



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

**GEF Small Grants Programme**  
**Operational Guidelines**  
(updated December 2020)

## Purpose of this Document

Launched in 1992, the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP), implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on behalf of the GEF Partnership, is a GEF Corporate Programme that finances community-led initiatives to address global environmental and sustainable development issues. SGP was specifically designed to generate innovative and impactful local actions by empowering civil society organizations (CSOs<sup>1</sup>) and community-based organizations with a strong focus on social inclusion, including indigenous peoples, youth, women and girls, and persons with disabilities.

The Operational Guidelines are intended to assist SGP National Coordinators/Sub-Regional Coordinators (NCs), Programme Assistants (PAs), National Steering Committees (NSCs), GEF Operational Focal Points and other country level partners, UNDP Country Offices and National Host Institution (NHI), SGP Central Programme Management Team (CPMT), SGP Upgrading Country Programme teams, and UNOPS in programme implementation.

They are based on the experience and knowledge gained both at the country and global levels over 25 years of SGP programme implementation. They provide the basic policy framework for SGP operations, including the structure, implementation, and governance of the programme. They also address the project cycle and grant disbursement.

Further details on procurement, finance and administrative issues related to UNOPS operations are described in the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) manual. Details on the programme and project monitoring, evaluation, and reporting are covered in the SGP Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy and briefly summarized in this document. These documents are attached to the Operational Guidelines as annexes.

The guidelines are meant to apply to all SGP Country Programmes. It is recognized that different contexts and situations may require different responses and adaptations. Any questions about the application of particular provisions of the guidelines should be referred to the SGP Central Programme Management Team (CPMT).

*The SGP Operational Guidelines (April 2020), that was approved as part of the SGP OP7 Project Document, has been updated in Dec 2020 to reflect the correct UNDP terminology for the role of UNOPS. The term “Responsible Party” is replaced by “Implementing Partner”.*

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<sup>1</sup> CSOs in this context refer to national and local civil society organizations, including community-based organizations, indigenous peoples, farmers associations, scientific and academic institutions, women’s groups, and youth and children organizations.

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## List of Acronyms.

BAC	Budget Account Classification Code
CBO	Community-based Organization
CCF	Country Cooperation Framework
CO	Country Office
COA	Chart of Account (ATLAS)
COB	Country Operating Budget
CPMT	Central Programme Management Team
CPS	Country Programme Strategy
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IOV	Inter-office Voucher
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOD	Miscellaneous Obligation Document
NC	National Coordinator
NCE	Nature, Climate and Energy Unit
NFP	National Focal Person
NFG	National Focal Group
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NHI	National Host Institution
NPFE	GEF National Portfolio Formulation Exercise
NSC	National Steering Committee
OP	Operational Programme
PA	Programme Assistant
PO	Purchase Order (ATLAS)
REQ	Requisition (ATLAS)
SBAA	Standard Basic Assistance Agreement
SGP	GEF Small Grants Programme
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
SRC	Sub-Regional Coordinator
SRSC	Sub-Regional Steering Committee
SPS	Sub-Regional Programme Strategy
TOR	Terms of Reference
UCP	Upgrading Country Programme
UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

## PART I: COUNTRY PARTICIPATION IN SGP

1. A country that wishes to participate in the SGP may submit a letter of interest signed by the GEF Operational Focal Point and addressed to the SGP Global Manager, with a copy to the UNDP and GEF Secretariat. Participation of new countries to the SGP is subject to a number of criteria including inter alia the GEF Council guidance through the SGP implementation arrangement paper, project document for the concerned operational phase, available funding, concurrence by the UNDP, and other relevant decisions and guidance.
2. The process for setting up a new SGP Country Programme includes the preparation and review of the country application, organization of an appraisal mission, consultations with civil society organizations and other stakeholders in the country.
3. Key eligibility criteria for countries to participate in SGP include:
  - Ratification of at least one of the global environmental conventions including the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants; and United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD);
  - Government commitment in support of SGP's implementation modality according to the SGP Operational Guidelines;
  - Presence of local NGOs and CBOs;
  - Potential for strong civil society organizations and government relations, and positive support for local civil society organizations;
  - Commitment for resource mobilization for the programme from the government, UNDP Country Office, and other partners' support efforts to attract other co-funding sources;
  - Positive enabling environment.

## PART II. SGP PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

4. **The structure of the SGP, implemented by UNDP, is decentralized and country-driven.** Within the parameters established and approved by the GEF Council under the GEF Programming Direction, SGP Implementation Arrangement and other relevant GEF Council decisions, and the SGP Project Documents for the SGP Operational Phase, the programme seeks to provide maximum country and community-level ownership and initiative. This decentralization is balanced against the need for programme consistency and accountability across the participating countries at the global level for the achievement of the GEF's global environmental benefits that are outlined in the Project Document for the Operational Phase.
5. **The overall programme direction and core funding of the SGP is agreed through the GEF Replenishment meetings for each GEF replenishment phase.** This is followed by decisions at the GEF Council, where details on the SGP implementation arrangement are discussed and

endorsed for each GEF replenishment phase. The SGP Operational Phase typically starts during the first year of the GEF replenishment phase, and the global programme runs for several years on a rolling basis.

6. Subsequently, the GEF Council approves the SGP's Project Information Forms (PIFs) and the GEF CEO endorses the SGP Project Document(s) for each SGP Operational Phase.<sup>2</sup> The SGP is financed by: 1) GEF's set aside finance (Core funds); 2) the GEF System of Transparent Allocation Resources (STAR); and 3) cofinancing. Cofinancing to the SGP is sought from CSOs/NGOs, bilateral and multilateral donors, foundations, private sector, governments, and others, who play a key role in establishing partnerships, leveraging resources, and providing sustainability to the programme.
7. The SGP Project Documents for the concerned Operational Phase provides the official framework for SGP operations in line with the programming and policy directions of the GEF replenishment phase. The project documents are signed between UNDP as the GEF Agency and UNOPS (or another entity in the case of Upgraded Countries Programmes – refer below) as the programme executing entity (Implementing Partner in UNDP nomenclature).

