

## The Challenge

Since its inception, the GEF Small Grants Programme has confronted very real challenges in working with communities to reconcile global environmental priorities with local community needs.

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 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.

## Our Approach

The GEF Small Grants Programme is rooted in the belief that global environmental problems can best be addressed if local people take ownership and there are direct community benefits.

The programme operates on the premise that people will protect their environment when they:

- are organized to take action;
- have a measure of control over access to the natural resource base;
- can apply necessary information and knowledge; and
- believe that their social and economic well-being is dependent on sound long-term resource management.

SGP links global, national and local issues through a transparent, participatory and country-driven approach to project planning, design and implementation.

## Linking Local and Global

The principal objectives of SGP are to:

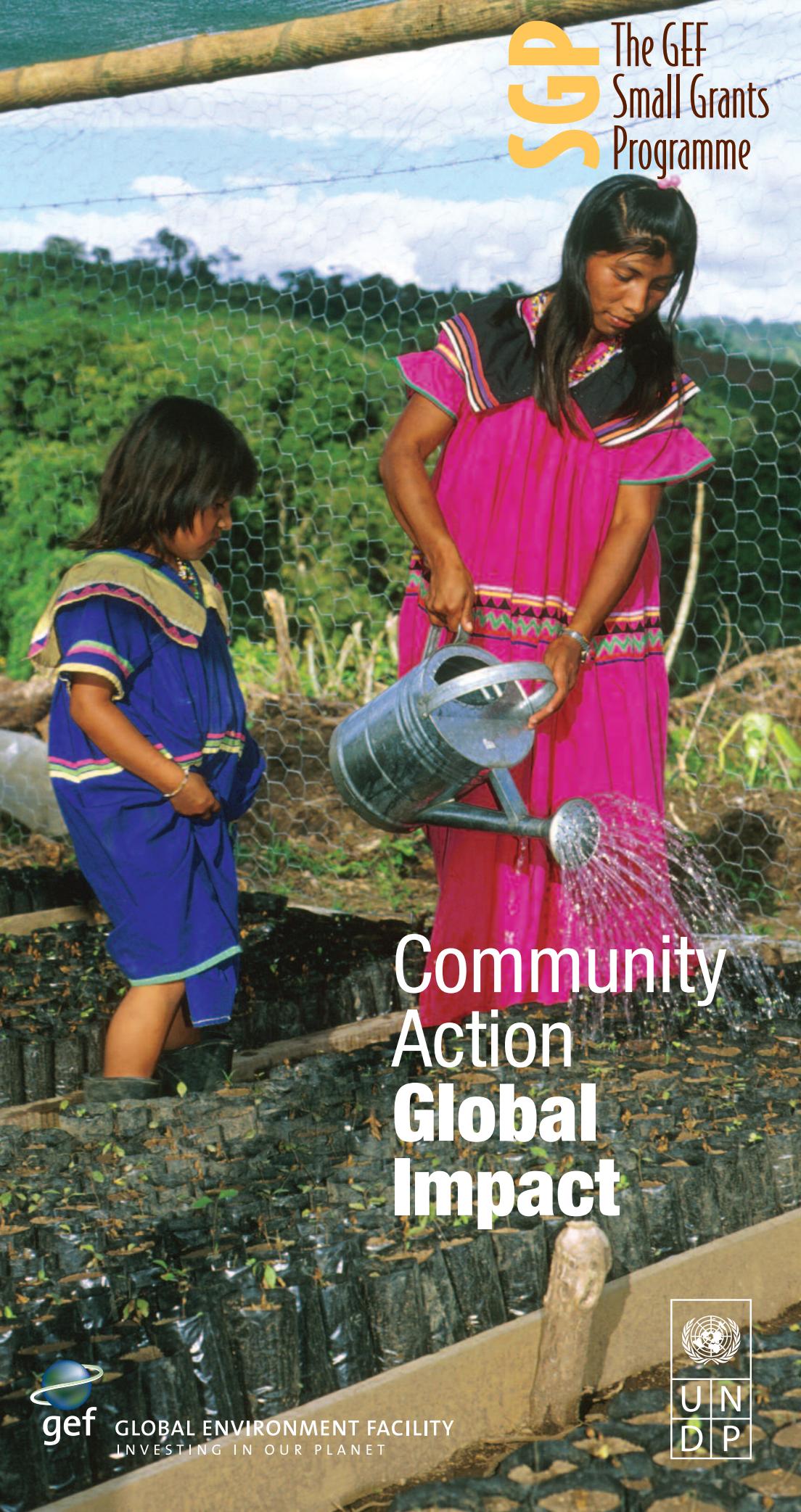
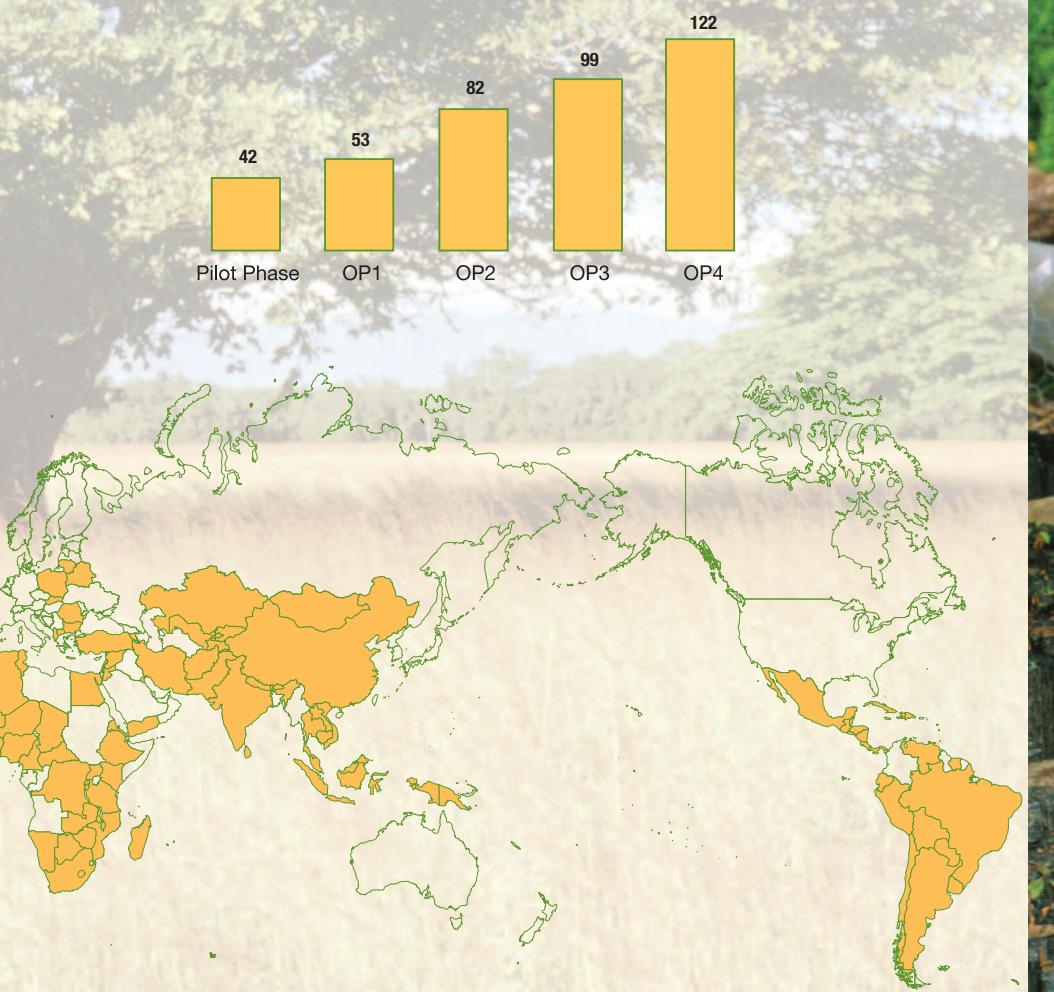
- Develop community-level strategies and implement technologies that could reduce threats to the global environment.
- Gather lessons from community-level experience and share successful community-based strategies and innovations among CBOs, NGOs, host governments, development aid agencies, GEF and others working on a regional or global scale.
- Build partnerships and networks of stakeholders to support and strengthen community, NGO and national capacities to address global environmental problems and promote sustainable development.
- Ensure that conservation and sustainable development strategies and projects that protect the global environment are understood and practiced by communities and other key stakeholders.

