



OPERATIONAL PHASE 8

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME

COUNTRY PROGRAMME STRATEGY

LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

(2026 -2029)





Abbreviation

BD	Biodiversity
CBA	Community-Based Adaptation
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CC	Climate Change
CD	Capacity Development
CH	Chemicals (and wastes management)
CPD	Country Programme Document
CPS	Country Programme Strategy
CSO	Civil Society Organization
FARM	Financing Agrochemical Reduction and Management
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IWs	International Waters
LD	Land Degradation
LDC	Least Developed Country
Lao PDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
MA	Multifocal Area
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
NAMA	Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPA	Non-Profit Association
NSC	National Steering Committee
OP	Operational Phase
SAP	Strategic Action Programme
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SGP	Small Grants Programme
STAR	System for Transparent Allocation of Resources
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Service
VNR	Voluntary National Review



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OP8 Financial Resources - SGP Country Programme (estimated US\$)

Total GEF SGP Grants to date since Country Programme start date (2009)	USD 5,871,726*
OP8 GEF CORE Funds	USD 500,000 (tbc)
OP8 GEF STAR Funds	USD 500,000 (tbc)
Other funds (secured)	USD N/A
Other funds (expected/to be mobilized)	USD 275,000**

* Based on the published data on https://sgp.undp.org/index.php?option=com_countrypages&view=countrypage&country=63&Itemid=271

** USD275,000 was calculated based on the OP7 co-financing where 15% is in-kind and 10% is in cash.



1. INTRODUCTION

The Eighth Operational Phase of the Small Grants Programme (SGP OP8) builds on 30 years of successful experiences in empowering local civil society organizations (CSOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) in designing and leading community-driven initiatives that have enhanced household well-being, increased awareness and resilience regarding environmental threats, and generated global environmental benefits.

The primary objective of the SGP OP8 is to engage local CSOs/CBOs in landscape approaches across Lao PDR, providing them access to knowledge and information, capacitating them through learning-by-doing, skills development, and delivering technical and grant assistance for interventions that enhance the well-being and socioeconomic conditions of local communities and generate global environmental benefits.

OP8 will also align with and contribute to the UNDP Strategic Plan (2022-2025), 9th National Socioeconomic Development Plan (2021-2025), larger frameworks of vertical fund projects of GEF, national policies, and international conventions ratified by the Government of Lao PDR. The GEF SGP 2.0 in Lao PDR will be funded through three sources: (i) the STAR budget, which aims to link with a larger framework of the GEF's vertical fund, whose projects have been implemented in several geographical areas; (ii) the CORE budget, which aims to address the needs of stakeholders as a result of social consultation; and (iii) some 30% of the total financing from the STAR and CORE sources will be allocated for innovation projects outside the identified landscapes.

2. COUNTRY PROGRAMME SUMMARY: Key results and achievements

The GEF SGP in Lao PDR started grant-making in 2009. The Lao PDR country programme since then has supported 197 projects, including 173 GEF projects valued at US\$5.87 million and 24 non-GEF grant projects totalling US\$0.70 million. The top three grantee projects are related to biodiversity, climate change, and chemicals and waste, which account for more than 79% of all initiatives executed. The snapshot information about the country programme portfolio is accessible at this link: https://sgp.undp.org/index.php?option=com_countrypages&view=countrypage&country=63&Itemid=271.

The nationally adopted focal or thematic areas in the SGP Lao PDR Country Programme's OP7 included **biodiversity (BD)**, **chemicals and waste (CW)**, **climate change mitigation (CC)**, **community-based adaptation (CBA)**, **international waters (IW)**, **land degradation (LD)**, **capacity development (CD)**, and **a multifocal integrated approach (MA)** to be implemented in six designated geographical areas or provinces namely **Phongsaly, Bokeo, Oudomxay, Huaphan, Savannakhet**, and **Saravan**. The GEF SGP OP7 (2022-2025) was financed through the CORE and Australian DFAT's Community-Based Adaptation Phase 3 (CBA3). Lessons learned that may have implications and areas for improvement for OP8 are included in Table 1.

Table 1. Lessons learned and implications for OP8

Lessons learned	Areas for improvement / recommendations
a) Grantee projects were distributed thematically and geographically around the country based on local requirements that were aligned with thematic areas. Despite its effectiveness, when project proposals were reviewed and chosen, the designated priority geographical areas were not completely implemented. Out of 43 grantee projects approved by OP7, only 14 were carried out in the priority provinces or geographical areas.	The GEF SGP's M&E is a designed monitoring framework which should be complied and regularly updated (plan vs actualization)—an annual review should be carried out. Given that OP8 has clearly outlined the landscape-based approach to grant making, a call for project concept notes and proposals should specify the geographical focus areas, particularly to ensure alignment with vertically funded GEF initiatives, stakeholders' needs and innovative projects outside the selected landscapes.



b) GEF SGP calls for proposals are open to eligible applicants—CSOs/CBOs, including public educational institutions and mass organisations.	The GEF SGP should target only CSOs and CBOs known local non-profit associations, producer groups or cooperatives, and foundations that are legally registered entities. If educational institutions and mass organizations are involved, they should only be affiliates carrying out duties that CSOs/CBOs are unable to do.
c) Nearly 50% of grantees are rural CBOs regarded as villages and village clusters. Most grantee CBOs outsourced or relied on individuals to help implement project activities. It is unclear how they were defined CBOs and if they had a proper legal entity status and documents certifying their status. This is not to mention their ability to manage projects, including accounting and financial documentation, reporting, and more. This raises issues on project impacts and even sustainability to grant CBOs or villages upon project completion.	To guarantee that all legally registered CSOs and CBOs are eligible to receive grants and to leave no one behind, the GEF SGP should (i) clearly define who is eligible to grants particularly CBOs while considering compliance with UNDP Lao PDR's normal financial proceedings, and (ii) divide prospective candidates into three categories: beginner, intermediate, and advanced—categorization will help the GEF SGP identify initiatives to support inexperienced grantees such as preparation and formulation of project concept and proposal, bookkeeping, and even business plan for commercial CBOs—part of capacity building.
d) The selection of proposals was based mainly on the quality of proposal content and its relevance to focal areas which resulted in a lack of emphasis on both geographical and focal or thematic areas and missed opportunities for synergies and tangible impacts.	To enhance strategic impact, future proposal selection processes should incorporate criteria that balance content quality with geographic and thematic diversity. This approach would help identify synergies across projects, ensure broader coverage of priority areas, and maximize tangible outcomes on the ground. A two-step grant-making approach should be considered—first is the shortlisting of the grantees meeting minimum requirements through a call for expression of interest; and second is a call for full proposal (technical and financial) for competitive selection by NSC members.
e) Specific outreach/communication strategy is absent; a minimal number of proposals were filed because of outreach problems, and GEF SGP called for submissions that focused more on thematic topics. These factors were connected to grantees' limited ability and inappropriate mission and experience to develop strong proposals.	This GEF SGP strategy has developed a targeted outreach and <i>communication plan</i> to broaden awareness and participation, especially among underrepresented groups and regions (e.g., candidates in the beginner category). The plan should include capacity-building initiatives to strengthen grantees' proposal development skills, and align their missions with thematic priorities, ensuring a more diverse and competitive pool of high-quality submissions.
f) Grantee projects have an average lifespan of one or two years, making project impacts and behaviour changes scarcely observed.	The GEF SGP should consider extending the duration of grantee projects or establish phased funding mechanisms that support longer-term engagement. This would allow sufficient time for meaningful impact, behavioural change, and sustainability to take root. Additionally, incorporating follow-up support or post-project monitoring could help capture long-term outcomes and lessons learned. Exceptional or outstanding projects should be further financed by the GEF SGP without requiring the formulation of a new project application. Because grantee projects have a limited lifespan, grantee efforts that complement current initiatives or activities that need additional resources or have close connectivity gaps should be given priority when selected, provided that a majority of NSC members have voted in favour in writing. The grantee should



g) The GEF SGP grantee projects promoted rural food security and sustainable management of natural wealth through climate resilient and agriculture and forestry; nonetheless, they encountered project-related discontinuations because economic advantages and returns of project interventions were not given enough consideration.	update project activities to accept the top-up grant (refer to Annexes A-B for project implementation onwards). Grantee projects should integrate economic viability assessments into project design to ensure that interventions not only promote environmental and social goals but also deliver tangible economic benefits to communities. This includes identifying income-generating opportunities, green value chain linkages, and market access strategies that enhance the long-term sustainability and adoption of climate-resilient, nutrition-sensitive agriculture and forestry practices, while also challenging the project proponent to consider the implications beyond project closure during implementation, particularly regarding the "one project – one product" approach for socio-economic development alongside prioritizing environmental aspects.
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3. COUNTRY PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

3.1 Alignment with national priorities

Lao PDR has established a comprehensive legal and policy framework to support its commitments to environmental sustainability, climate resilience, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable development. The country has enacted various national laws, decrees, and regulations to manage its natural resources effectively, address climate change, and promote sustainable land use and agriculture. The significance is the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan or NBSAP (2016-2025) to address critical issues concerning ecosystems and biodiversity that centre around forests, agriculture, aquatics, urbanization, species diversity, and drivers to biodiversity loss. These national policies are closely aligned with international agreements and commitments, ensuring compliance with global environmental standards and frameworks such as the Paris Agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Key national frameworks, laws, decrees, and international agreements that guide the country's environmental and development policies are annexed 1.

3.2 Gaps and opportunities

Although Lao PDR has developed robust planning frameworks, and ratified several international agreements, gaps remain in policy implementation, coordination, enforcement, and integration of community-driven solutions. Table 2 identifies critical gaps and opportunities to enhance the effectiveness of GEF SGP OP8 in Lao PDR.

Table 2. Summary of gaps and opportunities for SGP OP8 in Lao PDR

Theme	Key gaps	Opportunities for SGP OP8
Policy implementation and enforcement	Weak enforcement of environmental laws, limited local integration of national strategies.	Align SGP projects with existing policies, supporting community-driven enforcement and monitoring mechanisms. Grant applicants shall review any existing policies relevant to their initiatives, where available, to ensure alignment and support policy influence. This approach reinforces the government's responsibility to mainstream such policies.



Theme	Key gaps	Opportunities for SGP OP8
Community engagement and local capacity	Limited community involvement in decision-making; weak capacity of CSOs/CBOs.	Strengthen CSO/CBO capacity; enable participatory governance in land use; participatory appraisal management, and climate adaptation. To ensure that the proposed project would undoubtedly answer local requirements, grant applicants must have a letter for social consultation with stakeholders, such as the village head and the local government unit.
Biodiversity and sustainable livelihoods	Conservation laws lack livelihood integration; limited financing for NBSAP goals.	Promote eco-tourism, agroforestry, and nature-based enterprises; align with Forestry and Wildlife Laws and attach the importance to critically endangered species for conservation.
Climate adaptation and resilience	Inadequate grassroots integration of climate plans; NAP 2025 remains under development.	Support nature-based solutions and climate-smart agriculture; contributing to NAP development through pilot models. Based on available natural resources and local capabilities to coping mechanisms leading to the adaptation strategy.
Sustainable land and water management	Weak enforcement of land and water use plans; inadequate wetland protection.	Implement community-based land use plans; enhance wetland and watershed governance with local actors, with clear measurable indicators (e.g., number of hectares of community forest management for conservation and land degradation improved).
Circular economy and pollution control	Weak local implementation of waste/pollution strategies; low circular economy uptake.	Fund grassroots recycling and composting; support alternative livelihoods in waste management. More measurables in terms of quantity for waste generation at the household and for segregation for recycling to reduce the burden of landfill capacity projection.
Funding and private sector engagement	Insufficient funding for grassroots; minimal private sector involvement.	Establish microfinance/revolving funds; promote public-private partnerships, integrate gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) and social inclusion in financial planning; ensure alignment with UNFCC finance principle to improve access to climate finance and equitable resource allocation, and donor alignment with grassroots innovations; and engage or partner with the private sector, development partners and local government organizations in resource mobilization alongside the proposing project to GEF SGP.
Integration with UNDP and national programmes	Limited integration of grassroots work into national programmes	Link SGP initiatives with UNDP and national strategies to scale up local impact and policy influence for support; and enable institutional members including OFP and UNDP of NSC to use the SGP as an experiment plot for scaling up to full-sized project for each operational phase.
Social inclusion to leave no one behind by supporting youth, women and	Most climate, disaster, and agriculture legislations lacking gender integration and failing to include sex-disaggregated data, gender analysis, and effective	Strengthen the implementation of gender equality law; increase women and youth's participation by ensuring their representation in climate policymaking; promote economic empowerment; and ensure equal land rights; and demand that grant applicants



Theme	Key gaps	Opportunities for SGP OP8
indigenous or ethnic peoples	mechanisms to ensure women's participation	research these target populations in the project locations for beneficiaries over the course of the project's execution, with a focus on aiding the underprivileged.

3.3 OP8 strategic priorities of the SGP Country Programme

The OP8 SGP Country Programme for Lao PDR is developed during a transitional phase in which UNDP assumes responsibility for the SGP from UNOPS, coinciding with the conclusion of the 9th NSEDP (2021-2025), the development of the 10th NSEDP (2026-2030), and the merger of MONRE with MAF to establish the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment. Promoting food security and sustainable management of natural wealth through climate resilient and nutrition-sensitive agriculture and forestry is one of the 10th NSEDP strategic priorities. The OP8 strategic interventions or initiatives in Lao PDR will attach the importance of the local context with specific attention of the following:

Given its impact on people and economic growth, agriculture is crucial for food security and commodity production in relieving poverty. Promotion of individual and communal commercial agricultural output and private investment in high-potential industries including agro-processing, handicrafts, tourism, and logistics services are underway. The Government of Lao PDR encourages farmers, farmers' organizations, and enterprises to boost production for commercialization and increase import substitution of agricultural and industrial production. Growing industrial and agricultural production and excessive consumption have degraded resources in quantity and quality, exhausting their carrying capacity. Environmental factors affect food systems.

