



Eighth Operational Phase of the GEF Small Grants Programme (Part 1)

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

11285

Countries

Global (Albania, Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Congo DR, Costa Rica, Cote d'Ivoire, Cuba, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Honduras, India, Jamaica, Jordan, Kiribati, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Micronesia, Moldova, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Palau, Palestinian Authority, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Rwanda, Samoa, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, South Africa, St. Lucia, Suriname, Tanzania, Thailand, Timor Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Uganda, Ukraine, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Zambia, Zimbabwe)

Project Name

Eighth Operational Phase of the GEF Small Grants Programme (Part 1)

Agencies

UNDP

Date received by PM

1/12/2024

Review completed by PM

7/1/2024

Program Manager

Elsa Temm

Focal Area

Multi Focal Area

Project Type

FSP

PIF

CEO

Part I - General Project Information

1. a) Is the Project Information table correctly filled, including specifying adequate executing partners?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GRT 6/11/2024

Cleared

GRT 4/3/2024

See again comment under 5.2.b

GRT 2/14/2024

Not fully. It is noted that the proposed institutional arrangements describe a significant shift from how SGP has been historically executed from UNOPS serving as the executing entity to a DIM modality with a dual implementation and executing function for UNDP. In this context, please provide further details on the proposed ?other executing partners?. For further comments and questions on the proposed institutional arrangements please see comments under 5.2b.

Agency Response

UNDP, 18 March 2024

Please refer to response provided under question 5.2.b

b) Are the Rio Markers for CCM, CCA, BD and LD correctly selected, if applicable?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GRT 2/14/2024

Yes. Climate Change Mitigation, Climate Change Adaptation, Biodiversity and Land Degradation are all presented as significant objectives consistent with the overall project scope.

Agency Response

2. Project Summary.

a) Does the project summary concisely describe the problem to be addressed, the project objective and the strategies to deliver the GEBs or adaptation benefits and other key expected outcomes?

b) Does the summary capture the essence of the project and is it within the max. of 250 words?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GRT 6/11/2024

Cleared

GRT 4/3 2024

Thank you for the revised summary. However, please reference something to the effect that " in line with the GEF-8 SGP Implementation Arrangement Paper, core SGP resources are to be allocated equally among all eligible countries" (as reflected in the PIF).

GRT 2/14/2024

Not fully.

a) Please revise the text to capture more concisely the project objectives, strategies, main components and outcomes, its geographical scope, number of countries and its alignment with the SGP 2.0 key features, including the two additional implementing agencies and the equal distribution of Core resources amongst the countries.

b) Modify the project summary to reduce to 250 words as per request.

Agency Response

UNDP, 31 May 2024

The summary in the ProDoc and CEO ER has been amended with the following: ?In line with the GEF-8 SGP Implementation Arrangements Paper, core SGP resources are to be allocated equally among all eligible countries.?

UNDP, 18 March 2024

- a) The summary has been revised accordingly.
- b) The revised summary has been reduced to less than 250 words.

3. Project Description Overview

- a) Is the project objective statement concise, clear and measurable?
- b) Are the components, outcomes, and outputs sound, appropriate and sufficiently clear to achieve the project objective and the core indicators per the stated Theory of Change?
- c) Are gender dimensions, knowledge management, and M&E included within the project components and budgeted for?
- d) Are the GEF Project Financing and Co-Financing contributions to PMC proportional?
- e) Is the PMC equal to or below 10% (for MSP) or 5% (for FSP)? If above, is the justification acceptable?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
GRT 6/11/2024
Cleared

GRT 4/3 2024
Almost.

On b) Appreciate modification of the outcome. There remain, however, a difference between the portal version and attached project document (FSPCEOEndorsementdocument_SGP OP8CEO ER18March2024). The portal version still has a repetition of the Component title "1. Strategic Planning and Multi-Stakeholder Governance " and the (new) Outcome title "1.1. Enabling environment strengthened for effective, community-driven integrated approaches".

On c) Well noted about the representation of women/other genders. It is not clear, however, where these changes have been made in the section ?Project Objective, Components, Outcomes and Outputs?. Please can you specify in yellow.

On d) Not fully. Reported co-financing amount is not evidenced by the attached co-financing letter in Annex 11 which confirms US\$ 35 million in grant (investment mobilized) co-financing. The GEF guidelines on co-financing (Policy FI/GN/01) states that ?Agencies may report Co-Financing that is expected to be mobilized during project implementation from entities that are not known at the time of CEO Endorsement/Approval, particularly in the case of Co-Financing from the private sector or beneficiaries.? As per GEF Policy, the current

estimated co-financing from beneficiaries and private sector is therefore accepted at this stage. Please provide, however, evidence of recipient country government and CSO cofinancing or remove these from the table.

GRT 2/14/2024

- a) Yes. The Project Objective, as per the approved PIF, is concise, clear and measurable and adequately captures the project ambition and scope.
- b) Not fully: Please amend the Project components table, under Component 1 to avoid repetition of the Component heading '1.0 Strategic Planning and Multi-Stakeholder Governance'.
- c) Not fully. Gender dimensions and consideration of other important stakeholder groups are integrated into project rationale and components. However, please ensure the representation of women/other genders in Output 1.1.1. (National Steering Committees) and Output 1.1.2 (multi-stakeholder governance platforms). In Output 3.1.3, please include women/women's groups in stakeholder capacity development. For Output 4.1.1., please ensure that 'codification of results and lessons' capture gender-related results and lessons. All references to CSOs/CBOs should reflect / ensure inclusivity (i.e., broad representation including of women, youth, people with disabilities, and other groups in vulnerable situations). Knowledge Management and M&E are integral components of the project strategy. These have been sufficiently budgeted for at 3% each as set out in the SGP 2.0 Implementation Arrangements for GEF-8.
- d) Not fully. **Reported co-financing amount is not evidenced by the attached co-financing letter in Annex 11 which confirms US\$ 35 million in grant (investment mobilized) co-financing. Please see additional comments in section 8.4.**
- e) Yes. The PMC has been calculated in line with the SGP 2.0 Implementation Arrangements that caps PMC to 10% of the total project costs (net of Agency fee).

