



TRANSFORMING LAND MANAGEMENT GLOBALLY

Q&A ABOUT LAND IN THE 6TH GEF REPLENISHMENT PHASE (GEF-6)





Combatting land degradation is a key component of the post 2015 development agenda. The linkage between land degradation and other global environmental challenges is more recognized than ever before. We must leverage the increasing attention being given to land to further promote sustainable land management and rehabilitation of degraded land as solutions to multiple environmental challenges.

Responding to the immediate challenge of how we sustainably intensify the production of food, fuel and fiber to meet future demand without the further degradation of our finite land resource base, Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN), which emerged from the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in 2012, is a potential target to address this challenge.

Addressing drivers of land degradation and delivering related action could also enable the land-use sector to be a substantial element in the intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) under a new international climate change agreement. Similarly, implementing sustainable land management at scale will halt the loss of biodiversity as half of the Aichi biodiversity targets rely on better land management.

To spur action, GEF-6 funding has been made even more accessible to many land degradation affected countries, through the simplification of application and expedited approval processes. For GEF-6, a total USD346 million of the Land Degradation Focal area resources has been allocated to 144 eligible countries and a further USD85 million made available through regional and global set-asides, including UNCCD enabling activities.

The GEF Financing for Enabling Activities under the UNCCD provided critical funding for the implementation of the Convention during the last GEF Replenishment Phase. Now the new Phase - the Sixth GEF Replenishment Phase (GEF-6) - has started, and we encourage countries to access this important funding opportunity for sustainable land management efforts.

This booklet is a useful one-stop information source not only for the UNCCD National Focal Points but also for anyone who intends to design projects on sustainable land management for submission to the GEF. We hope that this booklet motivates stakeholders to take advantage of the multiple funding opportunities provided by the GEF.



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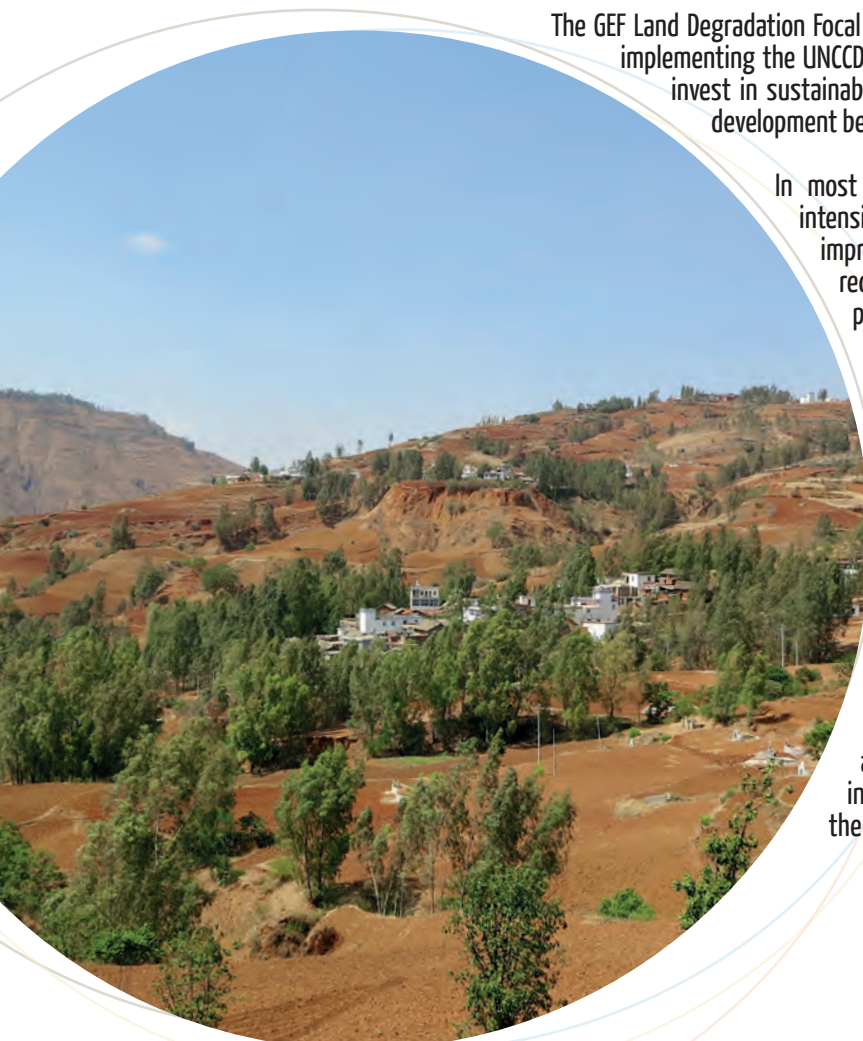
1. WHAT IS THE GEF LAND DEGRADATION FOCAL AREA AND WHY DOES IT MATTER FOR YOUR COUNTRY?