The consultations confirmed that the GEF SGP global environmental practices and efforts are greatly relevant to Lao PDR, particular in the following strategic initiatives:

- (i) *community-based conservation of threatened ecosystems and species, including eco-tourism;*
- (ii) *sustainable agriculture and fisheries, and food security;*
- (iii) *low-carbon energy access co-benefits;*
- (iv) *local to global coalitions for chemicals and waste management; and*
- (v) *catalysing sustainable urban solutions.*

Furthermore, as cross-cutting issues, three additional strategic approaches are mandatory to enhance social inclusion, knowledge management, results management, and M&E. These strategies must be pushed in SGP operations and grant-making.

Issues on chemicals and waste particularly in major cities of Vientiane Capital and three provinces of Luangprabang, Savannakhet and Champasak significantly affects society, manifesting as substantial public health concerns. **Potential for complementary and synergy of the strategic initiatives** has been associated with at least the UNDP's projects as indicated in Table 3. It will be **the applicant's role to further explore specific needs of the locals, project geographical locations, relevant possibilities of complementing SGP projects with UNDP's full-pledged projects and other donors' initiatives**. Where possible, synergies and linkages with UNDP project should be prioritized.

Table 3. SGP Country Programme's alignment with SGP OP8 Strategic Initiatives and country priorities / projects / programmes



SGP OP8 Strategic Initiatives – Global	SGP Country Programme's OP8 Priorities	SGP Country Programme's complementarity with GEF, UNDP, and other projects and programmes
<i>(i) Community-based conservation of threatened ecosystems and species, including eco-tourism.</i>	1) Improve the effectiveness of biodiversity and ecosystem conservation and management through equitable governance systems by recognizing and respecting the rights of indigenous/ethnic peoples and local communities. 2) Improve community-led biodiversity friendly practices and approaches, including promoting green/blue economy approaches (e.g. agriculture, fisheries, forestry, tourism, infrastructure, etc.) 3) Enhance community led actions for protection of threatened species.	UNDP: Generating multiple benefits through strengthened protection of intact forest landscapes in Lao PDR (2025-2030). IUCN: Lao Ecology Small Grants Programme Phase 2 with the initiative of sustainable agriculture and fisheries, and food security. EU/SDC: Sustainable Consumption and Production in Lao PDR (2024-2027), implemented by Swisscontact.
<i>(ii) Sustainable agriculture and fisheries, and food security</i>	1) Increase efficiency and effectiveness of overall food production and value chain, including in vulnerable ecosystems (mountains, island ecosystems, etc.). 2) Increase diversification and livelihood improvement. 3) Remove deforestation from supply chain and expand restoration of degraded lands.	UNDP: Integrated Water Resource Management and Ecosystem-based Adaptation (IWRM-EbA). IUCN: Lao Ecology Small Grants Programme Phase 2 with the initiative of sustainable agriculture and fisheries, and food security.
<i>(iii) Low-carbon energy access co-benefits</i>	Support implementation of Paris Agreement and NDCs by promoting renewable and energy efficient technologies that provide socioeconomic benefits and improve livelihoods.	MONRE outlines four key focus areas (e.g., sustainable resources management, pollution control, land management, and climate change mitigation and adaptation) to be included in its next five-year plan. One of expected targets includes carbon credit creation and climate change. Lao Brewery Company (ref. SGP OP8 Strategic Initiative: CSO-government-private sector policy and planning dialogue platforms).
<i>(iv) Local to global coalitions for chemicals and waste management</i>	1) Promote plastics/solid waste management and circular economy. 2) Reduce/remove use of chemicals in agriculture. 3) Enhance local to global coalitions on chemicals, waste and mercury management. 4) Support alternative livelihoods in waste management (e.g., upcycling, composting) linked to the Circular Economy Strategies for Lao PDR (2017)	UNDP's project: Financing agrochemical reduction and management (FARM) in Lao PDR (2023-2027). EU/WWF/KHF/CoZ&DSF: Waste to Value, implemented by Swisscontact (2025-2028).



SGP OP8 Strategic Initiatives – Global	SGP Country Programme's OP8 Priorities	SGP Country Programme's complementarity with GEF, UNDP, and other projects and programmes
(v) Catalysing sustainable urban solutions	1) Improve capacities to promote community-driven, socially inclusive and integrated solutions to address low-emission and resilient urban development. 2) Demonstrate innovative socially inclusive urban solutions/ approaches (including waste and chemical management, energy, transport, watershed protection, ecosystem services and biodiversity). 3) Implement public-private partnership approach for low carbon energy access for marginalized urban communities.	GGGI: Nature-based solutions for urban adaptation (NATURA: 2024-2029) EU/WWF/KHF/CoZ&DSF: Waste to Value, implemented by Swisscontact (2025-2028). Explore collaboration and partnership with recycling and waste management companies or entities (public and private partnership).
(vi) Community-Based Adaptation (CBA Phase 3)¹	Engage with the upcoming National Adaptation Plan (NAP 2025) to integrate community adaptation projects in high-risk areas	There are currently six CBA3 projects ongoing with OP7 financing.
(ix) CSO-government-private sector policy and planning dialogue platforms	Promote/enhance community voices and participation in global and national policy, strategy development related to global environment and sustainable development issues	Lao Brewery Company's CSR: environmental responsibility through innovative green energy initiatives; with its Together Towards Zero and Beyond Programme, it partnered with a private company to open a biomass energy factory in Vientiane Capital, with possible expansion to Pakse, Champasak. Potential linkages with Ministry of Industry and Commerce's Green Manufacturing and Labelling Agreements. Roles of local CSOs in GEF SGP included in MONRE's activity plan. Promote UNDP/SGP Lao PDR's visibility through various channels such as Lao CSO events and fairs—associated with KM below.
(x) Enhancing social inclusion	1) Promote targeted inclusive initiatives and mainstream social inclusion in all projects. 2) Support women-led and youth-led environmental initiatives aligned with the Law on Gender Equality (2019) and National Social Protection Strategy (2020-2030)	UNDP Lao PDR – Gender Equality Strategy 2022-2026. 2nd National Plan of Action on Preventing and Eliminating Violent Against Women and Children (2021-2025), 4th Action National Plan of Action on Gender Equality (2021-2025). The project proponent with their stakeholders shall make sure that social inclusion is cutting cross issue as a requirement for all thematic areas to leave no one behind, therefore it shall think about how to engage and involve these

¹ This initiative is funded by DFAT and only applicable to CBA Phase 3 by aiming to reduce vulnerability and improve the adaptive capacity of communities; provide countries with concrete ground-level experience on Climate Change Adaptation and CBA; and provide clear policy lessons and mainstream CBA within national processes.



SGP OP8 Strategic Initiatives – Global	SGP Country Programme's OP8 Priorities	SGP Country Programme's complementarity with GEF, UNDP, and other projects and programmes
		groups of people at community for instance gender, youth, disability people and marginalized group of people especially the poor to be beneficiaries of project.
(xi) Knowledge Management (KM)	1) Capture knowledge and lessons from projects and activities. 2) Improve capacities of CSOs/CBOs. 3) Associate with the initiative above regarding CSO-government-private sector policy and planning dialogue platforms.	KM especially information about grantee's project will be one of the main project outputs (video, printing, social media) which will be shared in public. The project team is required to write a blog about the project or an outstanding activity for 2-3 pages to share it with the country team.
(xii) Results Management, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)	Administer new M&E strategy in Country Programme and project design, implementation and overall decision making using participatory mechanisms.	Comply with UNDP Guidelines, prior to give the second payment – country team leading by NC and NSC members shall go to visit the site during its implementation 1-2 times of the project lifespan.

4. OP8 PRIORITY LANDSCAPES AND STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

The grant-making of **projects within and outside the priority landscape** shall permit up to **20% of the project cost for a community development fund or community revolving fund**, and up to **15% for grantees' administrative expenses**, contingent upon each tranche of the grant installation. The grantees' administrative expenses shall include the cost associated with the on-site M&E by the grantees' project team. The grantees' **project team is not entitled to a salary, but rather DSA** for their work with communities and government agencies at project sites. At the very least, the DSA mandated by the Ministry of Finance should be used as a reference. Other conditions will be based on the OP7 set aside agreement and operational guidelines for grant recipients.

The SGP grant-making component in GEF-8 is funded by the GEF Trust Fund or CORE Funds amounting to US\$ 500,000 and the STAR Funds totalling US\$ 500,000 approximately including non-grants for projects and UNDP overhead costs. Of the total grant budget allocated, **70% will finance grant projects inside the priority landscape while 30% will go toward innovation projects outside the priority landscape. In order to foster creativity and innovation, up to 30% of the overall grant project value may be awarded as bonus to priority landscape grant projects that have creative and innovative ideas, and as long as the top-up does not exceed the ceiling of US\$75,000 for one eligible grant applicant within one operational phase.** The co-financing from sources external to the GEF SGP will be contingent upon co-financing prospects and opportunities. Grant applicants shall clearly indicate all possible **strategic relevance** at different levels (local, national, and international) when designing project concepts and proposals.

A two-step grant-making approach should be considered—*first* is the shortlisting of the grantees meeting minimum requirements through a call for expression of interest for project concept submission; and *second* is a call for full proposal (technical and financial), both steps have its own template for grant submission. The shortlisting will help GEF SGP know and understand more the profiles of interested CSOs/CBOs—their vision and missions, human resources, technical and financial capacity, and experience in project management vis-à-vis their



project concept or idea based on SGP priority thematic and strategic initiatives as well as identified geographical locations.

4.1 Grant-making within the priority landscape

Four pillars of the GEF SGP 2.0 Implementation Arrangements are:

- **expansion,**
- **innovation,**
- **diversification,** and
- **optimization.**

With them, there are eight principles for operationalizing SGP 2.0 in GEF-8. Aligning SGP grant-making at the *national level* shall centre around **five strategic areas or initiatives** as stated in 3.3.

The GEF SGP grants will continue to **promote demand-driven, community-based innovation, capacity building, and the empowerment of indigenous peoples, women or gender, and youth**, aligning with the GEF's objectives to deliver global environmental benefits. The grants support local initiatives and finance targeted projects designed and implemented by CSOs/CBOs, essential for environmental conservation and restoration. The grant-making will follow a competitive approach through a call for proposal.

To be locally specific, **CSOs/CBOs as primary target applicants are those regulated by Decree on Associations** (No. 238, 11 August 2017) and **Decree on Groups and Cooperatives** (No. 606, 26 November 2020). The CSOs, according to the Decree on Associations, refer to **non-profit associations (NPAs)** classified in three levels—national, provincial, and district or village-based NPAs whose activities focus on (i) economic, (ii) professional, technical and creative, and (iii) social welfare and development.² **CBOs** are collective organizations engaged in agriculture, handicrafts, trade, services, or other professions, formed voluntarily. The term "**groups and cooperatives**" encompasses sectoral production and service groups, financial service groups, savings groups, agricultural and forestry cooperatives, credit and savings unions, trade cooperatives, handicraft and processing cooperatives, and service cooperatives. The responsibility for properly implementing "leave no one behind" in the SGP grant-making process rests with UNDP Lao PDR, especially with regard to CBOs whose legal status is unclear and who will not meet UNDP financial processes.

The application will be accessible to all qualified applicants (CSOs/CBOs) in Lao PDR engaged in environmental conservation and restoration efforts while integrating economic viability assessments into project design to ensure that interventions will not only promote environmental and social goals but also deliver economic benefits to beneficiaries through income-generating opportunities, development of sustainable value chains, and market access improvements. The application and project proposal shall be prepared in the English language and with a single applicant or more—co-applicants which will clearly state the lead applicant and the associate. CSO/CBO may want to affiliate with educational and/or research institutions, mass organizations, and/or the private sector provided that CSO/CBO is a lead applicant only. Labour division must be clear between lead applicant and associate(s).

The application shall be classified into three tiers—beginner, intermediate, and advanced. The criteria become progressively more demanding based on the applicant's level. Call for proposals shall make it clear for interested applicants to choose based on their level (refer to Annex 2 for criteria).

² For more detail, refer to Decree on Associations (2017).



