

# The GEF Small Grants Programme IR IRAN



Briefing Note— 2023



SGP

The GEF  
Small Grants  
Programme



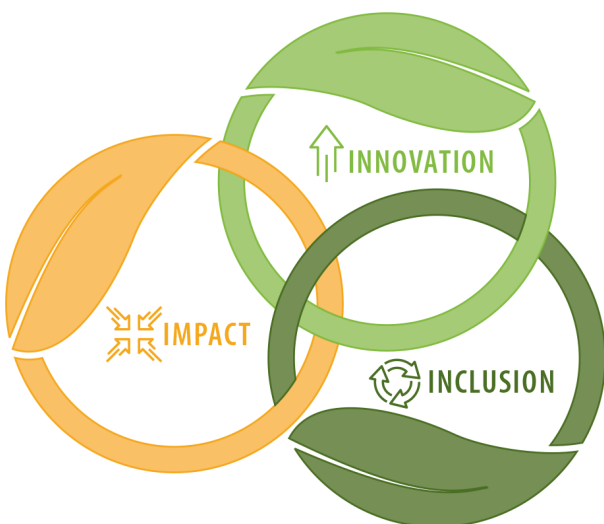


# GEF SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME

Since 1992, the Global Environment Facility's (GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP), implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has been supporting civil society organizations and community-based organizations around the world to take action to address global environment and sustainable development challenges.

## ABOUT SGP

- **INNOVATION:** SGP is an incubator of innovative solutions to safeguard the global environment;
- **SOCIAL INCLUSION:** SGP invests in social inclusion to maximize global environmental benefits and to empower most vulnerable and marginalized populations, including indigenous peoples, women, youth, and persons with disabilities;
- **IMPACT:** SGP is a strategic and evidence-based platform for community-based actions that can be scaled up, are sustainable and in synergy with other initiatives for greater impact.



# GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE

SGP has historically supported a total of 136 countries, while it is currently active in 127 countries. This includes 37 Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and 40 Least Developing Countries (LDCs).



127

ACTIVE COUNTRIES



37

SIDS



40

LDCs

# THEMATIC COVERAGE

SGP's portfolio takes an integrated approach and has multi-focal areas impact.



BIODIVERSITY



CLIMATE CHANGE



LAND DEGRADATION



CHEMICALS  
AND WASTE



CLIMATE CHANGE  
ADAPTATION



INTERNATIONAL  
WATERS





# STRATEGIC INITIATIVES



## Community-based conservation of threatened ecosystems and species

This initiative aims to improve conservation and sustainable use of threatened ecosystems and species in priority landscapes and seascapes, including the management of protected areas and corridors, integrated river-basins, and large marine ecosystems with active involvement of communities. The initiative also aims to mainstream biodiversity in key production sectors such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and infrastructure.



## Sustainable agriculture and fisheries, and food security

Aimed at testing and promoting community-based climate resilient agriculture, fisheries and food practices that improve productivity and increase ecological connectivity, including support for supply chains to target biodiversity-based products; agrobiodiversity and small-holder farmers; conservation of landraces and genetic resources; agroecological production methods; and organic agriculture, fair trade, and other relevant certifications schemes.



## Low-carbon energy access co-benefits

In line with larger frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals and the National Determined Contributions, the objective of this initiative is to demonstrate and scale up viable low carbon technologies, including renewable energies and energy efficient technologies and approaches that improve community energy access by working with the private sector and the government.



## Catalyzing sustainable urban solutions

In partnership with private sector and government, this pilot initiative will support the promotion of appropriate integrated community-oriented sustainable urban solutions that align with and contribute to the GEF Sustainable Cities Impact Program.



## Local to global coalitions for chemicals and waste management

The coalition supports communities in the forefront of threats related to chemicals and waste either as users or consumers with a focus on mercury management in the artisanal and small scale gold mining sector; plastics, solid waste management and circular economy; chemicals in sustainable agriculture.

## CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES



### CSO-Government-Private Sector Policy and Planning Dialogue Platforms

These platforms aim to ensure that community voices and participation are promoted and enhanced in the development of global and national strategies related to global environment and sustainable development issues.



### Promote Knowledge Sharing and South-South Community Innovation Platform

Promote replication and upscaling of good practices within and between SGP participating countries on global environmental issues and solutions across countries and regions.



# KEY FACTS

## SINCE INCEPTION (1992)



**27,348**

**PROJECTS**

on global environmental issues



**US\$752.9**

**MILLION**

in project funding

## HOW TO APPLY

SGP works as a decentralized grant facility at the country level. SGP grants are made directly to community-based organizations (CBOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) in recognition of the key role they play in conserving the global environment and achieving sustainable development.