The GEF Land Degradation Focal Area provides the framework for eligible countries¹ to utilize GEF resources for implementing the UNCCD. Through the focal area, the GEF provides incremental financing for countries to invest in sustainable land management (SLM) activities that generate multiple environmental and development benefits.

In most developing countries, SLM represents a major opportunity for sustainable intensification of existing farmlands, leading to sustained productivity. It also ensures improved management of agro-ecosystem services across production systems, reduces pressure on natural resources and helps improve and sustain the economic productivity and environmental sustainability.

The GEF remains committed to assisting eligible countries to fulfil their core obligations under the UNCCD. It has allotted set-asides fund (see page 6) in support to national reporting and related capacity development needs. In addition, funds for enabling activities may be used for strengthening capacity to monitor implementation and progress towards achieving the relevant Sustainable Development Goals. Because the GEF-6 replenishment phase (2014-2018) coincides with the final four years of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the UNCCD (2008-2018), links with the focal area strategy ensure that countries can appropriately channel GEF resource toward implementing the strategy.

Country Parties could also take advantage of the opportunity to contribute to the achievement of Land Degradation Neutrality, a target that will assist in sustainably intensifying the production of food, fuel and fiber to meet future demand without the further degradation of our finite land resource base.



¹ What are the eligible countries? See: https://www.thegef.org/gef/who_can_apply

2. HOW DOES GEF LAND DEGRADATION FOCAL AREA SUPPORT LARGE-SCALE TRANSFORMATION IN SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT?

The Land Degradation Focal Area promotes opportunities to catalyze scaling-up of SLM in the context of national and regional development priorities.

Through the GEF SLM Project, Bhutan is promoting SLM practices among rural households to reduce vulnerability and increase adaptation to climate variability and change. Applied practices include hedgerows, check dams, stone bunds, terraces, bamboo, and planted trees, as well as forest protection and natural regeneration in the uplands. These interventions enhance farmer's livelihoods by conserving soil and moisture and diversifying agricultural income. SLM decreases on-site vulnerability and protects watersheds off-site. It is a cost-effective approach to climate-smart agriculture with positive long-term impacts.

At the same time, SLM greatly enhances the potential for transforming degraded land that is a major threat to smallholder crop and livestock production.

Kazakhstan implemented a sustainable livestock based land use system to safeguard its rangelands and generate carbon benefits. The GEF Drylands Ecosystem Management Project was designed to provide initial service support to producer groups, improve national capacity to quantify carbon sequestration, promote public awareness, and develop a strategy to replicate interventions in similar areas of the country. The project has directly resulted in the restoration of 105,000 ha of degraded pastures, with significant local-level benefits. The project is now being scaled up.

Further, the Land Degradation focal area contributes to other focal areas such as biodiversity and climate change through the generation of multiple global environmental benefits in production systems.

Through the GEF Dryland Livestock Wildlife Environment Interface Project, Kenya and Burkina Faso implemented mixed, sustainable production systems that focused on savanna agro-ecosystems, engaging stakeholders in community conservation and income-generating activities, and establishing mechanisms to manage and resolve community and wildlife conflicts. The rehabilitation of degraded rangelands ultimately generated income. Sedentary pastoralists are now replicating these activities in the drylands of the Greater Ewaso Nyiro ecosystem in Kenya, and in the Arli National Park and agro-pastoral surrounds in Burkina Faso.



3. WHAT RESULTS CAN I TARGET WITHIN GEF-6? HOW CAN I ACHIEVE IT?

The goal of the Land Degradation Focal Area is to arrest and reverse global trends in land degradation, specifically desertification and deforestation. This is in line with the objectives set out in the UNCCD (Article 2). The focal area also supports affected country Parties of the UNCCD in achieving the objectives of the UNCCD's 10-year strategy and the potential targets under the new sustainable development goals.

