



GUIDANCE ON COMMUNITY BASED ADAPTATION (CBA)

(for “Call for Proposals”, 2023)

GEF-Small Grants Programme, UNDP Bhutan

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The Global Environment Facility’s Small Grants Programme (GEF-SGP), implemented by UNDP in partnership with the Royal Government of Bhutan provides financial and technical support to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to conserve and restore the environment while enhancing people's well-being and livelihoods. SGP demonstrates that community action can maintain the fine balance between human needs and environmental imperatives.

Since its inception in October 1998, SGP-UNDP has implemented a total of 183 projects in partnership with the Royal Government of Bhutan, CSOs, CBOs and academia. SGP-UNDP is now in its 7th Operational Phase (OP7) (2020-2023). The Strategic Goal of OP-7 is *“to promote and support innovative, inclusive and scalable initiatives, and foster multi stakeholder partnerships at the local level to tackle global environmental issues in the priority landscape”*.

Accordingly, SGP-UNDP announces the 2023 "Call for Proposals" inviting CSOs (including Community-Based Organizations and grassroots institutions/communities) to submit inclusive and innovative project proposals that addresses environmental issues in the face of changing climate. The proposals must align with SGP-UNDP’s Country Programme Strategy (OP-7) and National Adaptation Plan of the royal government of Bhutan. Following provides a brief information on Community Based Adaption.

Background

The climate crisis continues to be one of the greatest challenges facing our planet and humanity today. Local communities and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) are least responsible for climate change yet are the most vulnerable and suffer the most from its impacts.

Drought and rising temperatures, excessive precipitation and flooding, sea level rise and saltwater intrusion, coastal erosion, loss of agricultural crops, degradation of coral reefs due to bleaching, increased instances of pests and diseases, and unpredictable storms and weather events are just some of the challenges experienced by SIDS and Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

These variations in climate not only affect the environment and resilience of natural ecosystems, but also have ripple effects on every sector of the economy and society including economic stability, agriculture and food security, water access and sanitation, health and well-being, health, education, tourism, and livelihoods.

What is Climate Change Adaptation?

Adaptation refers to actions that help reduce vulnerability to the current or expected impacts of climate change. **Building resilience and reducing vulnerabilities** to climate shocks and disasters is not only an ethical imperative but can also have positive impacts on the environment, the economy, and well-being, as well as reduce inequalities and contribute to the SDGs.

Resiliency is also applicable to other shocks and stressors, such as pandemics, and economic and social crises.

What is CBA?

CBA is a locally led process that empowers people and communities to plan for and cope with current and future climate change impacts. The CBA approach is **inclusive** and centred on the priorities and processes chosen by the community. It involves shifting the power to local stakeholders to **lead or meaningfully participate** in adaptation actions. It does not prioritize the interests of external parties over those of the community.

The main goal of this new phase of CBA funding is to further enhance the capacities of local communities across priority landscapes/seascapes by building their social and ecological resilience to climate change.

Inclusive Adaptation

Like all global crises, climate change highlights and intensifies existing inequalities in our societies. **The complex interactions between exposure to climate impacts and certain biophysical, social, economic, and environmental factors contribute to social vulnerability.** These factors apply to all social groups including women, men, the elderly, children and youth, Indigenous Peoples and ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities. **Every individual is unique, and every community is diverse. Approaches and projects need to be carefully designed and customized.**

Understanding the dynamics of these factors makes it possible to mainstream vulnerable groups within CBA projects ensuring that:

- they can effectively participate in adaptation or development initiatives.
- develop the skills to gain access to, and control over, resources.
- and take responsibility in their decisions and actions to enable them to cope with climate change impacts.

The people most affected by climate change must be part of the climate solution.

Gender is a key social inclusion priority area for CBA, as women and girls are among the most vulnerable affected by climate change. It is mandatory for all CBA projects to include gender considerations during project design and implementation, and all projects must include gender indicators.

CBA Thematic Areas (*Aligned to OP7 Strategic Initiatives*)

1. Water security and resource management

Access to clean water and sanitation is an economic enabler and is vital to building climate resilience. However, many communities across the Pacific and Asia regions still lack basic water access. Climate change, directly impacts the water cycle, acts as a multiplier of the risks of water scarcity by increasing the variability and unpredictability of water resources. Thus, sustainably managing water resources is a critical aspect of the CBA programme.

Rainwater harvesting, nature-based solutions (NBS) such as watershed rehabilitation and enhancements to water storage capacities can be employed by the CBA programme to improve both domestic and agricultural water supply and access.

Emphasis can be placed on establishing strong coordination with WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) programmes in local communities and creating synergies with existing DFAT water focused programmes.

2. Agriculture, fisheries and food security

Droughts, flooding, shifting seasons and increased variability in rainfall and temperature patterns continue to affect agricultural production across the globe. These impacts are even more severe for smallholder farmers. For rural farming communities this can lead to food insecurity, poverty, poor health, nutrition and wellbeing.

CBA projects can invest in sustainable agro-ecological production techniques to boost productivity and income generation, improve ecosystem services, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, where possible.

3. Land degradation

CBA projects can focus on nature-based solutions, agro-ecology and sustainable land management practices to improve ecosystem services and address some of the drivers of land degradation and other environment challenges at the community level.

4. Disaster risk reduction (DRR)

DRR takes a systematic approach to adapting to climate change-induced hazards with a focus on preventing these hazards from evolving into full-fledged disasters. It includes a wide range of adaptation activities, such as risk and vulnerability assessments, utilizing early warning systems, improving multi-sectoral communication and collaboration, and education and awareness.

5. Cross-cutting themes

In addition to the core thematic areas, the following cross-cutting themes should also be integrated across the national portfolio of CBA projects:

- **Enhancing socio-ecological resilience and productivity** of landscapes
- Supporting **nature-based solutions** grounded in cultural and societal values around the protection, conservation and restoration of ecosystem goods and services.

- Prioritizing **social inclusion and traditional knowledge**- the CBA programme will ensure that interventions are socially sensitive and inclusive and that women, youth, local communities, persons with disabilities are actively brought into the CBA process as key agents of change.
- Building organizational, technical and management capacities and raising awareness.

National Alignment

The CBA programme should align projects to National Adaptation Plans and ongoing NDC implementation to ensure that they are relevant and complementary to national climate and development initiatives. By working with local authorities, national governments and other partners, the programme aims to strategically and systematically mainstream CBA lessons and best practices in local and national planning and development processes. This will facilitate mainstreaming, replication, policy influence, scale up and sustainability of successful locally led projects and approaches across landscapes.

Projects previously funded through regular SGP projects can be scaled up and replicated under CBA Phase 3.

CSO-government-private sector dialogues and platforms

Dialogues serve as a space to bridge the gap between local communities, local governments and the private sector and to provide opportunities for communities' voices to be heard, their needs to be understood, and their challenges to be recognized and addressed by various decision makers at local, regional and national levels.

Dialogues will support establishment of durable partnerships and networks with key local, national, and regional stakeholders to support broader adoption of CBA approaches. Each CBA project should establish linkages and build relationships with key stakeholders. Dialogues can also be used to facilitate knowledge transfer, sharing of best practices and key lessons among grantee networks via peer-to peer exchanges.

This initial guidance attempts to summarize the basics of CBA and will serve as guide in developing the proposals. This guidance is a living document, which is expected to be further enriched and improved with knowledge and experience.