

SGP The GEF
Small Grants
Programme

30
YEARS



LOCAL ACTION, GLOBAL IMPACT



SGP Global Manager Message

With natural resource depletion and economic development pressures intensifying in many parts of the developing world, and the associated rising inequalities, it is imperative that local communities and civil society including Indigenous Peoples, women, persons with disabilities and youth are empowered to design, implement, and deliver their own innovative solutions that are culturally appropriate and context specific.

SGP has been providing financial and technical support to civil society and community-based organizations on community-driven initiatives that address environmental challenges while improving livelihoods and enhancing people's well-being. The programme's unique approach revolves around the ideals of innovation, inclusion, and impact in achieving global environmental benefits and contributing to sustainable development.

Over the last three decades, SGP has gained a wealth of experience piloting sustainable development initiatives at the local level to address these challenges, many of which have been scaled, replicated, and mainstreamed and local and national levels. As we look ahead, SGP is committed to continue working with local communities, civil society, all partners and stakeholders to ensure a sustainable future for people and planet.

As we celebrate our 30th anniversary, we would like to thank the GEF and UNDP, our dedicated local communities and civil society partners, our National Steering Committees, SGP Country Programme teams and our range of donors and partners. We look forward to working together on many more years of successful SGP innovation, inclusion and impact.

Yoko Watanabe

Global Manager of the GEF Small Grants Programme

LOCAL ACTION, GLOBAL IMPACT

CELEBRATING THREE DECADES OF LOCAL ACTION FOR PEOPLE AND PLANET



An aerial photograph of a tropical coastline. On the left, the ocean has vibrant turquoise and blue-green waves with white foam crashing onto a sandy beach. To the right of the beach is a dense line of palm trees and other greenery. Further inland, there is a calm, light-green lagoon. The overall scene is lush and scenic.

Forewords

As we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP), I am inspired by the significant impacts that have been achieved over the last three decades by this unique programme.

The SGP has been a vital element of the GEF's work since 1992. It provides an important avenue to engage with civil society and local communities in support of environmental priorities. This programme is an essential piece of our efforts to prioritize the inclusion of non-state actors, including Indigenous Peoples, women, and young people, in all aspects of GEF-funded work.

One of the distinctive aspects of SGP is its ability to support innovative and locally-driven initiatives that both generate global environmental benefits and provide a boost to marginalized communities – generating incomes, increasing climate resilience, and improving living conditions for all members of society.

The SGP embodies the very essence of sustainable development by thinking globally and acting locally, and today this ethos is more relevant than ever. To accelerate transformational change and to meet ambitious global biodiversity, climate, and sustainable development targets, we need to put local communities and civil society organizations at the heart of our work to foster systemic change from the ground up.

Considering the critically important role that civil society and non-state actors must play to address environmental degradation and climate change, the knowledge and lessons generated through SGP activities over the past three decades are extremely valuable. As we look to the future, the GEF will build on the SGP's successes and partnerships as we expand the scale and scope of our work. This will include additional investment in supporting local solutions and civil society initiatives in support of lasting and scalable solutions for communities around the world.

I would like to thank and congratulate the extraordinary team that has been involved with SGP over the past three decades, including UNDP and our partners in civil society and in local communities, for their dedication, commitment, and hard work in ensuring the long-term success of community-driven environmental work. This is an approach that yields results, with great promise for the future.



Carlos Manuel Rodriguez
*CEO and Chairperson,
Global Environment Facility*



Formally established in 1992, the year of the landmark Rio Earth Summit, the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme (SGP) has been translating that grand global vision into local environmental action across the globe since then. Implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the SGP continues to leverage the unique knowledge and traditions of local communities and civil society to tackle the environmental challenges that affect them and our global community. That engagement has encompassed an impressive 27,000 varied projects across 136 countries over the past three decades — everything from tackling biodiversity loss to assisting communities to adapt to a changing climate to boosting access to clean and affordable energies.

Over the past decade, the SGP has evolved from a project approach focused on a specific community towards a portfolio approach whereby it plans, aligns, and manages groups of projects as portfolios to encompass entire landscapes and seascapes, maximizing its impact. This methodology, led by communities and defined by a culture of continuous innovation, is paying dividends across the world. That is clearly seen in efforts to restore and conserve landscapes including the awe-inspiring Mount Kenya and Mount Kilimanjaro to seascapes such as the pristine Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve in Mexico and the remarkable Belize Barrier Reef. The programme has positively impacted over 37 million hectares of protected and conserved areas since 2018 alone, generating local and global environmental benefits and enhancing people's livelihoods and wellbeing at the same time.

With the groundbreaking Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) now in place, the SGP has an ever-more important role in investing in communities including Indigenous Peoples, women, young people, and persons with disabilities to put its ambitious targets into action. That includes sharing and adopting the environmental solutions that have worked with other parts of the world through South-South and triangular cooperation. Indeed, UNDP's Nature Pledge is our firm commitment to catalyze the new level of ambition outlined in the GBF in over 140 countries. To this end, we will continue to rely on the unique knowledge and impetus generated by the SGP via grassroots movements and Indigenous Peoples who continue to be on the frontline of efforts to defend and restore our natural world and ultimately drive progress across all 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

On behalf of UNDP, I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to the Global Environment Facility; its donors and partners; the dedicated personnel who work tirelessly on-the-ground; and the local communities and civil society who have made the Small Grants Programme the success that it is. As we mark its 30th Anniversary, its many tangible results demonstrate that slowly but surely, it is indeed possible to nurture the tree of life back to health. That is vital to not only sustain this generation but the many generations to come.