#### I. Global-level Structure

8. **Since its establishment in 1992, as a Corporate Programme of the GEF, the SGP has been implemented by UNDP as the GEF Agency on behalf of the GEF Partnership.** UNDP is therefore legally accountable to the GEF Council for the implementation, as well as the management of other SGP co-financing resources that are channeled through UNDP. The global Nature, Climate and Energy Unit at the UNDP Headquarters in New York (UNDP-NCE) provides fiduciary oversight for all of its GEF activities, including the SGP. UNDP Headquarters staff include the UNDP-NCE Executive Coordinator, and his/her delegated senior officer.
  - a) **SGP Global Programme**
    9. **The SGP Central Programme Management Team (CPMT):** Within the UNDP framework, the SGP is managed as a Global Programme. At the country level, SGP Country Programmes are coordinated and managed by the SGP Central Programme Management Team (CPMT) at the UNDP headquarters at the global level. The CPMT provides the overall management of the SGP, including strategic, thematic, and operational guidance and support to the country programmes.
    10. The SGP Global Manager is responsible for the overall programme management, including strategy, partnership, and resource mobilization, while the Deputy Global Manager oversees

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<sup>2</sup> The SGP Core programme for the GEF Operational Phase is funded as a multi-country project framework, combining Core and STAR funds; whilst the SGP Upgraded Country Programmes (UCPs) are funded as stand-alone country project, drawn entirely from the country's GEF STAR allocation.

country programmes, results monitoring, and operational matters. The Programme Advisors are responsible for country supervision and support; guidance on thematic issues; communication and knowledge sharing; monitoring and evaluation; and partnership development and networking. As necessary, the Global Manager and Deputy Global Manager delegate certain functions to the Programme Advisors. The Programme Associates are responsible for daily administration and operations, including financial monitoring and reporting; human resources support; communications; organization of meetings; filing; and responses to routine requests for information.

**11. The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS):** Since inception, UNOPS has been the programme executing entity (Implementing Partner under the UNDP nomenclature) of the SGP. It provides programme execution services including administrative, financial, legal, operational, and procurement for the SGP as described in detail in the UNOPS SGP Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)<sup>3</sup>. UNOPS works closely with the CPMT.

**12. The CPMT-UNOPS Regional Support Team,** comprised of CPMT's Programme Advisor (as Regional Focal Point) and UNOPS's Regional Focal Point, provides a range of technical advice, operational, management and administrative support to the SGP Country Programmes for the concerned region. SGP has adopted the following geographical regions: Africa, Arab States, Asia, Europe & CIS, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Pacific. The Regional Support Team works collaboratively in support of country programmes with regard to all substantive and operational matters. The CPMT Regional Focal Point focuses primarily on technical and programmatic matters, and the UNOPS Regional Focal Point is responsible for administrative and financial issues.

#### **b) SGP Upgraded Country Programmes**

**13. Several of the longest standing and most mature SGP Country Programmes are recognized as an SGP Upgraded Country Programme (UCP).** Upgrading became operational under GEF-5, with the following objectives: (i) to enable the SGP to continue to expand and serve low-income nations without concomitant growth in core funding; (ii) to make better use of the capacities of mature Country Programmes to enrich the younger, less experienced ones; and (iii) to enable mature Country Programmes to access greater financial resources and exercise more programmatic freedom in light of their greater internal capacity. Criteria to become a UCP is discussed and agreed by the GEF Council under the SGP Implementing Arrangement Paper for each SGP Operational Phase.

**14.** SGP UCPs are financed with GEF STAR resources as standalone full-sized or medium-sized projects, and do not receive SGP core funding. The UCPs are aligned with the overall SGP strategic directions and follow the same operational modalities as the other SGP Country

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<sup>3</sup> [https://drive.google.com/a/unops.org/file/d/1b2ayrh0ddQHvOpXHXY16i\\_1t1qJ2EuZ/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/a/unops.org/file/d/1b2ayrh0ddQHvOpXHXY16i_1t1qJ2EuZ/view?usp=sharing)

Programmes. They also share a unified approach to civil society engagement, branding, strategic initiatives, knowledge management, communication, and community-driven project planning and implementation. **UCPs follow the same SGP Operational Guidelines.**

15. SGP UCPs are implemented by UNDP as the GEF Implementing Agency. Based on an assessment of execution modalities applied during previous Operational Phases, two execution options are available for UCPs: (i) execution by UNOPS in the absence of NGOs with sufficient execution capacities, thus providing an already familiar set of procedures and instruments to National Coordinators and UNDP Country Offices and guaranteeing a reasonable rate of project delivery without additional investment in time and resources; and (ii) execution by non-governmental organization/NGO(s), where practical and strategic conditions warrant its use and the proposed NGO fulfills criteria and standards relating to fiduciary and small grants management and respective reporting.
16. SGP UCPs are managed by a UCP Global Coordinator, who provides oversight by supporting and monitoring implementation and promoting the sharing of lessons learned and best practice among UCPs and between UCPs and the Global Programme.

## II. Country-level Structure

17. The SGP brings together Country Programmes of participating countries.<sup>4</sup> **The SGP Country Programme operates in a decentralized and country-driven manner through a SGP Country Programme Team and National Steering Committee in each participating country, with oversight support provided by the UNDP Country Office.** In some countries, a National Host Institution (NHI), including either a national NGO, environmental trust fund, or academic institution, is responsible for programme implementation in conjunction with the NC, NSC, and UNDP CO. SGP also operates with a Sub-Regional Coordinator among the sub-regional countries, where relevant. Further details on the Country Programme Structure is described in Part III below.

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<sup>4</sup> For a full list of participating SGP countries refer: <http://www.sgp.undp.org>

### Part III. OPERATION OF SGP COUNTRY PROGRAMMES

18. This section covers the implementation and operations of SGP Country Programmes. It discusses in more detail the roles and responsibilities of the SGP Country Programme Team (consisted of National/Sub-regional Coordinator and Programme Assistants); National Steering Committee or National Focal Groups (for those under Sub-Regional Programme modality); UNDP Country Office; and National Host Institution. It also discusses detail processes and requirements in implementing and administrating the SGP Country Programme.

#### I. Arrangements at the Country Level

19. The SGP operates at the country level under the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement (SBAA) between the recipient Government and the UNDP. For both SGP Country Programmes under Global Programme and UCPs, the UNDP-NCE Unit in New York is ultimately accountable to the GEF Council as the GEF Agency. UNOPS is accountable to UNDP as the programme executing entity/Implementing Partner, and as stipulated in the Memorandum of Understanding between UNDP and UNOPS. In case of UCPs, the Implementing Partner could also be an NGO. Because of the SGP's unique operating structure, the negotiation and maintenance of appropriate and supportive in-country institutional arrangements is of critical importance for effective programme implementation.

##### a) Oversight of SGP Country Programme at Country level

20. **The UNDP Country Office (UNDP CO) contributes to providing oversight and support to the SGP Country Programme at the country level.** The UNDP Resident Representative (UNDP RR) in each UNDP CO may choose to assign a senior staff person (typically the Deputy Resident Representative) to serve as the SGP focal point. The UNDP RR or his/her designated delegate participates as NSC member. The UNDP RR or the designee provides day-to-day oversight to the SGP Country Programme Team and serves as a secondary supervisor to the SGP National Coordinator (NC). The UNDP CO also plays a key role in facilitating the establishment of a new SGP Country Programme as well as closing it when necessary. In addition, the UNDP CO facilitates interaction with the host government, develop links with other in-country projects and programmes, and supports scaling up and resource mobilization efforts.

