



SGP The GEF
Small Grants
Programme



Community Action Global Impact

The UNDP – GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) in Afghanistan

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For further reference, SGP global programme document, SGP operational guidelines, case studies and other documents can be obtained from <http://sgp.undp.org>.



I. Background:

Afghanistan's environment and natural resource base is under great pressure. Of Afghanistan's 655,000 square kilometers of total land area, only 12% (7.9 million hectares) is arable. An additional 45% is rangeland under permanent pastures, less than 3% under forest cover, with the remaining 39% being mountainous. It is estimated that between 1978 and 2002 alone, the area under conifer forests in the eastern part of the country has been reduced by 50 percent.

Afghanistan is known as one of the countries with the lowest ability to retain and utilize its water resources. Climate change implications are now quite visible in precipitation and temperature regime resulting in prolonged and more frequent droughts and floods. Biodiversity appears to be declining at an accelerating rate throughout Afghanistan. Overgrazing and shrub collection for fuel is markedly reducing plant biomass and altering plant communities.

The National Environmental Law aims to improve the quality of life of the people of Afghanistan through conservation, protection and improvement of the country's environment.

II. The Small Grants Programme (SGP)

Established in 1992, the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme (GEF SGP) provides financial and technical support to projects that conserve and restore the environment while enhancing people's well-being and livelihoods, SGP recognizes that environmental degradation such as the destruction of ecosystems and the species that depend upon them, increasing levels of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in our atmosphere, pollution of international waters, land degradation and the spread of persistent organic pollutants and chemicals management are life-threatening challenges that endanger us all. However, poor and vulnerable communities –SGP's primary stakeholders- are most at risk because they depend on access to natural resources for their livelihoods and often live in fragile ecosystems.

The Small Grants Programme (SGP) is funded by GEF, implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and executed by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).

SGP is operational in more than 130 countries, having provided more than \$350 million to communities through more than 16,000 projects.

The country programme is governed at the country level by the National Steering Committee (NSC). SGP country programme policies and key decisions are made on consensus by the NSC.

III. SGP Afghanistan:

The Small Grants Programme (SGP) in Afghanistan was operationalized on 23rd October 2012 by UNDP with the support from the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA). To be eligible for SGP support, a project proposed for funding must meet the country-specific eligibility criteria laid out in the relevant SGP Country Programme Strategy approved by the NSC. Please refer to the link below to access the SGP Country Strategy and the Project Proposal template:

<http://bit.ly/XptxhJ>

The maximum grant amount per project is US\$ 50,000, for duration of up to 24 months.

A National Steering Committee (NSC), composed by a majority of civil society organizations, the government and UNDP provides guidance and technical oversight to the implementation of the SGP, based on a Country Programme Strategy (CPS).



Prince Mostapha Zaher, Director General of National Environmental Protection Agency addressing the Meeting for Launch of Small Grants Programme in Afghanistan



IV. Eligibility for SGP Support in Afghanistan:

Only civil society organization (this may include local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and other forms of not for profit organizations).

In case of special need, the principal proponent (National NGO) may go for partnership with international NGOs.

V. SGP Focal Areas

The programme provides grants to local communities including indigenous people, community-based organizations and other non-governmental groups for projects in:

- Biodiversity Conservation
- Climate Change Mitigation
- Prevention of Land Degradation
- Sustainable Forest Management
- Protection of International Waters
- Elimination of Harmful Chemicals

Biodiversity Conservation:

In the biodiversity focal area, activities must promote the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources in arid and semi-arid ecosystems; freshwater ecosystems; forest ecosystems; or mountain ecosystems.

Some of examples are the conservation of animal and plants endemic species, capacity-building efforts that promote the preservation and application of traditional and indigenous knowledge and practices, sustainable management and use of biodiversity, community conservation areas etc.



Climate Change Mitigation

In the area of climate change activities must either demonstrate the removal of local barriers to energy conservation and energy efficiency, or promote the adoption of renewable energy. Some examples include biogas, solar energy, hydroelectric energy, energy efficient cook stoves and efficient traditional heaters (bukharies), energy efficient housing, among others.



Prevention of Land Degradation

SGP may support sustainable land management through the following activities: sustainable agriculture based on soil and water conservation through improved tillage methods, agroforestry, promotion of suitable land uses and improved management of agricultural waste; as well as sustainable rangeland/pasture management and ground water conservation.



Sustainable Forest Management

Protection and rehabilitation of forest and woodland, especially in non-protected forests, by promoting viable indigenous management systems, and rehabilitation of degraded deforested areas.