One such potential target is Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN), which emerged from the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in 2012, as a clear and straightforward target that responds to the immediate challenge of how we sustainably intensify the production of food, fuel and fiber to meet future demand without the further degradation of our finite land resource base. Its objective is to maintain or even improve the amount of healthy and productive land resources over time and in line with national sustainable development priorities. By taking into account the LDN target, country Parties can promote better policy coordination that would help SLM practices at local, national and regional scales.

To achieve the goal, the Land Degradation Focal Area invests in good practices and enabling conditions conducive to SLM. In a nutshell, the approach to reach the goal is as below.



GOAL

Combatting land degradation to improve rural livelihoods



REQUIREMENTS

Support agriculture, livestock management, and forest landscape restoration to underpin rural livelihoods



MECHANISIM

Reinforcing SLM to enhance resilience in agro-ecosystems (LD1)
 Harnessing and maintaining ecosystem services for agro-ecological intensification (LD2)
 Promoting integrated management of production landscapes (LD3)
 Mainstreaming SLM in sustainable development (LD4)

This approach also creates opportunities for scaling-up successful interventions, to benefit millions of land users. For ease of implementation by countries, it is translated into specific program priorities to further consolidate and streamline national investments.



LD 1: AGRICULTURE AND RANGELAND SYSTEMS

Program 1: Agro-ecological intensification

Program 2: SLM for Climate-smart Agriculture



LD2 – FOREST LANDSCAPES

Program 3: Land Management and Restoration



LD3 – INTEGRATED LANDSCAPES

Program 4: Scaling-up Sustainable Land Management through Landscape Approach



LD4 – INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS

Program 5: Mainstreaming SLM in Development

Synergies, integrated landscape management and gender mainstreaming are the three most important elements that crosscut all GEF-6 focal areas. The focal area investments also take into account the different roles of men and women in advancing SLM at multiple scales and will ensure that investments mainstream gender. In addition, effective policies for mitigating land degradation must consider the synergies with international agreements, especially the Rio Conventions, to maximize the cost-effectiveness of response measures.

4. HOW MUCH FUNDS ARE ALLOCATED FOR THE LAND DEGRADATION FOCAL AREA IN GEF-6 IN TOTAL? WHAT KIND OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES ARE THERE ?

The total amount allocated for GEF-6 is USD 431 million, which will be invested through country allocations under the GEF System for a Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR) and focal area set-asides. The STAR will account for USD346 million (80.3 %) of the focal area resources allocated to 144 eligible countries. The remainder of USD85 million (19.7 %) will be utilized for specific programming as set-aside funds.

Focal Area Objective	Focal Area Programs	Indicative Allocation (\$ million)
LD1 – Agriculture and Rangeland Systems	Program 1: Agro-ecological intensification Program 2: SLM for Climate-smart Agriculture	100
LD2 – Forest Landscapes	Program 3: Land Management and Restoration	70
LD3 – Integrated Landscapes	Program 4: Scaling-up Sustainable Land Management through Landscape Approach	106
LD4 – Institutional and Policy Frameworks	Program 5: Mainstreaming SLM in Development	70
Focal Area Set-Aside		85
Total Land Degradation		431



5. HOW MUCH FUNDS ARE ALLOCATED FOR THE GEF-6 LAND FOCAL AREA SPECIFIC TO UNCCD ENABLING ACTIVITIES?

The GEF financing supports implementation of the UNCCD in accordance with country obligations to the Convention, based on decisions taken by the Conference of the Parties (COP). Focal area set-aside funds will support Enabling Activities in GEF-6 based on priorities for fulfilling country obligations under the convention such as reporting and strengthening monitoring capacities. An approved ceiling of USD70,000 per country will be available for the entire GEF-6 phase. In keeping with GEF principles for financing, the GEF amount is provided on the assumption that it is a contribution only, and will not cover the full costs of the Enabling Activities. A country can choose how to utilize the GEF Enabling Activity financing depending on its other existing funding opportunities.