Achim Steiner
*Administrator, United Nations
Development Programme*

Contents

ABOUT THE
SMALL GRANTS
PROGRAMME

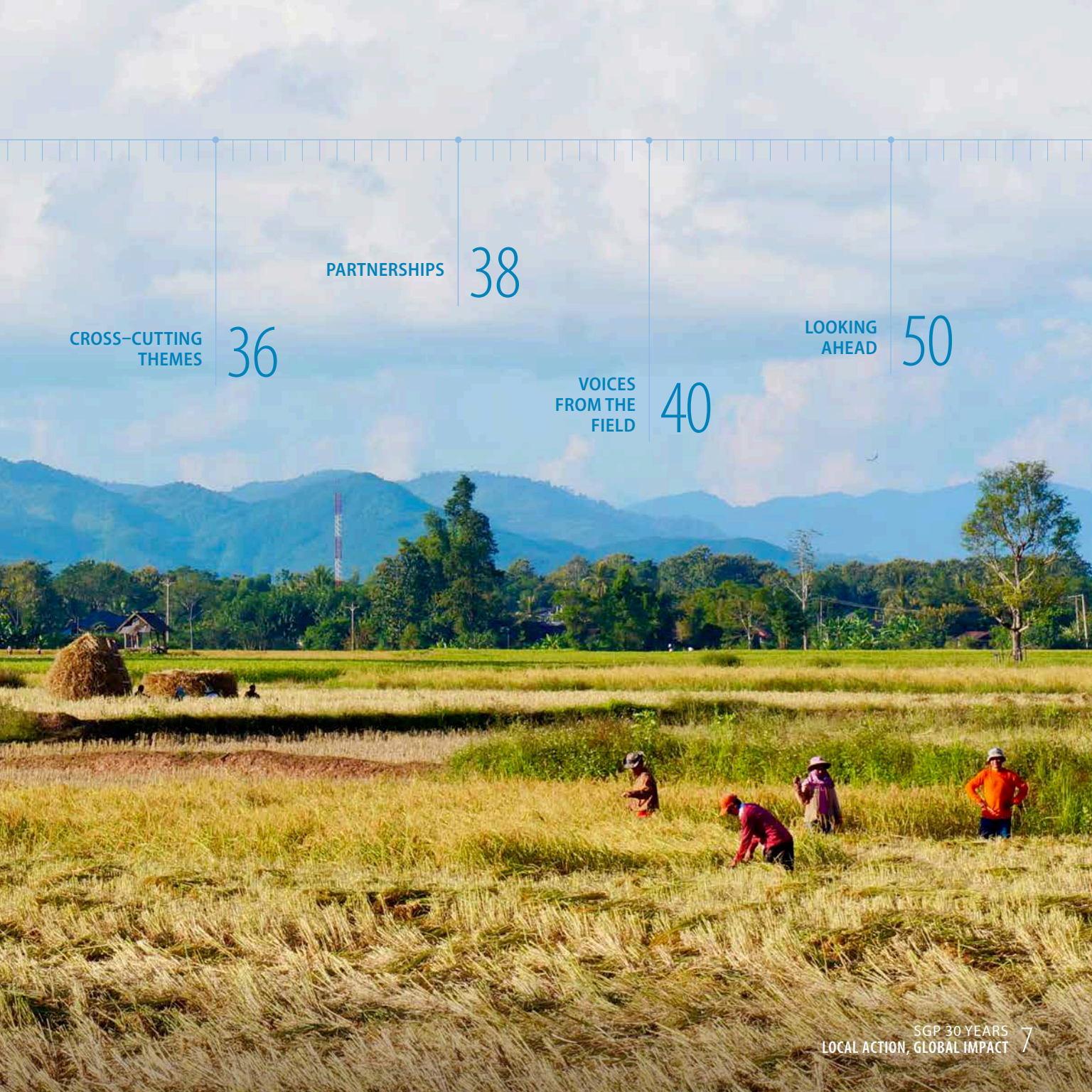
8

STRATEGIC
INITIATIVES

28

THREE
DECADES
OF IMPACT

15



CROSS-CUTTING
THEMES

36

PARTNERSHIPS

38

VOICES
FROM THE
FIELD

40

LOOKING
AHEAD

50

About the Small Grants Programme



For the past thirty years, the Small Grants Programme (SGP) has been providing financial and technical support to civil society and community-based organizations on innovative community-driven initiatives that address global environmental issues – such as biodiversity loss, climate change mitigation and adaptation, land degradation, international waters, and chemicals and waste management – while improving livelihoods. Throughout its journey, SGP has continuously evolved and has now grown into a unique global delivery mechanism to scale up local actions that can develop and deliver solutions to these multiple challenges.

SGP is the largest and longest standing corporate programme of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), dedicated to supporting civil society and community-based initiatives. It has been implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on behalf of the GEF Partnership since 1992. SGP was sparked by the idea that the active participation of local communities in dealing with critical environmental problems holds the key to promoting effective stewardship of the environment and achieving sustainable development. The programme's unique approach revolves around the ideals of innovation, inclusion, and impact in achieving global environmental benefits and contributing to sustainable development.

