

Global Environment Facility (GEF), Small Grants Programme (SGP)

Operational Phase 8 – Terms of Reference (ToR)

1.0 Background

The Global Environment Facility’s Small Grants Programme (GEF-SGP), implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), is a flagship initiative that empowers Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), and grassroots actors in developing countries to address global environmental challenges through locally led, inclusive, and innovative solutions. Funding provided by the GEF is focused on GEF’s Focal Areas of Biodiversity Conservation (BD), Climate Change (CC), Land Degradation (LD), International Waters (IW), and Chemicals and Waste (CH). Since its inception in 1992, the SGP has supported over 26,000 projects worldwide, demonstrating that small-scale, community-driven action can generate significant global environmental benefits while advancing sustainable development, improving livelihoods, and reducing poverty.

SGP operates through a decentralized, country-level delivery mechanism guided by a multi-stakeholder National Steering Committee (NSC) and coordinated by a Country Programme team. Its **“Community Action, Global Impact”** approach recognizes that transformative change begins at the local level, where communities possess the knowledge, motivation, and capacity to protect ecosystems and improve well-being. The Eighth Operational Phase (OP8) builds on over 30 years of experience and introduces a strategic shift towards integrated landscape and seascape management. This approach promotes multi-stakeholder collaboration, inclusive governance, and systems thinking, to address complex environmental and socio-economic challenges. OP8 is designed to mobilize bottom-up action by empowering local communities, including **women, youth and persons with disabilities (PWD)**, to lead initiatives that restore ecosystems, strengthen resilience, and promote sustainable development.

In Zambia, OP8 will address escalating pressures such as biodiversity loss, land degradation, climate vulnerability, and pollution from chemicals and waste, particularly in communities that depend directly on natural resources and ecosystem services. In line with GEF-8 programming directions, OP8 seeks to generate multiple global environmental benefits by building the capacity of local actors to tackle climate change, restore degraded ecosystems, and improve socio-ecological productivity. It will support initiatives that enhance ecosystem services, diversify livelihoods, and strengthen governance systems across critical landscapes. At the same time, OP8 contributes to Zambia’s national priorities. By mainstreaming and scaling community-led solutions, the SGP will continue to catalyze transformative change that is locally grounded, environmentally impactful, and globally significant.

2.0 SGP's Main Objectives

- I. Empower local civil society and community-based organizations to lead community-driven initiatives that enhance well-being, resilience and global environmental benefits
- II. Apply integrated landscape approaches to improve ecosystem services, diversify livelihoods, and strengthen governance systems
- III. Accelerate innovation and scaling up by leveraging multi-stakeholder alliances, partnerships, and dialogue platforms
- IV. Promote social inclusion and equity, with a strong focus on women, local people, youth, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups

3.0. OP8 SGP Strategic Initiatives

3.1. Community-based management of threatened ecosystems and species:

Through SGP OP8, grants will be awarded to local CSOs/CBOs to support the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in forest landscapes, grasslands, river basins and catchments, wetlands, and coastal and marine ecosystems, as well as mainstream biodiversity conservation principles and practices in key production sectors in the landscape-seascape. With the active involvement of local peoples, local communities and other civil society organizations embedded within multi-stakeholder governance platforms, locally led initiatives will support innovative solutions at landscape-seascape, national, and other levels.

3.2. Sustainable agriculture and fisheries, and food security:

Through landscape-seascape level community-based grants, SGP OP8 will enhance the sustainability and productivity of priority socio-ecological production systems, particularly for food staples and commodities, livestock, fisheries and aquaculture. OP8 will emphasize support to local farmers and fishers to adopt science-based agroecological, regenerative, and biodiversity conservation principles and practices and adapt these to local contexts using traditional knowledge. Local action in the landscape will directly support national voluntary Land Degradation Neutrality targets.

3.3. Local to Global Coalitions for Chemicals and Waste Management:

SGP OP8 will support communities at the forefront of chemicals and waste-related threats, either as users or consumers. Interventions will focus on innovative, affordable, and practical solutions to chemicals and waste management, including plastics, electronic waste, polychlorinated biphenyls and other persistent organic pollutants, and mercury.