Small grant administration, implementation, and duration will consider the following (re Part VIII: Grant Administration):

- a) Applying a pragmatic approach to defining feasible and operable lower thresholds for grants;
- b) Adhering to a maximum grant amount of **US\$75,000**, while recognizing the spirit of GEF SGP to provide opportunities for smaller local associations and organizations with limited capacity and absorption ability;
- c) Ensuring that any grantee does not concurrently implement more than one grant during GEF OP-8;
- d) Aligning grant-making thematically with the GEF-8 Programming Directions and SGP 2.0's five strategic priorities or initiatives stated above;
- e) Promoting SGP 2.0 cross-cutting strategic priorities in grant selection and dedicate a significant proportion to indigenous or ethnic peoples and local communities, women and girls (gender), youth and vulnerable or marginalized groups;
- f) Setting time boundaries around the SGP grants, i.e., a duration of **one to two** years depending on their scope (it is proposed that grant projects that are outstanding or exceptional, auto granting should be made without requiring them to write new project proposals);
- g) Supporting multi-stakeholder platforms and dialogues to generate greater scale and impact, through demonstration, capacity-building, network building, awareness raising, advocacy, public policy influence and the dissemination of lessons learned; and
- h) Leveraging, when possible, business-oriented approaches and strengthening dialogues and partnerships with the private sector and exploring potential opportunities for finance and technical support that can help scale up SGP innovations.

a) Process for selecting priority landscapes

The process for identifying priority landscapes for focal areas, strategic initiatives, and geographical areas used the following steps:

- *Stakeholder identification*: Identifying and engaging a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including local communities, CSOs, CBOs, government agencies, and academic institutions. This ensured that various perspectives and expertise were incorporated into the consultation process.
- *Project site visits and consultations with SGP grantees*: A total of three projects and local communities supported by the GEF SGP have been visited, including two projects in Luang Prabang, and one project in Champasak.
- *Multi-stakeholder consultation*: Three provincial consultation workshops that were organized in the abovementioned locations provided platforms for participants to share experiences, discuss challenges, and propose solutions related to environmental conservation and sustainable development through group works. Divided into three working groups, the groups worked on and brainstorm two focal areas. After group presentation, open discussions were carried out. The discussion also heard the proposed geographical areas for possible interventions. The workshops organized in Luang Prabang and Champasak had representatives from Luangnamtha, Oudomxay, Khammuane, Savannakhet, and Attapeu.
- *National workshop*: The online and offline workshop presented the preliminary findings which helped confirm the identified geographical areas and SGP global strategic areas or initiatives, including other important areas and considerations to initiate small grant projects ensuring impacts and sustainability after project interventions.

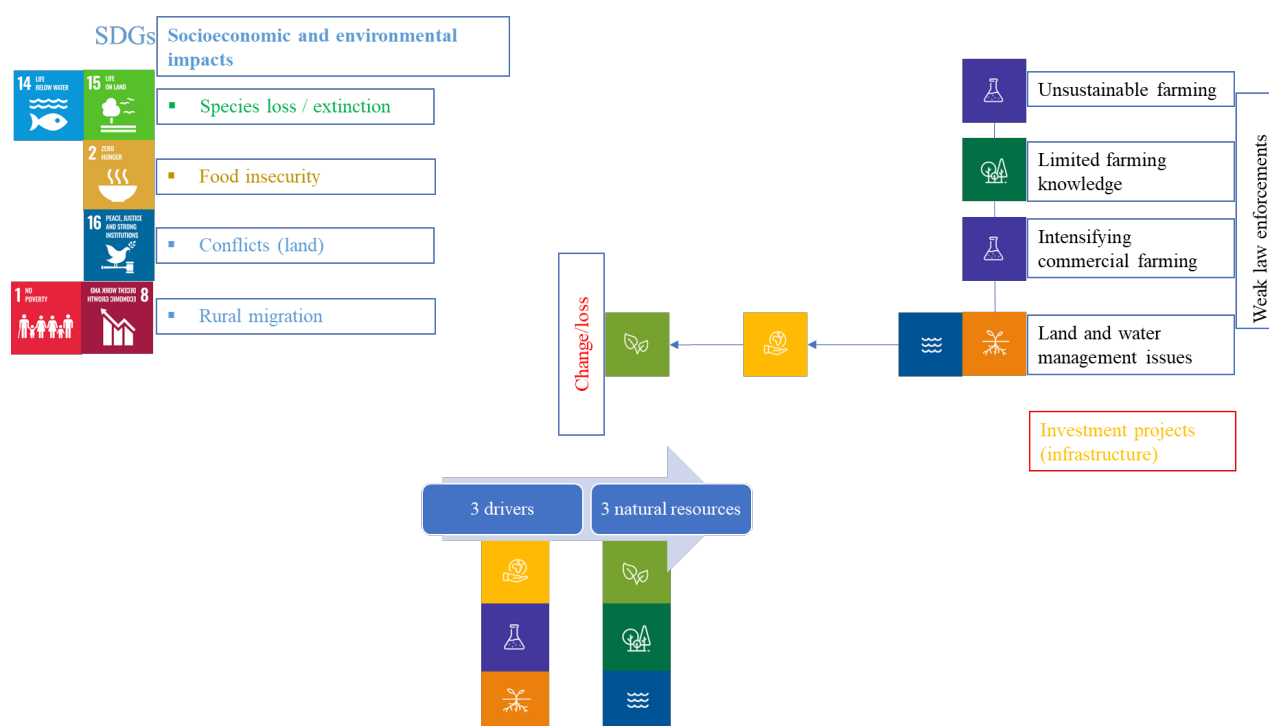
The **GEF SGP 2.0 Operational Phase for GEF-8 (global)** has identified **six focal or thematic areas** below:



The six focal areas are claimed to be important and are interconnected from one another. Diagram 1 below summarises the findings from local and central consultations. The environmental impacts matter the food systems.

While there are many forms of farming or agriculture that support healthy people and ecosystems, food systems are also a main driver to environmental degradation and loss due to for example unsustainable farming for commercialization coupled with limited knowledge about sustainable farming and good enforcement. Although six focal areas are important depending on geographical locations, three focal areas that contribute to three other focal areas (biodiversity, forest management, and water) are climate change, chemical and waste, and land degradation.

Diagram 1. Mapping of the priority landscapes



b) Selected landscapes for OP8

The proposed geographical landscapes are divided into two groups—the provinces where UNDP projects are implemented as part of the synergy and the provinces identified during the consultations. They are **GEF-8, IWRM and FARM as priority when grant applicants design project concepts and proposals**; and other UNDP projects whose scalable and impactful activities or initiatives should also be included, dependent on the results of the SGP OP8 annual review.



The grant-making in chemical and waste areas will focus specifically on large cities in Luang Prabang, Vientiane Capital, Savannakhet, and Champasak as shown in Map 1 and where possible chemicals and waste related grantee projects could be linked with expandable and impactful activities of IWRM and FARM.³ The SGP OP8 should prioritize project applications focused on livelihood development to promote sustainable income generation, emphasizing inclusive, green, and sustainable value chain development for agricultural and forest products, thereby fostering behaviour change and significant and impactful outcomes.

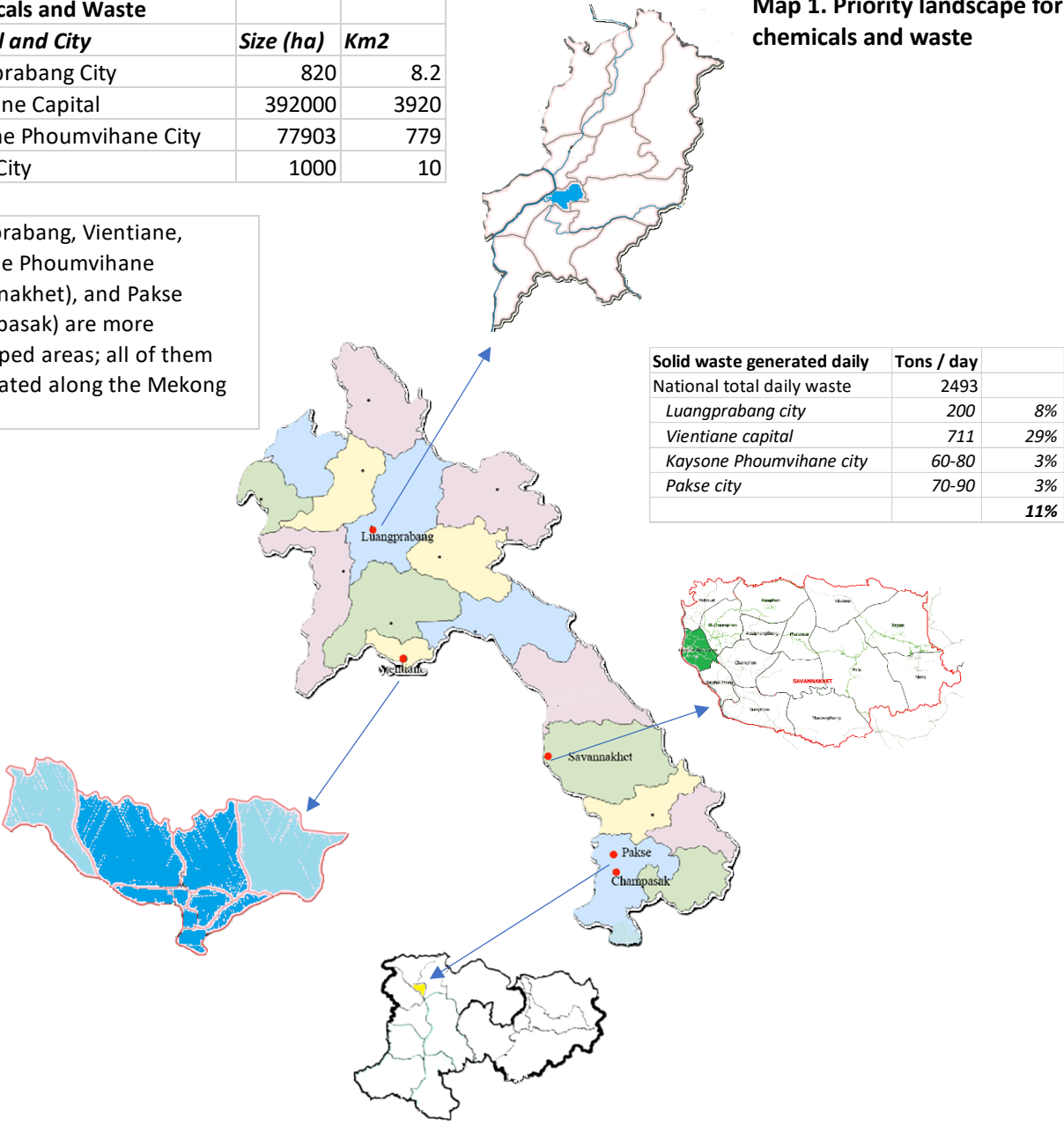
³ Based the meeting with DPF/MONRE (15 February 2025), desk review, and consultations.



Chemicals and Waste		
Capital and City	Size (ha)	Km2
Luangprabang City	820	8.2
Vientiane Capital	392000	3920
Kaysone Phoumvihane City	77903	779
Pakse City	1000	10

Luangprabang, Vientiane, Kaysone Phoumvihane (Savannakhet), and Pakse (Champasak) are more developed areas; all of them are located along the Mekong Rivers.

Map 1. Priority landscape for chemicals and waste





The supporting information about the identified landscapes recommended for making complementary and synergy efforts with the UNDP projects: GEF-8, IWRM and FARM are:

(i) **GEF-8: Generating Multiple Benefits Through Strengthened Protection of Intact Forest Landscapes in Lao PDR (2025–2030)** that targets approximately 0.5 million hectares of primary forest landscapes and across four key national protected areas: (i) *Phou Xieng Thong* covering 3 districts of Phine, Sepon, and Nong of Savannakhet; (ii) *Xebang Nuan* covering 2 districts of Ta-Oy and Samoui of Saravan; (iii) *Xe Sap* covering 2 districts of Kaleum of Sekong and Samoui of Saravan; and (iv) *Nam Et-Phou Louey* covering Huanphanh's 5 districts of Viengthong, Xam Neua, Hiem, Et, and Xiengkhor. In addition, based on the ecological and strategic priorities, the project's likely target areas include provinces of Luangnamtha, Phongsaly, Oudomxay, Khammouane, Bolikhamxay, Attapue, and Champasak.

(ii) **IWRM-EbA: Integrated Water Resource Management and Ecosystem-based Adaptation in Lao PDR (2021–2025)** targets two climate-vulnerable regions: **Luang Prabang City** (focusing on 5 urban villages vulnerable to urban flooding and climate-related risks with 1,000 hectares), and the **Xe Bang Hieng River Basin (covering 5 districts) in Savannakhet Province** with approximately 10,000 hectares as shown below:

<i>District, Savannakhet</i>	<i>Focus areas (3 villages per district)</i>
Champhone	Community-based adaptation
Xonebouly	Ecosystem restoration
Songkhone	Water resource management
Sepon	Climate-resilient agriculture
Nong	Flood and drought risk reduction

IWRM-EbA developed the Integrated Climate-Resilient Flood Management Strategy (ICFMS) for all target districts to provide a detailed Action Plan to improve local community resilience to floods and ensure effective socioeconomic development that benefits the economy, communities, and environment. ICFMS provides clear and detailed geographical landscapes for possible SGP project interventions.

