS will be prepared and initially cleared by the NSC and submitted to the CPMT RFP for review by him/her together with other relevant CPMT and UNDP colleagues. Reflecting on the comments received from the CPMT, the CPS will be revised by the NC, reviewed and endorsed by the NSC, before final approval by the CPMT.

62. The CPS will contain among others: (i) the background and baseline situation of the country; (ii) priority geographic and thematic focus; (iii) programme framework; (iv) results framework; (v) social and environmental standards and risks; (vi) projected finance; and others. A specific guidance for the development/updating of the CPS, including a standard template, will be prepared by the CPMT and shared with the Country Programmes at the start of each Operational Phase. The development/revision of the CPS should be undertaken as a participatory process that engages the full range of non-governmental and government stakeholders in the country, and to fully engage and involve the NSC.

VI. Annual Work Plan & Country Operation Budget

- 63.** The Country Operation Budget or Sub-regional Operation Budget (abbreviated here to COB) is the financial provision for country or sub-regional programme implementation, including costs for the country team salary, office premise, travel, equipment, etc. The Annual Work Plan (AWP) and COB is prepared annually by the NC in consultation with the NSC, UNDP CO and CPMT. Both the AWP and COB are essential in supporting the timely and cost-effective implementation and achievements of the CPS. Both the COB and AWP are reviewed and cleared by the UNDP CO and the CPMT RFP. In countries where an NHI hosts the SGP, the COB is generally covered by the terms of the contract for services between the organization and the UNDP.
- 64.** The UNDP Global Team and CPMT approves and manages the COB with the SGP NC working in close collaboration with the UNDP CO. The SGP Country Programme team, with support from the UNDP and/or relevant responsible party, is accountable for the use of the COB and implementation of the AWP within the approved amount and timeline.

PART 4 IMPLEMENTATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF SGP GRANTS

I. SGP Regular Grants

- 65. Each SGP Country Programme prepares and issues a call for proposals on a regular basis in line with the approved SGP Country Programme Strategy (CPS) or Project Document.** Information in the call for proposals should clearly state that the SGP makes grants to eligible CSOs (or to individuals in exceptional cases as in the case of fellowships), on specific thematic and geographic focuses with a maximum grant amount of US\$75,000 for regular grants.¹³ While a regular and open competitive call for proposals is the preferred modality and good practice, project concepts and proposals may also be received on a rolling basis by SGP country teams to be reviewed for eligibility in line with the CPS for the Operational Phase, with feedback provided to proponents.
- 66.** The process for developing an SGP grant project concept and project document should 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) templates for project concept and proposal development, and; (iv) co-financing requirements in cash and/or in-kind. SGP project concepts and grant proposals are typically prepared and presented in the national language of the country.

¹³ During GEF-8, the SGP 2.0 guidelines developed by the GEF Sec refer to a modified small grant ceiling to a maximum ceiling of \$75,000 increased from \$50,000 to be applied to the operational arrangements working with three agencies. For the UNDP-implemented SGP, the decision on the most appropriate small grant ceiling will be decided by the SGP National Steering Committee.

67. Eligible entities include national NGOs, CBOs, Indigenous Peoples organizations, women and youth groups, persons with disabilities, as well as rural communities. Applicants for SGP grants that have not yet established a formal organization or association, or do not yet have a banking arrangement, are required to open a dedicated bank account with at least three signatories for the implementation of the project. Registration is not considered a formal pre-requirement for the receipt of grant proposals, and the SGP Country Programme is expected to provide capacity-building support to remote and marginalized communities to directly access finance and secure legal identity. Implementation of SGP projects is generally expected to lead to greater legal empowerment and institutional recognition as an outcome of the result of project activities undertaken.
68. SGP provides grants in a strategic manner to support activities that help achieve the programme objectives outlined in the CPS and project document for the Operational Phase. In terms of helping achieve global environmental benefits, each project proposal should align with the SGP's Strategic Initiatives and articulate how the project objectives and activities would have a positive effect in the relevant GEF focal areas, and other commitments made to bilateral donors and cost-sharing agreements. Each project should also determine a measurable contribution to one or more of the GEF results indicators and targets on global environment benefits. 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, a simple results framework and monitoring work plan are required for each proposal.
69. As a demand-driven programme, SGP projects endeavor 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 environment. For SGP interventions to have relevance and utility at the community level, these socio-economic issues are considered in the project design. **A key guiding philosophy of the programme has been to promote social inclusion and reach the marginalized poor and vulnerable communities**, especially when other support is limited, and where development baseline conditions have not been met. Typically, the SGP will need to mobilize additional resources to help provide the cofinancing, technical assistance, capacity-building, gender and socio-economic activities, 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.
70. **Project concepts from eligible CSOs may be screened by the NC, TAG, or jointly with the NSC.** The NSC should determine which screening modality it will follow, and periodically review this decision to make sure that the modality chosen is working well. In all cases, project concept selection should be done on the basis of established eligibility and selection criteria in accordance with the CPS. The NSC should be informed on the long list of all project concepts