Agency Response

UNDP, 31 May 2024

b) The component type of Component 1 has been revised to 'technical assistance' only, rather than splitting between investment and technical assistance. Grant allocations previously under Component 1 have been shifted to Component 2. This is described in more detail below in the response regarding the grant ratio. Also, the phrasing of Outcome 1.1 has been revised in the Project Document and CEO ER, including in the theory of change diagram, to better distinguish the outcome phrasing from the component title.

c) The descriptions of Outputs 1.1.1, 1.1.2 and 3.1.3 have been amended accordingly. The narrative description of knowledge management in the ProDoc has been amended with the following: "Programme level knowledge management also includes codification of gender-related results and lessons as part of the activities Output 4.1.1."

d) The indicative co-financing contributions from Recipient Country Governments and Civil Society Organizations have been deleted from the co-financing table. Other references to co-financing in the ProDoc and CEO ER have been adjusted accordingly.

UNDP, 18 March 2024

b) Outcome 1.1 has been rephrased to the following: "Enabling environment strengthened for effective, community-driven integrated approaches."

c) We ensure the representation of women/other genders in Outputs 1.1.1 and 1.1.2; women's groups will be included in stakeholder capacity development under Output 3.1.3; and gender-related results will be captured in the codification of results and lessons in Output 4.1.1. This has been reflected in the Project Document and CEO ER.

d) Consistent with previous operational phases, co-financing contributions from other partners, including recipient governments, private sector, civil society organizations, and local communities are mobilized during the implementation phase. The GEF guidelines on co-financing (Policy FI/GN/01) also states that "Agencies may report Co-Financing that is expected to be mobilized during project implementation from entities that are not known at the time of CEO Endorsement/Approval, particularly in the case of Co-Financing from the private sector or beneficiaries." Co-financing resources mobilized during the implementation phase are reported in the annual monitoring reports (AMRs) and evaluations.

4. Project Outline

A. Project Rationale

a) Is the current situation (including global environmental problems, key drivers of environmental degradation, climate vulnerability) clearly and adequately described from a systems perspective and adequately addressed by the project design?

b) Have the role of stakeholders, incl. the private sector and local actors in the system been described and how they will contribute to GEBs and/or adaptation benefits and other project outcomes? Is the private sector seen mainly as a stakeholder or as financier?

c) If this is an NGI project, is there a description of how the project and its financial structure are addressing financial barriers?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GRT 2/14/2024

a) Yes. The current situation is adequately described, and the project design addresses these coherently and logically.

b) Yes. The project describes the links with the GEF-8 strategy and centrality of local action and innovations in meeting GEBs. With its focus on CSOs and CBOs, it places a strong emphasis on women groups and women-led organizations (output 2.1.3) and focused interventions on leaving no one behind, including Indigenous Peoples, youth, persons with disabilities (?Output 2.1.4). The private sector is presented as key partner, for example, by learning by doing and knowledge exchanges with CSO-Government-Private Sector Policy and Planning Dialogue Platforms (output 3.1.3).

c) N/A

Agency Response

5 B. Project Description

5.1 a) Is there a concise theory of change (narrative and an optional schematic) that describes the project logic, including how the project design elements are contributing to the objective, the identified causal pathways, the focus and basis (including scientific) of the proposed solutions, how they provide a robust approach? Are underlying key assumptions listed?

b) Is there a description of how the GEF alternative will build on ongoing/previous investments (GEF and non-GEF), lessons and experiences in the country/region?

c) Are the project components (interventions and activities) described and proposed solutions and critical assumptions and risks properly justified? Is there an indication of why the project approach has been selected over other potential options?

d) Incremental/additional cost reasoning: Is the incremental/additional cost reasoning properly described as per the Guidelines provided in GEF/C.31/12? Has the baseline scenario and/or associated baseline projects been described? Is the project incremental reasoning provisioned (including the role of the GEF)? Are the global environmental benefits and/or adaptation benefits identified?

e) Other Benefits: Are the socioeconomic benefits resulting from the project at the national and local levels sufficiently described?

f) Is the financing presented in the annexed financing table adequate and demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objectives? Are items charged to the PMC reasonable according to the GEF guidelines?

g) How does the project design ensure resilience to future changes in the drivers and adaptive management needs and options (as applicable for this FSP/MSP)?

h) Are the relevant stakeholders (including women, private sector, CSO, e.g.) and their roles adequately described within the components?

i) Gender: Does the gender analysis identify any gender differences, gaps or opportunities linked to project/program objectives and activities and have these been taken up in component design and description/s?

j) Are the proposed elements to capture and disseminate knowledge and learning outputs and strategic communication adequately described?

k) Policy Coherence: Have any policies, regulations or subsidies been identified that could counteract the intended project outcomes and how will that be addressed?

l) Transformation and/or innovation: Is the project going to be transformative or innovative? Does it explain scaling up opportunities?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GRT 4/3/2024

Cleared

GRT 2/14/2024

a) Yes. The narrative section concisely describes and is aligned with the Theory of Change diagram which in turn presents underlying assumptions, causal relationships, proposed solutions, leading to project outcomes and GEBs.