(iii) **FARM: Financing agrochemical reduction and management in Lao PDR (2023-2027)** focuses on agricultural chemicals and sustainable agriculture in Oudomxay, Luangnamtha, Xiengkhuang, Borkeo, and Vientiane Capital, covering 15 districts—found to have high pesticide use, agricultural intensity, and potential for transitioning to integrated pest management and organic practices. The project covers 30,000 hectares including pilot demonstration farms, agrochemical monitoring zones, and farmer training areas across 5 provinces of Oudomxay, Luangnamtha, Xiengkhuang, Borkeo, and Vientiane Capital as detailed below:

Province and district	Focus areas
<i>Oudomxay</i>	
Xay	Provincial capital and agricultural hub
La	Upland farming
Namor	Border area with shifting cultivation
<i>Luangnamtha</i>	
Luangnamtha	Urban and peri-urban agriculture
Sing	Cross-border trade and pesticide use
Long	Ethnic farming communities
<i>Xiengkhuang</i>	

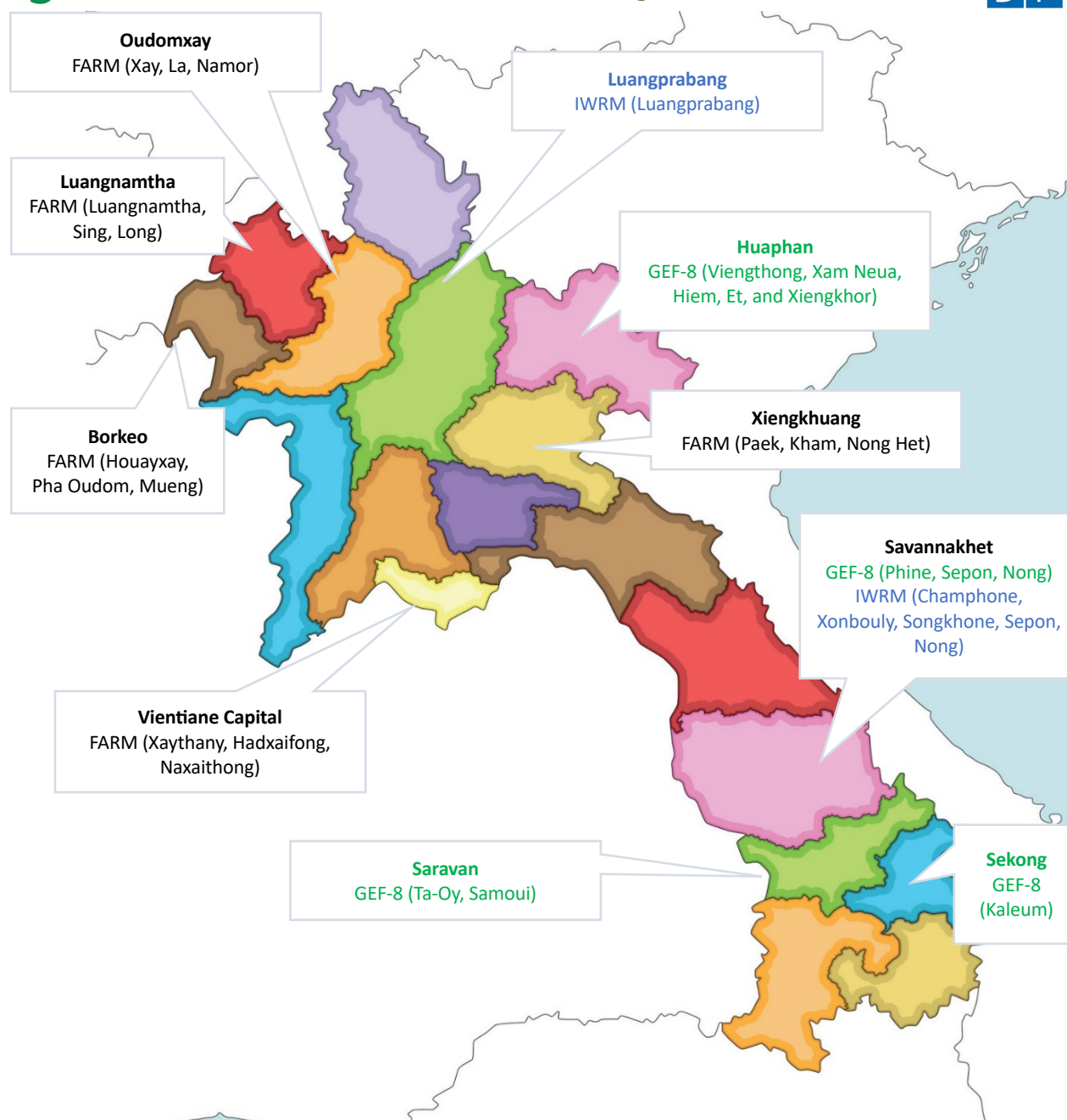


Paek	Home to Phonsavan, provincial capital
Kham	Rice and vegetable production
Nong Het	Upland farming and cross-border trade
Bokeo	
Houayxay	Provincial capital, Mekong corridor
Pha Oudom	Remote, subsistence agriculture
Mueng	Ethnic communities and shifting cultivation
Vientiane Capital	
Xaythany	Peri-urban agriculture and horticulture
Hadxaifong	Vegetable and rice farming
Naxaithong	Pilot area for organic farming

Map 2 shows target provinces and districts of the UNDP projects linked to complementary and synergy efforts.



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c) OP8 strategic initiatives in the landscapes

With the SGP 2.0 four pillars and principles for operationalizing SGP 2.0 in GEF-8, the **grant-making at the national level (Lao PDR) will align around the first five strategic initiatives** (i, ii, iii, iv, v). The **mandatory initiatives** will be x, xi, and xii (Table 4) as described in subsections 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, and Section 9, respectively; where CSO-government-private sector policy and planning dialogue platforms is crucial to promote GEF SGP visibility through various events organized by GEF SGP itself and/or by other stakeholders.



Table 4. Selected initiatives

<i>Lao PDR's strategic initiatives</i>	<i>Twelve strategic initiatives (Global)</i>
X	(i) community-based conservation of threatened ecosystems and species, including eco-tourism
X	(ii) sustainable agriculture and fisheries, and food security
X	(iii) low-carbon energy access co-benefits
X	(iv) local to global coalitions for chemicals and waste management
X	(v) catalysing sustainable urban solutions
	(vi) community-based adaptation 3
	(vii) global ICCA support initiative 2
	(viii) Community dev. and KM for the Satoyama Initiative 4
X	(ix) CSO-government-private sector policy and planning dialogue platforms
X (compulsory)	(x) enhancing social inclusion
X (compulsory)	(xi) knowledge management
X (compulsory)	(xii) results management, M&E

Community-driven solutions will be prioritized to address key environmental challenges, including biodiversity loss, climate change, land degradation, and pollution (chemical and waste). Within the realistic scope and duration of the SGP projects, strengthening local capacity, promoting sustainable livelihoods, and integrating ecosystem-based approaches will be essential to ensure long-term environmental and social benefits. Multi-stakeholder collaboration, knowledge sharing, and adaptive management should guide the programme's implementation. Key strategic areas below can be integrated into the SGP OP8 based on the stakeholder's perspectives presented in Table 6.

Key strategic initiatives with selected project interventions

- (1) *Community-based conservation of threatened ecosystems and species, including eco-tourism*: support local initiatives for biodiversity preservation, agroforestry, and seed-saving programmes to protect native species; strengthen forest and water governance by implementing stricter forest and water conservation laws, supporting participatory forest management, and establishing aquatic biodiversity protection zones.
- (2) *Sustainable agriculture and fisheries, and food security*: develop ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) projects, encourage reforestation, and improve watershed management as an approach to promoting climate resilience; promote sustainable agriculture and land use by shifting away from monocropping, introducing organic farming, and providing practical or hands-on training on soil conservation and agroecology.
- (3) *Low-carbon energy access co-benefits*: introduce energy-efficient cookstoves or biogas systems to reduce the need for firewood, alleviating deforestation and preserving forest ecosystems that store carbon and support biodiversity.
- (4) *Local to global coalitions for chemicals and waste management*: improve waste and chemical management; strengthen community-based waste collection and awareness programmes on hazardous waste disposal.
- (5) *Catalysing sustainable urban solutions*: enhance awareness regarding waste management and segregation by organizing events at all levels, focusing on the handling of diverse solid wastes and chemicals, and advocating for and supporting waste-to-energy initiatives; strengthen the enforcement of rules and regulations pertaining to waste generated by households, industries, organizations, and the importation of chemicals; enhance and develop waste value chains; and enhance or establish waste segregation facilities in communities, schools, and public spaces.

(6) *Outside priority landscapes*:



(6.1) *Capacity building and partnerships*: empowering CSOs, local governments, and private sector actors to collaborate on sustainable development initiatives.

(6.2) *Enhance monitoring and knowledge sharing*: establish a national database on environmental challenges, support participatory monitoring, and promote best practices through knowledge-sharing platforms.

d) Grant-making outside the priority landscapes

The grant-making outside the priority landscapes will focus on innovation projects aiming to address broader environmental and social challenges while fostering inclusivity.

Innovation projects could be initiatives that introduce new or significantly improve ideas, methods, products, or services that create meaningful value. These projects aim to transform creative or innovative concept into practical solutions that solve problems, meet community needs, or enhance overall well-being. Importantly, such initiatives should be community-driven, locally adapted, offering creative approaches to environmental challenges while also improving livelihoods. Example of such projects include:

- (i) *locally rooted creativity* by using traditional knowledge in new ways or combining it with modern practices to solve environmental problems;
- (ii) *scalable models* by piloting ideas that can be replicated or expanded across other communities or landscapes;
- (iii) *renewable energy in remote communities* by implementing small-scale solar or wind system to provide energy access to marginalized populations while training local technicians, including women and youth, to maintain systems, empowering communities through skills development;
- (iv) *urban green spaces* by developing community-led projects to create (or improve existing) urban gardens or parks that improve biodiversity in city areas and engaging vulnerable groups, such as elderly individuals and low-income families, in planning and maintaining these spaces;
- (v) *education and awareness campaigns* by conducting workshops, training, and outreach programmes to raise awareness about environmental sustainability, targeting schools and underrepresented groups in urban or suburban settings and using art, technology, and storytelling to creatively engage communities in discussions about conservation;
- (vi) *waste management and recycling initiatives* by supporting projects that promote circular economy practices, such as waste-to-resource innovations, outside of ecological landscapes, collaborating with informal waste pickers to ensure their inclusion and economic empowerment, and developing the sustainable value chain in wastes; or
- (vii) *cross-sectoral thinking* by linking environmental goals with economic, social, and cultural benefits—like green value changes or eco-tourism.

The resources, whether secured or planned, cash or in-kind, are strategically utilized to enhance both individual projects and the overarching efforts within the selected landscape. The resources can be deployed and utilized effectively by:

1. Enhancing project implementation:

- Cash resources: Direct funding is allocated to critical project components, such as purchasing materials, hiring technical experts, or conducting trainings.
- In-kind contributions: These resources, including volunteer labor, donated equipment, and community support, reduce costs and ensure projects are locally grounded.

2. Promoting integration across projects:



- By pooling resources from various projects or actors within the landscape/seascape, stakeholders can tackle larger challenges, such as habitat restoration or climate resilience, more effectively.
- Shared infrastructure, like monitoring tools or training facilities, optimizes resource use and fosters collaboration.
- 3. *Capacity building and empowerment:*
 - Resources are strategically invested in training community members, local organizations, and project teams. This builds long-term capacity to sustain outcomes and manage resources effectively.
 - Empowerment efforts, such as gender inclusion programmes, ensure diverse participation and innovation.
- 4. *Scaling up impact:*
 - Co-financing from partnerships is used to scale successful models or interventions to other areas within the landscape.
 - Lessons learned are disseminated and applied to maximize the reach of sustainable solutions.
- 5. *Monitoring and adaptive management:*
 - Cash resources are allocated for robust monitoring systems to track progress and outcomes. This data guides adjustments to ensure alignment with the landscape's overall goals.
 - In-kind resources, like local knowledge and expertise, enhance adaptive management practices.
- 6. *Fostering collaboration:*
 - Multi-stakeholder partnerships create opportunities for resource sharing, innovation, and joint problem-solving. Cash and in-kind contributions provide the foundation for sustained partnerships.

4.2 CSO-government-private sector dialogue platforms

The GEF SGP CPS Lao PDR shall reinitiate its *annual exchange seminar* that gather relevant stakeholders (government offices, mass organizations, CSOs/CBOs, educational institutions, and private sectors) to share and exchange environmental concerns and central and local stakeholders' experiences of working together to influence policymakers and/or mobilize resources to address local needs. The annual event will demand the SGP team, including NSC, to update stakeholders its annual operations and performance as well as challenges faced by the SGP team and grantees. To strengthen partnerships, amplify the role of CSOs/CBOs, and create impactful connections between grassroots communities and policymakers, the SGP CPS requires a *detailed plan* to organize and sustain CSO-Government-Private Sector Dialogue Platforms. How it will inform and influence policy at various levels during OP8:

Organizing and sustaining dialogue platforms

1. *Promoting the role of CSOs:*
 - Highlight CSO contributions through shared forums, showcasing successful community-led projects and their alignment with national and global environmental goals.
 - Enable capacity-building activities to strengthen CSOs' ability to advocate for policy changes and effectively engage with governments and private sector stakeholders.
2. *Bridging grassroots and policymakers:*
 - Facilitate inclusive dialogues where grassroots representatives, such as agroecology farmer leaders, ICCA custodians (Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas), and producer organizations, can present their challenges, achievements, and solutions.
 - Organize thematic dialogues, such as:
 - Joint CSO-government preparations for environmental conventions (e.g., Convention of Parties (COPs) for climate and biodiversity agreements).



- Networks of agroecological farmers and producer organizations for sustainable food systems and climate-resilient farming.
- 3. *Facilitating the uptake of good practices:*
 - Disseminate lessons learned and success stories from SGP projects to inform national development strategies.
 - Showcase innovative approaches (e.g., waste-to-energy solutions, biodiversity conservation models) to encourage replication and scaling.
- 4. *Enhancing communication and collaboration:*
 - Use online and offline platforms for real-time knowledge-sharing and networking among stakeholders.
 - Support alliances, such as local-to-global chemical coalitions and national ICCA groups, to align grassroots efforts with international commitments.

Informing and influencing policy in OP8

The SGP country programme will use experiences and lessons learned from community-driven projects to shape and influence policy at local, regional, and national levels:

1. *Key policy processes and contributions:*
 - NBSAP (National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan): Integrate grassroots biodiversity conservation practices into updates of national plans, highlighting the role of ICCAs.
 - NDC (Nationally Determined Contributions): Use community-driven climate mitigation and adaptation projects to inform climate action commitments.
 - NAMA (Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions): Promote low-carbon development models demonstrated by small projects to influence larger national strategies.
 - NAPA (National Adaptation Programme of Action): Align successful grassroots resilience-building projects with national adaptation priorities.
2. *Relevant Networks:*
 - Engage with international networks, such as GEF's global SGP community, to share knowledge and enhance policy alignment.
 - Collaborate with sectoral coalitions, including agroecology and chemical safety networks, for broader impact.
3. *Policy Advocacy:*
 - Use evidence from SGP projects to advocate for key national policy changes addressing global environmental issues, such as renewable energy transitions, biodiversity preservation, and climate resilience.
 - Facilitate dialogues to ensure grassroots voices influence decision-making in high-level policy arenas.