Countries have three modalities for accessing the GEF resources, with the following specific considerations:

- **GEF Agency** - The UNCCD National Focal Point should work through GEF's Operational Focal Point (OFP) in the respective country to enlist a GEF Implementing Agency of choice, which will then prepare and submit the funding proposal through the normal procedure for all GEF projects. The GEF Agency template (available on the GEF website: http://www.thegef.org/gef/LD_direct_access_template) should be completed by the selected GEF Agency. The Agency will receive a fee of 9.5 % of the GEF funds for the project cycle management services.
- **Umbrella Project** - The OPF only needs to prepare and sign a letter of endorsement for the country to be included as a recipient of the GEF enabling activity grant. UNEP is the lead GEF Agency for developing the umbrella project, which will make available the fixed amount to each recipient country having endorsed and participated in the umbrella project. A draft Project Identification Form of the UNEP umbrella project and the endorsement letter form will be available on the GEF and UNCCD websites. Again, UNEP as the implementing agency will receive a fee ranging from 9 to 9.5 % of the total, depending on the size of the umbrella project.
- **Direct Access** - This modality provides countries with direct access to GEF resources through its designated executing entity, which could be a national agency. However, this modality follows the operations policies and procedures of the World Bank, and therefore requires that a requesting government agency meet the eligibility requirement of the World Bank's Procurement and Financial Management Systems. If the project is approved, the Grant Agreement can only be signed by the country's Minister of Finance or designated authority. The latest instructions for this modality will be accessible on the GEF website.

The maximum amount to be accessed is the same for all three modalities.



6. HOW DOES THE STAR ALLOCATION SYSTEM WORK?

STAR means System for Transparent Allocation of Resources. Three of GEF's focal areas allocate their resources through STAR, Biodiversity, Climate Change, and Land Degradation. Each focal area has developed indices governing the amounts allocated for each country. For Land Degradation, the index is based on three indicators: area affected by land degradation, total dryland area, and vulnerable population.

Individual countries drive the programming of STAR resources based on their national priorities in relation to the focal area. GEF Agencies² and executing partners identify and develop projects together with all stakeholders in accordance with the GEF policies on the project cycle (explained in the last section). In addition, STAR regulations guide the utilization of focal area allocations for projects, especially in relation to flexibility of the total amount, which is particularly crucial for countries with small allocations under the Land Degradation Focal Area. During GEF-6, 49 countries with a total allocation of USD7 million or less will have full flexibility to utilize the amount under a single focal area. Countries above this threshold will have an allowed marginal adjustment of USD2 million, which can be shifted from one focal area to another, based on programming priorities of the country.

Further, a Cross-Cutting Capacity Development Program helps countries meet and sustain global environmental outcomes, by strengthening key capacities that address challenges and removing barriers common to the multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). Projects financed through this program enhance a country's ability to meet its obligations under the Conventions by creating synergies, while at the same time catalyzing the mainstreaming of MEAs into national policy, management, or financial and legislative frameworks. During GEF-6, the program will facilitate the acquisition, exchange, and use of knowledge, skills, good practices, and behavior necessary to shape national planning and budgeting processes and implementation in support of global environmental benefits.

7. WHAT OTHER FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES EXIST OUTSIDE THE STAR?

There are other funding windows outside the STAR allocation system, for example:

Set-aside funds of USD85 million are targeted toward reinforcing the focal area mandate through investments that complement country activities under the STAR. The funds will be utilized as per the following priorities: contribution to the incentive mechanism for the Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) program and the Integrated Approach pilot on Fostering Sustainability and Resilience of Production Systems in Sub-Saharan Africa; support for UNCCD Enabling Activities; and for regional and global initiatives to foster regional integration, knowledge sharing, and transfer to advance SLM globally. For these regional and global initiatives, eligible countries are encouraged to link nationally-developed projects through programmatic approaches to justify additional funding support for Regional and Global activities.