b) **Not fully.** When outlining the linkages to ongoing/previous investments (GEF and non-GEF), please specify what are meant by 'replicable coordination mechanisms' and how (the means) the GEF alternative might build on ongoing/previous investments, and how the impact of SGP-funded activities could be enhanced by taking a more coordinated approach at the national level, giving examples of these, and whether this coordination could lead to scaling up opportunities.

c) Yes. Project components, activities, outputs, assumptions and risks are outlined and justified.

d) N/A

e) Yes. Social and economic benefits focusing on gender equality and women's empowerment, youth, indigenous peoples and local communities, persons with disabilities, CSO strengthening, urban solutions and south-south exchanges are clearly described.

f) **Not fully.** Please revise Annex A: Financing Tables. GEF Financing Table. Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds, which outlines the STAR resources requested by country and by focal area and amend the inconsistency between the columns Total GEF Project Grant (\$) (\$7,682,500.00) vs Total GEF Financing (\$) (\$137,543,397). Likewise, the table which follows after.

g) Yes. Adaptive management strategies are mainstreamed in the project design through the integrated landscape-seascape approach during project implementation, to reflect changes to the circumstances and adjustments to national and local priorities and through local empowerment of CSOs through the design and implementation of initiatives, contributing to the socio-ecological resilience, sustainability and productivity of critical local landscapes and seascapes.

h) **Almost.** The components describe how CSOs will be engaged and strengthened through community driven grants with dedicated outputs focusing on grants aimed at gender equality and women's empowerment, youth, indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities. the project also sets out strategies for leveraging private sector engagement and business-oriented approaches. However, please see comments on the Stakeholder Engagement Plan.

i) Yes. Annex 8 Gender Analysis and Action Plan identifies differences, gaps and opportunities based on previous phases, lessons learned and evaluations with specific targets or strategies to ensure gender equality and women's empowerment in the work of SGP at the country level identified during the development of the Country Program Strategies.

j) Yes. Component 3 is centered on Knowledge Management and Learning, and how through Outcome 3.1, the sustainability and impact of community-led collective action will be enhanced through knowledge management and learning approaches across landscapes-seascapes and regions, including South-South Cooperation.

k) Yes. While, no specific policies, regulations or subsidies have been identified, potential risks associated with changes in in-country political conditions and mitigation measures are outlined in the "Risks to Project Implementation "section as moderate.

l) Yes. The overall project design facilitates opportunities for innovation and scaling up and catalyzing multi-stakeholder alliances to test new approaches through CSOs, including projects serving as "incubators" of innovation, with the potential for broader replication of successful approaches through larger projects and programs supported by the GEF and/or other partners.

Agency Response

UNDP, 18 March 2024

b) "Replicable coordination mechanisms" refer to strategies, processes, or frameworks that have proven successful in coordinating and aligning various initiatives, projects, and programs at the national level. These mechanisms can be replicated to facilitate coordination with GEF and non-GEF ongoing/previous investments. From SGP's experience, scaling up, replication, and mainstreaming of project benefits can be achieved through the following mechanisms:

? Development and implementation of projects with geographic focus with coordination and linkages.

? Development of joint projects with partners at local, national, regional and global levels.

? Promotion of synergies, linkages and partnerships.

? Advocating to influence or change government policy.

? Transforming community thinking, attitudes and behaviors through knowledge sharing, learning, and networking.

The single most important factor in broader adoption is the activities of national stakeholders, notably of the national coordinators and national steering committee members.

SGP experiences show that scaling up takes different forms, and the pathways and mechanisms to achieve broader adoption of results vary. There is no single approach, and every success has its own story of how the impact of the project was extended and achieved scalability. While some ideas spread or were adopted organically, in many cases scaling up of community efforts took planning, nurturing, mobilization of alliances and partnerships, as well as systematic follow-up. There are some broad themes that recur in multiple country cases, including the following:

? Community work needs to be ?nurtured? in order to achieve sustainable results.

? Achieving and sustaining results requires time.

? Barrier removal and creation of an enabling environment are essential for scaling up.

? Partnerships increase the impact of the project and are key to scaling up.

? Creative and adaptive replication may be an effective way of extending the reach of community efforts related to environmental management and sustainable development.

f) These inconsistencies have been discussed with the GEF SEC IT department and changes have been made to the portal entries accordingly.

h) Private sector engagement and business-oriented approaches are integrated in the project strategy. The narrative description of Outcome 2.1 includes the following entry: ?The SGP OP8-Part 1 will also work to engage MSMEs and other private sector entities in financing landscape-seascape strategies in relation to the different links of key value chains; as such, the programme will support the participatory formulation of value chain strategies for sustainably produced agricultural, livestock or fisheries products, as well as value-added products from sustainable harvests of non-timber forest products and the like.?

5.2 Institutional Arrangements and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Project

a) Are the institutional arrangements, including potential executing partners, outlined on regional, national/local levels and a rationale provided? Has an organogram and/or funds flow diagram been included?

b) Comment on proposed agency execution support (if agency expects to request exception). Is GEF in support of the request?

c) Is there a description of coordination and cooperation with ongoing GEF and non-GEF financed projects/programs (such as government and/or other bilateral/multilateral supported initiatives in the project area, e.g.).

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GRT 6/11/2024

Cleared

GRT 4/3/2024

Not fully.

1. It remains concerning that UNDP has only identified 9 out of 99 countries with NGO executing arrangements or NHIs. GEF SEC would like to see a higher number of NGO executing arrangements. Please provide information on concrete measures to assess/identify opportunities for national/local executing entities in all countries, including means to report on progress on these measures at PIR/MTR stages.
2. While some explanations are provided in response below, revisions to the project document are unclear. Please reflect explanations in the review sheet also in the project document (highlighting in yellow any revisions).
3. On the organogram, please as per comment earlier placing GEF Secretariat on the top, noting that the Steering committee only provides operational guidance and advice as per the SGP 2.0 Implementation Arrangements for GEF-8. Please also more clearly visualize in the organogram the separation between implementing and executing functions. Also please explain in the project document, the organogram as presented in the resubmission.