21. In summary, the UNDP CO provides operational support (under a Country Office Support letter of agreement), for, inter alia:

- Recruitment and appointment of SGP country programme staff on behalf of UNOPS;
- Hosting the SGP Country Team Office;
- Issuing appointment letters of NSC members, based on CPMT approval;
- Participate as standing member of the SGP National Steering Committee (NSC);
- Engage in SGP Country Programme Strategy development as well as all key project cycle of SGP grant projects as part of the NSC, including project appraisal, approval, and

- monitoring.
- UNDP RR signing the Memorandum of Agreements (MOA) of the SGP grants on behalf of UNOPS. In case of UCPs that are executed by a NGO, the MOA is signed between the NGO and the grantee.
  - Promotes policy and programme linkages with the government and other partners for scaling up of SGP project approaches and tools, and support on resource mobilization.

## **b) Hosting Arrangement for SGP Country Programme**

- 22. There are two basic hosting arrangements for the country programme: UNDP Country Office (UNDP CO) or National Host Institution (NHI).** Hosting Arrangement will be finalized by the Global Manager or the UCP Global Coordinator, in consultation with country stakeholders.
- 23. The UNDP CO provides overall oversight support for in-country operations, in coordination with the CPMT or UCP Global Coordinator, for all type of hosting arrangements.**
- 24. UNDP Country Office as SGP host institution:** In most countries, the SGP Country Programme is hosted by the UNDP CO. The SGP Country Programme office may be physically located within or outside the UNDP Country Office premises, as appropriate.
- 25. SGP National Host Institution:** In keeping with the spirit and mandate of the SGP to develop and foster the capacities of CSOs in participating countries, SGP Country Programme could be hosted by a CSO as the host institution, when relevant. Based on consultations with stakeholders, the SGP Country Programme could be hosted in a National Host Institution (NHI), which may be a non-governmental organization or academic institution at the national level. Based on transparent criteria<sup>5</sup> and selection process, the SGP Global Manager or UCP Global Coordinator approves the NHI, in consultation with UNDP CO, NSC, and key national stakeholders.<sup>6</sup>
- 26. The identification of a pool of suitable NHIs is typically carried out during the SGP appraisal mission, by reviewing and assessing a list of available and interested organizations in consultation with key stakeholders, and/or through a process of competitive bidding coordinated between CPMT, UNOPS, and the UNDP CO, as appropriate. Local representation of international NGOs would not normally be eligible. The legitimacy and neutrality of potential**

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<sup>5</sup> Criteria for NHI selection could include: a) National stature and credibility; b) Good working relationships with other CSOs, including participation in environment/development networks; c) Demonstrated compatibility with the procedures, objectives, and grant-making functions of the SGP, GEF, and UNDP; d) Significant experience in community-based, participatory environment and development; e) Substantial involvement and technical expertise in environmental issues related to the GEF and the Rio conventions; and f) Proven programme management and administrative capacity with systems in place.

<sup>6</sup> For NGO execution in UCPs, the Implementing Partner selection needs to follow the UNDP Partner Capacity Assessment Tool (PCAT) and the HACT assessment procedure, available in the UNDP Programme and Project Management Chapter of the POPP, under [Select Implementing Partner \(procedure 2.0\)](#) and [Select Responsible Party and Grantee \(procedure 3.0\)](#).

NHIs within the NGO community at the country level are essential qualifications to carry out SGP grant-making activities.

27. A contract will be concluded between the NHI and UNOPS that outlines the technical support and administrative services to be provided, as well as the applicable operating budget. The relationship with an NHI may range from the provision of physical office space with an NC holding a UNDP/UNOPS contract; to one where the NHI carried the full responsibility for managing the SGP Country Programme, including for the recruitment of an NC. The extent of responsibility of the NHI will be clearly defined in the contract for services signed by UNOPS and the NHI and may evolve over time.
28. If the NHI resumes full responsibility including the recruitment and contracting of the NC, he/she is an employee of the NHI and reports to the head of the NHI. If the NC hosted by a NHI holds a UNDP or UNOPS contract, the staff reports directly to the SGP Global Manager or UCP Global Coordinator.
29. The NHI will submit a standard annual report for review by the CPMT and UNOPS. Once considered satisfactory performance, the NHI contract can be renewed annually by approval of the CPMT or UCP Global Coordinator. In certain cases, where the selected NHI does not fully meet performance expectations, and upon consultation with country stakeholders, the contract may be terminated, and hosting will be transferred either to the UNDP CO or to another NHI.
30. The NHI Representative may also participate as member of the NSC. To ensure transparency and impartiality, the NHI is not eligible to apply for SGP grants.

## II. SGP Country Programme Team

**31. The SGP Country Programme Team consists of a National Coordinator/Sub-regional Coordinator (NC) and Programme Associate (PA),** depending on the size and complexity of the Country Programme.

### a) National/Sub-regional Coordinator

**32. Roles and Responsibilities:** The NC is responsible for the overall functioning of the SGP in each participating country, and for the implementation and achievement of the SGP Country Programme Strategy for the relevant Operational Phase. For UCPs, the Project Document for the relevant Operational Phase will be the guiding framework document. Key responsibilities include inter alia to: (i) facilitate the development of the Country Programme Strategy (CPS) for each operational phase; (ii) assist CSOs in every step of the project cycle management, including development, implementation, and monitoring; (iii) serve as the ex officio secretariat for the NSC; (iv) oversee/undertake the financial, operational, and database management; (v) resource mobilization; (v) communication and knowledge management; (vi) support scaling up efforts,

policy dialogue and advocacy; and (vii) global reporting to the CPMT or UCP Global Coordinator, UNOPS, responding to audits, and other tasks as stipulated in their ToR. The NC is also responsible for all country programme expenditures. The NC is expected to have full-time dedication to the SGP<sup>7</sup> and avoid all possible conflicts of interest.