SGP is a social inclusion platform, where traditional knowledge and science meet to solve global and local problems, while empowering and building capacity of women, Indigenous Peoples, youth and persons with disabilities. Besides its central role as an incubator and accelerator of community innovations, SGP plays a key role in bringing together civil society, governments, the private sector, and others to promote systemic change from the community level to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. It also plays a unique role in meeting the objectives of Multilateral Environmental Agreements and coordinating closely with the Rio Conventions and others to bring the voices of civil society, Indigenous Peoples and local communities to the global fora.



SGP Brazil



SGP Iran

Over the last 30 years SGP has



Delivered over US\$750 million in project funding



>27,000 community-based projects on global environmental issues



SGP has historically supported a total of 136 countries, while currently active in 127 countries. This includes 37 Small Islands Developing States and 40 Least Developed Countries.



Thematic Coverage (2016-2022)

SGP's portfolio takes an integrated approach and has multi-focal areas impact. These figures only indicate the primary focal area of SGP projects.



39%

BIODIVERSITY



25%

CLIMATE
CHANGE



19%

LAND
DEGRADATION



5%

CHEMICALS
AND WASTE



3%

INTERNATIONAL
WATERS



7%

CAPACITY
DEVELOPMENT



Key Results (2016-2022)



BIODIVERSITY

1,872

PROTECTED AND INDIGENOUS
CONSERVED AREAS POSITIVELY
INFLUENCED BY EFFECTIVE
MANAGEMENT



CLIMATE CHANGE

245,407

HOUSEHOLDS WITH
IMPROVED ENERGY
ACCESS CO-BENEFITS



LAND DEGRADATION

698,719 HECTARES
OF LAND WITH IMPROVED
MANAGEMENT PRACTICES



INTERNATIONAL WATERS

84,214 TONS
OF LAND-BASED
POLLUTION REDUCED



CHEMICALS

276,939 KILOGRAMS
OF PESTICIDES PROPERLY
DISPOSED



SOCIAL INCLUSION

32%
WOMEN-LED PROJECTS

42%
PROJECTS WITH
YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

23%
OF PROJECTS WITH
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

655 ORGANIZATIONS
OF PERSONS WITH
DISABILITIES SUPPORTED



CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

126,394
PEOPLE WITH
IMPROVED CAPACITY

11,361
CIVIL SOCIETY &
COMMUNITY-BASED
ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTED



SCALING UP

15%
OF PROJECTS SCALED UP

12%
OF PROJECTS
INFLUENCED POLICY



Three Decades of Impact



Ana Canestrelli

PAGE 14: From top to bottom; SGP Bhutan, SGP Brazil, SGP Fiji, SGP Solomon Islands, SGP Mexico, SGP Peru, SGP Moldova, SGP Tanzania, SGP Ukraine, SGP Solomon Islands, SGP Panama, SGP Ecuador, SGP Iran, SGP Nigeria, SGP Ecuador, SGP Lesotho

SGP 30 YEARS
LOCAL ACTION, GLOBAL IMPACT 15

1990s

From pilot programme to global community-based platform

“There is no comparable mechanism for raising environmental awareness and building capacity across such a broad spectrum of constituencies within the recipient countries. National ownership of the SGP and commitment to its participatory principles is clearly demonstrated by the talented and experienced people attracted to become National Steering Committee members, as well as the enormous voluntary inputs elicited by the programmes from all levels of society.”

Second Independent Evaluation of SGP



1992

In 1992, the year of the Rio Earth Summit, SGP was established as a response to the call for “thinking globally, acting locally” from civil society organizations, who sought a dedicated funding window within the GEF to put local communities in the driver’s seat to address global environmental issues. At a time before the internet had become a world wide web, SGP managed to kick off its pilot phase as a truly global programme, present in 33 developing countries across five continents.

1993

SGP’s approach has always been characterized by participatory innovation, calculated risks, and learning as much from failures as from successes. The catchphrase, learning by doing, epitomizes how SGP builds on each successive phase of actual on-the-ground practices in a process of experiential learning. The 1995 Independent Evaluation of SGP’s pilot phase found that it had been a “genuine success” and made recommendations to improve and expand the programme further based on lessons learned.

1994

During its first decade, SGP launched its first two operational phases, supported over 1,000 projects and developed a set of global Operational Guidelines that have enabled global coherence and formed the basis for programme implementation, with regular updates as it evolved and assimilated lessons learned.

1995

Since its early phases, SGP demonstrated the viability of a decentralized, country-driven, community-based approach for making grants to civil society and community-based organizations.

By 1998, the Second Independent Evaluation of SGP confirmed its niche in the environment and development world:

“There is no comparable mechanism for raising environmental awareness and building capacity across such a broad spectrum of constituencies within the recipient countries. National ownership of the SGP and commitment to its participatory principles is clearly demonstrated by the talented and experienced people attracted to become National Steering Committee members, as well as the enormous voluntary inputs elicited by the programmes from all levels of society.”

1996

1997

2000s

Strengthening SGP's strategic approach and partnerships

SGP is a social inclusion platform where traditional knowledge and science meet to solve global and local challenges, while empowering and improving the skills of women, Indigenous Peoples, youth and persons with disabilities.



2000

Based on the experiences and lessons learned during its initial decade, SGP adopted a more focused and strategic approach to enhance the impact and sustainability of its interventions by strengthening global frameworks for coherent operation, monitoring and evaluation, and resource mobilization.