GRT 2/14/2024

a) Not yet. The proposed new institutional arrangements describe a significant shift replacing UNOPS that historically has been the executing entity for SGP with a DIM modality and dual UNDP implementation and executing function for SGP 2.0. The GEF SGP 2.0 Implementation Arrangements in GEF-8 (GEF/C.63/06/Rev.01) encourage SGP implementing agencies to work with local executing entities and in cases where local capacity constraints do not allow for national executing entities to be identified, that the Implementing Agencies work with an international executing entity. While the GEF Policy on Minimum Fiduciary Standards allows for dual project implementation and executing roles, this arrangement is an exception to common practice. In this context, please provide:

1. Clearer rationale for the suggested institutional arrangements and DIM modality, and additional details on local/NGO executing arrangements across the 99 countries included in this project.
2. Additional details on the lines of responsibility, reporting and accountability within UNDP between the project implementation and execution functions, specifically at the country level. Given that Country Offices vary in size and structure, please provide further details on how this separation of country office-level executing and quality assurance functions, and on how country-driven decision-making principles and program autonomy, independence and transparency can be promoted.
3. Further details on planned local/NGO executing arrangements. The project submission suggests a limited role of local organizations serving as executing entities across the 99 countries included. So far only 3 countries - Brazil, India, and the Philippines are mentioned to be considered having local executing agencies.
4. In the organogram, please (1) include the GEF Secretariat in the organogram (noting that the role of the SGP 2.0 Global Steering Committee is to provide periodic

operational guidance only); and (2) clearly reflect, as separate levels/boxes, the implementing and executing functions and key functions for "responsible parties", assuming that these are executing NGOs and clarify what is intended by "Agencies" under responsible parties.

b) See above.

c) Not fully. Please develop further and clarify how (mechanisms or means) the SGP Global Project will coordinate with the listed ongoing GEF and non-GEF financed projects/programs at country level in particular.

Agency Response

UNDP, 31 May 2024

1. The following entry has been added to the Governance and Management Arrangements section in the Project Document and CEO ER:
?Building on more than 30 years of successfully supporting locally led sustainable development, UNDP aims to strategically expand support for direct access to finance by civil society organizations, including expanding the pool of in-country, non-governmental National Host Institutions as a first step towards direct execution and on-granting by those CSOs who possess the administrative, fiduciary and technical capacities for effective Country Programme management. CSO execution is possible in countries with well-established philanthropic foundations or NGOs, which ipso facto tends to limit the possibility of this modality to those countries with a longer history of constructive CSO engagement. During the course of OP8 implementation, potential CSO partners will be identified, in close consultation with SGP National Steering Committees and networks of prior grantees, who may be capable of the kind of transparent and accountable management and administration that is required by UNDP?s own fiduciary standards and responsibilities as GEF Agency. Progress on identifying qualified NGO responsible parties will be tabled in the NSC meetings and reported in the annual PIRs and documented in the midterm review.?
2. The responses below in the review sheet have been reflected in the Project Document and CEO ER, highlighted in blue.
3. Reference to the SGP 2.0 Steering Committee has been deleted from the governance organogram. Instead, a separate dedicated section on SGP 2.0 Implementation arrangements has been added, with related language on roles and responsibilities of the GEF Council, the GEF SEC and the SGP Steering Committee in line with the language of the SGP 2.0 Council approved document. Also, the organogram in the OP8 ProDoc and CEO ER has been revised to visualize the separation more clearly between implementing and executing functions.

UNDP, 18 March 2024

a) Institutional arrangements:

1. In line with the GEF SGP 2.0 Implementation Arrangements, SGP Implementing Agencies may use SGP Executing Entities, **but it is not a requirement**? In cases where the SGP Implementing Agency may already have established policies and procedures to work directly with CSO/CBO/NGO grantees that the Agency has identified as having sufficient capacity, the Agency may opt to provide funding directly to such entities?.

Based on the above, UNDP, in coordination with GEF, designed the SGP OP8 Tranche 1 PIF on the basis of direct execution of the global program in its entirety by UNDP (Direct Implementation Modality? or DIM? in the UNDP nomenclature). Based on country level discussions and assessments of capacities, the most appropriate execution modality is determined for each country and UNDP will either (i) plan to directly fund grantees in line with its established Low Value Grants Policy which permits direct funding to grantees, or (ii) will do so indirectly, via on-granting?, i.e. an arrangement where UNDP provides funds to another grant-making institution? which will operate as executing entity in the country concerned.

The above structure through UNDP's DIM execution modality, as presented in the SGP OP8 Tranche 1 PIF, was approved by the GEF Council in Brasilia in June 2023.

Adopting the DIM execution modality for SGP offers several advantages. Leveraging UNDP's existing structure and administrative, financial, and monitoring systems will enhance clarity and integration of SGP activities at the country level, including better integration into UNDP's strategic programming, enhanced reporting and resource mobilization capabilities, and the potential to leverage SGP's experience for additional support to locally led action for the global environment.

Currently, SGP Country Programmes are executed via a national NGO executing arrangements in Brazil, India, Indonesia and Philippines. Additionally, in a number of countries (including Egypt, Jordan, Namibia, Tonga, Nauru), a National Host Institution (NHI), including either a national NGO, environmental trust fund, or academic institution, is responsible for programme execution. In all cases, these executing entities will work in conjunction with the SGP NC and will be overseen by the SGP NSC, and UNDP CO.