² Who are the GEF Agencies? Check https://www.thegef.org/gef/gef_agencies

SFM is one of the critical means to achieve the GEF-6 Land Focal Area goals. The SFM Incentive is aimed to: (1) maintain forest resources; (2) enhance forest management; (3) restore forest ecosystems; and (4) increase regional and global cooperation. The incentive works in a way that a 50% top-up is provided in addition to STAR resources that a country dedicates towards sustainable forest management projects, i.e. if a country commits USD10 million of its STAR allocation towards a SFM project, it will receive an additional incentive of USD5 million from the SFM incentive program. Countries are eligible to access up to a maximum of USD10 million from the SFM Incentive. To be eligible for the SFM Incentive, however, each country is required to invest a minimum of USD2 million from their national allocations and from at least 2 focal areas. Countries with flexible allocations are free to use their full flexibility and are required to invest national allocation in only one focal area. In order to address collaborative and cooperative issues in programmatic approaches, approximately 10% of the SFM incentive program has been earmarked for targeted investments to increase regional and global cooperation on major issues.

During GEF-6, a series of Integrated Approach Pilots (IAPs) will be supported by the GEF, aiming at transformational change in key sectors impacting the global environment. One of the IAPs, "On Fostering Sustainability and Resilience of Production Systems in Sub-Saharan Africa" will be implemented in targeted agro-ecologies in the most food insecure dryland regions in Africa, potentially covering an estimated 10 million hectares and involving 2-3 million households over 5-10 years. It contains four main components: (1) soil and water conservation; (2) diversification of production systems; (3) integrated natural resource management in agro-pastoral systems; and (4) supportive policies and institutional frameworks for transformational change toward food security. In addition, this IAP will specifically emphasize women's empowerment and participation at all levels.



8. HOW CAN I MAKE LAND ISSUES BETTER MEET MULTIPLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES?

Multi-focal area programming is based on synergies and trade-offs in production systems, aiming to bring about multiple benefits to inter-linked environmental challenges. For example, SLM innovation for sustainable agriculture can contribute to biodiversity conservation and safeguarding of agrobiodiversity; reduction of pollution risks and degradation of water resources; reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in production systems; and increased sustainability and resilience of agro-ecosystem services.

In order to ensure a practical approach to designing multi-focal area projects utilizing Land Degradation Focal Area resources, it is important that priorities be carefully aligned with other GEF focal areas. This requires adequate understanding of goals and objectives of the other focal areas. The bullet points below highlight the selected objectives and associated program priorities under the different focal areas that are the most amenable to multi-focal programming with the Land Degradation Focal Area.



- **Biodiversity (BD) Focal Area** – SLM enhances the integration of biodiversity in production systems, including the potential to increase landscape connectivity and secure important habitats for threatened species.
- **SFM/REDD+ Incentive Mechanism** – Multi-focal area projects utilizing this incentive mechanism will meet specific criteria that address sustainable forest management at a landscape approach.
- **International Waters Focal Area** – Integrated management of land and water resources is fundamental for long-term productivity of agro-ecosystems. At the same time, SLM interventions play an important role in reducing the risk of sedimentation in freshwater bodies as well as in coastal and marine ecosystems.
- **Climate Change Mitigation Focal Area** – Because this focal area requires explicit focus on quantifiable carbon benefits, the multi-focal area projects must include interventions that seek to maximize this benefit without imposing tradeoffs on other environmental or development benefits.



9. WHO DOES WHAT IN THE PROJECT LIFE CYCLE?

It is paramount that the GEF financing supports national development priorities. For this, the GEF Operational Focal Point (OFP) has a critical role to play at the beginning of a project's development. However, during the entire project cycle period (i.e. 2015-2019), a number of different actors are involved in different ways. The table below summarizes the key actors involved during the project's life cycle.

Partner	Role	Stage of involvement in project cycle
GEF Operational Focal Point	The principal contact point for all GEF activities in the country: facilitates country consultations and national portfolio formulation exercises (NPFES); reviews and endorses project ideas and concepts; oversees project implementation progress.	Mainly in Pre-PIF stage, but also continues throughout the project implementation phase.
GEF Secretariat	Reviews funding requests (FSP, MSP, PPG, EA, PFD) for consistency with GEF policies, strategies, and review criteria; approves funding requests at appropriate stages (GEF CEO)	Throughout the project cycle
GEF Council	Approves projects (FSP, PFD) and provides policy guidance on projects at appropriate stages	Approves Work Programs
GEF Partner Agency (GEF Agencies + GEF Project Agencies)	Helps the national executing partner develop and submit project proposals/final documents for GEF funding; approves the project internally; supervises project implementation; undertakes project monitoring, mid-term reviews and submits project completion reports	Throughout the project cycle
National Executing Partner	With the support of the GEF Agency, prepares the project concept (PIF); undertakes day-today project operations; responsible for overall execution of projects	Pre-PIF submission; throughout project implementation and completion
Trustee	Sets aside funds for projects; commits funds; disburses funds; undertakes financial closure of the project	Throughout the project cycle
STAP	Screens project proposal at an early stage to identify options to benefit from high-level scientific and technical advice in its further preparation	At PIF/PFD submission Post CEO PIF /PFD clearance
GEF Evaluation Office	Evaluates completed projects and selected themes; undertakes annual performance reviews	After project completion
UNCCD Secretariat	Provides comments on contents of projects or programs in accordance with decisions of the Conference of Parties to the Convention	Throughout the project cycle