**33. Selection and Contract:** The SGP Global Manager or the UCP Global Coordinator approves the recruitment of the NC, and the UNDP CO typically administer the selection and contract of the personnel on behalf of UNOPS (in case of SGP global), under the UNDP CO's human resources rules for Service Contracts. Other relevant UNDP and UNOPS contractual modalities are used in exceptional cases. In some cases, the NC contract administration can be covered under the terms of the contract with the NHI. In this case, the NHI's human resources management rules apply to the NC. Regardless of the arrangement, the selection of the NC is done through a publicly advertised and competitive selection process. The selection panel submits three of the top applicants to the CPMT Regional Focal Point for review and final approval by the SGP Global Manager. In case of UCPs, the UCP Global Coordinator reviews and makes the final approval. The recruitment process and related guidelines are described in more detail in the UNOPS Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

**34. Reporting and performance assessment:** The NC reports to the SGP Global Manager, with the day-to-day guidance and supervision provided by the CPMT Regional Focal Point. In the case of UCPs, the NC reports to the UCP Global Coordinator. The NC also works closely with the UNDP RR (or his/her designee) at the country level as their secondary supervisor. The performance of NCs is evaluated annually. The evaluation is undertaken through a SGP Performance and Results Assessment (PRA) in three parts: (i) a self-assessment by the NC; (ii) performance assessment inputs from the NSC and UNDP RR; and (iii) an overall review and assessment by the CPMT or UCP Global Coordinator, along with UNOPS inputs. For NCs under the Global Programme, the final annual performance is assessed by the CPMT. For the NCs that are administered by the NHI (for those who do not hold a UNDP/UNOPS contract), the NC is accountable to the head of the NHI. The NHI as an institution reports to the CPMT or UCP Global Coordinator on their performance as part of the annual reporting of the NHI.

**35. Representation:** The NC often represents the SGP in local, national, and global meetings, workshops, and other events in the country, and may be accompanied by members of the NSC. However, for legal and financial purposes, only the UNDP RR or his/her Officer in Charge (OIC) may represent the SGP in-country. Where the UNDP hosts the SGP country programme, only the UNDP RR or his/her Officer in Charge (OIC) can sign the SGP grant Memoranda of Agreement (MOAs) on behalf of UNOPS, and other co-financing arrangements. The NC does not have the authority to officially sign legal and financial agreements. The NC may however sign non-binding collaborative agreements between SGP and other projects and programmes. Under NHI hosting

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<sup>7</sup> The NC should not accept any other functions unless a cost-sharing arrangement can be negotiated with the UNDP CO or NHI and agreed by CPMT.

arrangements, the signature of the MOA may be assigned by the director of the NGO as the Implementing Partner of UNDP (in case of UCPs) or Responsible Party of UNOPS. The NC should consult the CPMT or the UCP Global Coordinator, and UNOPS where relevant, if there is any doubt on the rules and procedures with respect to signing legal documents and associated procedures.

#### **b) Programme Assistant and other support personnel**

- 36.** As part of the SGP country programme team, a Programme Assistant (PA) will be recruited based on set of criteria agreed by the CPMT, including overall size of the SGP Country Programme portfolio, and specific country programme needs. Under the standard ToR, the PA provides support and responsible for the financial, operational, and database management for the SGP country programme, and reports to the NC.
- 37.** The process of hiring the PA will follow the same overall procedure and modality as the NC noted above. The NC shall be involved in the selection process, and the panel recommendation will be forwarded to the CPMT Regional Focal Point or UCP Global Coordinator for approval. The NC is responsible for the supervision and performance assessment of the PA.
- 38.** In certain cases, a part-time PA and/or consultant with the required background may be recruited for a limited period to contribute and provide required assistance for the management of the Country Programme. These arrangements are discussed and agreed with the CPMT through the annual work planning and country operational budget excise. More details on the recruitment process and related guidelines are provided in the UNOPS SGP SOPs.

### **III. Sub-Regional Programme**

- 39. On an exceptional basis, when deemed appropriate, SGP could also have a Sub-regional Programme**, and have a Sub-Regional Coordinator and Programme Assistant that covers multiple countries. The decision to have a Sub-regional Programme, instead of country programmes, will be determined by the CPMT in consultation with the regional stakeholders. The Sub-Regional Coordinator may manage the programme, while projects are reviewed and approved by a voluntary National Focal Group (NFG) with part-time facilitation by a National Focal Person (NFP) at the country level. The composition and function of the NFG follows the same as the National Steering Committee noted below. Some countries, with substantial grant making, may decide to shift to a Country Programme modality with a full time NC.

### **IV. National Steering Committee**

- 40. The National Steering Committee (NSC) serves as the main decision-making body of the SGP at the country level, and provides overall oversight, guidance and direction to the Country Programme.**

## Roles and Responsibilities:

- 41.** The NSC is a central governance element of the SGP and provides the primary substantive contribution and oversight to the programme, in coordination with the NC. The NSC member's roles include to (refer to the standard TOR for the NSC for further details):
- Provide overall guidance and strategic direction of the Country Programme, including the development, periodic revision, and implementation of the SGP Country Programme Strategy (CPS);
  - Link the SGP operations to the relevant global, regional, and national policies and strategies of the GEF and other third-party co-financing;
  - Support resource mobilization efforts for the SGP, at all levels;
  - Support scaling up efforts to mainstream SGP lessons learned and successes in national development planning and policy-making;
  - Participate in project monitoring and evaluation;
  - Ensure participatory, democratic, impartial, and transparent procedures for project review, selection, and approval, as well as all other aspects of programme implementation at the country level in accordance with the SGP Project Document for the relevant Operational Phase;
- 42. No SGP project may be undertaken at the country level without the approval of the NSC.** Operationally, the decisions of the NSC are considered final provided they are consistent with the SGP Operational Guidelines, the SGP Project Document for the GEF Operational Phase and the Country Programme Strategy (or UCP Project Document). As such, the NSC must do its best to ensure the technical and substantive quality of SGP grants, and the administrative and financial capacity, either actual or potential, of the CSO grant recipients. The UNDP RR, or his/her delegate, as well as other members of the NSC, are encouraged to provide any relevant information about these concerns, especially the financial and organizational integrity of CSOs. However, neither the NSC nor its individual members as programme volunteers, hold any legal or fiduciary responsibility for the SGP or its activities.
- 43.** The objectivity, transparency and credibility of the NSC is of paramount importance to the success of the SGP Country Programme, and to maintaining good relations among stakeholders. As a general rule, Country Programmes cannot consider proposals associated with organizations of sitting NSC members. A CSO may nonetheless submit proposals when the associated NSC member finished the term of service and is no longer on the Committee. On an exceptional basis, based on approval by the SGP Global Manager or the UCP Global Coordinator, CSOs with members in the NSC can submit proposals.
- 44.** In accordance with the UN rules on ethical conduct, all members of the NSC must declare any conflict of interests, actual or potential, with respect to concepts or proposals submitted for

consideration. All NSC members must sign a Declaration of Conflict of Interest (COI) statement at the time of their appointment, as well as for each sitting of the NSC which reviews and approves projects. A conflict of interest may involve a range of circumstances including *inter alia*: (i) the presence of relatives or family members connected with the proposal; (ii) a financial or personal interest in the applicant organization; (iii) political, reputational and/or other ethical considerations. For more details, please refer to the UNOPS SOPs.