4.0 The Landscapes

Prioritized landscapes for OP8 will include the following six river catchment areas:

- I. Chambeshi catchment area
- II. Luapula catchment area
- III. Luangwa catchment area
- IV. Kafue catchment area
- V. Tanganyika catchment area
- VI. Zambezi catchment area

5.0 Eligibility: Organizations Applying for OP8 GEF-SGP

Organizations wishing to apply under OP8 GEF-SGP must meet the following criteria:

- Be a **locally registered CBO, CSO, foundation, academic institution, or similar entity**, in accordance with Government's legal requirements, with a minimum of **two (2) years' operational experience**. Private sector and political parties are not eligible. *Proof of registration must be attached.*
- Have **experience in implementing initiatives of similar scope and nature** and demonstrate **strong community involvement** in the proposed project.
- Be capable of preparing both **narrative and financial reports**.
- Be willing to provide a **matching contribution** (in-kind and/or cash) to complement the requested funds.

6.0 Non-eligibility of Project Proposal Types

The following types of project proposals are **not eligible** for funding under the GEF-SGP OP8:

- Project proposals that support activities that are not in line with the values of the UN or that provide funding for any criminal activities including but not limited to terrorism.
- Project proposals which do not demonstrate equal treatment for individuals or groups of people on grounds of their gender, religious beliefs, or lack of them, or their ethnic origin.
- Project proposals which consist exclusively or primarily of capital expenditure e.g., land, buildings, equipment, vehicles, etc.
- Political activities and religious activities.
- Project proposals concerned only or mainly with individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, and congresses.
- Project proposals concerning only or mainly individual scholarships for studies or training courses.
- Credit or loan schemes.
- Cash donations.

7.0 Eligibility of Project Costs: Which cost may be considered?

The categories of costs considered as eligible and non-eligible are indicated below. The budget is both a cost estimate and a ceiling for "eligible costs". Note that the eligible costs must be based on real costs based on supporting documents. Costs that do not appear realistic may be rejected. **It is therefore in the applicant's interest to provide a realistic and cost-effective budget in USD. Please use the attached budget template only.**

7.1 Eligible costs

To be eligible under this Call for Proposals, costs must be directly verifiable and traceable to the activities being implemented.

7.2 Ineligible costs

The following costs are not eligible:

- Debts and provisions for losses or debt.
- Interest owed.
- Salary top-ups and similar emoluments to government employees or other project interested persons

- Items already financed in another framework, i.e. existing capacity should not be included in the budget

8.0. Those wishing to apply for a grant must submit:

- Signed grant proposal application (using provided templates) directly to GEF Small Grants Programme - UNDP Zambia ops.zm@undp.org and copy registry.zm@undp.org no later than **11:59 PM Zambia Time, 31st December 2025**. Proposals submitted after the deadline and those submitted using other templates and channels will not be considered. A zoom meeting has been arranged to provide more details. The **zoom meeting** will be held on **19th December 2025 from 11:00 to 12:30 hours**.

Link:

<https://undp.zoom.us/j/89028146295?pwd=3ZULHLfRgMEBSIIlg9CEq3rHVI8INv.1>

Meeting ID: 890 2814 6295

Passcode: 359038

In submitting proposals, the applicant must include the following supporting documents:

- **ANNEX I** Letter of support from the government line Ministry.
- **ANNEX II** Project Proposal (Technical) - The technical proposal must not exceed 15 pages. The minimum elements to be included must respond to the technical criteria identified in the Terms of Reference (ToR).
- **ANNEX III** Project Proposal (Financial) - The financial proposal should be comprehensive.

Other documents to be attached:

- Proof of registration including copies of registration certificate(s)
- A clearly defined management structure: Organogram, Management Structure, contact details
- Proof of experience in relevant fields as indicated in the call for proposals.

Proponent organizations must ensure their proposed project idea is **1) relevant, 2) innovative, 3) sustainable, and 4) aligned to the OP8 SGP Strategic Priorities**. Encouraging and building partnerships among organizations and groups is an integral part of the SGP. Thus, less experienced community organizations are encouraged to take part in SGP activities, assisted by a local organization, that plays a key role as mentor or partner.



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9.0. Budget: The grant amount for the budget will range from USD5,000 to USD50,000. Please note that **USD50,000 will be considered only in exceptional situations.** The implementation capacity of the CBOs and/or CSO and the ideas being proposed will be considered when approving the grant amount.

10.0. Project Duration: The duration of proposed projects should not exceed 24 months.