This strategy ensures that the CSO-Government-Private Sector Dialogue Platforms not only create stronger partnerships but also establish a two-way bridge, allowing grassroots innovations and concerns to shape national and global policies.

4.3 Promoting social inclusion, including gender equality and women's empowerment

To ensure that no one falls behind, the GEF-8 SGP prioritizes social inclusion for gender, youth, poor and marginalized groups, ethnic people, and persons with disabilities. It emphasizes gender equality and women's empowerment in particular. It grants these groups of people and local communities the right to participate in and lead grant activities, supports women and women-led organizations as beneficiaries, and promotes youth



perspectives in project design and governance. SGP operations and grant-making at the national and project levels will promote social inclusion.

Two essential references are used to enhance GEF-8 SGP's social inclusion: the *National Action Plan for Gender Equality (NAPGE: 2021-2025)* and the *UNDP Gender Equality Strategy (UNDP-GES: 2022-2026)*.

- NAPGE prioritizes equitable access to education, health, employment, and leadership; economic empowerment and vocational training for women; eliminating gender-based violence; legal changes that are consistent with international treaties; and strengthening institutions accountable for gender equality.
- UNDP-GES supports Lao PDR's commitment to mainstreaming gender in all development sectors, boosting women's leadership and participation, closing gender inequalities in education, labour, and health, and improving data systems and gender-disaggregated statistics.

Lao PDR's gender equality and women's empowerment are faced by:^{4/5}

- deeply rooted inequalities still limiting education opportunities for both girls and boys;
- girls in some communities facing risks of child marriage and early pregnancy which can hinder their personal and professional growth;
- domestic roles and public participation of women and girls who often bear the burden of domestic work and caregiving, while their voices in public life are less influential;
- women particularly women with ethnic background and disabilities are underrepresented in development, adaptation, and implementation of climate change a disaster risk management;
- violence against women—gender-based violence remains a concern, with reports of physical and sexual violence against women; and
- political representation—women hold only 22% of parliamentary seats as of February 2024, indicating a need for greater representation in decision-making roles

To help address the challenges and support NAPGE and UNDP-GES's efforts, the GEF-8 SGP CPS Lao PDR will continue to embed gender equality and women's empowerment based on:

- **evidence-based planning** by emphasizing gender-disaggregated data and social inclusion statistics to inform policy and monitor progress—more than 40% of total participants will be women representing grant project implementation and NSC, and efforts will be made to move beyond participation counts to measuring real impact on, for instance, project design, resource mobilization, and partnership planning.
- **transformative gender agenda** by addressing social norms and gender stereotypes, promoting digital access and economic empowerment, and tackling gender-based violence and poverty through services.
- **collaborative and capacity building** by partnering with UN agencies, donors, and Lao Women's Union at different levels, and by engaging and building capacity for local government and service providers during the SGP operations and grant project implementation.

4.4 Knowledge management (KM)

Recognizing the importance of *Communication Capacity Development and Knowledge Management (CCDKM)* within the OP8 framework, the GEF-SGP Country Programme will prioritize the development of a more targeted, effective, and culturally appropriate communication and outreach strategy. Establishing a "CCDKM Grant" should

⁴ UNICEF Laos: Gender equality—Harnessing girls' power, energy, and creativity for a better future for all. <https://www.unicef.org/laos/gender> (i, ii, and iii).

⁵ Lao People's Democratic Republic (<https://data.unwomen.org/country/lao-peoples-democratic-republic>)



be considered to support the communication and KM as well as marketing the SGP. The grant agreement can be made intermittently during the operational phase (Refer to Annex 4).

This grant application aims to establish a dedicated fund to enhance communication skills and KM among grantees and potential applicants, while also serving as a marketing instrument for the GEF SGP. It will be instrumental in enhancing the programme's overall efficacy by facilitating activities aimed at bolstering communication and KM, as well as the production of communication materials and publications on lessons learned and best practices—available in both offline and online formats, such as video scripts, brochures, and handbooks. Furthermore, it is essential that each grantee or project is mandated to promote their work via social media platforms and is capable of presenting their work at designated events. In order for the project to be completed satisfactorily, the project team shall have **a short video about the project** and **a narrative on the project's good practices** that will be posted in social medias.

5. COMMUNICATION PLAN

The SGP Country Programme's communication plan aims to achieve the following objectives:

- (i) Promote a better understanding of global environmental and sustainable development issues, including livelihoods, poverty reduction, gender equality, and climate change;
- (ii) Foster partnerships and advocacy by engaging key stakeholders, including governments, CSOs/CBOs, private sector actors, and local communities; and
- (iii) Raise awareness and mobilize resources to support SGP initiatives at both national and local levels, aligning with national priorities, GEF programming, and UNDP strategies.

Communication strategy

To effectively communicate and engage with key stakeholders and CSOs/CBOs, the SGP Country Programme employs a multi-channel, participatory approach:

1. Targeted communication channels

- Website: The UNDP GEF-SGP website serves as the central hub for information dissemination, featuring country-specific pages with project portfolios, success stories, videos, and testimonials. It includes links to local language resources and interactive maps to visualize project locations;
- Social media: Platforms like Facebook is used to share updates, project stories, and visual content, ensuring broader reach and engagement;
- Email newsletters: Regular updates are sent to stakeholders, including donors, partners, and community members, to keep them informed about SGP activities and achievements; and
- Events and workshops: In-person and virtual events, such as workshops, training sessions, and community consultations, are organized to engage stakeholders directly and foster collaboration.

2. Stakeholder engagement

- The strategy prioritizes active engagement with local communities and CSOs/CBOs by involving them in the design and implementation of communication initiatives. This ensures that communication efforts are culturally appropriate and address local needs.
- Regular dialogues with government agencies and private sector partners are conducted to align GEF-SGP projects with national development plans and priorities, while also showcasing their contributions to global environmental benefits.

3. Key messages and advocacy



- Communication materials highlight how GEF-SGP projects align with national development goals, such as poverty reduction, gender equality, and climate resilience; and
- The strategy emphasizes SGP's role in achieving GEF objectives and supporting UNDP's broader goals of sustainable development and community empowerment.

4. Innovative communication activities

- Success stories, case studies, and visual content (photos, videos, infographics) are developed to showcase the impact of SGP projects;
- Regular reports, policy briefs, and best practice guides are published to share knowledge and lessons learned; and
- A knowledge-sharing platform is established to facilitate peer learning and collaboration among grantees and stakeholders.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

- Metrics such as reach, engagement, and website traffic are used to assess the effectiveness of online communication.
- Participation in workshops, training sessions, and community events is tracked to measure the reach of in-person communication.
- Regular surveys and feedback sessions are conducted to ensure communication efforts meet stakeholder needs and expectations.

6. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND PARTNERSHIP PLAN

The OP8 of the GEF SGP shall encourage grantees to emphasize resource mobilization and partnerships with their capacity to enhance the impact and sustainability of the grants. Project proposals that have obtained additional funding sources on top of the GEF grant to be re-requested should be given priority in order to actualize resource mobilization and partnership with current projects and public and private funding sources (such as the environmental protection fund, IUCN Lao Ecology Small Grant Programme Phase 2) as part of complementary and synergistic efforts. Below is an overview with a focus on secured and planned cash and in-kind co-financing:

Key elements of the plan

1. Secured and planned co-financing:

- *Cash contributions:* These are secured from international donors' projects, INGO, and/or private sector partners. For example, the GEF Trust Fund allocates core resources, while additional funding is mobilized through partnerships.
- *In-kind contributions:* Communities and local organizations contribute through volunteer labour, provision of materials, and use of local facilities. These contributions are critical for project implementation and sustainability.

2. Co-financing opportunities:

- *Multistakeholder partnerships:* OP8 fosters collaborations with national and local CBOs/CBOs and private entities to pool resources and expertise.
- *Blended financing models:* Combining public grants, private investments, and community contributions to maximize resource mobilization.
- *Landscape approach:* By integrating projects within a specific landscape, OP8 encourages resource sharing and co-financing among stakeholders.

3. Capacity building and knowledge sharing:



- Training local communities and organizations in project management and fundraising to enhance their ability to secure co-financing.
- Sharing good practices and success stories to attract new partners and funding sources.
- 4. *Policy integration:*
 - Aligning SGP projects with national/local development plans to secure government support and possible funding.
 - Advocating for policies that allocate national budgets to support SGP objectives.
- 5. *Women participation:*
 - Ensure and include women's participation in resource mobilization and partnership planning exercises particularly in the abovementioned elements.

a) Secured and planned cash and in-kind co-financing

The GEF SGP country programme mandates that proposals contain 15% in-kind contributions from applicants, and that any amount of in-cash contributions **from applicants themselves** be given careful consideration in order to guarantee strong **ownership and participation** in projects. When choosing proposals, the requirements will be taken into account. Secured and/or planned cash and in-kind co-financing at various levels to enhance its impact can be done as follows:

Project level

- *Cash contributions:* These often come from applicants, local governments, INGOs, or private sector partners who align with the project's goals.
- *In-kind contributions:* Community members may offer labour, materials, or expertise to support project implementation. Such in-kind contribution must be valued and properly recorded for reporting.

Landscape level

- *Collaborative initiatives:* Multiple projects within a landscape may pool resources to address broader environmental challenges.
- *Shared infrastructure:* Investments in shared facilities or tools can serve multiple projects, including SGP projects, optimizing resource use.

Country level

- *National partnerships:* Governments and international organizations may provide funding or technical support to align SGP projects with national priorities (provided that SGP projects are viewed significantly contributing to mutual goals).
- *Policy integration:* Co-financing can be secured through policies that allocate national budgets through state funding facilities such as the Environment Protection Fund, to support SGP objectives.

These strategies ensure that GEF SGP resources are effectively leveraged to achieve sustainable development goals.

b) Co-financing opportunities

To enable co-financing for GEF small grant projects requires deliberate planning and collaboration. Some concrete activities and approaches to consider are:

Activities

- *Stakeholder meetings:* Organize workshops and consultations to align interests between small grant recipients and potential co-financing partners, such as INGOs, donors, local governments, or private entities;



- *Awareness campaigns:* Highlight the mutual benefits of co-financing through targeted outreach efforts to attract contributors.
- *Resource mapping:* Identify available local resources (e.g., in-kind contributions, volunteer time) to match small grant funding.
- *Impact demonstrations:* Showcase success stories of similar projects to build confidence among potential co-financers.
- *Reporting frameworks:* Develop transparent and regular reporting systems to ensure accountability and trust.

Approaches

- *Capacity building:* Train grantees in proposal writing, fundraising techniques, and financial management to make their projects more appealing for co-financing.
- *Collaborative proposal writing:* Involve co-financing partners in drafting funding proposals to align objectives and commitments.
- *Multi-stakeholder agreements:* Formalize partnerships through agreements that clearly outline responsibilities and benefits for all contributors.
- *Blended financing models:* Combine public grants, private investment, and community contributions to maximize impact.
- *Monitoring and evaluation:* Implement robust mechanisms to track project progress and outcomes, reinforcing trust among co-financing partners.

It is recommended for the SGP OP8 that its applicants are encouraged to seek co-financing opportunities. These methods can help build sustainable and impactful partnerships for small grant projects and grantees.

7. PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The GEF SGP in Lao PDR presents significant partnership opportunities to enhance resource mobilisation for local communities and CSOs/CBOs. Through its country team, including the NSC and TAGs, SGP can play a key role in strengthening project development capacity and facilitating access to diverse funding sources beyond its own grants. Key approaches and activities are provided below:

Capacity building for proposal development

- Conduct training workshops for CSOs/CBOs and community representatives on proposal writing, donor engagement, and financial management.
- Establish mentorship programmes where NSC and TAG members provide technical guidance and feedback on funding proposals.
- Develop a repository of sample proposals, concept notes, and donor requirements to assist stakeholders in preparing high-quality applications.

Facilitating access to alternative funding sources

- Organise donor roundtables and networking events to connect CSOs/CBOs with potential funders (bilateral agencies, private sector, foundations, etc.).
- Map out available funding opportunities (e.g., Green Climate Fund, bilateral donors, CSR programmes) and disseminate this information through periodic bulletins or an online database.
- Support CSOs/CBOs in meeting compliance and reporting requirements for different funding sources.



Enhancing multi-stakeholder collaboration

- Establish multi-stakeholder platforms where CSOs/CBOs, government agencies, and private sector actors can collaborate on joint funding proposals.
- Develop partnership agreements with private sector actors interested in sustainable development initiatives (e.g., sustainable agriculture, biodiversity conservation).
- Strengthen linkages between local CSOs/CBOs and international NGOs that can provide co-financing or in-kind technical support.

Pilot co-funding and blended finance models

- Encourage cost-sharing models, where multiple donors contribute to a common initiative supported by SGP.
- Introduce results-based financing models that align funding disbursements with project milestones and impact indicators.
- Explore public-private partnerships (PPPs) to co-finance community-led environmental initiatives.

Advocacy and visibility for resource mobilisation

- Develop a storytelling and impact showcase strategy to highlight successful SGP-supported projects, attracting additional funding.
- Engage with media, social media influencers, and digital platforms to create visibility for community projects and potential funding needs.
- Organize policy dialogues and thematic forums to align SGP-supported initiatives with national development priorities and donor interests.