### HOW WE WORK?



PROJECT  
1

PROJECT  
2

PROJECT  
3



## KEY STEPS IN THE APPLICATION PROCESS



The project proponent – a national CBO or CSO – contacts the SGP National Coordinator to receive project application guidelines and forms. Refer to the SGP website's, under section "Where We Work" for information and contacts at the country-level.



The proponent organization prepares a brief project concept note and submits it to the SGP Country Programme.



If the project is found eligible, the project proponent prepares a project proposal. In some cases, this step may be supported by a planning grant.



Project proposals are reviewed by the National Steering Committee (NSC).



The NSC reviews the proposal and either accepts, rejects, or returns it to the proponent with recommendations for formulating and refining the project.



Approved projects sign grant agreement. SGP grants are usually paid in three installments, based on successful implementation and reporting.

**NOTE:** SGP allows flexibility and customization at the country level to allow the programme to respond to the local context. Please contact the National Coordinator in your country to find out how to apply. SGP does not charge a fee at any stage of the selection process.





# GRANT

## MODALITIES



REGULAR GRANT  
UP TO \$50,000

PLANING GRANT

UP TO \$5,000

STRATEGIC GRANT

UP TO \$150,000

## SGP Mission

**E**stablished in 1992, the year of the Rio Earth Summit, the GEF Small Grants Programme embodies the very essence of sustainable development by "thinking globally acting locally". By providing financial and technical support to projects that conserve and restore the environment while enhancing people's well-being and livelihoods, SGP demonstrates that community action can maintain the fine balance between human needs and environmental imperatives.

SGP recognizes that environmental degradation such as the destruction of ecosystems and the species that depend upon them, increasing levels of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in our atmosphere, pollution of international waters, land degradation and the spread of persistent organic pollutants are life-threatening challenges that endanger us all. However, poor and vulnerable communities –SGP's primary stakeholders- are most at risk because they depend on access to natural resources for their livelihoods and often live in fragile ecosystems.





# SGP IRAN

Iran was the 54th country to join the program starting in 2001. To date, SGP Iran has funded over 350 projects. When the program started in Iran there were very few development projects using a participatory approach. It was a learning by doing process, which produced the participatory literature as the projects went along, in order to fill the gap. Our collective experience has demonstrated that change comes community by community, it does not come through a top-down approach. When development takes shape from the grass roots it is sustainable, and when the communities are empowered as a part of the solution, then innovative solutions arise. Participatory assessments, planning and implementation is what SGP and the grantees in Iran have been doing.

At the national and local levels, SGP operates in a decentralized and country-driven manner through country programme teams composed of a National Coordinator (NC), a Programme Associate (PA), and a National Steering Committee (NSC). Each participating country develops a country programme strategy (CPS), which adapts the SGP global strategic framework to specific country conditions. SGP CPS takes into account existing national environmental strategies and plans, as well as those relating to national development and poverty eradication. Through the CPS, the country is able to put emphasis on certain thematic and geographic areas to ensure synergy and impact, as well as to facilitate programme administration.

All SGP country programmes have a voluntary National Steering Committee (NSC), which is the central element of SGP and provides the major substantive contribution to and oversight of the programme. The





NSC is comprised a majority of civil society organizations, as well as representatives of the government, UNDP and the academia. The NSC helps develop the CPS, considers whether proposals for grants are feasible and meet SGP criteria, and what kind of technical support is needed for implementation.

It is also responsible for the final approval of grants, undertaking monitoring and evaluation visits to the projects, providing advice, ensuring proper monitoring and evaluation, helping extract, share and replicate successful SGP projects and practice and promoting SGP at the national and international level.

SGP provides grants to Civil Society Organizations (CSO), notably national and local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). By enabling a direct connection between sustainable livelihoods and the generation of local and global livelihoods, SGP empowers communities to act and participate in their own development and hence ensures community ownership and impact. SGP responds to the demand from local communities and NGOs for grants. SGP has continuously sought to simplify its procedures and facilitate access to grant funding for local communities. SGP experience further shows that it is important to invest in capacity development of potential grantees to facilitate their access to funding and enable successful implementation of projects and also giving small planning grants to communities to support proposal development and accepting different proposal formats such as participatory videos and photo stories in lieu of written proposals, where necessary. SGP partners with local and national Governments to allow for a multi-stakeholder approach and national ownership. Governments dedicate funds and other resources, participate in the National Steering Committee, incorporate good practices and lessons from SGP, and facilitate replication, scaling up, and policy change.