Acronyms: CEO= Chief Executive Officer; EA = enabling activities; FSP= full-sized projects; MSP= medium-sized projects; PFD= program framework document; PIF=project identification form; PPG= project preparation grants; STAP= scientific and technical advisory panel

10. WHAT IS NEW IN THE GEF-6 PROJECT CYCLE?

The GEF-6 introduced the higher ceiling of medium-sized projects (to USD2 million GEF grant), which can be approved by the CEO in a one or two-step process. GEF-6 also expedites the approval process of umbrella projects consisting of enabling activities, by simplifying the application procedures so that only OFP endorsement letters need to be provided by participating countries to apply for funding support. It also developed stricter monitoring of GEF Secretariat and GEF Agencies service standards, and shortened and simplified key proposal templates. Also, the GEF Council has updated the project cancellation policy so that projects exceeding the 18-month standard from the date of Council approval to the date of submission for CEO endorsement will be cancelled upon due notification by the GEF Secretariat to the recipient countries and the GEF Agencies. For the standard full-size projects (above USD2 million GEF grant), project approval procedures in GEF-6 continue to follow the existing procedures.

One important feature of the GEF-6 project cycle is the simplified processing of programmatic approaches. The proposed new modality is available to all GEF Agencies with the same agency fee policy. It contains two steps and is designed to expedite the process through: (i) Council approval of a program framework document (PFD) - agencies and countries are then free to design and prepare child projects under the program, and (ii) CEO endorsement of the child projects once they are ready. There is also a built-in flexibility for the child project preparation timeline.



11. WHAT DOES A GEF-6 PROJECT LOOK LIKE?

SLM projects can be developed and designed as either Stand-alone (with Land Degradation Focal Area resources only), Multi-focal (in combination with other focal area resources), or Multi-Trust-fund (in combination with LDCF or SCCF resources). These options present very different opportunities and challenges with respect to GEF requirements for incremental financing. It is therefore essential to understand their distinctions, to assess which option is best suited to the context, amount of resources available for programming and the GEF window from which those resources can be accessed.

Stand-alone projects will be financed fully from your country's land degradation STAR allocation. If your country has USD7 million or less in its total STAR allocation, it can flexibly use the Climate Change and Biodiversity focal area allocations for projects addressing Land Degradation (and vice versa).

Multi-focal area projects combine Land Degradation Focal Area priorities with those of other focal areas through projects that demonstrate the value-added by integration to generate global environment benefits. For countries designing multi-focal area projects that will address land degradation in forest landscapes, there is also potential to secure additional funding from the incentive mechanism of the SFM program. The actual amount accessible from this incentive mechanism is relative to the amount of STAR resources programed in the project in a ratio of 2:1 (a minimum of USD2 million of STAR resources accesses USD1 million of the SFM incentive).

Multi-Trust Fund projects can be developed using the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) or the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) for a project on land degradation that relates to the reduction of vulnerability to adverse climate change impacts, increases the adaptive capacity to respond to climate change impacts, or promotes the transfer and adoption of adaptation technologies. The LDCF and SCCF finance the additional costs to help vulnerable countries. The LDCF finances least developed country NAPA priorities, while the SCCF mainly finances adaptation and technology transfer for all developing country parties to the UNFCCC.



12. WHAT DOCUMENTATIONS AND PROCESS ARE REQUIRED FOR A PROJECT PROPOSAL?

The process and necessary documents for a project proposal depend on the size of the project. There are four options for programming: full-sized projects, medium-sized projects, or programmatic approaches.