## Partnerships

Multi-Stakeholder cooperation and partnerships at every level are at the core of SGP success. From management structures and funding mechanisms to grassroots action, partnerships permeate all aspects of SGP operations. The synergies created by these collaborations are critical to the wide impact of grant activities. SGP has collaborated with over 250 partner organizations worldwide, and thousands of partner organizations at the country level that have provided co-funding and other forms of co-operation.

## Where We Work

Between 2004 and 2010, SGP has been growing steadily from 65 to 122 countries across five regions, including Lithuania and Poland which were recently closed. For more information please visit our website: [www.sgp.undp.org](http://www.sgp.undp.org).



Community  
Action  
Global  
Impact

**Established in 1992, the year of the Rio Earth Summit, the GEF Small Grants Programme embodies the very essence of sustainable development by “thinking globally, acting locally”. By providing financial and technical support to projects that 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.**



## KEY FACTS

- Over the past 18 years, the GEF Small Grants Programme has invested \$450 million and leveraged similar levels of co-financing for over 12,000 projects by communities in 122 countries.
- The programme provides grants of up to \$50,000 directly to local communities including indigenous peoples, community-based organizations and other non-governmental groups.
- The decentralized structure of SGP encourages maximum country and community-level ownership and initiative.

## FOCAL AREAS

The GEF Small Grants Programme works in five fundamental focal areas of the GEF.

### Biodiversity

SGP projects tackle threats to biodiversity through local action in all types of ecosystems: arid and semi-arid, coastal and marine, freshwaters and wetlands, forests and mountains. Since 1992, SGP has supported more than 6,906 projects in biodiversity conservation, contributing to the strategic priorities of the GEF. During its fourth Operational Phase (OP4) from 2007 to 2010, SGP has concentrated its efforts on protected areas; indigenous and community conserved areas (ICCAs); and the sustainable use of biodiversity-based products. The biodiversity focal area accounts for 52 percent of the total portfolio of the SGP programme.

The programme also supports the equitable sharing of benefits derived from the use of biological resources, as well as respect for and preservation of traditional knowledge. SGP places special emphasis on working with indigenous peoples in conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. This is based on the principle that the survival and well-being of indigenous peoples is inextricably linked to both cultural and environmental conservation.



### Climate Change

SGP contributes to climate change mitigation by supporting community projects on renewable energy, energy efficiency and low carbon transport. Since 1992, the programme has funded more than 2,415 climate change projects, which accounts for approximately 18 percent of SGP's total project portfolio.

Low carbon energy technologies include micro-hydro, wind, biomass and solar technology that primarily meet the energy needs (e.g. lighting and heating) of poor communities; local public facilities (e.g. rural schools, health centers) and community based micro-enterprises (e.g. food processing and drying units). Low carbon transport includes promoting non-motorized transportation, such as bicycles and public transport.



Because local communities are the most severely affected by climate change impacts but least equipped to cope, SGP is piloting efforts on Community-Based Adaptation (CBA) by implementing projects that seek to enhance the resiliency of communities, and the ecosystems on which they rely. In so doing, SGP is contributing to the creation of small-scale ‘project-policy laboratories’ which generate knowledge about how to adapt to climate change at the local level.

### International Waters

SGP supports transboundary water body management with community-based initiatives by linking to national Transboundary Diagnostic Analyses (TDA) and large international water programmes. SGP interventions include innovative local solutions to reduce pollution, improve water use efficiency, protect water supplies, and sustainable management of fisheries using a rights-based approach. As of 2010, SGP has funded over 700 projects which account for roughly 5 percent of the portfolio. This is complemented by SGP biodiversity projects that address the protection of coastal ecosystems; transboundary lakes and rivers; and endangered marine and freshwater species.

### Land degradation

Land degradation and persistent organic pollutants (POPs) became SGP focal areas in 2002. Since then, SGP has supported 1,562 projects on land degradation that represent some 12% of the portfolio. SGP aims to improve agricultural management to benefit communities and protect the environment. SGP also provides support to communities to maintain the cover and functionality of agro-ecosystems, and forest ecosystems in dryland areas.

### Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)

SGP supports projects promoting the phase out of POPs, preventing the use of POPs at the community level and/or managing POPs waste in an environmentally sound manner. From 2002 to 2010, the POPs focal area accounted for approximately 2 percent of the programme portfolio with 242 projects.