## SGP IRAN Thematic Clusters

**E**ight Thematic Clusters have been formed in SGP Iran which have resulted in thematic networks among grantees and stakeholders on similar topics to help build synergy, sharing resources, partnerships, emerging solutions, as well as helping communities accessing national forums on related topics.





# SGP Approach & Methodology

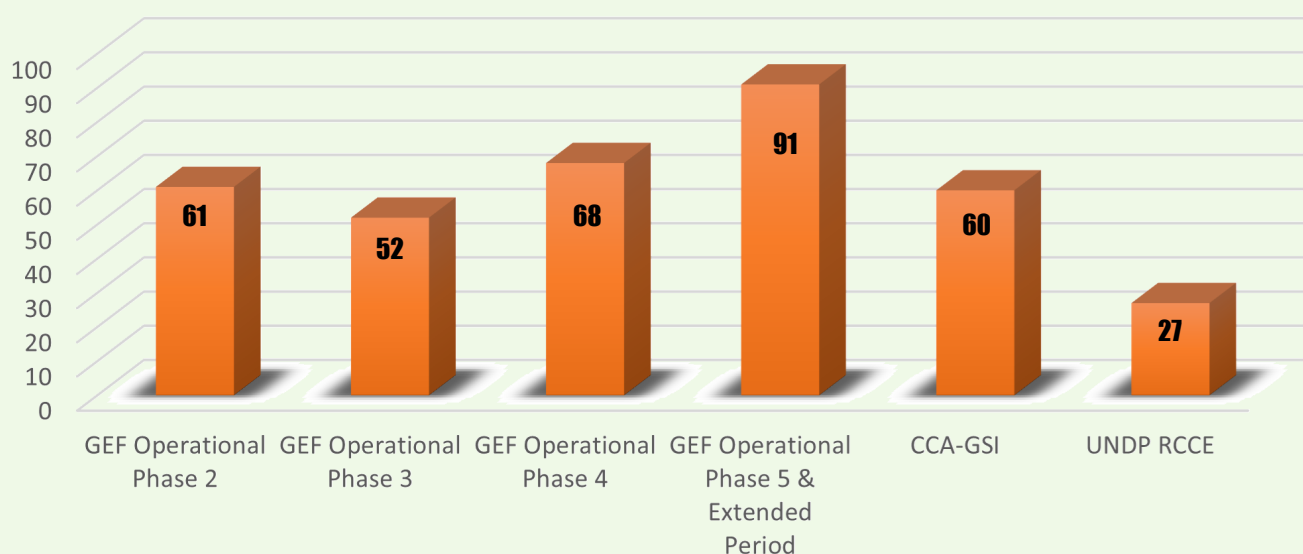
Experience has shown that SGP approach has been more successful than the conventional development programs and projects because, the SGP approach is demand-driven (based on community and NGO needs and aspirations), sustainable (as it includes ecological, economic and socio-cultural aspects), focused on capacity building (awareness raising and training are an integral part of project activities) and operates as a network (including key stakeholders).

While in a conventional development project, the approach is supply-driven (projects and budgets are approved in advance and at government level), projects are sectoral (promoting only one sector of economy such as agriculture, fisheries, forestry, etc.), top-down (communities are not involved in decision-making), with a short and discontinued impact.

	Conventional Methods	GEF SGP Methods
Entry point	Weaknesses	Existing capacities
Objectives	Problem solving	Capacity development
Who trains?	Expert	Facilitator
Who decides?	Plan	Local community
Why?	Standards implementation	Situation improvement
Where?	Classroom	Field
What kind of knowledge?	Academic knowledge	Traditional knowledge, existing experiences, and science
How?	Positivistic	Participatory research action
Results	Solving problems	Trust and capacity increase (Sustainable)

## Number of SGP IRAN Projects in GEF OPs

(GEF & Non- GEF Funded Projects)