	Full-Sized Project	Medium-Sized Project	Program
GEF Grant Amount	> USD 2 million	USD 2 million or less	Usually > USD10 million
Project Approval Steps	Council approval of PIF → CEO endorsement of final FSP document → Agency internal approval	SINGLE STEP PATH - no PIF, CEO approval of fully developed MSP document Agency → internal approval TWO STEP PATH - CEO approval of PIF → CEO approval of final MSP document → Agency internal approval	Council approval of PFD → CEO endorsement of final child project documents → Agency internal approval
Agency Fee (if applicable)	9.5% up to USD10 million of GEF grant; 9% if GEF grant is more than USD10 million	9.5% of GEF grant	9%
Project Document preparation timeline	18 months from Council approval of PIF until CEO endorsement	12 months (only if two step path) until CEO approval	Based on GEF Agency's "program commitment deadline" from date of Council approval of PFD
PPG availability	Yes	Yes	Yes, for child projects under the program
OFP Endorsement letter (requirements)	At time of PIF submission (grant amount, PPG, if any, agency fee)	At time of MSP submission (grant amount, agency fee, PPG if requested)	At Council approval of PFD endorsed by all participating countries (grant amount for the program, agency fee, PPG if anticipated)

Acronyms: CEO= Chief Executive Officer; FSP= full-sized projects; MSP= medium-sized projects; OFP= operational focal point

Nearly all countries utilize GEF resources for Small Grants Programs (SGPs) at the national level. GEF-SGP projects are designed in the same way as regular FSPs or MSPs, and follow the normal GEF project cycle. However, once approved or endorsed, they are administered nationally through a process established with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which serves as GEF Agency for all SGPs. Each country has a core allocation, but can also add STAR allocation, including from Land Degradation resources. Desertification and deforestation are the main priorities of the GEF-SGP under the Land Degradation Focal Area, which is now the second largest focal area in terms of ongoing grant projects under the GEF-SGP.

The GEF-SGP can provide up to USD50,000 to civil society organizations (CSOs) or grassroots groups for projects to improve agro-ecosystems and forest landscapes where deterioration of ecosystems services and goods undermines the livelihoods of many people.





13. WHAT IS A GOOD GEF-6 PROJECT PROPOSAL? HOW CAN I ENSURE A GOOD PROPOSAL?

The elements you should address when developing a successful GEF funding proposal are already built in the Project Identification Form (PIF) in the form of specific questions and guidelines, available on the GEF website. The following elements are amongst the most important criteria for GEF financing: (1) evidence of country ownership; (2) choice of GEF Agency based on comparative advantage of agencies; (3) a solid baseline and incremental reasoning for the GEF grant on top of that baseline; (4) stakeholder participation, socio-economic benefits, and gender considerations; (5) consistency with focal area strategies; (6) adequate co-financing to ensure that GEF funds are incremental and impacts can be scaled up; and (7) estimation, monitoring and evaluation of the global environmental benefits.

A GEF-6 project is ideally focused on addressing the drivers of environmental degradation, seeking synergies with other focal areas to create multiple benefits, is innovative and builds sustainability and replication into its strategy. As the title of this brochure emphasizes, it's time for transformational impact in land management. We all need to work together so that GEF investments can catalyze impact at scale as opposed to yet another pilot demonstration.

In general, all elements included in templates, as required for approval (MSP) or endorsement (FSP) by the GEF CEO, must be adequately addressed. Furthermore, the final package submitted to the GEF is expected to provide greater detail on all aspects elaborated during project development, to be presented separately in the agency's own project document. In addition, aspects that required consultation with stakeholders and confirmation (e.g. baselines, targeted co-financing) must be fully addressed.

In this regard, the budgeted monitoring and evaluation framework, and the focal area tracking tools are required at CEO endorsement stage. The Land Degradation tracking tool, available on the GEF website, is a means to help aggregate results and outcomes at a portfolio level. It also helps GEF reporting to the UNCCD. The tracking tool is being constantly revised based on lessons learned during its application.

Sustainable Land Management Financing in the GEF: A Primer for the Sixth GEF Replenishment Phase (2015). https://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/publication/GEF_LDFAbrochure_CRA_2_0.pdf Land Degradation Neutrality: Resilience at local, national and regional levels (2014).

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Photos

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