that has been submitted and screened. At the minimum, project concepts should identify concrete results that are relevant to one or more 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.

II. Planning Grants

- 71.** Once the project idea or concept is received, while it is an important part of the NC's responsibilities to assist CSOs in proposal development, additional assistance is often required. In such cases, two options may be considered: (i) an SGP planning grant modality may be used; or (ii) 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.
- 72.** Planning grants of up to \$5,000 can be approved once project concepts have been selected. CBOs, Indigenous Peoples' organizations 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.
- 73.** A planning grant can be used by an eligible CSO to: (i) organize stakeholder workshops or meetings to design the project in a participatory manner; (ii) provide technical assistance to elaborate the project concept into project document, undertake studies or develop strategies; (iii) undertake baseline assessments; (iv) develop a business plan; (v) translate concepts from local languages into one of the three main UN languages (English, French or Spanish) required by the SGP database and UNDP operational and administrative platforms at the global level; and (v) support proposal design including the development of indicators as part of a monitoring and evaluation plan.
- 74.** Administratively, a planning grant is like any other SGP grant, and can only be made to eligible CSOs/CBOs through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). Planning grants cannot be awarded to an individual. 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 cases (e.g. time-sensitive activities, smaller amounts).

III. Strategic Grant

- 75.** In special cases, grants may be provided for SGP Strategic Projects up to a maximum grant amount of \$150,000 that will: (i) enable scaling up and replication of tested approaches and tools in multiple locations/communities; and (ii) consolidate efforts of several communities and

CSOs.¹⁴ For Strategic Projects, the SGP Country Programme should select projects through a competitive process, and share summary of the Strategic Project concept with the concerned CPMT RFP for review and concurrence. It is recommended that each SGP Country Programme carefully review the use of Strategic Grant with the NSC in relation to the regular grant modality and consider using this modality to enable scaling up impact.

IV. Regional and Global Grant

- 76.** In support to regional or global scaling up, mainstreaming, replication, and broader adoption of SGP successes and lessons learned, SGP grants for regional or global initiatives can be provided up to a maximum grant amount of \$150,000. Like regular SGP grants, strategic grants are signed between the UNDP CO, or the relevant NHI/responsible party, and the CSO grantee. Regional and global grants can also facilitate and promote transboundary initiatives. Guidance for proactive or responsive modalities as well as procedures for the use of regional and global grants are developed by the CPMT for specific thematic and technical portfolios, in consultation with the concerned SGP Country Programmes and/or relevant stakeholders and partners by following a transparent and competitive grant-making process.

V. Grant Agreement and Funds disbursement

- 77.** 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 funds grant activities that are directly relevant to the GEF criteria, co-financing must be sought for the 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 endeavor to mobilize enough funding in cash or in kind to at least “match (1 to 1 ratio)” the GEF grant allocation to the country.
- 78.** Once the NSC has approved a project for SGP funding support, the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is signed between the grantee and the UNDP RR. In the case of SGP country programmes that are executed by an NHI, the MOA may also be signed between the grantee and the NHI/responsible party. SGP projects normally have a duration of between one and two years. The amounts and schedules may differ, contingent upon the nature and length of project activities. Typically, SGP grants follow three installments: first disbursement of 30% to 50% of the total project grant amount at the time of grant agreement; followed by 40% to 60% at the mid-term after the submission of progress report (in one or two tranches); and a final 10% installment after submission of the final report. Approval is sought from UNDP CO and UNDP Global Team for exceptional cases that divert from the regular installment pattern.

¹⁴ During GEF-8, the SGP 2.0 guidelines developed by the GEF Sec refer to a modified strategic grant ceiling above \$150,000 to be applied to the operational arrangements working with three agencies, as relevant.