### **Composition**

- 45. A majority of NSC members should be from the non-governmental sector.** The NSC is composed of voluntary members from the CSO sector (including NGOs, academic and scientific institutions, indigenous peoples, women groups, and others); UNDP Country Office (RR and/or the designated SGP focal point in the country office); and the GEF Operational Focal Point (or his/her designee), and others including private sector, donor institutions, experts, and limited number of additional government members as appropriate.
- 46. The UNDP RR and GEF OFP are considered to be institutional members. All other NSC members are invited to join in their personal capacity.** To the maximum extent possible the NSC membership should reflect expertise on relevant GEF focal areas of biodiversity; climate change mitigation; international waters; sustainable land management; sustainable forest management; chemicals and wastes, and other thematic areas that the country programme is focused on. One of the NSC member should be designated as the focal point to provide expertise on gender issues. It is also recommended to designate a youth and indigenous peoples focal point in the NSC.
- 47.** In general, only one government representative (GEF Operational Focal Point or Political Focal Point) is required as an institutional member. Depending on the circumstances, additional government representatives such as the Ministry of finance, Convention Focal Point(s), and/or other relevant members may be considered. Governmental members should hold positions relevant to the work of the SGP and at a level where they could contribute to strategic and technical discussions, particularly when assessing and approving proposals.
- 48.** Based on the experience of multiple SGP Operational Phases, it is recommended that the NSC is composed of about 7 to 12 members. However, variance from this could be accepted as membership could vary by country context. Membership should be large enough to include a majority of civil society members, as well as members from the government and UNDP CO.
- 49. The NSC may also constitute a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) with a pool of voluntary experts on call to serve as a technical sub-committee to review proposals and in relation to specific areas of programming and partnership development.** The TAG can also be tasked by the NSC to provide specific technical guidance in specialized areas of work. In addition, the TAG may also be formed in response to donor and co-financing requirements mobilized for the SGP

country programme. The composition of the TAG should also reflect the multi-sectorial approach of the SGP incorporating a mix of experts drawn from civil society and the government.

### *Selection and Appointment*

50. For new country programmes, the selection of NSC members is led by the UNDP CO with support from the NC, in close consultation with the CPMT and a wide circle of stakeholders. The composition and appointment of a newly established NSC is subject to review by the CPMT RFP and final approval by the SGP Global Manager, while subsequent appointments and updates can be approved by the responsible CPMT RFP. For UCPs, approval is provided by the UCP Global Coordinator. The UNDP RR provides the appointment letters on behalf of the SGP.
51. **For an existing NSC, the selection and rotation of new NSC members will be facilitated by the UNDP RR or his/her designated delegate, with support from the standing NSC and NC, in consultation with a wide and representatives group of stakeholders at the national level.**
52. **Nomination and selection of non-governmental NSC members should be undertaken in a transparent manner through as wide a consultation as possible with country stakeholders.** Unless an exception is granted by the CPMT based on the country context, **an open call for nomination of NSC member** (i.e. email among CSO networks and partners, communication through the print media, radio and other relevant channels) along with clear selection criteria and the due process for selection will be undertaken. The existing NSC reviews the nominations and provides a recommended composition to the UNDP RR, considering both the expertise and qualifications of the individual candidates, and the overall composition and balance of the committee. The UNDP RR, in consultation with the NC, will review and agree upon the recommended list of new NSC members, which is then submitted to the CPMT or UCP Global Coordinator for final approval, and inclusion in the SGP database.
53. The NSC non-governmental members must have high credibility and wide experience working with CSOs, CBOs, and indigenous peoples in the country and can thus represent the needs and interests of the constituency in committee discussions. Strong, experienced, and technically competent civil society representation on the NSC is crucial as a means of keeping the SGP responsive to its mandate to work with CSOs, CBOs and indigenous peoples. These members must also have the requisite knowledge of GEF Focal Areas and/or specific themes such as gender, sustainable livelihoods, monitoring and evaluation and knowledge management.
54. The NC, after due consultation with other NSC members of good standing, including the UNDP RR, may recommend changes of the NSC member if it becomes clear that a particular member's participation is not contributing to the programme. An NSC member who does not participate in three consecutive meetings, without citing a valid reason, may be considered for rotation or renewal. The final decision is endorsed by the SGP Global Manager or the UCP Global

Coordinator, and a letter to the outgoing member should be signed by the UNDP RR.

### *Term of Service*

- 55. NSC members serve for a period of three years, with a possibility of one-time renewal.** Serving more than two terms in a consecutive manner is not allowed, unless approved by the SGP Global Manager or UCP Global Manager on an exceptional basis. It is recommended that at least one term gap (3 years) is provided before the individual may come back as a NSC member, even in a new capacity. Inviting new members is a sound and healthy policy that brings new ideas and expertise to programme implementation. Rotation of the members should be planned on a regular basis, and roughly one quarter (2-3 members) of the NSC may rotate in any given year in order to avoid drastic change in members at any one time.
- 56.** Participation in the NSC is voluntary, without monetary compensation. Travel expenses for project site visits or to NSC meetings can be covered by the SGP country operational budget (COB) as relevant and should be reflected as part of the annual work plan and COB planning exercise.

### *Decision Making*

- 57.** NSCs adopt decisions under the principle of consensus and rarely resort to voting to determine whether a project is approved, or whether a particular course of action is to be taken. NSC members on the whole must be able and willing to discuss constructively and develop consensus decisions. In order to make consensual decisions, it is recommended that participation of the majority of NSC members, including a balanced representation of non-governmental and government members, is secured.
- 58. To facilitate the meetings, the NSC may decide to select its Chairperson(s)** by having: (i) one of the most committed members to Chair for a particular period of time, but strongly recommended for no more than one term or 3 consecutive years; or (ii) members to Chair meetings on a rotating basis to enhance each member's participation. In case the Chair is selected from the government, a co-chair approach between the government and non- government representation is highly recommended to promote civil society leadership and CSO-government collaboration which are institutional objectives of the programme.
- 59. The NC serves in an ex-officio capacity on the NSC, participating in deliberations, but not in decisions regarding project selection.** The NC usually convenes the NSC and functions as its Secretariat, including inter alia in (i) answering technical questions from the NSC members on a range of topics relating to the functioning of the SGP as a global programme; (ii) providing clarifications on the pipeline of project concepts and proposals received, including planning grants provided; as well as (iii) with respect to the existing cohort of approved SGP projects under implementation. With the help of the PA, if applicable, the NC prepares the summary of the main NSC decisions and discussion to be shared with UNOPS and uploaded to the SGP database. A copy of the NSC summary of key decisions, presented in the standard SGP template, including list of

appraised project concepts and decisions, must be reviewed and signed by all the members present.