2001

The SGP global strategic framework helped country programmes better reconcile local community needs with global environmental priorities. SGP's resource mobilization framework helped secure funding beyond GEF finance to cover those activities that fall outside of core GEF focal areas, such as health, education, and livelihood and income generation activities.

2002

National Coordinators and National Steering Committees ensured decentralized management of the programme in harmony with these global frameworks to enable coherent, aggregated results and knowledge management. The development of SGP Country Programme Strategies through a multi-stakeholder consultative process at each operational phase allowed global frameworks to be adapted to specific national and local environmental, economic, and social contexts, providing a strategic approach to grant-making based on national priorities and local needs.

2003

In 2001, SGP partnered with the United Nations Foundation and UNESCO in support of a new landscape conservation model focused on protected areas nominated as World Heritage Sites. The Community Management of Protected Areas Conservation (COMPACT) methodology was developed and tested by participating SGP country programmes in a range of priority landscapes and seascapes, leading to its mainstreaming into SGP Country Programmes Strategies and adoption by UNESCO as a recommended methodology for the sustainable development of protected areas.

2004

In 2003, the Third Independent Evaluation of SGP highlighted its critical value for the GEF in making resources accessible and meaningful to communities around the world to address global environmental issues: "In many countries, SGP has become the permanent public face or even de facto ambassador of the GEF."

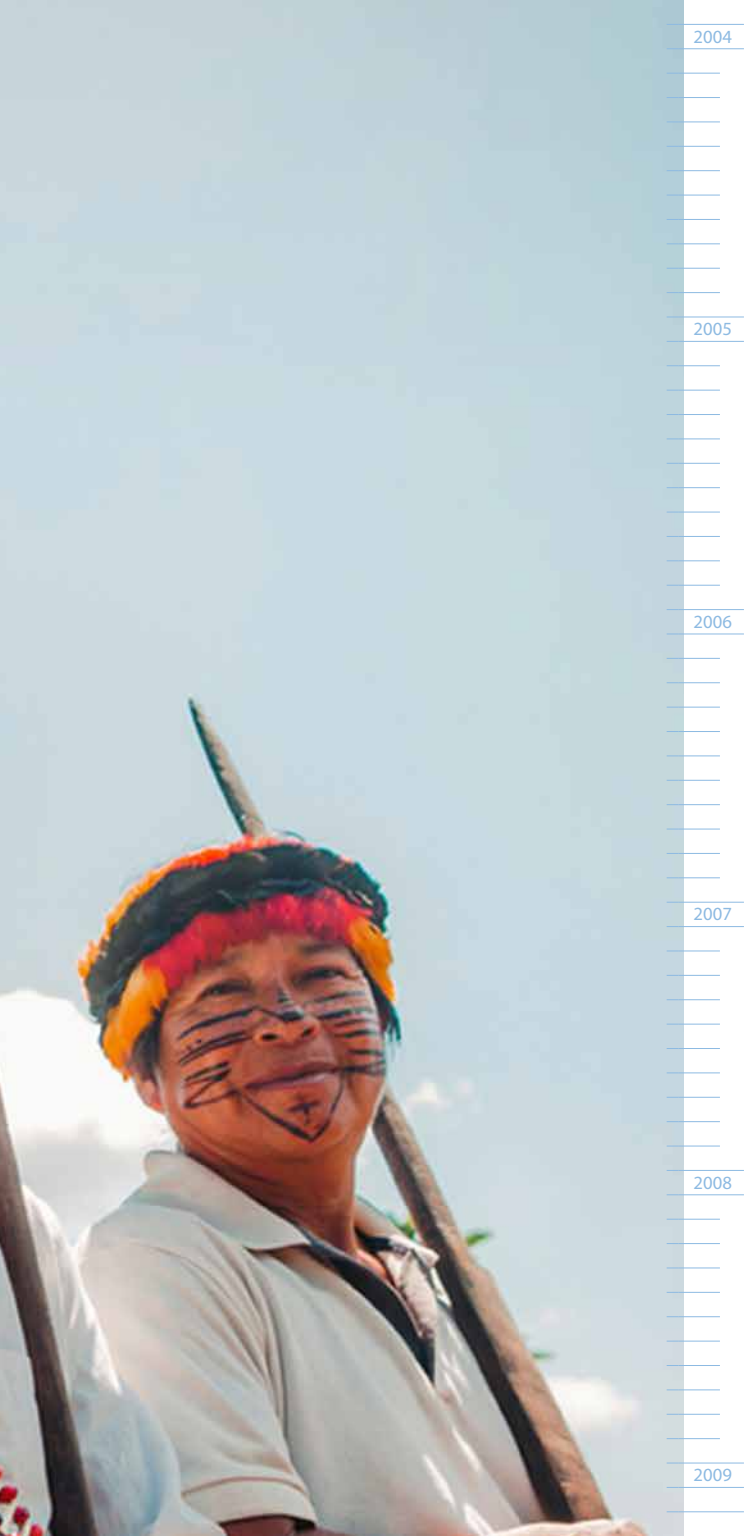


2005

“In many countries, SGP has become the permanent public face or even de facto ambassador of the GEF.”