Institutional strengthening of CSOs/CBOs for long-term sustainability

- Assist CSOs/CBOs in registering as legal entities to access international funding.
- Support the development of organizational strategic plans that align with donor priorities.
- Build financial and governance capacity to enhance CSO/CBO credibility and donor confidence.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

The implementation of the Country Programme Strategy during the OP8 of the GEF SGP in Lao PDR is subject to a range of potential risks that could impact project success. These risks include social, environmental and operational risks in alignment with UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards (SES, 2019), climate-related risks, and other contextual risks such as natural disasters, political influence, and project management.

Effective project implementation requires a thorough understanding of potential risks and their impact on outcomes. Table 5 outlines key risks identified in the project, their degree and probability, and the mitigation measures planned to address them. By proactively strengthening institutional capacity, fostering inclusive participation, and ensuring transparency, the proposed strategies align with UNDP's SES to enhance project sustainability and impact.

Table 5. Description of risks identified in OP8

Describe identified risk	Degree of risk	Probability of risk	Risk mitigation measure foreseen
Low capability of local CSOs/NPAs and other applicants to develop quality project proposals.	Medium	Low	Strengthen capacity-building efforts through workshops, mentoring, and guidance on proposal development. Provide access to technical advisory groups (TAGs) and develop a repository of best practices for applicants. (Aligned with SES Principle 3: Inclusion and Participation).



Describe identified risk	Degree of risk	Probability of risk	Risk mitigation measure foreseen
Social inclusion gaps, leading to exclusion of marginalized groups.	Medium	Low	Conduct structured stakeholder consultations, ensure free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) where applicable, and document all engagements. (SES Standard 6: Indigenous Peoples).
Sustainability of project implementation after closure.	High	Medium	Allocate up to 20% of project funds to a community-managed revolving fund with clear financial discipline and governance structure. Ensure post-project sustainability through partnerships. (SES Standard 5: Sustainable Resource Management).
Weak project ownership and leadership, impacting reporting and implementation timelines.	Medium	Low	Enhance communication between grantees and the programmes secretariat, set clear deadlines, and enforce accountability measures. Termination protocols for non-compliance will be enforced after 60 days of inactivity. (SES Principle 2: Accountability and Transparency).
Ineffective CSO-Government-Private Sector Dialogue Platform.	Medium	Low	Strengthen multi-stakeholder engagement by involving academia, mass organizations, and other relevant actors in annual knowledge-sharing forums. (SES Standard 2: Stakeholder Engagement).
Local government influence and transparency issues.	High	Medium	Ensure independent project management committees are established with transparent financial oversight, including regular reporting to the programme secretariat. (SES Standard 4: Transparency and Anti-Corruption).
Failure to meet strategic initiative targets and measurable outcomes.	Medium	Low	Integrate SMART indicators into project proposal requirements and review processes to align with OP8 targets. (SES Standard 3: Project-Level Monitoring and Evaluation).
Grantee delays requiring MOA amendments.	High	Medium	Implement a case-by-case assessment process for MOA extensions, ensuring alignment with UNOPS requirements. Allow for flexibility within a 60-day grace period post-MOA expiry. (SES Standard 7: Adaptive Management).
Delays in documentation affecting project timelines due to seasonal productivity factors.	High	Medium	Streamline approval processes, ensuring that once NSC approval is granted, the MOA can proceed without further delay. Conditional approvals should include clear recommendations for quick resolution. (SES Standard 8: Efficiency and Effectiveness)
Government influence on CSOs/CBOs projects due to financial and political factors.	High	Medium	Conduct government orientation sessions to build awareness of SGP frameworks. Implement awareness campaigns among officials at all levels. (SES Principle 1: Human Rights-Based Approach)
Merger of MONRE with MAF as Ministry of Agriculture and Environment potential delays in SGP implementation	High	Medium	Require close follow-up with MONRE/NSC on the progress (SES Standard 2: Stakeholder Engagement)



9. MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN

The M&E plan aligns with the SGP M&E Country Programme Guidelines (2019) and incorporates key elements such as synergizing with indicators, M&E budget allocation, and impact reviews. The plan aims to enhance the programme's ability to measure progress, assess impacts, and ensure accountability.

1. Objectives of the M&E plan

- Monitor the implementation of SGP projects and their alignment with GEF focal areas (biodiversity, climate change, land degradation, etc.);
- Assess the environmental, social, and economic impacts of SGP projects at the local, national, and global levels;
- Provide transparent reporting to stakeholders, including the GEF, UNDP, governments, and local communities; and
- Capture lessons learned and good practices to improve future project design and implementation.

2. Key components of the M&E plan

2.1 Synergizing with Indicators

- Each SGP project will select indicators from the Project Roster of Indicators provided in the SGP M&E Country Programme Guidelines (2019). These indicators will be tailored to the specific objectives and outcomes of each project;
- Standardized indicators used across all SGP countries to measure progress toward GEF objectives (e.g., hectares of land under sustainable management, tons of CO₂ emissions reduced, number of beneficiaries);
- Tailored to national priorities and local contexts, these indicators measure project outcomes and impacts relevant to Lao PDR's development goals; and
- Indicators will be reported in mid-term and final progress reports submitted by grantees. These reports will include quantitative and qualitative data to demonstrate progress and impact.

2.2 M&E Budget

Each project will allocate at least 8% of the total grant amount for M&E activities.⁶ This budget will cover (i) surveys, interviews, focus group discussions, and other data collection methods; (ii) preparation and submission of mid-term and final progress reports; (iii) tracking and reporting on GEF-8 indicators as required; (iv) if a project evaluation is part of the grantee's M&E plan, the budget will also cover evaluation costs; and (v) the M&E budget will be used to ensure that grantees have the necessary resources to effectively monitor and evaluate their projects, including hiring external evaluators if needed.

2.3 Impact Reviews

Conduct Impact Reviews to assess the overall results and impacts of the SGP OP8 in Lao PDR. These reviews will (i) assess the extent to which vulnerable and marginalized groups (e.g., women, ethnic minorities, youth) have been included and benefited from SGP projects; (ii) evaluate the scaling up, replication, mainstreaming, and policy influence of successful SGP initiatives; (iii) review the effectiveness of the SGP's community-driven approach and its ability to deliver results; (iv) the Impact Review will produce evidence-based knowledge on the strengths and weaknesses of the SGP OP8, providing insights for future programming; and (v) the Impact Review will be conducted at the mid-point and end of the OP8 cycle to ensure timely feedback and adjustments.

⁶ This percentage is included in the 15% of the grantees' administration cost.



3. M&E activities and timeline

3.1 Baseline Assessment

- *Objective:* Establish a baseline for key indicators at the start of each project to measure progress and impact.
- *Activities:*
 - Conduct surveys and interviews with project beneficiaries and stakeholders.
 - Collect data on environmental, social, and economic conditions in the project area.
- *Timeline:* Within the first 3 months of project implementation.

3.2 Mid-Term Review

- *Objective:* Assess project progress and make necessary adjustments to ensure successful implementation.
- *Activities:*
 - Review progress against project objectives and indicators.
 - Conduct stakeholder consultations to gather feedback and identify challenges.
 - Prepare and submit a mid-term progress report.
- *Timeline:* At the mid-point of the project cycle (e.g., 12 months for a 24-month project).

3.3 Final Evaluation

- *Objective:* Measure the overall impact of the project and document lessons learned.
- *Activities:*
 - Conduct a final evaluation to assess the achievement of project outcomes and impacts.
 - Prepare and submit a final progress report, including data on GEF-8 indicators.
 - Document best practices and lessons learned for knowledge sharing.
- *Timeline:* At the end of the project cycle.

3.4 Impact review

- *Objective:* Assess the overall impact of the SGP OP8 in Lao PDR and provide recommendations for future programming.
- *Activities:*
 - Conduct a comprehensive review of all SGP projects under OP8.
 - Analyse data on social inclusion, broader adoption, and delivery mechanisms.
 - Produce a final Impact Review report with evidence-based findings and recommendations.
- *Timeline:* At the mid-point and end of the OP8 cycle.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 National coordinators (NCs)

- Oversee the implementation of the M&E plan at the country level.
- Provide technical support to grantees in data collection, reporting, and evaluation.
- Ensure compliance with GEF and UNDP M&E requirements.

4.2 Grantees

- Implement M&E activities as outlined in their project proposals.
- Collect and report data on project indicators.
- Submit mid-term and final progress reports.

4.3 UNDP country office

- Provide technical support and ensure alignment with UNDP's M&E frameworks.
- Review and approve M&E reports submitted by grantees.

4.4 GEF secretariat

- Review and approve M&E reports and Impact Reviews.



- Provide guidance on global indicators and reporting standards.

4.5 National steering committee (NSC)

- Approve the selection of project proposals
- Monitor the progress of the project implementation
- Provide inputs on GEF SGP technical documents
- Visit the project sites and/or project evaluations

The NSC members are volunteers contributing to GEF SGP programme's success. To incentivize their active engagement and involvement in any GEF SGP mission, it is recommended that they are entitled to the UN-rate DSA when on GEF SGP missions such as M&E.

5. M&E tools and methods

- 5.1 *Logical framework (Log-frame)*—A tool for planning and monitoring projects, outlining objectives, outputs, outcomes, and indicators;
- 5.2 *Participatory M&E*—Involving local communities and stakeholders in the M&E process to ensure their perspectives are captured;
- 5.3 *Geographic information systems (GIS)*—Mapping project locations and impacts for visual representation; and
- 5.4 *Surveys and interviews*—Collecting qualitative and quantitative data from beneficiaries and stakeholders.

6. Knowledge management and sharing

- 6.1 *Documentation of best practices*—Capture successful approaches and lessons learned to inform future projects;
- 6.2 *Knowledge sharing platforms*—Use websites, social media, and other digital tools to share M&E findings and best practices; and
- 6.3 *Workshops and webinars*—Organize knowledge-sharing events with stakeholders to disseminate findings and promote learning.

9.1 Monitoring approaches at project and country levels

The M&E plan ensures systematic tracking of progress at the project level and aggregation of results at the Country Programme portfolio level, with strong emphasis on data quality assurance and alignment with the SGP M&E Country Programme Guidelines (2019). Below is a detailed explanation of the process:

1. Progress tracking at project Level

1.1 Data collection and reporting

- Baseline data to be collected within the first 3 months of project implementation (surveys, interviews, GIS mapping).
- Mid-Term & Final reports to be submitted structured reports with quantitative and qualitative data on project indicators by grantees
- Participatory monitoring is involved by local communities in data collection (e.g., focus groups, beneficiary feedback).

1.2 Key M&E activities

- Logical framework (Log-frame) applied to track progress against predefined outputs, outcomes, and indicators.
- Surveys & interviews applied to verify project achievements (e.g., hectares restored, CO₂ reductions, beneficiary numbers).
- Third-Party verification (if needed) applied to ensures objectivity, especially for high-impact projects.

1.3 Data quality assurance (DQA)



- Projects use predefined GEF/SGP indicators to ensure comparability.
- National Coordinators (NCs) and UNDP review reports for consistency and accuracy.
- NCs conduct random verifications to confirm reported data.

2. Aggregation & Analysis at Country Programme Level

2.1 Consolidation in SGP database

- Project-level data (baseline, mid-term, final) is recorded in the SGP centralized database (e.g., UNDP's Quantum or SGP-specific systems).
- Ensures uniform reporting across all projects for easy aggregation.
- Visualize trends (e.g., total land restored, beneficiaries reached, emissions reduced).

2.2 Portfolio-level analysis

- Evaluates performance across projects (e.g., which projects exceeded targets, which faced delays).
- Groups' results by GEF focal areas (biodiversity, climate change, etc.) to assess sectoral impact.
- Conducted at mid-term and end of OP8 cycle to assess overall Country Programme effectiveness.

2.3 Data quality control at portfolio level

- Compares reported results with external datasets (e.g., government statistics, satellite imagery).
- Flags inconsistencies (e.g., unusually high beneficiary numbers) for further verification.
- UNDP/GEF may conduct independent audits of selected projects.

3. Ongoing data management in SGP database

3.1 Process for recording project and country-level data

- Grantees submit reports (mid-term, final) with verified data.
- Ensure compliance before entering into the SGP database.
- UNDP/GEF validation through spot-checks and approves aggregated results.
- Database updates through real-time tracking allows adaptive management (e.g., reallocating resources if projects underperform).

3.2 Ensuring data integrity

- Provide training for grantees to ensure proper data collection methodologies.
- Conduct automated checks on database flags incomplete/illogical entries.
- Conduct periodic audits by random project audits verify data accuracy.

4. Alignment with SGP M&E guidelines and GEF-8 requirements

- Standardized indicators to Develop and apply core project indicators aligned with GEF-8 requirements to ensure consistency and comparability across all projects.
- Dedicated M&E Budget to allocate 8% of the total grant to M&E activities, ensuring adequate resources for high-quality data collection, analysis, and reporting.
- Conduct KM systematically document and share lessons learned through UNDP platforms to enhance learning and inform future programming

To ensure **credible, representative, and participatory data collection**, the SGP Country Programme implement a structured approach to **monitoring, capacity building, and stakeholder engagement**, aligned with *SGP M&E Guidelines (2019)* and *GEF-8 requirements*.

1. Capacity building for grantees

M&E inception workshop

- Objective: Train grantees on the new M&E strategy, data collection tools, and reporting requirements.
- Participants: All grantees, National Coordinators (NCs), UNDP, local CSOs, and community representatives.
- Key Topics:



- Introduction to GEF-8 indicators and project-level M&E frameworks.
- Hands-on training on data collection methods (surveys, focus groups, GIS mapping).
- Ethical guidelines, including Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) and "Do No Harm" principles.
- Frequency: Conducted at the start of each funding cycle (OP8) and refreshed annually for new grantees.