## V. Country Programme Strategy

- 60. Each SGP participating country must prepare a Country Programme Strategy or Sub-regional Programme Strategy for the operational phase** (abbreviated as the CPS) that is approved by the CPMT. The development/revision of the CPS is designed to ensure strategic grantmaking and other activities at the country level, in congruence with the SGP Project Document and strategic initiatives for the concerned Operational Phase; alignment with strategic planning frameworks associated with the relevant Conventions and national policies, plans and strategies; environment and social safeguards, risk management, as well as coordination with the GEF, other major partnerships and programs where relevant. For new SGP Country Programmes, the development of a CPS is one of the first tasks to be undertaken by the NC and newly-formed NSC.
- 61.** The CPS shall be updated in every Operational Phase of the SGP, or as deemed necessary by the NSC, to align country programme priorities with those included in the relevant SGP Project Document in line with the priorities of the GEF, third party co-financing, and other national policies, programmes and plans. Based on wide stakeholder consultations, a draft of the CPS will be prepared and initially cleared by the NSC and submitted to the CPMT Regional Focal Point for review by him/her together with other relevant CPMT colleagues. Reflecting on the comments received from the CPMT, the CPS will be revised by the NC, reviewed and endorsed by the NSC, before being finally approved by the CPMT.
- 62.** The CPS will contain among others: (i) background and baseline situation of the country; (ii) priority geographic and thematic focus; (iii) programme framework; (iv) results framework; (v) social and environmental standards and risks; (vi) projected finance; and others. A specific guidance for the development/updating of the CPS, including a standard template, will be prepared by the CPMT and shared with the Country Programmes at the start of each Operational Phase. The development/revision of the CPS should be undertaken as a participatory process that engages the full range of non-governmental and government stakeholders in the country, and to fully engage and involve the NSC.
- 63.** For UCPs, a standard UNDP Project Document is produced that reflects the Country Programme's strategy that is broadly coherent with the overall SGP strategic initiatives endorsed by the GEF Council during each Operational Phase. To ensure strong country ownership, and in line with the stakeholder engagement requirements outlined by UNDP and the GEF<sup>8</sup>, the development of the Project Document will be done in full consultation and close

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<sup>8</sup> UNDP's [Social and Environmental Standards \(SES\)](#), the [SES Guidance Note of Stakeholder Engagement](#), the [GEF's Guidelines on the Implementation of the Policy on Stakeholder Engagement](#) and the [GEF Policy on Gender Equality](#).

engagement with government, CSOs and other relevant stakeholders and in an inclusive and gender-responsive manner and applying the agreed social and environmental standards and screening procedures. The UCP Global Coordinator clears the Project Document and submits it to the GEF for CEO Endorsement and to UNDP for approval following standard procedures.

## **VI. Annual Work Plan & Country Operation Budget**

- 64.** The Country Operation Budget or Sub-regional Operation Budget (abbreviated here to COB) is the financial provision for country or sub-regional programme implementation, including costs for the country team salary, office premise, travel, equipment, etc. The Annual Work Plan (AWP) and COB is prepared annually by the NC in consultation with the NSC. Both the AWP and COB are essential in supporting the timely and cost-effective implementation and achievements of the CPS. Both the COB and AWP are reviewed and cleared by the UNOPS-CPMT Regional Team and DGM, with final approval by the SGP Global Manager. In countries where an NHI hosts the SGP, the COB is generally covered by the terms of the contract for services between the organization and UNOPS. The COB process and related guidelines are highlighted in detail in the SOPs.
- 65.** UNOPS, as the executing entity/Implementing Partner, manages the budget in direct contact with the SGP Country Programme team and in collaboration with the UNDP CO and CPMT. The SGP Country Programme team, with support from UNOPS, is responsible for the use of the COB and implementation of the AWP within the approved amount and timeline.
- 66.** For the UCPs, the budget for operations is approved as part of the Project Document and is subject to revision on an annual basis along with approval of Annual Work Plans and requests for annual Authorized Spending Limits. In UCPs, any proposed budget revision should be developed by the NC, in close consultation with the UNDP CO, and UNOPS where relevant, and shared with the UCP Global Coordinator for final review and approval.

## PART IV IMPLEMENTATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF SGP GRANTS

### I. SGP Regular Grants

- 67. Each SGP Country Programme prepares and issues a call for proposals on a regular basis in line with the approved SGP Country Programme Strategy (CPS) or Project Document** (in the case of UCPs). Information in the call for proposals should clearly state that the SGP makes grants to eligible CSOs (or to individuals in exceptional cases as in the case of fellowships), on specific thematic and geographic focuses with a maximum grant amount of US\$50,000 for regular grants. While regular call for proposals is a preferred modality and good practice, based on established practice over successive SGP Operational Phases, project concepts and proposals may also be received on a rolling basis by SGP country teams to be reviewed for eligibility in line with the CPS for the Operational Phase, or UCP Project Document, with feedback provided to proponents.
- 68.** The process for developing an SGP grant project concept and project document should take place in a transparent manner covering the: (i) project preparation guidelines setting forth the eligibility criteria; (ii) application/proposal review process and calendar; (iii) templates for project concept and proposal development, and; (iv) co-financing requirements in cash and/or in-kind.
- 69.** SGP provides grants in a strategic manner to support activities that help achieve the programme objectives outlined in the CPS and project document for the Operational Phase. In terms of helping achieve global environmental benefits, each project proposal should align with the SGP's Strategic Initiatives and articulate how the project objectives and activities would have a positive effect in the relevant GEF focal areas. Each project should also determine measurable contribution to one or more of the GEF results indicators and targets on global environment benefits. To create sustainability and impact beyond the project, SGP projects can combine demonstration, capacity-building, network building, awareness raising, and dissemination of lessons learned as integral components. Given this comprehensive approach, a simple results framework and monitoring work plan are required for each proposal.
- 70.** As a demand-driven programme, SGP projects endeavor to address both the GEF criteria, as well as community needs and initiatives. The SGP usually works with communities and localities that confront a multitude of social and economic development problems that impact on concerns related to global environment. For SGP interventions to have relevance and utility at the community level, these socio-economic issues are considered in the project design. **A key guiding philosophy of the programme has been to promote social inclusion and reach the marginalized poor and vulnerable communities**, especially when other support is limited, and where development baseline conditions have not been met. Typically, the SGP will need to mobilize additional resources to help provide the cofinancing, technical assistance, capacity-building, gender and socio-economic activities, or whatever non-GEF element may be necessary

for a project's success. These project components are vital to achieving local acceptance, ownership, and sustainability of SGP interventions.