Third Independent Evaluation of SGP





2004

In 2006, SGP started a collaboration with the International Union for Conservation of Nature on Indigenous and Community-Conserved Territories and Areas (ICCAs). This led to SGP becoming one of the founding members of the Global ICCA Consortium in 2008 and, years later, establishing a partnership with the Global Support Initiative for Indigenous and Community-Conserved Territories and Areas (ICCA-GSI), with funding from the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety of the Government of Germany, which has grown to a sum of US\$50 million delivered through SGP and other partners since 2014.

2005

By 2007, in response to ongoing demand, SGP had reached the milestone of 101 countries covered, with an emphasis on small island developing states and least developed countries. As it continued to rapidly expand during its fourth operational phase, the programme improved its ability to reach the remotest and poorest communities, eventually operating in 126 countries. In 2008, the GEF and the UNDP Independent Evaluation Offices conducted their First Joint Evaluation of SGP. The study found that, while SGP nearly doubled in size and launched country programmes in many challenging country contexts, it continued to be “a cost-effective way for the GEF to generate global environmental benefits while addressing country priorities and responding to the needs of local populations.”

2006

2007

In 2009, SGP partnered with the Australian Government’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) to start the Community-Based Adaptation programme with AU\$12 million to improve the adaptive capacity of communities and reduce their vulnerability to the impacts of climate change. It provided critical support to communities on climate adaptation, complementing a theme that was not previously covered by GEF finance.

2008

2009

2010s

Towards a socially inclusive landscape and seascape approach

SGP is an incubator and accelerator of community innovations that brings together local communities, civil society, government, private sector, and others to promote systemic change from the ground up to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

2010



SGP Ukraine

2011

In 2011, SGP started its fifth operational phase with a record amount of resources: nearly \$310 million in total GEF funding. As it celebrated its 20th anniversary, SGP consolidated and scaled up its landscape and seascape approach, which was built upon the COMPACT experience, as well as the Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative Programme (COMDEKS). Through COMDEKS, which was launched in 2011 with nearly \$10 million in support from the Japan Biodiversity Fund of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Japanese Ministry of Environment and other partners, SGP provided small grants to local community organizations to systematically improve the resilience of socio-ecological production landscapes and seascapes.



SGP Barbados

2012

In 2013, SGP engaged in another important partnership with the UN-REDD programme and the Government of Norway on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, plus the sustainable management of forests, and the conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (REDD+). Through the partnership, SGP provided grants to Indigenous Peoples and local communities to address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, improve the formalization of territorial rights, and other related initiatives.

2013

In 2015, the Second Joint Evaluation of SGP reaffirmed that it continued “to support communities with projects that are effective, efficient, and relevant in achieving global environmental benefits while addressing livelihoods and poverty as well as promoting gender equality and empowering women”. The evaluation also noted that replication, upscaling, and mainstreaming were actively occurring through the programme.



SGP Democratic Republic of Congo

2014

In 2016, as part of SGP’s strong focus on social inclusion, the first Global SGP Indigenous Peoples Fellowship Programme was launched. The four selected global fellows, all Indigenous women, focused on developing the capacity of the next generation of Indigenous leaders to effectively engage in global environmental and sustainable development policy

2015

In 30 years, SGP has constantly evolved and grown into a unique global delivery mechanism to scale-up local actions to address global environmental issues, while enhancing wellbeing and livelihoods.



2014

fora to have their voices heard. In 2018, SGP also launched National Indigenous Fellowships to support a range of skills development, including project monitoring and implementation, dialogues on Indigenous youth, and access to climate finance.

2015

In 2017, as SGP celebrated its 25th anniversary, it had matured into a global community financing platform that facilitates multiple partnerships, and functions as a delivery mechanism not only for GEF finance, but also for bilateral and multilateral donors, foundations, the private sector, and others.

2016

In 2018, two separate evaluations conducted by the GEF Independent Evaluation Office noted SGP's essential contribution to the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment and its key role as the GEF's primary modality of engagement with Indigenous Peoples.

2017

2018

2019



A person wearing a colorful poncho and a hat is herding sheep in a vast, grassy field. In the background, there is a large blue lake and a range of mountains under a clear sky.

2020s

Expanding SGP's scope and scale

“SGP has shown that dealing with local priorities can bring solutions to global environmental problems. It has proven that communities can more easily participate in and benefit from small projects than big ones because of the local ownership process it promotes.”

Emad Adly, SGP National Coordinator, Egypt



2020

In 2020, when COVID-19 swept the globe, SGP quickly responded with the development of COVID response and recovery measures, and additional funding allocated to all participating countries. The second phase of the ICCA-GSI partnership was launched to support the hardest hit Indigenous Peoples and local communities to cope with and recover from the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic. SGP also partnered with the UNDP's Lion's Share Fund to issue grants under the 'COVID-19 Response: Resilience in Wildlife Communities' initiative, which addressed COVID's impact in local communities that were engaged in wildlife tourism.

2021

In 2021, SGP's quick response to COVID-19 was highlighted in its Third Joint Evaluation, which reaffirmed that the programme continues to be highly relevant to evolving environmental priorities at all levels. The evaluation also found that SGP shows high levels of alignment with broader GEF and UNDP frameworks and strategies, and maintains strong internal programmatic coherence. It also recognized SGP as a unique funding mechanism for civil society organizations that promotes new ways of working that are flexible and adaptable to local circumstances.