# SGP Iran Portfolio



**359**

**TOTAL PROJECTS**  
(since 2001 - OP2)

**227**

**GEF Funded Projects**

**87**

**Non- GEF Funded Projects**

**21**

**TOTAL ongoing Projects**



**US\$ 7.6**  
**MILLIONS**

**Project Grants**

**US\$ 12.2**  
**MILLIONS**

**Co-funding (cash& inkind)**

## GEF SGP IRAN PROJECTS BASED ON FOCAL AREAS



**26%**  
**Biodiversity**



**20%**  
**Climate Change**



**8%**  
**Land Degradation**



**1%**  
**Chemicals and Waste**



**2%**  
**Capacity Development**



**2%**  
**International Waters**



**17%**  
**Multifocal Area**



**17%**  
**Community Conserved  
Areas**



**7%**  
**UNDP RCCE COVID-19**





## Community Conserved Areas

Local Communities are the stewards of much of the world's cultural and natural heritage, including biodiversity hotspots. For centuries across all regions of the world, their cultures, governance systems and ways of life have shaped and nurtured their collective lands and territories, enabling them to practice core values such as respect and reciprocity, only taking what they need to meet their food, livelihood, health and spiritual needs. The rich repository of traditional and local knowledge that such communities have built up over generations also serves as a source of innovation offering potential nature- and culture-based solutions for the multiple global crises that the world faces today, notably climate change, biodiversity loss, inequality, and the risks of global pandemics. Over the last 12 years, the strategic framework, targets and biodiversity strategies of the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) have increasingly recognized and emphasized the vital role of local communities in biodiversity conservation, including outside of the framework of government-recognized protected areas. Yet whilst this recognition has grown progressively, much of the official bilateral development assistance and multi-lateral funding has remained targeted at supporting government-managed protected areas.

As such, the Global Support Initiative to territories and areas conserved by local communities (CCA-GSI) was formed in 2014 to broaden the range and quality of diverse governance types in recognizing CCAs, and to contribute to biodiversity goals and discussions such as the CBD's Aichi 2020 targets and forthcoming post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). The CCA-GSI is a signature programme under the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Local Action Service Offer which is working to significantly expand the size and scope of support to local actors by bringing in new partners and innovative sources of financing.



# SGP Response to COVID-19

## (Risk Communication and Community Engagement)

The Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) initiative was implemented in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme of Iran and the GEF Small Grants Programme Iran through international funds in 2020. GEF SGP along with local and provincial CBOs and NGOs implemented 27 projects in 16 provinces of Iran. These projects, with the participation of their target communities, helped to apply standard methods of prevention and precautionary measures against Covid-19 pandemic in a more informed and effective way. The objectives of these projects was to try to reduce the negative effects caused by Covid-19 and its psychosocial consequences among the vulnerable groups of the target communities.



Children  
Youth & Adults  
Senior Citizens  
Female headed households  
People with disability  
Sanitation workers  
Nomads  
Families supported by SWO  
Street vendors  
Extremity Vulnerable individuals

Mazani  
Laki  
Kurdish  
Lori  
Azari

Ministry of Health & Medical Education  
National Task Force To Confront COVID-19  
Iran University of Medical Sciences  
Provincial government bodies and organizations  
Tehran Municipality's Welfare, Services & Social Participation Organization  
Iranian Red Crescent Society  
NGOs and CBOs

Posters  
Brochure  
Banner  
Short educational clips  
Podcast  
Booklets  
Animations  
Siyah-Bazi  
Radio messages

Target Provinces

Languages

Target Groups

Partners

Communication Materials

27 PROJECTS  
UNDP RCCE COVID-19





The Small Grants Programme (SGP) is a corporate programme of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Established in 1992, SGP is currently active in 127 countries and promotes community-based innovation, capacity development, and empowerment through sustainable development projects of local civil society organizations with special consideration for Indigenous Peoples, women, and youth. SGP has supported over 27,000 community-based projects on biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, climate change mitigation and adaptation, sustainable land management, conservation of international waters, and chemicals and waste management, while generating sustainable livelihoods.



The Global Environment Facility was established on the eve of the Rio Earth Summit to tackle our planet's most pressing environmental problems. Since then, it has provided more than \$21.7 billion in grants and mobilized an additional \$119 billion in co-financing for more than 5,000 projects and programs. The GEF is the largest multilateral trust fund focused on enabling developing countries to invest in nature, and supports the implementation of major international environmental conventions including on biodiversity, climate change, chemicals, and desertification. It brings together 184 member governments in addition to civil society, international organizations, and private sector partners. Through its Small Grants Programme, the GEF has provided support to more than 27,000 civil society and community initiatives in 135 countries.



UNDP partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crisis, and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. On the ground in 177 countries and territories, we offer global perspective and local insight to help empower lives and build resilient nations. [www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org)



UN Common Premises  
No.8, Shahrzad Blvd,  
Darrou, Tehran  
IRAN  
PoBox: 15875-4557  
Email: [sgp.ir@undp.org](mailto:sgp.ir@undp.org)  
Website: [www.sgp.undp.org](http://www.sgp.undp.org)

**Front cover photo**  
Mashgh Afarinesh va Toseye Paydar (NGO)

**Back cover photo**  
Boom Sazgan Shirdal Aati (NGO)

**Design**  
Mehdi Almasi