Protection of International Waters

In the international waters focal area activities must address environmental concerns in a specific water body shared by two or more countries (such as freshwater drainage basin that is regionally significant), or address land-based threats to international waters. SGP will focus its effort to implement community-based practices in managing specific water body types such as rivers and lakes.



Elimination of Harmful Chemicals

Mounting evidence of damage to human health and the environment has focused on a category of substances referred to as Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). POPs are pesticides, industrial chemicals or unwanted by-products of industrial processes or combustion. They are characterized by persistence - the ability to resist degradation; bio-accumulation - the ability to accumulate in living tissues; and potential for long range transport. Examples are; project development in the area of 1) e-waste management; 2) lead paint; 3) chemicals in products; 4) mercury.

VI. Global Success Examples

Energy Efficient Housing, Pakistan

SGP Pakistan has taken an initiative of energy efficient housing. Under this initiative, 400 houses have been provided to the poor women in three districts in Sindh. This project led to a national and global wave for environment friendly housing practices. This housing Technology has following landmark climate change adaptation and mitigation features:



No use of bricks thus no greenhouse gases emission as a result of brick kilns

No brick kilns, no fuel wood cutting

No or minimum use of wood in roof structure

Minimum of sustainable use of water, energy and fuel

Able to withstand natural disaster

This project led to a national and global wave for environment friendly housing practices. Pakistan program's "Benazir Housing Technology" has attracted attention from all over the world.

Fruit Oils Produced by Marginalized Women in the Western Himalayas, India

Jagriti is a Community-Based Organization which started out with a plan to save wild apricot trees, which were in danger of being cut down to make space for more profitable apple trees and agriculture. The project was designed to build the capacities of poor women-headed families from the marginalized castes to create sustainable livelihoods based on the use of forest resources.

The women were trained on the use of seeds from the wild apricots and peaches and other local trees to produce valuable oils, soaps and other value added products for sale. They learned about collecting and grading seeds, drying them, using oil expellers, and packaging the products.

The initial success led to scaling up of the project activities, with additional funding from SGP and the Government of India, Ministry of Environment & Forests. Jagriti has established a strong market link through a marketing outlet on the Kullu-Manali main road that sells the products made by the women's groups, and has also linked the products to the Himachal Pradesh Tourism Department through retail outlets in Simla and Manali. Sales have increased every year 2006-07 (USD 900) to 2012-13 (USD 56,000).



Light for all- `solar tukis` light remote villages, Nepal

Until today, 2.4 million people use kerosene lamp and fatwood respectively to light their house in Nepal. With the support of SGP the Center for Renewable Energy (CRE) initiated an ambitious campaign 'Light for All' and introduced cheaper Solar Tukis. (A solar tuki set consists of two sets of 0.4W WLED (White Light Emitting Diode) based lamp, 1 unit of 2.5-3W solar panel to charge the battery in the solar tukis, with 3 volt outlet for small radio).

The 'Light for all Campaign' has been able to install 749 solar tukis in Yanshila and Panchakanya VDCs of Morang and Ilam district respectively. The campaign received further boost when the CRE received a grant of \$US 19,000 from Development Market Place of World Bank. CRE also partnered with Environment Camps for Conservation Awareness (ECCA) for the 'Light for All campaign'.



Community Gardens as an Alternative to Livestock and a way to Combat Land Degradation, Mongolia:

Due to the adverse effects of climate change and the frequent occurrence of droughts in Mongolia, many springs, small streams, natural ponds and even lakes in the country have dried up over the last 15-20 years. The Haraa River is one of the biggest contributors to Selenge River which supplies 60 % of the Baikal lake that accounts 20 % of world's fresh water resources. In parallel with these adverse effects, there have been rapid increases of live stock heads after live stock privatization in the early 1990s that have also contributed to overgrazing and pasture depletion around the country.

When the community started to experience difficulties with grazing animals and keeping the live stock safe over harsh winters, the "Esunbalt" community based organization created an initiative to develop a community garden in a soil eroded and pasture degraded land to demonstrate that planting fruits is a win-win

option. On one hand it is a solution to land degradation and an opportunity to generate new livelihood alternatives for herders. To date, this option proved to be so successful that other herders started to follow. The grant was approved to stop soil erosion, pasture depletion and the destruction of the Haraa river willow trees in the middle stream (close to the grant site) by enhancing the capacity and knowledge of the community members and other immediate neighbors.