79. A grantee may submit another proposal upon successful completion of an initial project, but no grantee can receive funds exceeding US\$75,000 in a given Operational Phase, unless it is a strategic grant up to \$150,000, or exceptional approval is sought from and provided by the SGP Global Manager. Any grantee which has received the maximum US\$75,000 in one Operational Phase, may however submit another funding request in the following Operational Phase after successful completion of the first project, or receive funds provided by a different bilateral donor or partnership programme which is using the SGP as a delivery mechanism.
80. The MOA and grant disbursement process, including the applicable standard operating templates for Low Value Grants (LVGs) are provided as Annexes to the SGP Operational Guidelines. In general, all SGP administrative procedures are aligned with and follow the UNDP POPP. In certain cases, the SGP Operational Guidelines, which have been developed and progressively refined by UNDP over a thirty-year period, cater for specific hard-to-reach target populations as part of the grant-making procedures. In the case of legal identity, the SGP does not require registration as a pre-requirement for the receipt of grant proposals.

PART 5 MONITORING & EVALUATION AND REPORTING

81. The SGP approach to results-based management, monitoring and evaluation is multi-tiered with dedicated procedures in place at the global, country and project levels. SGP applies UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards, and accompanying Social and Environmental Screening Procedures (SESP), to: (i) the design of project frameworks with the GEF and bilateral donors at the global level; and (ii) CPS documents at the country level. For grievances that may arise in SGP grantmaking at the national level, the NC and NSC are tasked to manage the appropriate conflict resolution measures in consultation with UNDP CO, CPMT, and responsible parties. As an integral function of UNDP's second level oversight for the programme at the global level, either the CPMT and/or the BPPS Nature Hub may initiate a trouble-shooting mission, as well as formal investigations, as deemed appropriate.

I. Project level

82. **For project level monitoring, the SGP focuses on participatory methodologies which maximize grantee ownership.** The SGP country team typically organizes a workshop at the inception of a grant cycle to convene a cohort of grantees with the objective to: (i) build common understanding and capacities to undertake quality M&E activities; (ii) create synergies between grantees for deeper impact, including broader adoption; (iii) enable a forum of learning from both success and failures. To assist with monitoring at the portfolio level, a CSO with demonstrated capacity, or third-party monitoring entity, may be engaged by the SGP country team to ensure enhanced reporting. Subject to budget availability, a workshop may also be convened for a cohort of grantees at project conclusion. Knowledge fairs may also be convened with partners to be cost effective, supporting linkages between a thematic and/or geographic

cluster of SGP projects.

- 83.** Each SGP project is encouraged to invest a limited amount of the total grant amount (4-5%) on project level M&E and knowledge management activities. These funds are directed towards collection of quality data and evidence for project results, in particular mandatory indicators from the roster of project indicators for a given Operational Phase. The funds may also be utilized towards the timely and quality submission of project progress reports to SGP which serve in turn as a requirement for financial disbursements of grants.
- 84.** At the project level, a measurement system exists to harmonize reporting across the SGP portfolio. Each of the SGP projects picks from a roster of project indicators, including global environmental and socio-economic indicators, and report results as guided by the M&E guidelines, project document for the Operational Phase, and donor cost-sharing agreement. With support from the NC, as part of the MOA preparation the grantee selects from the roster of indicators to track results under the project monitoring plan and report upon in the final progress reports. SGP grantees have the flexibility to select additional indicators beyond the SGP roster as appropriate. The SGP NC and PA are responsible to aggregate and upload the project indicators and results into the global SGP database in English, French or Spanish.

II. Country Level

- 85.** At the country level, SGP country programme teams, including NSC members, undertake monitoring of the grant portfolio on an ongoing basis. Subject to the availability of funds, each project is visited at least once during the life cycle of project. Guided by the COB guidelines for a given Operational Phase, additional missions to the project site may be made. In general, monitoring missions should be limited to one or two persons, including the SGP NC and a NSC member unless there are special reasons, and as approved by the UNDP CO and CPMT RFP as part of the annual COB and AWP planning exercise. Field missions should typically be **budgeted for on the basis of actual costs (fuel, accommodation and food)** and not based on UN proforma costs of daily service allowance (DSA).
- 86.** Close and regular collaboration are undertaken between the NC and NSCs on M&E activities at the country level. Periodic reviews and monitoring of the CPS implementation is undertaken to enable (i) verifiable and structured adjustments to the CPS, including any course correction in terms of ongoing projects and advice on the selection of new projects; (ii) noting early results for broader adoption and partnership development; and (iii) identification of risks. It is recommended that the SGP Country Programme team and NSC prepare a brief SGP Country Programme Report, with information on key results and grant-making on an annual basis and/or every Operational Phase.
- 87.** In coordination with the UNDP and relevant responsible party where applicable, SGP country programme teams are responsible for the financial monitoring of grants, disbursements, COB