It is the intention of UNDP during project implementation to continue to replicate such successful NGO execution arrangements while at the same time identifying additional potential civil society organizations capable of transparent, cost effective on-granting, insofar as the entity meets the SGP Implementing Agencies' fiduciary and other standards?.

2. It should be noted that UNDP has strong and proven policies in place to firewall programme implementation from execution.

At the global level, GEF-SGP will be overseen at the programme level by UNDP staff from the BPPS Nature Hub in close coordination with UNDP BPPS Vertical Funds Oversight, Compliance and Programme Support Hub (the VF Hub?). These units and functions, both programmatic and fiduciary, are institutionally separate and have distinct reporting lines from the execution functions.

At the global level, the SGP Central Programme Management Team (CPMT) will manage and coordinate execution functions, including coordinating and providing coherent technical guidance and support to country execution staff in the participating countries. These global

execution staff are distinct from the global staff engaged in oversight functions and reporting lines are fully segregated, thus ensuring a firewall between implementation and execution.

The same firewall exists at country level where the Programme will be overseen through senior CO management representation at the SGP National Steering Committee and quality assurance provided by the programmatic teams within the UNDP country office. Execution functions will be provided by the SGP National Coordinator and other operational and project staff who will support the day-to-day execution functions for the project (including calls for proposals, signing grants, making payments to grantees, etc.). There will be a clear separation between the roles of oversight/assurance and execution at the UNDP Country Office level and reporting lines will be fully segregated.

Following best practices from 30 years of implementation of the Small Grants Programme, country-driven decision-making principles and program autonomy, independence and transparency will continue to be promoted through the Country Program strategies, Steering Committees, transparent calls for proposals etc.

3. Please see response above under number 1. The options for implementation arrangements follow the basic DIM structure approved in the SGP OP8 Tranche 1 PIF and have been further elaborated at the country, regional and global levels during the CEO Endorsement Request development.

The proposed implementation arrangements are guided by the intention to develop execution arrangements most appropriate to the country context. Building on more than 30 years of successfully supporting locally led sustainable development, UNDP aims to strategically expand support for direct access to finance by civil society organizations, including expanding the pool of in-country, non-governmental National Host Institutions as a first step towards direct execution and on-granting by those CSOs who possess the administrative, fiduciary and technical capacities for effective Country Programme management. CSO execution is possible in countries with well-established philanthropic foundations or NGOs, which ipso facto tends to limit the possibility of this modality to those countries with a longer history of constructive CSO engagement. During the course of OP8 implementation, potential CSO partners will be identified, in close consultation with SGP National Steering Committees and networks of prior grantees, who may be capable of the kind of transparent and accountable management and administration that is required by UNDP's own fiduciary standards and responsibilities as GEF Agency.

4. The organogram has been revised accordingly, as presented below and incorporated in the Project Document and CEO ER.

b) See above responses

c) The following entry has been added to the Project Document and CEO ER:

SGP OP8-Part 1 will coordinate with the listed ongoing GEF and non-GEF financed projects/programs at country level in the following ways:

1. *Facilitating stakeholder engagement:* This involves government agencies, NGOs, CBOs, private sector, academia, etc. in environmental conservation and sustainable development initiatives. Long-term, continued, multi-phased approach in engaging local communities and whole of society (men, women, youth and elders), SGP promote broad participation in all stages of the grant project cycle: design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. A key pillar of

the landscape approach, sustainability of landscape planning and management processes is enhanced through the continuous development of multi-stakeholder partnerships, involving local government, national agencies and institutions, NGOs, the private sector, universities, research institutions and others at the landscape level.

2. *Knowledge exchange*: Through learning platforms where stakeholders involved can exchange knowledge, experiences, and best practices. These platforms could include workshops, conferences, seminars, and online forums to facilitate dialogue and collaboration.

3. *Capacity building*: SGP OP8-Part 1 will provide technical assistance and capacity building support to stakeholders. This includes training sessions, mentoring, and knowledge sharing activities to strengthen the capacity of local communities, NGOs, and government agencies to implement their projects more effectively.

4. *Policy advocacy*: SGP OP8-Part 1 can promote enabling environments for ongoing projects and programs, by advocating for supportive policies, regulations, and institutional frameworks that facilitate the scaling up of successful initiatives and the replication of best practices. Sustainability of results are ensured by aligning country programmes with relevant government policies and linking with relevant national policies and programs.

5. *Resource mobilization*: SGP will leverage its networks and partnerships by connecting grantees with potential funders, donors, technical assistance providers, and government led programs/projects to support their activities, scale up their impact, and ensure the sustainability of results at the grantee level.

5.3 Core indicators

a) Are the identified core indicators calculated using the methodology and adhering to the overarching principles included in the corresponding Guidelines (GEF/C.62/Inf.12/Rev.01)?

b) Are the project's targeted contributions to GEBs (measured through core indicators and additional listed outcome indicators) /adaptation benefits reasonable and achievable?

Are the GEF Climate Change adaptation indicators and sub-indicators for LDCF and SCCF properly documented?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GRT 6/11/2024

Cleared

GRT 4/16/2024

Please incorporate explanations as described in your response below in the project document and reference the SGP 2.0 results framework included in the Operational Guidelines.

GRT 2/14/2024

a) Not fully. Five of the 11 GEF-8 core indicators are to be reported against and have been correctly calculated as per the corresponding Guidelines. It is also noted that UNDP SGP will continue to measure and report on additional indicators beyond core indicators, to enable capture of global-environmental and socio-economic impacts. As per draft SGP 2.0 RFM and technical discussions to-date, please consider the inclusion of Core Indicator 6 and additional SGP-specific indicators.

b) Not fully. They are coherent with the project scope and objectives and based on the experience of previous operational phases. Please ensure consistency in the use of commas for the numbers presented (see Indicator 4). However, Under Indicator 2.2 Marine Protected Areas Under improved management effectiveness, please provide list of PAs to be covered, as available.