2022

In 2022, as SGP approached its 30th anniversary, it delivered over US\$720 million to over 27,000 community-based projects, changing countless lives in a total of 136 countries. Currently active in 127 countries, the programme is preparing to expand in scope and scale in its upcoming eighth operational phase, focusing on diversification, innovation, and optimization, as well as on establishing wider partnerships and synergies with GEF agencies, donors and a diverse range of stakeholders for further impact.

2023

2024



2025

Strategic Initiatives

SGP's strategic initiatives were introduced to promote integrated approaches, shifting the focus from project to portfolio programming at the landscape and seascape level. The strategic initiatives promote and support community-based innovative, inclusive and impactful initiatives and foster multi-stakeholder partnerships and knowledge sharing to tackle environmental issues in priority landscapes and seascapes.



Community-based conservation of threatened ecosystems and species

This initiative improves conservation and sustainable use of threatened ecosystems and species in priority landscapes and seascapes, including the management of protected areas, ICCAs, other effective conservation measures (OECMs), bio-corridors, integrated river-basins, and large marine ecosystems with active involvement of communities. The initiative also mainstreams biodiversity conservation in key production sectors such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and infrastructure, and contributes to implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

“The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework highlights the leading role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. We look forward to further engaging with the GEF SGP and others to promote and scale-up initiatives led by Indigenous Peoples and local communities to accelerate the implementation of this historic agreement and the achievement of its goals and targets.”

*Dr. David Cooper, Acting Executive Secretary,
Convention on Biological Diversity*

Food security through sustainable agriculture and fisheries

This initiative focuses on testing and promoting community-based climate resilient agriculture, fisheries and food practices that improve productivity, regeneration, and increase ecological connectivity. It also promotes the development of value chains to target biodiversity-based products, agrobiodiversity conservation and support to small-holder farmers, conservation of landraces and genetic resources, agroecological production methods, and organic agriculture, fair trade, and other relevant certifications schemes. This initiative also supports the Land Degradation Neutrality objectives of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

“Land is at the center of the current planetary crisis and holds the key to our collective well-being. During the last 30 years, SGP has been creating tangible change on the ground, transforming the lives of the most impoverished and vulnerable people who rely on the land for their living. By restoring and protecting the land, this invaluable and fragile resource, SGP helped not only to shape a better future for those depending on the land but also to plant the seeds of a better life for all.”

Ibrahim Thiaw, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification





Low-carbon energy access

In line with larger frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement and National Determined Contributions, this initiative demonstrates and scales viable low carbon technologies, including renewable energies and energy efficient technologies and approaches that improve energy access for communities by working with the private sector, government and other partners. The focus is on providing low-cost bottom-up energy solutions with high potential for carbon emission reductions, using integrated approaches going beyond energy sector and aims to increase climate resilience, reduce poverty and enhance well-being.

“The role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, particularly women and girls in all their diversity, in achieving the Paris Agreement goals and building a climate-resilient world is now more crucial than ever. For three decades, SGP has been directly supporting local innovations and building the resilience of those most impacted by climate change, reducing emissions at the local level. We look forward to furthering the collaboration and upscaling the impact needed to address the climate emergency through local actors.”

Simon Stiell, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Local to global coalitions for chemicals and waste management

This initiative supports communities on the forefront of threats related to chemicals and waste either as users or consumers, and aims to reduce, phase-out, properly dispose and eliminate harmful chemicals, persistent organic pollutants and waste from the environment. The initiative is aligned to priorities under the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, and focuses on mercury management, electronic waste, plastics and the circular economy, solid waste management, and chemicals and pesticides in sustainable agriculture.

“From plastics to pesticides, harmful chemicals and pollutants continue to threaten our environment and human health. Elimination and phase out of these chemicals require a concerted effort and a holistic approach that must involve civil society and local communities. We are happy to continue our partnership with the SGP on raising awareness, building capacity, developing alternative methods and approaches to address the pollution crisis. SGP has indeed been a close partner on implementing the BRS Conventions at the local level, and we can only benefit from the local experiences gained thus far.”

Rolf Payet, Executive Secretary of The Basel Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Convention Secretariat





“The emission and release of mercury has far-reaching detrimental effects on both humans and our planet. Throughout the years, the GEF SGP has demonstrated considerable leadership and dedication in piloting and scaling up community-based solutions to prevent mercury contamination and promote safe alternatives to mercury use, including with Indigenous Peoples and rural women. We extend our heartfelt congratulations on SGP’s 30th anniversary and express our continued interest in working together to support local communities and civil society organizations to protect human health and the environment.”

Monica Stankiewicz, Executive Secretary
of the Minamata Convention

Catalyzing urban solutions

In partnership with private sector and government, this pilot initiative supports the promotion of appropriate integrated community-oriented sustainable urban solutions that align with and contribute to the GEF Sustainable Cities Impact Program. The initiative focuses on socially inclusive waste and chemical management, energy, transport, watershed protection, ecosystem services and biodiversity conservation in urban landscapes.





Cross-cutting themes

Civil society, government and private sector policy and planning dialogue platforms

Small but successful local actions have the power to transform policies and programmes. These platforms aim to ensure that community voices and participation are promoted and enhanced in decision-making processes. They are platforms for communities and civil society to exercise their agency and rights on the development of global and national strategies related to environment and sustainable development issues. They create a space for networking, partnership building and dialogue across scales and levels.



