Call for Experts to serve on the GEF SGP National Steering Committee

Background
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) and community-based organizations with a strong focus on social inclusion, including indigenous peoples, youth, women and girls, and persons with disabilities. 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.

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. 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. The NSC is composed of voluntary members from the CSO sector and others including private sector, donor institutions, experts, and limited number of additional government members as appropriate.

Minimum required qualifications and key fields of competencies
Individuals interested to serve on the Committee must demonstrate recognized capacity and expertise in the following fields of key competency, supported by successful career experience at a senior level in environment with at least 10 years of relevant professional experience across the following areas:

- Wide technical expertise, operational experience and good understanding of the applied technologies related to the GEF SGP’s focal areas:
  - Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation
  - Land Degradation and Local Forest Management
  - International Waters
  - Chemicals and Waste Management
  - Biodiversity conservation
  - Capacity building and Sustainable Livelihoods
- Professional experience in the financing, development, and implementation of community projects.
- Working knowledge of the programme management cycle
- Familiarity with United Nations Conventions, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and other relevant processes is highly desirable

In addition to the above, interested individuals must demonstrate an unquestionable personal reputation, integrity, and ethical behavior throughout his or her professional career.

Application and selection procedure
Interested individuals should submit their expression of interest by providing a full documented CV and a cover letter specifying the fields of key competencies that match their skills.

- Responses to this call should be sent via email to Gefsgp.jam@undp.org no later than November 19, 2021
- The subject line of the email message should follow the following format: Subject: Expression of interest GEF SGP NSC – [FIRST NAME] [FAMILY NAME]
- The file containing the curriculum vitae should be named “CV [FAMILY NAME]” (e.g. CV SMITH), and similarly, the file containing the cover letter should be named “Cover letter [FAMILY NAME]”.
- Please specify in the cover letter and CV your professional affiliation(s)
- Only the following formats will be accepted: MS Word and PDF.

Members will be selected through an open, transparent, and competitive process based on the criteria above and the annexed terms of reference. They will then be nominated by the current Committee and endorsed by the Global Manager. Members will be expected to work remotely with the possibility to attend meetings of the Committee, either physically or virtually. The SGP Secretariat will communicate and assist with any travel requirements relating to the work of the Committee. The time required per month for proposal review will depend upon the volume of proposals received. Unless otherwise requested by the applicant, CVs received during the recruitment process may be retained as part of a roster of experts that the GEF SGP can draw upon as needed.
Annex: Terms of reference of the GEF SGP National Steering Committee

Functions and Duties
1. The SGP 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. NSC composition and operation will conform to the relevant sections of the GEF SGP Operational Guidelines.

2. The NSC member’s principal roles include the following:
   (i) Provide overall guidance and strategic direction of the Country Programme, including the development, implementation, and periodic review and revision of the SGP Country Programme Strategy (CPS).

   (ii) Review and approve projects in alignment with the CPS following participatory, democratic, impartial, and transparent procedures in line with the SGP Operational Guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures.

   (iii) Provide technical support to project oversight and implementation at the country level in accordance with the SGP Project Document for the operational phase, including project monitoring and evaluation (e.g. field visits).

   (iv) Link the SGP operations to the relevant global, regional, and national policies and strategies of the GEF and other third-party co-financing.

   (v) Support partnership development and resource mobilization efforts for the SGP at project and country levels.

   (vi) Support scaling up efforts to mainstream SGP lessons learned and successes in national development planning and policymaking.

Selection and Appointment
3. For new country programmes, the selection of NSC members is led by the UNDP Country Office (CO) with support from the National Coordinator (NC), in close consultation with the SGP Central Programme Management Team (CPMT) and a wide circle of stakeholders. The composition and appointment of a newly established NSC is subject to review by the CPMT Regional Focal Point (RFP) and final approval by the SGP Global Manager. Based on the approval by the Global Manager, the UNDP RR provides the appointment letters on behalf of the SGP.

4. For an existing NSC, the selection and rotation of new NSC members will be facilitated by the UNDP CO with support from the standing NSC and NC, in consultation with a wide representative group of stakeholders at the national level. For existing NSC, appointments and updates will be approved by the responsible CPMT Regional Focal Point (RFP). Based on the approval by the RFP, the UNDP RR provides the appointment letters on behalf of the SGP.
5. For both new and existing NSC, 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 (e.g. 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.

6. 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. The SGP database should be updated in a timely manner, including terms and contact information.

7. 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.

**Term of Service**

8. NSC members serve for a period of three years, with a possibility of one-time renewal. Term of appointment of NSC member would be no more than two terms in a consecutive manner, unless approved by the SGP Global Manager on an exceptional basis.

9. 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.

10. 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 to avoid drastic change in members at any one time.

11. 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.

12. 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 not be considered for rotation or renewal. The final decision is endorsed by the SGP Global Manager and a letter to the outgoing member should be signed by the UNDP RR.
13. 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.

Composition
14. Based on the experiences globally, 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.

15. 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.

16. The UNDP RR and GEF OFP are considered 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.

17. 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.

18. 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.

Meetings and Rules of Order
19. 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. 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.
20. 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.

21. The NSC meets at least on a biannual basis (or as determined by the NSC) to provide strategic guidance to the SGP, review and approve grant proposals and to conduct other activities within its terms of reference.

22. Regular meetings of the NSC ordinarily may include the following agenda items:
   (i) Report on status and progress of the country and global SGP.
   (ii) Status reports and updates on projects and activities in implementation.
   (iii) Financial report on execution of grant allocation.
   (iv) Presentation of project proposals for consideration.

23. NSC minutes concerning meetings in which projects are approved should be as detailed and specific as possible following the standard SGP NSC minutes template by listing each project considered and including all NSC recommendations or observations about each project. The NSC decision about each project should be clearly noted, including any reformulations required before final approval. The list of approved projects should include the budget amount approved. The minutes should be signed by all NSC members present.

24. The NSC should review and sign-off on project proposals that are reformulated or adjusted after being provisionally approved by the NSC, prior to submitting them to the UNDP Resident Representative for MOA signature. A formal meeting is not required, and the review may be done on a no-objection basis.

25. No SGP project may be undertaken at the country level without the approval of the NSC, besides the Planning Grant, which the NSC could delegate the approval to the NC as relevant (refer to the SGP Operational Guideline for details). 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.

26. 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.

27. 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.
National Coordinator Responsibilities

28. The NC serves in an ex-officio capacity on the NSC, participating in deliberations, but not in decisions regarding project selection.

29. The NC usually convenes the NSC and functions as its Secretariat, including inter alia in:
   (i) Managing communication between and among NSC members, for sending out notices of meetings,

   (ii) Answering technical questions from the NSC members on a range of topics relating to the functioning of the SGP as a global programme.

   (iii) Providing clarifications on the pipeline of project concepts and proposals received, including planning grants provided.

   (iv) Providing information on the existing cohort of approved SGP projects under implementation.

   (v) Present substantive reports on the status and progress of the SGP and its activities

   (vi) 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.