Agency Response

UNDP, 31 May 2024

The explanations described below in reference to the SGP 2.0 results framework have been added to the CEO ER and the Project Document.

UNDP, 18 March 2024

a) Core Indicator 6 has been added. Mitigation benefits are expected to be achieved in the AFOLU sector (e.g., improved landscape management, restoration) and through deployment of low-GHG emission community technologies. The targets for this indicator are ?to be determined (TBD)?. Consistent approaches for estimating GHG emissions mitigated are being piloted among OP7 projects, and the targets for OP8 will be reported evaluating the results of the piloting.

Aligned with the GEF-8 Results Indicators for the SGP 2.0, the OP8-Part 1 results framework includes the following indicators for capturing socioeconomic impacts:

? **Indicator 8:** Number of representatives from social inclusion group (indigenous peoples, women, youth, persons with disability, farmers, other marginalized groups) meaningfully engaged in multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms.

? **Indicator 9:** Number of SGP countries supporting legal identity and legal empowerment issues

? **Indicator 14:** Number of community-based sustainable solutions in urban landscapes (e.g., transport, biodiversity conservation, chemical and waste management, energy efficiency, watershed protection, etc.).

? **Indicator 16:** Number of projects with focused interventions promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

? **Indicator 17:** Number of SGP countries that demonstrate models of engaging (a) Indigenous Peoples, (b) youth, and (c), persons with disabilities.

? **Indicator 18:** Amount of grant funding of total grant portfolio accessed by: (a) women and/or women's groups; (b) youth and/or youth-led groups; (c) Indigenous peoples' groups.

? **Indicator 19:** Number of grants supporting promotion of legal identity and legal empowerment, including the participation of Indigenous peoples and other remote/marginalized groups

With respect to direct beneficiaries with diversified, strengthened livelihoods and/or sources of income (Indicator 14 in the SGP 2.0 Results Framework), these results will be captured in Core Indicator 11 (People benefitting from GEF-financed investments) and reported in the annual monitoring reports.

b) Consistent with previous SGP operational phases, a list of marine protected areas (MPAs) cannot be provided at the CEO Endorsement stage. The specific MPAs that will be targeted under OP8 Part 1 will depend on the individual grant proposals submitted during the implementation phase. There may also be specific MPAs mentioned in the updated country programme strategies and/or landscape-seascape strategies that will be developed through participatory processes described in the descriptions of Outputs 1.1.1 and 1.1.2.

5.4 Risks

a) Is there a well-articulated assessment of risk to outcomes and identification of mitigation measures under each relevant risk category? Are mitigation measures clearly identified and realistic? Is there any omission?

b) Is the rating provided reflecting the residual risk to the likely achievement of intended outcomes after accounting for the expected implementation of mitigation measures?

c) Are environmental and social risks, impacts and management measures adequately assessed and rated and consistent with requirements set out in SD/PL/03?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GRT 2/14/2024

Yes. The overall risk rating has been set as Moderate. Risks cited include Climate risks, environment and social (further elaborated on in the SESP Annex F and Annex 4: UNDP social and environmental screening report), political and governance, macroeconomic, strategies and policies, technical design of project or program, Institutional capacity for

implementation and sustainability, Fiduciary: Financial Management and Procurement, stakeholder engagement.

Agency Response

5.5 For NGI Only: Is there a justification of the financial structure and of the use of financial instrument with concessionality levels?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

6 C. Alignment with GEF-8 Programming Strategies and Country/Regional Priorities
6.1 a) Is the project adequately aligned with Focal Area objectives, and/or the LDCF/SCCF strategy?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
GRT 2/14/2024

Yes. The project is aligned with the SGP 2.0 thematic priorities described in both the GEF SGP 2.0 Implementation Arrangements for GEF-8 and the different focal area strategies outlined in the GEF-8 programming directions.

Agency Response

6.2 Is the project alignment/coherent with country and regional priorities, policies, strategies and plans (including those related to the MEAs and to relevant sectors).

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
GRT 2/14/2024

Yes. Through the development of Country Program Strategies at the national level the project will align with countries' priorities, policies and plans. Both nationally and internationally, the Project is aligned with the principle MEAs including, the Paris Agreement (UNFCCC), the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (UNCBD), Land Degradation Neutrality targets (UNCCD), the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the Stockholm Convention on POPs, and the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

Agency Response

6.3 For projects aiming to generate biodiversity benefits (regardless of what the source of the resources is - i.e., BD, CC or LD), does the project clearly identify which of the 23 targets of the

Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework the project contributes to and how it contributes to the identified target(s)?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
GRT 2/14/2024

Yes. The Biodiversity outcomes of SGP OP8-Part 1 align with the goals of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), including targets 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, and 23.

Agency Response

7 D. Policy Requirements

7.1 Are the Policy Requirement sections completed?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
GRT 2/14/2024

Yes.

Agency Response

7.2 Is the Gender Action Plan uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
GRT 2/14/2024

Yes.

Agency Response

7.3 Is the stakeholder engagement plan uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
GRT 4/3/2024

Cleared

GRT 2/14/2024

Not fully. The Stakeholder Engagement Plan (annex 6) has some inconsistencies and please review Table 2, in particular:

i) Reference to UNOPS as a stakeholder with executing functions, whereas in the Project Document it is understood that UNOPS will not have a role in the project.

ii) Reference to the development of a private sector engagement strategy under GEF-7, whereas this is GEF-8 and this strategy has already been completed.