Knowledge management and South-South community innovation platform

Knowledge management and South-South cooperation are integral parts of the SGP. It promotes replication and upscaling of good practices within and between SGP participating countries on global environmental issues and solutions across countries and regions. SGP also promotes and disseminates community innovations, experiences and best practices to other development partners, practitioners, and policymakers.

Partnerships

At its core, SGP is about partnerships. SGP collaborates with many organisations at the global, regional and country levels to mobilize resources and create synergies for greater impact. Partners have included the Governments of Australia, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand Norway, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. SGP has also established partnerships with African Union Commission, Caribbean Biodiversity Fund, European Commission, the European Union, the Global Island Partnership, Japan Biodiversity Fund, the Keidanren Nature Conservation Fund, the MAVA Foundation, Microsoft's Project 15, the Mountain Partnership, SOS Sahel, UNEP, UNDP and other UN Agencies among many others.





SGP Nepal



SGP Morocco



SGP Ecuador

Voices from the field





Jaguar conservation in Argentina

Lucero Corrales works at Proyecto Yaguerete, an initiative from the CelBA NGO and the National Research Council of Argentina focused on jaguar conservation in northern Argentina. Since 2019, SGP has supported Proyecto Yaguerete to strengthen community and inter-institutional efforts to promote productive models that favor the coexistence of people and jaguars in the Paranaense Forest and the Gran Chaco Argentino. This includes improving the economy for rural inhabitants and ensuring the sustainability of their livelihoods. Lucero coordinates the Proyecto Yaguerete Collaborator Group, a programme that trains local ranchers and farmers as rangers to monitor the big cats and manage human wildlife conflict.

“Rangers motivate people. They begin to want to know the jaguars instead of hunting them. Every day I sleep in a different house to advance the mission. The first time is hard, but later it’s like coming home to old friends and family. I drink yerba mate, talk for hours, share food, and work with the farmers.”

Lucero Corrales, Coordinator, Proyecto Yaguerete Collaborator Group



Improving water access in Jamaica

Eurica Douglas is one of Jamaica's real-life heroes. With an infectious laugh and an alluring lilt to her voice, Eurica has been supporting the needs of communities in Jamaica's Clarendon Parish for more than 20 years. Together with the Clarendon Parish Development Committee and the Pleasant Valley community, she worked on a climate change adaptation project to improve water access and security in the remote villages of Pleasant Valley and White Chapel. Since the project was completed in 2013, the community has not gone a single day without water. Part of SGP's Community-Based Adaptation Programme in partnership with the Australian government, this initiative now serves as a model that is being scaled up and replicated throughout Jamaica.

“People began to see that the Parish Development Committee was able to change people's lives completely, that the work had real impact. It brought the community and everyone together for the same goal. This project stimulated many others, it made the vision more of a reality. It showed how change was possible.”

*Eurica Douglas, Development Manager,
Clarendon Parish Development Committee*





Enhancing food security in Lesotho's mountains

The mission of the Rural Self-help Development Association (RSDA) in Lesotho is to support smallholder farmers on sustainable farming and ecological agricultural practices, with an emphasis on the economic, social and cultural dimensions of communities. Women and girls, particularly in mountainous rural areas, have the potential to be major agents of change as farmers, market sellers, artisans, entrepreneurs and community leaders. When women like RSDA's Director Mampho Thulo have access to resources, services and opportunities, they become a driving force against hunger, malnutrition and rural poverty, actively propelling the development of mountain economies.

“Thanks to SGP and the Mountain Partnership, my mindset and that of my fellow farmers have changed about the food we produce, eat and sell. We are now more aware of the dangers of using agro-chemicals and have decided to focus on producing good, clean and fair food for all. It's impossible to imagine Lesotho without thinking about sorghum. We are all united to showcase its importance.”

Mampho Thulo, Director, Rural Self-help Development Association



Youth action on plastic pollution in the Seychelles

The ocean is drowning in plastic. This stark realization inspired three young women to co-found The Ocean Project Seychelles, an NGO that tackles issues affecting the local marine environment through education, outreach, research and action. For Small Island Developing States like the Seychelles, ocean ecosystems such as coral reefs, seagrass beds and mangroves are critical to sustaining biodiversity, livelihoods and economic development. Over two years with SGP support, the project set up national litter programmes in four island districts and led 58 beach clean-ups on seven islands, engaging over 1,100 volunteers and collecting over five tonnes of marine litter and plastic pollution.

“We hope to make people think about their plastic consumption and encourage them to swap single-use plastic for reusable alternatives. It’s easy to feel disheartened at times and that, as individuals, our actions may not amount to much, but if each one of us does our bit, no matter how small, these tiny actions can build a wave of change.”

Natasha Burian, Co-founder, The Ocean Project Seychelles





Regenerative agriculture in Moldova

Valeria manages a demonstration plot in a picturesque place a skip away from a lake and a forest in the village of Rîșcova, where smallholder farmers practice 'living', regenerative and environmentally-and-consumer-friendly agriculture. A few hundred kilograms of naturally and ecologically grown produce are harvested every week and distributed to local customers. This project is transforming relationships between people and the land, and the way food is grown, sold and shared in this community.

“Why organic agriculture? Because it is the only natural and ethical way to farm. One should rather wonder: why industrial agriculture, which abounds in chemicals that affect the soil, water, biodiversity and human health? If we want sustainable agriculture that will feed us for many years, we should only focus on organic and regenerative agriculture.”