Ongoing M&E support

- NCs, UNDP, and NSC members perform as mentors to provide continuous technical guidance to grantees.
- Standardized reporting formats, log-frames, and digital data collection tools (e.g., KoBo Toolbox).
- Grantees share experiences through quarterly M&E reflection sessions.

2. Monitoring visits and portfolio evaluations

Frequency of monitoring visits

- At least one mandatory visit per project during its lifecycle (baseline, mid-term, or final evaluation).
- Cluster-Based Monitoring:
 - Projects in the same thematic area (e.g., biodiversity, climate change) or geographic region are grouped for joint monitoring to reduce costs.
 - Expected frequency:
 - High-impact projects: 2-3 visits (baseline, mid-term, final).
 - Standard projects: 1-2 visits (mid-term + spot check).
- Third-Party Monitoring (if needed):
 - Engaging academic institutions, NGOs, or independent evaluators for impartial verification.
 - Consult SGP's Central Project Management Team (CPMT) for guidance on procurement.

Portfolio-level evaluations

- Mid-Cycle Review (Year 2-3 of OP8): Assess cluster performance, gender inclusion, and scalability.
- Final Impact Review (End of OP8):
 - Evaluates cumulative outcomes across all projects.
 - Measures contributions to GEF focal areas, SDGs, and national priorities.
 - Includes case studies, beneficiary testimonials, and policy influence analysis.

3. Participatory monitoring and ethical compliance

Engaging local stakeholders and vulnerable groups

- Community-based monitoring committees:
 - Include women, youth, indigenous or ethnic groups, and marginalized communities in defining success indicators.
 - Use participatory rural appraisal (PRA) and focus group discussions to gather feedback.
- Methods for community-owned monitoring:
 - Photo diaries, community scorecards.
 - Mobile-based surveys for real-time feedback as digital reporting
 - Biannual meetings to review progress and adjust implementation.

Ethical guidelines

- Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC):
 - All data collection involves transparent consent processes with communities.
 - Vulnerable groups (e.g., ethnic minorities) are consulted in their preferred language.
- "Do No Harm" Principle:
 - Avoids cultural insensitivity, conflicts of interest, or unintended negative impacts.
 - Ensures data anonymity where needed (e.g., gender-based violence cases).

4. Reporting and knowledge sharing

Community-level reporting



- Display project progress in local languages in village noticeboards
- Share results with non-literate stakeholders through radio/community meetings.
- National/global reporting*
- Results uploaded to SGP Global Database, UNDP Country Office reports, and GEF portals.
- Grantees present findings to policymakers, NGOs, and donors on annual learning forums

5. Cost-effective partnerships - to maximize efficiency, SGP to:

- Partner with other grant-makers (e.g., FAO, IUCN, NGOs) for joint field visits.
- Collaborate with universities for independent data validation.
- Leverage government monitoring systems (e.g., MONRE, MAF) to avoid duplication.

Table 6. M&E Plan at the Country Programme Level, aligns with SGP M&E Guidelines (2019) and GEF-8 requirements:

M&E Activity	Purpose	Responsible Parties	Budget Source	Timing
Country Programme Strategy (CPS) Elaboration	Develop framework for action, including identification of community projects aligned with GEF-8 focal areas.	NC, NSC, country stakeholders, grantees	SGP planning grant (for consultants, if needed)	At the start of OP8
Annual CPS Review (integrated into NSC meetings)	Assess project effectiveness, portfolio performance, and adaptive management needs. Facilitate learning and strategic adjustments.	NC, NSC, UNDP Country Office (with CPMT review)	Staff time, Country Operating Budget	At least once annually
Annual Monitoring Report Survey	Standardized reporting to CPMT/GEF; analytical presentation of results for donors.	NC/PA (with CPMT technical guidance)	Staff time	June–July (annually)
Country Portfolio Review	Capture portfolio-wide impacts, broader adoption, and lessons for CPS refinement. Supports stakeholder reporting and strategic planning.	NC, NSC (consultants if needed for impact reviews)	SGP planning grant (for external reviews)	Once per operational phase (mid-term and final)
SGP Database Management	Ensure accurate recording of project/country inputs for tracking and reporting.	NCs, PAs (with CGP/UNDP oversight)	Staff time	Ongoing (data finalized by May–June annually for reporting)
Audit	Verify compliance with financial/project management standards (UNDP/GEF).	External auditors (NC/PA support)	Global Operating Budget	Annually (risk-based selection of countries)

9.2 CPS results framework

Table 7. Results frameworks for SGP OP8 Country Programme Strategy, align with GEF SGP 2.0 pillars and Lao PDR's landscape approach

Alignment with SDGs SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 15 (Life on Land), SDG 6 (Clean Water), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption)
Synergy with UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD): CPD Output 1.3: Enhanced community resilience through sustainable natural resource management CPD Output 2.1: Inclusive livelihoods and economic opportunities for marginalized groups



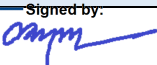
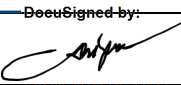
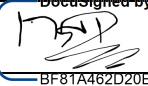
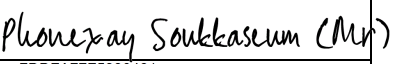
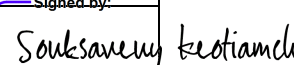
OP8 SGP Programme Goal: Engage local CSOs/CBOs in landscape-seascape approaches across the world, providing them access to knowledge and information, capacitating them through learning-by-doing, skills development, and delivering technical and grant assistance for interventions that enhance wellbeing and socioeconomic conditions and generate global environmental benefits.		
1. OP8 SGP CPS Strategic Initiatives (Prioritized for Lao PDR)	2. CPS Indicators and Targets (Quantitative targets aligned with GEF OP8 + country-specific indicators)	3. Means of Verification
<u>Strategic Initiative 1:</u> Community-based conservation of threatened ecosystems and species, including eco-tourism	- 5,000 hectares of landscapes under improved practices (GEF 4.1/4.3). - 1,500 hectares of terrestrial habitat restored (GEF 2/5). - At least 10 target species showing recovery trends.	- Project reports - GIS mapping - Baseline/endline biodiversity surveys - Annual monitoring Report (AMR)
<u>Strategic Initiative 2:</u> Sustainable agriculture and fisheries, and food security	- 3,500 hectares under climate-smart/organic agriculture (GEF 3.1). - 10 CSO – private sector partnerships - 30% average reduction in chemical fertilizer use in target areas.	- Satellite imagery - Farmer/partner registries - Grantee progress reports - AMR
<u>Strategic Initiative 3:</u> Low-carbon energy access co-benefits	- 2,000 tons CO2e mitigated. - 200 kW renewable energy installed (e.g., biogas, solar, etc). - 5 local energy solution demonstrated.	- Energy audits - Installation records - AMR - Case studies
<u>Strategic Initiative 4:</u> Local to global coalitions for chemicals and waste management	- 5 policy briefs / recommendations and/or bylaw influence (e.g., plastic waste). - 3 coalitions/networks established. - 20 community recycling or waste management projects.	- Partner reports - Policy documents - Local meeting records - AMR
<u>Strategic Initiative 5:</u> <u>Catalysing Sustainable Urban Solutions</u> <i>(Limited to peri-urban areas of Vientiane/Luang Prabang)</i>	- 8 urban/peri-urban community projects implemented (e.g., urban wetland restoration, waste recycling hubs). - 15 community waste hubs and/or wetland sites. - 20% plastic waste reduction in 3 urban pilot zones.	- Municipal audits - Urban CSO reports - Project documentation - AMR
<u>Strategic Initiative 6:</u> <u>CSO-Government-Private Sector Dialogue Platforms</u> <i>(Critical for scaling rural innovations)</i>	- 6 multi-stakeholder policy dialogues (e.g., on land tenure/clean energy). - 3 policy inputs adopted at provincial or national. - 50% representation by women/IPs in dialogues.	- Dialogue minutes - Stakeholder surveys - Policy documents - AMR
<u>Strategic Initiative 7:</u> Enhancing social inclusion (Mandatory)	- 50% of all grant beneficiaries are women (GEF 11). - 30% of projects led by youth / Ips. - Gender and inclusion criteria applied in 100% of projects.	- Disaggregated M&E data - Gender audit reports - Grantee interviews - AMR + stakeholder interviews.
<u>Strategic Initiative 8:</u> Monitoring and Evaluation and Knowledge Management (Mandatory)	- 100% of projects include community-led M&E systems. - 3 national KM workshops conducted. - 1 national knowledge hub/platform established.	- M&E and KM reports - Event documentation - SGP database - Final Impact Review

NOTE: The targets / indicators and means of verification are dynamic and can be updated as required.



10. NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE ENDORSEMENT

The signatures of NSC members are required as endorsement of the complete final CPS duly reviewed and agreed at the National Steering Committee meeting.

NSC members involved in OP8 CPS development, review and endorsement	Signatures
Thome Xaisongkham (Mr), on behalf of UNDP Country Office	Signed by:  8C2DFD112507438...
Hongnapha Phommabouth (Ms)	Signed by:  797CAC2A066A43B...
Kaisamai Narkkhittavong (Mr)	DocuSigned by:  0E833ECB1902447...
Anousack Maitrychith (Mr), on behalf of GEF OFP	DocuSigned by:  9CE0B0D9E4B44BF...
Phetsamone Manola (Ms)	DocuSigned by:  BF81A462D20B421...
Phonexay Soukkaseum (Mr)	DocuSigned by:  7DDFA77F5330481...
Sirixai Phanthavongs (Ms)	Signed by:  B950211A7F934C8...
Souksaveuy Keotiamchanh (Ms)	Signed by:  4FC85959A8AB432...
Tingthong Phetsavong (Mr.)	DocuSigned by:  34C281D3CA004C8...



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- UN Women. *Lao People's Democratic Republic* (<https://data.unwomen.org/country/lao-peoples-democratic-republic>)



ANNEXES

**Annex 1. List of relevant national planning framework and international agreements**

Key National Planning Frameworks and International Agreements	Date of Issuance / Ratification
National Laws	
Law on Environmental Protection, No. 53/NA	2024
Law on Aquatic Animals and Fishery, No. 41/NA	2023
Law on Terrestrial Wildlife, No. 42/NA	2023
Law on National Heritage, No. 11/NA	2021
Forestry Law, No. 64/NA	2019
Law on Gender Equality, No. 77/NA	2019
Law on Disaster Management, No. 71/NA	2019
Land Law, No. 70/NA	2019
Law on Water and Water Resources, No. 23/NA	2017
Law on Chemicals, No. 07/NA	2016
Law on Tourism, No. 32/NA	2013
Law on Agriculture, No. 01/NA	1998
Decrees	
Decree on Protection Forest, No. 01/GoL	2024
Decree on International Trade Management of CITES Species, No. 299/GoL	2024
Decree on Wetland, No. 350/GoL	2023
Decree on Protected Forest, No. 219/GoL	2023
Decree on Climate Change, No. 321/GoL	2019
Decree on National Green Growth Strategy to 2030, No. 20/GoL	2019
Decree on Pesticides Management, No. 258/GoL	2017
Decree on Foundations, No. 149/PM	2011
Decree on Cooperative, No. 136/PM	2010
Regulations, Guidelines and other Legislation	
Decision on Pollution Control, No. 168/MONRE	2021
Decision on Management and Monitoring of Toxic and Hazardous Wastes, No. 3649/ MONRE	2021
Decision on Endorsement the List of Aquatic and Wildlife Species for Conservation and Management, No. 08/PM	2021
Decision on Determination of Flora Species in Category I, II & III, No. 0448/MAF	2021
Key National Planning Frameworks	
Lao PDR's National Adaptation Plan	2025
Lao PDR Forestry Strategy to 2035 and Vision to 2050	2024
National Plastics Action Plan for the Lao PDR, 2024 - 2030	2024
Agricultural Land Management and Development Strategy to 2030 and Vision to 2040	2024
National Strategy on Climate Change towards 2030	2023
National Strategy for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+)	2021
Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) for the Paris Accord	2021
National Roadmap for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Lao PDR	2020
Strategic Framework for Green and Sustainable Agriculture	2020
National Social Protection Strategy and Vision to 2030	2020
National Green Growth Strategy of the Lao PDR till 2030	2018
National Land Allocation Master Plan	2018
Circular Economy Strategies for Lao PDR	2017
National Pollution Control Strategy and Action Plan, 2018-2025	2017
9 th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2016-2025)	2016
National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) for Lao PDR 2016-2025	2016
Lao PDR National Agro-Biodiversity Programme and Action Plan II (2015-2025)	2016



Paris Agreement	2015
UNFCCC National Adaptation Plans of Action (NAPA)	2009
Fourth Five-year National Plan of Action on Gender Equality (2021-2025)	2020
Key International Agreements	
Minamata Convention on Mercury	Ratified on 21 Sep 2017
Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS)	Sep 2012
Kyoto Protocol	6 Feb 2003
UNFCCC National Communications (1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd).	Ratified on 5 Jan 1995 First submitted in 2000 Second submitted in 2013 Third submitted in 2020
Strategic Action Programmes (SAPs) for shared international waterbodies (IW)	2010
Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF)	Joined in 2008
Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)	Ratified on 5 Mar 2002
The ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity	2005
Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)	30 May 2004
Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the CBD	1 Nov 2004
UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)	Accepted 20 Sep 1996
Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer	21 Aug 1998
Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)	20 Sep 1996
UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)	4 Jan 1995
Mekong River Commission Agreement on the Cooperation for the Sustainable Development of Basin	1995
UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	2015
ASEAN Agreement on the Convention of Nature and Natural Resources	Accepted on 16 Oct 1997
Ramsar Convention	28 May 2010
International Plant Protection Convention	28 Jan 1955
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	14 Aug 1981
National Review of Lao People's Democratic Republic Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and Adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform (BPfA+25)	2019
Key International Guidelines	
GEF Small Grants Programme 2.0 Operational Guidelines for GEF-8	2024
GEF Small Grants Programme 2.0 Implementation Arrangement for GEF-8	2022
UNDP's Country Programme Document for the Lao PDR (2022–2026)	2021