Agency Response

UNDP, 18 March 2024

i) Reference to UNOPS has been deleted from the Stakeholder Engagement Plan for consistency with the description of the institutional arrangements in the Project Document and CEO ER. Potential responsible parties, as shown in the organogram are collectively referred to as 'UN Agency Execution, NGO Execution / National Host Institution'.

ii) The subject entry regarding private sector engagement has been revised as follows: 'The SGP developed a private sector engagement strategy under GEF-7, and this strategy will continue to be implemented during SGP-OP8.'

7.4 Have the required applicable safeguards documents been uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GRT 2/14/2024

Yes.

Agency Response

8 Annexes

Annex A: Financing Tables

8.1 GEF Financing Table and Focal Area Elements: Is the proposed GEF financing (including the Agency fee) in line with GEF policies and guidelines? Are they within the resources available from (mark all that apply):

STAR allocation?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GRT 2/14/2024

Yes.

Agency Response

Focal Area allocation?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GRT 2/14/2024

Yes.

Agency Response

LDCF under the principle of equitable access?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GRT 2/14/2024

n/a

Agency Response

SCCF A (SIDS)?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GRT 2/14/2024

n/a

Agency Response

SCCF B (Tech Transfer, Innovation, Private Sector)?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GRT 2/14/2024

n/a

Agency Response

Focal Area Set Aside?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GRT 2/14/2024

n/a

Agency Response

8.2 Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

a) Is the use of PPG attached in Annex: Status of Utilization of Project Preparation Grant (PPG) properly itemized according to the guidelines?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GRT 2/14/2024

n/a

Agency Response

8.3 Source of Funds

Does the sources of funds table match with the amounts in the OFP's LOE?

Note: the table only captures sources of funds from the country's STAR allocation

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GRT 4/3/2024

Cleared.

GRT 2/14/2024

Not fully. Please revise Table ?Sources of Funds for Country Star Allocation? - there appears to be an error in the total of \$7,682,500.

Agency Response

UNDP, 18 March 2024

Please refer to the response provided above to comment 5.1f.

8.4 Confirmed co-financing for the project, by name and type: Are the amounts, sources, and types of co-financing adequately documented and consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines?

e.g. Have letters of co-finance been submitted, correctly classified as investment mobilized or in-kind/recurring expenditures? If investment mobilized: is there an explanation below the table to describe the nature of co-finance? If letters are not in English, is a translation provided?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
GRT 6/11/2024
Cleared

GRT 4/16/2024

As noted in 3.d, the GEF guidelines on co-financing (Policy FI/GN/01) states that "Agencies may report Co-Financing that is expected to be mobilized during project implementation from entities that are not known at the time of CEO Endorsement/Approval, particularly in the case of Co-Financing from the private sector or beneficiaries." As per GEF Policy, the current estimated co-financing from beneficiaries and private sector is accepted at this stage, please provide, however, evidence of recipient country government and CSO cofinancing or remove these from the table.

GRT 2/14/2024

Not yet. Based on the information provided, except the UNDP's 35M grant, all the rest co-financing items are "indicative" at this stage which will only be confirmed during the project implementation stage. As the GEF Co-financing policy requires reporting of "confirmed" co-financing with appropriate supporting evidence submission at the CEO Endorsement request, please provide evidence-based justifications or remove all "indicative" co-financing at this stage. During the implementation phase, please report the materialized/confirmed co-financing with appropriate evidence (e.g., co-financing letters).

Agency Response

UNDP, 26 June 2024 _ response to comment provided under 9.1?GEFSEC Recommendation? on 25 June 2024

Addressed. Co-financing will be reported during implementation as part of the AMR/PIR process and MTR/TE.

UNDP, 31 May 2024

The indicative co-financing contributions from Recipient Country Governments and Civil Society Organizations have been deleted from the co-financing table. Other references to co-financing in the ProDoc and CEO ER have been adjusted accordingly.

UNDP, 18 March 2024

As mentioned above in the response to the comment on co-financing and consistent with previous operational phases, co-financing contributions from other partners, including recipient governments, private sector, civil society organizations, and local communities are mobilized during the implementation phase. The GEF guidelines on co-financing (Policy FI/GN/01) also states that "Agencies may report Co-Financing that is expected to be mobilized during project implementation from entities that are not known at the time of CEO Endorsement/Approval, particularly in the case of Co-Financing from the private sector or beneficiaries." Co-financing resources mobilized during the implementation phase are reported in the annual monitoring reports (AMRs/PIRs) and evaluations.

Annex B: Endorsements

8.5 a) If "and only if" - this is a global or regional project for which not all country-based interventions were known at PIF stage and, therefore, not all LOEs provided:

Has the project been endorsed by the GEF OFP/s of all GEF eligible participating countries and has the OFP name and position been checked against the GEF database at the time of submission?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GRT 2/14/2024

No changes in LOEs since PIF submission

Agency Response

b) Are the OFP endorsement letters uploaded to the GEF Portal (compiled as a single document, if applicable)?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GRT 2/14/2024

No changes in LOEs since PIF submission

Agency Response

c) Do the letters follow the correct format and are the endorsed amounts consistent with the amounts included in the Portal?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

Annex C: Project Results Framework

8.6 a) Have the GEF core indicators been included?

b) Have SMART indicators been used; are means of verification well thought out; do the

targets correspond/are appropriate in view of total project financing (too high? Too low?)

c) Are all relevant indicators sex disaggregated?

d) Is the Project Results Framework included in the Project Document pasted in the Template?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GRT 2/14/2024

Yes.