**71. Project concepts from eligible CSOs may be screened by the NC, TAG, or jointly with the NSC.**

The NSC should determine which screening modality it will follow, and periodically review this decision to make sure that the modality chosen is working well. In all cases, project concept selection should be done on the basis of established eligibility and selection criteria in accordance with the CPS or UCP Project Document. The NSC should be informed on the long list of all project concepts that has been submitted and screened. At the minimum, project concepts should identify concrete results that are relevant to one or more of the GEF focal areas and reflect the needs of the community or communities and/or stakeholders that would be involved. Once the concepts have been selected, the proponent organizations will be notified of this decision and asked to develop complete project proposals.

## **II. Planning Grants**

**72.** Once the project idea or concept is received, while it is an important part of the NC's responsibilities to assist CSOs in proposal development, additional assistance is often required. In such cases, two options may be considered: (i) SGP planning grant modality may be used; or 2) a local consultant may be hired or a capable "assisting NGO" may be contacted to help the CSO/CBO/communities, according to terms of reference that the NC elaborates in coordination with the proponent organization.

**73.** Planning grants of up to \$5,000 can be approved once project concepts have been selected. CBOs, indigenous peoples' organizations and communities with little experience in project design and management receive priority to benefit from this assistance. Hence, the planning grant has an important capacity-building function which in itself is an important SGP objective.

**74.** A planning grant can be used by an eligible CSO to: (i) organize stakeholder workshops or meetings to design the project in a participatory manner; (ii) provide technical assistance to elaborate the project concept into project document, undertake studies or develop strategies; (iii) undertake baseline assessments, (iv) develop a business plan; (v) translate concepts from local languages into one of the main UN languages required by the SGP; and (v) support proposal design including the development of indicators and a monitoring and evaluation plan.

**75.** Administratively, a planning grant is a grant like any other SGP grant, and therefore can only be made to eligible CSOs/CBOs through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). Planning grants cannot be awarded to an individual. The project document for the planning grant specifies the activities to be undertaken, and the responsibilities of the parties concerned. The NSC generally approves the planning grant, although the NSC can in certain instances also delegate approval to the NC for certain cases (e.g. time-sensitive activities, smaller amounts). Refer guideline and

detail in the SOPs.

### **III. Strategic Grant**

**76.** In special cases, grants may be provided for SGP Strategic Projects up to a maximum grant amount of \$150,000 that will: (i) enable scaling up and replication of tested approaches and tools in multiple locations/communities; and (ii) consolidate efforts of several communities and CSOs. For Strategic Projects, the SGP Country Programme should select project through competitive process, and share summary of the Strategic Project concept with the concerned CPMT RFP or UCP Global Coordinator for review and approval. It is recommended that each SGP Country Programme carefully review the use of Strategic Grant with the NSC in relation to the regular grant modality and consider using this modality to enable scaling up impact.

### **IV. Regional and Global Grant**

**77.** In support of regional or global scaling up, mainstreaming, replication, and broader adoption of SGP successes and lessons learned, as well as to leverage resources and utilize strategic opportunities at these levels, SGP grants for regional or global initiatives can be provided up to a maximum grant amount of \$150,000, which is signed between UNOPS (as the SGP executing entity/Implementing Partner) and the CSO grantee. Regional and global grants could also facilitate and promote transboundary initiatives. Guidance for proactive or responsive modalities as well as procedures for the use of regional and global grants are developed by the SGP CPMT for specific thematic and technical portfolios, in consultation with the concerned SGP Country Programmes and/or relevant stakeholders and partners by following a transparent and competitive grantmaking process.

### **V. Grant Agreement and Funds disbursement**

**78.** SGP grants generally only cover a portion of project costs, with other components provided by the CSO partner, the community itself, or by other donors. Since SGP grants fund activities that are directly relevant to the GEF criteria, co-financing must be sought for the community baseline or sustainable development needs. However, since it would be unrealistic to require a baseline/incremental cost exercise for each individual project, each country should instead endeavor to mobilize enough funding in cash or in kind to at least “match (1 to 1 ratio)” the GEF grant allocation to the country.

**79.** Once the NSC has approved a project for SGP funding support, the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is signed between the grantee and the UNDP RR on behalf of UNOPS based on a delegation of authority. In case of UCPs that are executed by a NGO, the MOA may also be signed between the grantee and the NGO. SGP projects normally have a duration of between one and two years. The amounts and schedules may differ, contingent upon the nature and length of project activities. Typically, SGP grants follow three installments: first disbursement of

30% to 50% of the total project grant amount at the time of grant agreement, followed by 40% to 60% at the midterm after the submission of progress report (in one or two tranches); and a final 10% installment after the submission of final report. Approval is sought from UNOPS and CPMT for exceptional case that divert from the regular installment pattern.

- 80.** A grantee may submit another proposal upon successful completion of an initial project, but no grantee can receive funds exceeding US\$50,000 in a given Operational Phase, unless it is a strategic grant up to \$150,000, or exceptional approval is sought from and provided by the SGP Global Manager or the UCP Global Coordinator. Any grantee which has received the maximum \$50,000 in one Operational Phase, may however submit another funding request in the following Operational Phase after successful completion of the first project.
- 81.** The MOA and grant disbursement process, the applicable templates, and all related guidelines are found in detail in the UNOPS SGP SOPs.

## **PART V. MONITORING & EVALUATION AND REPORTING**

- 82.** SGP's results management, monitoring and evaluation approach is multi-tiered and dedicated M&E procedures are in place at the global, country and project levels as per the SGP Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy in line with the relevant GEF and UNDP monitoring policies.
- 83.** SGP applies the UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards (SES) and accompanying Social and Environmental Screening Procedures (SESP). SGP applies the UNDP's SESP to the design and development of its Project Document and SGP Country Programme Strategies. Related compliance mechanism and accountability frameworks are also to be referred. For ad-hoc issues that may arise in SGP grantmaking and other activities, the NC and NSC are tasked to manage the appropriate conflict resolution measures in consultation with UNDP CO, CPMT or UCP Global Coordinator, and UNOPS.

