Communities have shown themselves to be effective stewards of their environmental resources when provided a strong stake and empowered to undertake their management, rehabilitation and protection.
Overview of GEF and the Small Grants Programme (SGP)

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is a global partnership among 181 countries, international institutions, NGOs, and the private sector that aims to address global environmental issues while supporting national sustainable development initiatives.

The GEF was established in 1991 and serves as an independent financial mechanism to assist countries in fulfilling their obligations under the following Conventions they have signed and ratified: the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants.

The GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) was launched in 1992 and is implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 128 countries. It is a corporate programme of the GEF which provides grant funding to communities and civil society organizations in developing and transition countries to enable them to implement projects in the focal areas of climate change, biodiversity, sustainable forest management, land degradation, international waters, and Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)/chemicals. These community-based projects must meet environmental objectives while at the same time also supporting poverty reduction and local empowerment objectives.

In South Africa, GEF SGP started in 2001 and since then it has supported over 90 projects to the value of over USD$ 4,2 mill and co-financing (cash & in-kind) of over US$7,5mill in 2015. The maximum grant provided to each SGP project is USD $50'000 and the projects vary from demonstration projects, capacity building, information dissemination and policy dialogue.

SGP Administration

The main point of contact for the SGP is the National Coordinator (NC), who is assisted by a Programme Assistant and a National Steering Committee (NSC) made up of representatives from government, UNDP Country Office, academia and civil society. The NC and the NSC perform the following functions:

- Lead the development of the SGP Country Programme Strategy (CPS) which outlines the strategic direction and national priorities for the SGP over four-year operational phases.
• Evaluate project proposal to determine whether they meet SGP criteria
• Advise on project design and implementation
• Monitor projects during implementation
• Organise capacity building workshops for grantees, including prospective grantees

3 Projects Eligible for SGP Funding

There are six main focal areas that the SGP funds:

- Biodiversity
- Climate Change Mitigation & Community Based Adaptation
- Land Degradation
- Sustainable Forest Management
- International Waters
- Chemicals

GEF SGP 6th Operational Phase OP6 (2014 – 2018)

The SGP Goal for GEF 6 is to:

“Effectively support the creation of global environmental benefits and the safeguarding of the local environment through community and local solutions that complement and add value to the national and global level action.”

For GEF6, SGP grant making will focus on priority themes that are multifocal in character and leverage SGP’s ability to foster synergies among focal areas. The following four **multi-focal initiatives** which will be prioritised for grant-making:
Community Landscape & Seascape Conservation

Initiatives for the protection and sustainable use of important ecosystems using a landscape and seascape approach. This includes initiatives for communities in buffer zones and corridors. Projects focused on creating and demonstrating good practices along the lines of adaptive community-based land management that benefits from combined inputs of traditional knowledge and modern practices in tackling degradation of agricultural land, rangeland, forest landscapes; supporting agro-biodiversity, food sovereignty, in-situ plant and animal genetic resources,

Seascape approaches will involve the identification and prioritization of water-bodies for intervention, coordination among key stakeholders in the identification of the root causes of environmental degradation, and the development and implementation of inter-linked activities to systematically address water-body environmental degradation.

Climate Smart Innovative Agro-ecology

Initiatives in production buffer zones of important & critical ecosystems, often in remote rural areas not covered by other traditional donors. Project typologies include support food and seed security and poverty reduction, *inter alia*, small scale agro-ecology, agro-forestry, soil and water conservation.
Priority initiatives will target communities in areas without access to electricity and those that still rely on traditional biomass for cooking. Projects typologies include, inter alia, energy efficient cook-stoves, installation of solar PV panel, solar lighting, waste-to-energy, biogas, etc.

**Low-carbon Energy Access Co-benefits**

**Local to Global Chemicals Management Coalitions**

Initiatives will include support for innovative, affordable and practical solutions to chemicals management in joint efforts with government, research institutions, private sector and/or international agencies. Project typologies include, inter alia, pesticide management in agriculture and the promotion of organic farming as an alternative, reduction of chemicals usage and contamination, avoidance of open burning of solid waste and safe disposal of e-waste.

**Particular focus is given to projects that target women, indigenous people, farmers and youth.** Partnerships between NGOs and CBOs are encouraged to enhance capacity of communities and for project sustainability.

SGP projects are expected to fall into one or more of the following categories:

- **Demonstration**: project which tests an approach that could then be replicated or adopted elsewhere
- **Capacity development**: project which can include building organisational capacity as well as capacities that relate directly to environmental conservation and sustainable livelihoods.
- **Information / Networking / Policy Dialogue**: project focusing on stakeholder networking and peer exchange to share information, knowledge or skills. It could also include
innovative approaches to shaping policy and building stakeholder capacity for effective participation in policy processes. Projects include support to civil society-government dialogue platforms, communication platforms, and social inclusion.

Projects are also expected to contribute towards achieving the SGP Country Programme Strategy for the 6th Operational Phase of the SGP.

- **SGP as a delivery mechanism**: In the 6th Operational Phase, SGP will work in synergy as well as in a supportive role to implement community components of GEF full-sized projects and other government and development agencies’ projects that need to engage communities and CSOs on the ground in a cost effective way by utilizing an already established mechanism with local presence.

### Who can apply for SGP Funding?

Any registered civil society organisation in South Africa. Proof of registration should accompany your application. The organisation should have the capacity to implement the project or partner with an organisation which will assist in building their capacity.

The following is checked by the NC and NSC:

- Track record of engagement in community development work
- Properly constituted Board
- Sound and transparent financial and administrative record-keeping and reporting systems
- Ability to provide co-financing in cash and in-kind
- Ability and willingness to work in partnership with other organisations and government.
How to apply for the SGP Grant

Project proponents should follow the steps outlined in the table below to apply for the grant.

**STEP 1** The project proponent - an NGO or CBO, contacts the National Coordinator or Programme Assistant to receive project application guidelines and forms

**STEP 2** With assistance from the NC, the proponent prepares a brief project concept paper and submits this to the coordinator.

**STEP 3** The NC reviews and pre-screens the concept paper accordingly to see if it meets the GEF SGP criteria and other criteria adopted by the NSC for activities aligned with the Country Programme Strategy (CPS)

**STEP 4** If the project is judged eligible, the project proponent prepares a project proposal written according to the format provided by GEF SGP Office

**STEP 5** Completed project proposals are submitted by the NC to the National Steering Committee (NSC)

**STEP 6** The NSC reviews the proposal and either accepts it, rejects it, or returns it to the proponent with a request that further work be done on formulating & refining the project data

**STEP 7** Approved projects enter the SGP work programme. Grants are usually paid in 3 instalments; an upfront payment after signing of Agreement to initiate the project, a mid-term payment upon receipt of a satisfactory progress report and a final payment on receipt of a satisfactory project completion & final report

**Funding Limit and Project Duration**

Maximum grant provided per project is up to US $50,000. The maximum duration of a project should be 3 years.

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SGP Contact Details

The National Coordinator and Programme Assistant can be contacted on:

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