Agency Response

Annex E: Project map and coordinates

8.7 Have geographic coordinates of project locations been entered in the dedicated table? Are relevant illustrative maps included?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GRT 2/14/2024

Yes.

Agency Response

Annex G: GEF Budget template

8.8 a) Is the GEF budget template attached and appropriately filled out incl. items such as the executing partner for each budget line?

b) Are the activities / expenditures reasonably and accurately charged to the three identified sources (Components, M&E and PMC)?

c) Are TORs for key project staff funded by GEF grant and/or co-finance attached?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GRT 6/11/2024

Cleared

GRT 4/16/2024

Not yet. Please revise budget table and project components to adhere to the target 72% grant ratio as described in the SGP 2.0 Implementing Arrangements for GEF-8.

GRT 2/14/2024

Not yet.

- a. The budget table indicates that \$90,854,354 is allocated for grants to CSOs/CBOs, accounting for 66% of total project costs including Agency fee. The SGP 2.0 Implementation arrangements document *indicates a proposed target to allocate at least 72% of SGP funding directly to grantmaking to CSOs/CBOs?* Please revise the budget table as well as table B on project component budget accordingly.
- b. Please recheck against project component table B.
- c. Please provide TOR for key project staff.

Agency Response

UNDP, 31 May 2024

Following discussions with GEFSEC, the current grant ratio has been increased 66% to 67% (inclusive of fee); with a further increase in the proposed grant ratio to the stipulated 72% ratio (inclusive of fee), by recognizing and categorizing a percentage of some 'essential' services, such as, capacity building and technical assistance as grant-supporting activities. This is clearly expressed, as such, in the Components table in the CEO ER under Component 2 (categorized as 'investment' as per table below) as well as in the Budget table, and further explained in the overall text under the relevant component and output. Please note that this results in a decrease of funding under Component 1 and an increase in funding under Component 2 versus the original approved PIF, as Component 2 now includes community level and/or strategic grants. This is justified in the CEO EAR as all grants activities are now reflected under Component 2 for clarity in reporting.

- Total Grant allocation: USD 92,154,076 (67% ratio ? inclusive of agency fee).
- Total amount of Component 2: USD 99,031,245.87 (72% ratio ? inclusive of agency fee). This is comprised of TA and capacity building specifically targeted 'for grant supporting activities' (Output 2.1.1) and 67% as grants inclusive of agency fee (Grant account in the budget table) under output 2.1.2 through 2.1.4).

UNDP, 18 March 2024

- a. In line with the GEF Fee Policy, the 9% fee is given to Agencies to cover specific oversight and quality assurance services ('Project Cycle Management Services' and 'Corporate Services?'). The scope of these services is very clearly delineated in the GEF Fee policy and the fee to cover such oversight costs is (a) awarded as a percentage of the

total grant (i.e. the project execution budget), and (b) granted to the Implementing Agency separately from and in addition to the grant/project budget;

If the same principles are followed here, the total GEF project grant or project execution budget for SGP should include only those components of the GEF envelope that are dedicated to the execution of the project, which would include (a) the grants themselves, plus (b) the costs associated with project management, M&E, KM, capacity development and technical assistance. In other words, the fee which is supposed to cover oversight services by UNDP and/or other SGP Agencies should not be treated as part of the Total GEF Project Grant.

The above is clearly aligned with the principles that are being applied for regular GEF projects as well, where the grant amount refers only to the project budget and not to the oversight fee which the Implementing Agency receives for oversight.

As such, for the calculation of the ratio, the grant versus non-grant ratio should equally be determined by taking into account only the project budget for execution (i.e. 91% of the GEF SGP 2.0 envelope), since 9% would be earmarked already separately to cover oversight (over and above the project budget).

This is how the ratio was calculated with \$90,854,354 constituting 72% of the total project execution costs, in line with GEF fee policy and the agreed operational model for all previous operational phases. This will be critical for the operational viability of the SGP programme at global and country level.

b) Please refer to response above to comment 8.8a.

c) The terms of reference for key positions have been added to Annex 10 to the Project Document.

Annex H: NGI Relevant Annexes

8.9 a) Does the project provide sufficient detail (indicative term sheet) to assess the following criteria: co-financing ratios, financial terms and conditions, and financial additionality? If not, please provide comments.

b) Does the project provide a detailed reflow table to assess the project capacity of generating reflows? If not, please provide comments.

c) Is the Agency eligible to administer concessional finance? If not, please provide comments.

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Requestn/a

Agency Response

Additional Annexes

9. GEFSEC DECISION

9.1.GEFSEC Recommendation

Is the project recommended for approval

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GRT6/25/2024

Not yet. All earlier comments addressed, but please remove the co-financing rows in the Portal that have no supporting documentation. Then, as co-financing materializes during implementation, you can add these amounts alongside the supporting documentation at MTR and/or TE stages.

GRT 6/11/2024

Yes

Not yet. The budget table uploaded in the portal section is different from the explanation as well as the revised budget uploaded in the documents (dated 31st May). The budget table cut and paste under Annex G of the Portal's CEO endorsement entry has to be the latest one and match with the component table.

9.2 Additional Comments to be considered by the Agency during the inception and implementation phase

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GRT 4/3/2024

Cleared

GRT 2/14/2024

There are some outstanding responses to comments provided by council members during the PIF approval. Please provide a table on how the CEO endorsement and subsequent actions in project inception and implementation will respond to these and particular comments from UK on the focus on IPLCs.

9.3 Review Dates

	CEO Approval	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review	2/14/2024	3/19/2024
Additional Review (as necessary)	4/16/2024	6/5/2024
Additional Review (as necessary)	6/10/2024	6/28/2024
Additional Review (as necessary)	6/25/2024	
Additional Review (as necessary)		