### **I. Project level**

- 84.** SGP focuses on participatory M&E with grantee ownership. The SGP country team typically organizes a workshop at the inception of a grant distribution cycle to convene the cohort of grantees with the objective to: (i) build common understanding and capacities to undertake quality M&E activities; (ii) create early synergies between grantees for deeper impact, including broader adoption; (iii) enable a forum of learning from both success and failures. A CSO with required capacity or third-party monitoring entity may be engaged by the SGP country team for these purposes. Subject to budget availability, a workshop may also be convened for a cohort of grantees at project conclusion. Knowledge fair and joint workshops/activities could be convened with partners to be cost effective and support linkages between a cluster of SGP projects.
- 85.** Each SGP project is encouraged to invest limited amount of total grant amount (4-5%) on project level M&E and knowledge management activities. These are directed towards collection of quality data and evidence for project results, in particular mandatory indicators from the roster of project indicators for a given Operational Phase. The funds may also be utilized towards the timely and quality submission of project progress reports to SGP and UNOPS which in turn serve as a requirement for financial disbursements of the grant tranches.
- 86.** At the project level, a measurement system exists to harmonize reporting across the SGP portfolio. Each of the SGP projects picks from a roster of project indicators, including both global environmental and socio-economic indicators, and report results as guided by the SGP M&E guidelines, and the Project Framework for a given Operational Phase. At project commitment, as part of the MOA preparation, the grantee with support from NC, selects from the roster of indicators and commits to tracking them as part of planned project monitoring and reporting. At project conclusion, these indicators are reported in the SGP project mid-term and final progress reports. The grantee has the flexibility to select any additional indicators beyond the SGP roster as appropriate.

## II. Country Level

- 87.** At country level, SGP country programme teams, as well as the NSC, undertake monitoring of grant portfolio on an ongoing basis. Each project is visited at least once during the life cycle of project. Guided by the COB guidelines for a given Operational Phase, additional missions to the project site can be made by the SGP Country Programme team and/or NSC members when there are particular needs and is cost effective. In general, monitoring missions should be limited to one or two persons, including the SGP NC and a NSC member unless there are special reasons, and as approved by the UNDP CO, CPMT and/or UNOPS as part of the annual COB and AWP planning exercise.
- 88.** Close and regular collaboration are undertaken between NC and NSCs on M&E activities at the country level. Periodic reviews and monitoring of the Country Programme Strategy implementation is undertaken during the operational phase. This enables (i) verifiable and structured adjustments to the CPS to take place, including any course correction in terms of ongoing projects and advice on the selection of new projects; (ii) noting early results for broader adoption and partnership development; and (iii) identification of risks. It is recommended that the SGP Country Programme team together with the NSC to prepare a brief SGP Country Programme Report, with information on key results and grantmaking on an annual basis and/or every operational phase.
- 89.** In coordination with UNOPS, SGP country programme team are responsible for the financial monitoring of grants, disbursements, COB expenditures, and co-financing. Audits of SGP Country Programmes will be conducted in a regular manner accordance with the UNDP and UNOPS auditing standards, and applicable financial rules and regulations. Audit is also organized when risk is identified. The SGP audit exercise is focused on transparency, accountability and quality of SGP country operations in line with the SGP Operational Guidelines and SOPs. The audits will cover country level management, financial, and administrative issues and includes provisions for project-level inspection. Country teams are required to comply with the Audit checklist for a given Operational Phase, and detailed processes are available in the UNOPS SGP SOPs. Should an audit be undertaken, SGP country programmes are obligated to follow up on the recommendations of audits.
- 90.** The SGP country programme team is responsible for regularly keeping project and country-level information updated in the SGP Global Database for all prior and current Operational Phases. This includes tracking all country programme level grant maker plus elements in the SGP database. Compliance with requirements and timelines in the SGP Database Guidance is required.
- 91.** SGP country program team is expected to regularly communicate and report on the SGP country results and progress with the UNDP CO, GEF Operation Focal Point and other stakeholders. The NC keeps the UNDP CO informed of progress in programme implementation, usually through

the RR and SGP focal point in the UNDP CO. For a given Operational Phase, the CPS and its results framework reflects a synergy with UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD), which in turn is linked to UNDP Strategic Plan. Specific guidance is provided in SGP M&E guidelines for a given Operational Phase. In general, each CPS notes at least one CPD outcome/ output area to be synergized with selected on the basis of: (i) maximum potential for broader adoption; (ii) two- way sharing of evidential lessons and experiences; and (iii) potential for joint-reporting on national development mechanisms and UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

### **III. Global Level**

- 92.** At the global level, in compliance with the GEF Policy on Monitoring, a consolidated Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) is submitted to the GEF secretariat, including (i) the status of the Programme; (ii) results across applicable core Indicators; (iii) project financing approved, committed, and disbursed by operational phase, with a breakdown between grants to civil society and community-based organizations and other costs, as well as GEF and additional funds; and (iv) any other information as required by the relevant GEF policies. All SGP countries, including UCPs, comply with quality and timely submission of country level inputs as part of SGP AMR process.
- 93.** At the global level, the CPMT facilitates learning across the portfolio of participating countries to support the use of M&E data for decision making at different levels. Recurring global reporting requirements, such as AMR, are complemented by periodic requests by the CPMT, UCP Global Coordinator and/or UNOPS for information on specific subjects and thematic issues, such as reports under preparation for the GEF Council, or for the relevant global environmental conventions. Refer further detail and guidance on project and programme reporting in the SGP Monitoring & Evaluation Strategy.
- 94.** In accordance with the GEF Monitoring Policy and UNDP Evaluation Policy, SGP will have an independent evaluation for each operational phase. CPMT liaises with the GEF and UNDP Independent Evaluation Offices (IEOs) for the evaluation, including country programme visits and reviews.

### **IV. Upgraded Country Programme**

- 95.** For UCPs, the NC is required to oversee the implementation of the M&E Plan presented at the CEO Endorsement stage and submit annual Project Implementation Reports (PIRs). A Mid-Term Review (MTR) is completed midway through the project to identify challenges and outline corrective actions, and a Terminal Evaluation (TE) will take place upon completion of all major project outputs and activities. UCPs are also expected to comply with the SGP Global Database completion requirements and submit contributions to the SGP AMR.

## **PART VI. COMMUNICATION AND BRANDING**

- 96.** All communication and knowledge materials developed by SGP must adhere to the SGP's Visual Guidelines. This includes materials produced as part of the SGP project grants and any materials developed by SGP country teams.
- 97.** The GEF, SGP, and UNDP logos will appear together on all promotional materials, other written materials like publications developed by the project, and project hardware. Any citation on publications regarding projects funded by the GEF and other donors will also accord proper acknowledgement to the donors.
- 98.** For SGP projects that are funded by other partners and donors, their logo maybe added based on agreement with them to recognize their contribution.
- 99.** All SGP programme and project information will be disclosed in accordance with relevant policies notably the UNDP Disclosure Policy and the related GEF Policies.