expenditures, and co-financing. Audits of SGP Country Programmes will be conducted in a regular manner in accordance with the UNDP auditing standards, and applicable financial rules and regulations. Audit is also organized when risk is identified. The SGP audit exercise is focused on transparency, accountability and quality of SGP country operations in line with the SGP Operational Guidelines, including its Annexes and applicable templates. The audits will cover country level management, financial, and administrative issues and includes provisions for project-level inspection. Country teams are required to comply with the Audit checklist for a given Operational Phase. Should an audit be undertaken, SGP country programmes are obligated to follow up on the recommendations of audits.

- 88.** The SGP country programme team is responsible for regularly keeping project and country-level information updated in the SGP Global Database for all prior and current Operational Phases. This includes tracking all country programme level risks, implementation progress, safeguards and other concerns in the SGP database. Compliance with the requirements and timelines in the global SGP database guidance are required.
- 89.** The SGP country programme team is expected to regularly communicate and report on the SGP country results and progress with the UNDP CO, GEF OFP and other stakeholders. The NC keeps the CO informed of progress in implementation, usually through the RR and SGP focal point in the CO. For a given Operational Phase, the CPS and its results framework reflects synergies with the UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD), which is linked in turn to the UNDP Strategic Plan. In general, each CPS notes at least one CPD outcome/output area to contribute to on the basis of: (i) maximum potential for broader adoption; (ii) two-way sharing of evidential lessons and experiences; and (iii) potential for joint-reporting on national development mechanisms and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

III. Global Level

- 90.** At the global level, in compliance with the GEF Policy on Monitoring and other relevant bilateral donor agreements, a consolidated Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) and/or PIRs are submitted to the GEF secretariat, including: (i) the status of the country programme; (ii) results across applicable core Indicators; (iii) project financing committed and disbursed by Operational Phase, with a breakdown of grants to NGOs and CBOs, both GEF and bilateral cost-sharing agreements; and (iv) any other information as required by the relevant GEF policies, and bilateral donors. All SGP countries are expected to comply with quality and timely submission of country level inputs as part of SGP AMR process.
- 91.** At the global level, the CPMT facilitates learning across the portfolio of participating countries to support the use of M&E data for decision making at different levels. Recurring global reporting requirements, such as the AMR and PIRs, are complemented by periodic requests by the CPMT and UNDP for information on specific subjects and thematic issues, such as reports under preparation for the GEF Council, as well as the relevant Rio conventions (CBD, UNFCCC, UNCCD,

Minamata). Further details and guidance on project and programme reporting is provided in the SGP Monitoring & Evaluation Strategy.

92. In accordance with the GEF Monitoring Policy and UNDP Evaluation Policy, SGP typically undergoes an independent evaluation once per Operational Phase. The BPPS Nature Hub and CPMT liaise with the GEF and UNDP Independent Evaluation Offices (IEOs) for the evaluation, including country programme visits and reviews. In the case of bilateral donor agreements and partnerships, UNDP follows the procedures requested by the relevant contribution agreements, as agreed by the UNDP Funding Window agreements.

PART 6 COMMUNICATION AND BRANDING

93. All communication and knowledge materials developed by SGP must adhere to the SGP's Visual Guidelines. This includes materials produced as part of the SGP project grants and any materials developed by SGP country teams.
94. The GEF, SGP, UNDP and other donor logos will appear together on all promotional materials, other written materials like publications developed by the project, and project hardware. Any citation on publications regarding projects funded by the GEF and other donors will also accord proper acknowledgement to the donors. For SGP projects that are funded by bilateral donors and international foundations, additional branding and communication guidelines may be agreed upon based on the relevant cost-sharing agreements.
95. All SGP programme and project information will be disclosed in accordance with relevant policies notably the UNDP Disclosure Policy and the related GEF Policies.