Annex 2. A structured design for selection criteria of SGP project proposals

Areas	Beginner tier	Intermediate tier	Advanced tier
	For applicants with little to no prior experience in implementing projects	For applicants with moderate experience and capacity to manage projects	For highly experienced applicants
Maximum budget (\$)	10,000	40,000	75,000
Eligibility	- First-time grant applicants or those with minimal project experience. - Must demonstrate a basic understanding of the proposed field.	- Applicants with a track record of at least one successfully completed project. - Demonstrable familiarity with project management.	- Extensive experience in the field with multiple successful projects completed. - Demonstrated leadership in implementing large-scale initiatives.
Proposal requirements	- Clear and concise project description. - Basic outline of goals, activities, and timeline. - General budget estimation, with flexibility for adjustments.	- Detailed project plan with defined objectives, milestones, and deliverables. - Comprehensive budget breakdown. - Evidence of collaboration or community engagement	- Sophisticated project design addressing complex challenges. - Comprehensive risk management and sustainability strategies. - Detailed budget justification linked to each project activity.
Areas	Beginner tier	Intermediate tier	Advanced tier
Selection criteria	- Relevance to the grant programme's objectives. - Potential for impact in the target community. - Demonstration of basic resource management skills.	- Feasibility and innovation of the project. - Measurable outcomes and sustainability plan. - Proven capacity to manage resources and meet deadlines.	- Potential for significant, wide-ranging impact. - Innovative approaches and alignment with global best practices. - Strong track record of achieving previous grant objectives.
Capacity building	Priority given to applicants willing to engage in training or mentorship programmes	N/A	N/A
Supporting materials	N/A	Letters of recommendation from stakeholders (if applicable).	- Data or case studies showcasing previous successes. - Endorsements from reputable organizations or authorities.



Annex 3. Supporting details for specific country delivery mechanisms

GEF SGP Lao PDR OP8 Grant-Making Summary

Category	Details
SGP funding for OP8	US\$1 million (CORE and STAR)
Funding allocation	— 70% for projects inside priority landscapes; 30% of the total project amount topped up as bonus if found innovative — up to 30% for innovation projects outside priority landscapes — max US\$75,000 per project including second financing (if performance exceptional to support key pillars stated below)
6 focal or thematic areas	Biodiversity, land degradation, climate change, chemicals and waste, sustainable forest management, and international waters
5 Strategic initiatives	— community-based conservation of threatened ecosystems and species, including eco-tourism — sustainable agriculture and fisheries, and food security — low-carbon energy access co-benefits — local to global coalitions for chemicals and waste management — catalysing sustainable urban solutions
4 cross-cutting strategic initiatives (mandatory)	— enhancing social inclusion — CSO-government-private sector policy and planning dialogue platforms — knowledge management — results management, M&E
Eligibility	Only officially registered CBOs and CSOs ; applicants must contribute 15% in kind
Cost allowances	Up to 15% for admin expenses
Contribution to revolving fund	up to 20% for community development or revolving funds (optional)
Key pillars	Expansion, Innovation, Diversification, Optimization
Empowerment Goals	Community-based innovation, capacity building, inclusion of ethnic peoples, women, youth
Women's participation targets	At least 50% women involvement in project lifecycle; 40%+ women in NSC
Economic viability	Required; must assess income generation, value chains, market access , and sustainable agricultural/forestry practices
Project tiers	Applicants categorized into Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced
Strategic synergies	Alignment with 3 UNDP projects: (i) Intact Forest Landscapes (2025–2030) (ii) IWRM-EbA (2021–2025) (iii) FARM (2023–2027) (iv) other UNDP projects
Application steps	1. Expression of Interest (EOI) — Documents: license, experience summary, staff profile, 3 references



	— Project concept (1-2 pages) to identify concrete results that relevant to one or more of the focal or thematic and strategic areas and reflect the needs of community or communities and/or stakeholders that would be involved. The concept must include priority location e.g., province, district, and village(s). 2. Call for Full Proposal (CfP) — Notify shortlisted candidates — Organize an orientation session and/or training on project formulation, business plan, project cycle management (this can be carried out by specialized grantee) for shortlisted candidates by tier (beginner, intermediate, and advanced) — Shortlisted candidates start developing their full project proposal (technical and financial), attached with community consultation letter(s)
Monitoring & Evaluation	M&E mandatory; logical framework indicators must be updated routinely
Strategy note	Country program strategy is a living document—subject to revision



Annex 4. Concept note on “Communication Capacity Development and Knowledge Management (CCDKM) Grant” for the implementation of GEF-SGP – OP8

Introduction

Recognizing the strategic importance of Communication Capacity Development and Knowledge Management (CCDKM) for achieving the objectives outlined within the GEF-SGP OP8 framework, the GEF-SGP Lao PDR Country Programme will prioritize the development of a more targeted, effective, and culturally appropriate communication and outreach strategy. This Concept Note outlines a framework for establishing a dedicated “**CCDKM Grant**” designed to support this priority.

This grant application aims to establish a dedicated fund to enhance communication skills and KM among grantees and potential applicants, while also serving as a key **marketing instrument** for the GEF SGP programme in Lao PDR. It will be instrumental in enhancing the programme's overall efficacy by facilitating activities aimed at bolstering communication and KM, as well as the **production of communication materials and publications** on lessons learned and best practices—available in both offline and online formats, such as **video scripts, brochures, and handbooks**. Furthermore, it is essential that each grantee or project is **mandated to promote their work via social media platforms and is capable of presenting their work at designated events**. The CCDKM Grant facility allows for grant agreements to be potentially awarded intermittently during the operational phase, addressing specific communication and KM needs as they arise, subject to budget availability.

Estimated Budget: USD75,000 (max)

Duration: 24 months

1. Project Summary

This project establishes a dedicated fund to bolster communication capacity building and KM for the GEF-SGP during OP8, implementing a targeted, effective, and culturally sensitive communication strategy. It will focus on two key components:

- **Communication Capacity Development:** Training grantees (local communities, organizations, and CSOs) in effective communication techniques, including social media promotion, storytelling, public presentation skills, and culturally appropriate messaging for diverse audiences.
- **Knowledge Management:** Establishing a knowledge-sharing platform and disseminating best practices, success stories, and lessons learned through various offline and online formats (including video scripts, brochures, handbooks, etc.) to enhance program understanding and foster broader support.

The project also aims to improve outreach to key audiences (potential grantees, development partners, and local communities) through diversified channels (social media, mobile messaging, community radio), overcome language barriers by using local languages, and incorporate robust feedback mechanisms to ensure continuous improvement.

2. Alignment with SGP Communication Strategy and Objectives

This project directly supports the SGP's outreach and communication strategy focused on engagement, participation, and partnerships. It also addresses the core objectives of the SGP communication plan:

- Promoting a deeper understanding of global environmental and sustainable development issues, encompassing livelihoods, poverty reduction, and gender equality.
- Strengthening partnerships and advocacy aligned with national priorities, GEF programming, and UNDP strategies.
- Raising awareness and mobilizing resources for SGP at all levels, utilizing the CCDKM grant as a marketing instrument.
- Enhancing transparency, accountability, and knowledge sharing.

3. Target Audiences (Beneficiaries of CCDKM Activities)

The primary target audience for the capacity development, KM activities, and materials produced under this CCDKM Grant are the **grantees of the GEF SGP OP8 programme in Lao PDR**. Based on the SGP OP8 Country Programme Strategy, these primarily include:



- **Civil Society Organizations (CSOs):** Legally registered non-profit associations (NPAs) engaged in implementing SGP-funded environmental projects.
- **Community-Based Organizations (CBOs):** Legally registered local groups, cooperatives, and community entities leading SGP initiatives.

Consistent with the SGP OP8's emphasis on social inclusion, the CCDKM activities will prioritize reaching and empowering specific groups within these CSOs and CBOs, including:

- **Indigenous/ethnic Peoples and Local Communities** involved in SGP projects.
- **Women**, women's groups, and women-led organizations participating in or leading SGP grants.
- **Youth**, youth groups, and youth-led organizations engaged in SGP activities.

These groups will be the main recipients of the training, resources, and knowledge-sharing facilitated by this grant.

4. Key Messages

Aligned with the SGP global communication strategy, the project implemented by the selected grantee will reinforce key messages of:

- Sustainability and Impact ("Local Action for Global Impact")
- Community Empowerment ("Solutions by Communities, for Communities")
- Policy Alignment ("Bridging Local Initiatives with National Priorities")
- Inclusivity ("No One Left Behind")
- GEF SGP Value ("Effective Support for Community-Led Environmental Action")

5. Project Objectives

- Enhance grantee communication skills by providing training on narrative development, multi-channel communication, visual material creation, social media promotion, public presentation skills, and stakeholder engagement.
- Improve KM by facilitating knowledge sharing through a platform, workshops, peer learning, and document/disseminate success stories and lessons learned in accessible formats, and
- Promote collaboration and partnerships through fostering collaboration among SGP grantees, CSOs, development partners, and other relevant stakeholders.

6. Project Activities

- **Phase 1: Needs Assessment and Planning**
 - Assess communication skills, knowledge, and resource needs of current and potential SGP grantees (CSOs/CBOs, with attention to women, youth, IPs).
 - Review existing SGP documentation and identify knowledge gaps relevant to grantees.
 - Develop detailed templates and guidelines for communication materials (brochures, video scripts, handbooks) tailored for grantee use.
 - Outline requirements for SGP grantee social media engagement and event presentations.
- **Phase 2: Capacity Development Training & Material Production**
 - Conduct training workshops for SGP grantees covering basic communication skills, storytelling, social media management, culturally appropriate messaging, visual content creation, and public presentation.
 - Facilitate the production of core communication materials (e.g., template brochures, handbook outlines, sample video scripts) for grantees.
 - Provide ongoing mentoring and technical support for SGP grantees.
- **Phase 3: KM Platform Development and Launch**
 - Design and develop a user-friendly knowledge-sharing platform (online/offline components) accessible to SGP grantees and stakeholders.



- Populate the platform with relevant content, including best practice guides, case studies, training materials, and grantee-produced content.
- Promote the platform to SGP grantees and stakeholders.

- **Phase 4: Implementation of Grantee Communication Mandate & M&E**

- Support SGP grantees in fulfilling social media promotion and event presentation requirements.
- Monitor and evaluate grantee communication activities and outputs.
- Post-training evaluation of grantee communication skills.
- Monitor platform usage and gather user feedback.
- Refine the communication strategy, materials, and platform based on M&E findings.

7. Expected Outcomes

- Improved communication skills among SGP grantees, focusing on social media and presentation abilities, with particular emphasis on women, youth, and IPs.
- Enhanced KM and dissemination through diverse formats accessible to grantees, ensuring program visibility and effective marketing, and
- Increased engagement and collaboration among SGP grantees in project promotion and knowledge sharing.

8. Sustainability

- Integrate communication capacity building and KM into ongoing SGP support and grant agreements for future grantees.
- Empower SGP grantees to utilize acquired skills, knowledge, and materials in their ongoing and future projects and activities.
- Establish sustainable mechanisms for updating and disseminating best practices and lessons learned among the SGP community beyond the grant period.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Track SGP grantee participation in training and access/use of resources and materials (disaggregated by gender, youth, IP status where possible).
- Monitor SGP grantee compliance with communication mandates (social media activity, event presentations).
- Monitor communication channel usage (website, social media analytics) and platform engagement by grantees and others.
- Collect qualitative and quantitative data on communication reach, impact, and effectiveness as a marketing tool.
- Conduct regular evaluations (mid-term, final) for continuous improvement.

10. Eligible Grantee (Implementers of the CCDKM Grant)

Suitable grantees for *implementing* components of this CCDKM grant could include:

- **Tier 1: Experienced National CSOs:** Leading national non-governmental or civil society organizations with a proven track record in environmental conservation or sustainable development, demonstrating strong experience in implementing capacity-building programs, communication campaigns, KM initiatives, and managing donor-funded projects within Lao PDR.
- **Tier 2: Specialized Communication, Media, or Academic Partners:** Communication agencies, media production houses, consulting firms, or academic institutions (departments focused on communication, media, or relevant fields) possessing specialized technical expertise in areas such as communication strategy development, training facilitation, graphic design, video production, digital media, knowledge platform development, and communication for development (C4D).
- **Tier 3: Emerging CSOs or Consortia with Strong Potential:** Newer or smaller CSOs, community networks, or consortia (partnerships between organizations) that may have less extensive project management history but demonstrate strong potential, relevant niche expertise, deep community connections, innovative ideas for



communication and KM, and a clear plan for capacity development through the grant implementation. Partnerships that combine community reach with technical skills are encouraged.

11. Key Considerations for Grantee Selection

- Demonstrated experience in communication for development (C4D), capacity building, and environmental conservation/sustainable development issues in Lao PDR.
- Necessary technical expertise (training facilitation, material design, platform management) and resources.
- Understanding of culturally appropriate communication methods for diverse Lao ethnic groups.
- Strong project and financial management capacity.
- Clear alignment with GEF-SGP goals and objectives for OP8.
- Alignment with one of the applicant tiers described above.