Valeria Șvarț, Development Director, EcoVisio



Renewable energy in rural Nepal

In 2018, Laiku left her family in Nepal to board a plane for the first time in her life. After six months in India, she literally enlightened her village upon her return: as a newly certified solar technician, she installed solar home lighting in 220 houses, benefitting over 2,100 people. Laiku was one of three Lama women who became so-called Solar Mamas, thanks to a South-South cooperation initiative to promote renewable energy that is supported by SGP through a partnership with Barefoot College International, Women Light the World, Bodhi Tree Foundation Humla, the New Zealand High Commission and Mega Bank.

“It is unimaginable for me as an illiterate woman to be able to install lighting in my community. And it was even more astonishing to have gone all the way to India for this opportunity, to receive the training that enabled me to help my own people.”

Laiku Lama, Solar Technician, Nepal





Tree planting in the Solomon Islands

If you asked local children about the long line of trees growing next to the coastal road between Takaboru and Horabau on Guadalcanal Island, in the Solomon Islands, they might tell you that those trees have always been there. Many young people don't know that a decade ago this part of the island looked different and these trees are part of an environmental and economic transformation happening in the region. Tree planting and farming began here in 2013, when the community group Isi Akson Theatre Art Trust (Inc.) launched an afforestation project with SGP support. Founded by Francis Koria, the group originated from the Solomon Island's Development Trust's theatre, which used plays to raise awareness among both literate and illiterate Solomon Islanders about issues touching their lives. By December 2020, the Isi Akson project planted over 6,000 trees on what is now called the Kolokisu Afforestation Camp, covering 5,000 hectares.

“Before, it was just grassland. I thought I could start a project to create jobs, so that's how I came up with this tree planting project. The community worked to plant and maintain the trees. After eight years, not only have the trees grown, so has the knowledge base on how to farm them in the arid climate.”

Francis Koria, Chairman, Isi Akson Theatre Art Trust (Inc.)



Empowering women and youth in Morocco

Bidaya is a local Moroccan organization that acts as a social green tech business incubator and worked with SGP to launch the Women Green'preneur project to address gender inequality and green jobs for youth. The project trained 30 aspiring female entrepreneurs with environmental projects. The five-month programme covered everything they needed to learn to get their ideas off the ground: from idea conception to defining a business model, through prototyping and testing. One of the start-ups that was born thanks to this initiative is Madame Olympe, the first Moroccan producer of underwear for menstrual hygiene.

“Creating Madame Olympe helped me get involved, in a tangible way, in subjects that are important to me, and especially to go from awareness to taking concrete action. Through this initiative we have made a difference in the lives of women in our community thanks to the convenient non-toxic menstrual protection.”

Yasmine Benhamou, Founder, Madame Olympe





Inclusive forest restoration in Georgia

In the town of Borjomi, in Georgia, the Tebe centre provides a nurturing space for social integration, rehabilitation, and employment of over 30 persons with disabilities. Managed by the civil society organization Together for Real Change, with SGP support, the Tebe centre also plays a key role in restoring the Borjomi forest, which has suffered from conflict, frequent fires and climate change impacts. The centre built a greenhouse and a nursery to grow fir trees, pines, and birches. These are later replanted into the forest, offering persons with disabilities an opportunity to learn about forests and climate change, while engaging in meaningful environmental work.

“ In Tebe, we witness the transformative power of nature and the human spirit, proving that disability is never a barrier when hearts and hands unite for a greener, more inclusive tomorrow. ”

Nana Lomadze, Head, Together for Real Change

Looking ahead



SGP's 30 years of experience show that small but effective local actions can be scaled up to create greater impact. As the programme enters its eight operational phase, SGP will continue to engage local communities and civil society across the world, providing them access to knowledge and information, capacitating them through learning-by-doing and skills development, and delivering technical and grant assistance for interventions that enhance wellbeing and socio-economic conditions, while also conserving, protecting and restoring the planet's natural resources.

In addition, SGP will work with partners, GEF agencies and civil society to create opportunities for further innovation and scaling up of projects that provide models suitable for adaptation and replication in other regions and countries. It will also catalyze multi-stakeholder alliances to test new approaches and leverage its dialogue platforms towards greater impact.

Building on three decades of successful experience, SGP remains committed to working towards a sustainable future for people and planet.





“Today, SGP’s unique role in supporting civil society and local communities is more relevant than ever. Global environmental issues require integrated, innovative and inclusive solutions. This is exactly what SGP delivers through decentralized and scaled up community-led efforts, which in turn contribute to making a systemic change in conserving our planet and improving people’s lives.”

Yoko Watanabe, SGP Global Manager







SGP Ukraine



SGP Sri Lanka



SGP Cuba



SGP Vietnam



SGP Iran

SGP The GEF
Small Grants
Programme | **30**
YEARS

304 E 45th Street
UNDP, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10017
USA
www.sgp.undp.org



Acknowledgements

This publication is dedicated to the past and present SGP grantee-partners, local communities, civil society, SGP staff and National Steering Committee members, for their commitment to environmental action and local sustainable development over the past three decades.

Design: CamiloSalomon @ www.cjsalomon.com

SGP The GEF
Small Grants
Programme | **30**
YEARS

304 E 45th Street
UNDP, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10017
USA
www.sgp.undp.org