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**INFORMATION NOTE
ON
LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FUND SUPPORT
FOR GRADUATING LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES**

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1. This Information Note summarizes the support provided by the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) to graduating least developed countries (LDCs).

ELIGIBILITY FOR LDCF SUPPORT

2. The LDCF was established at the seventh Conference of the Parties (COP 7) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), by decision 7/CP.7 from 2001, which states the following:

Decides also that a least developed countries fund shall be established, which shall be operated by an entity entrusted with the operation of the financial mechanism, under the guidance of the Conference of the Parties, to support a work programme for the least developed countries. This work programme shall include, *inter alia*, national adaptation programmes of action in accordance with Section II, "Implementation of Article 4, paragraph 9, of the Convention", of decision 5/CP.7;

3. Regarding eligibility for access to the LDCF, the GEF Council at its 19th meeting in April 2002 approved a document titled *Arrangements for the Establishment of the New Climate Change Funds* (GEF/C/19/6)¹, which stated the following:

24. Eligibility: It is assumed that financing will be available to all Least Developed Countries as defined by the United Nations that are also party to the Convention. Currently, 49 countries have been designated as least developed countries, of which 46 countries are Parties to the UNFCCC. The list of LDCs is reviewed every three years by the UN Economic and Social Council.

4. Since the establishment of the LDCF, Timor Leste and South Sudan were added to the LDC list, in 2003 and 2012, respectively. They became eligible for LDCF support upon accession to the UNFCCC, which took place in October 2006 for Timor Leste and February 2014 for South Sudan.

5. Regarding eligibility to access the LDCF for National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) implementation projects, the GEF Council at its 28th meeting in May 2006 approved a document titled *Programming Paper for Funding the Implementation of NAPAs under the LDC Trust Fund* (GEF/C/28/18)², which stated the following:

¹ This document can be accessed at: https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/C.19.6_Climate_Change_Funds_5.pdf

² This document can be accessed at: https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/GEF.C.28.18_5.pdf

44. Proposals submitted for funding under the LDCF will be reviewed in light of agreed project criteria, drawn from the COP guidance. These criteria include country ownership; program and policy conformity; financing; institutional coordination and support; and monitoring and evaluation. For purposes of the LDCF, these criteria will be understood as follows:

- (a) *Country ownership* includes two considerations: country eligibility and country drivenness. For a country to be eligible to receive funding for NAPA implementation under the LDCF, it should be an LDC Party to the UNFCCC that has completed its NAPA.

TREATMENT OF LDCs THAT HAVE GRADUATED SINCE LDCF INCEPTION

6. The LDCF is currently supporting 47 countries categorized by the UN as LDCs. Since the LDCF establishment, four LDCs that were eligible to receive LDCF support have graduated. They are: Cape Verde, Maldives, Samoa, and Equatorial Guinea.

7. The GEF Secretariat has taken the following practice with graduating LDCs, based on eligibility for support as agreed by GEF Council:

- (a) If a country is classified as an LDC at the time of PIF approval by the LDCF/SCCF Council following technical clearance by the GEF Secretariat, the project is eligible to receive LDCF support;
- (b) Projects already approved by the LDCF/SCCF Council prior to a country's graduation continue to be supported with agreed LDCF resources until completion.

8. During a very early stage of the LDCF operations, two PIF submissions were discussed with the GEF Secretariat prior to the graduation date, and these were subsequently approved by the LDCF/SCCF Council and by the GEF CEO shortly after the graduation date on an exceptional basis. They are summarized in Annex 1.

UPCOMING LDC GRADUATIONS

9. The LDC status and graduation are informed by the Committee for Development Policy (CDP), which reviews development indicators in LDCs every three years. If a country scores adequately on two out of three of the development criteria for two consecutive triennial reviews, the CDP makes a recommendation on its graduation. The UN Economic and Social Council needs to endorse the CDP recommendation. The UN General Assembly takes note, which should be in the same year. The most recent CDP Review³ was conducted in March 2018,

³ The CDP review of March 2018 is available at: <http://undocs.org/en/E/2018/33>

in which eligibility of the LDCs listed in Table 1 was considered.

Table 1: Graduation Status of LDCs Considered for Graduation by the CDP in March 2018⁴

LDC		Status
1	Vanuatu*	Scheduled to graduate in 2020
2	Angola*	Scheduled to graduate in 2021
3	Bhutan	Recommended for graduation by the CDP and endorsed by ECOSOC; General Assembly resolution forthcoming
5	Kiribati	Recommended for graduation by the CDP; ECOSOC decision deferred to 2021
5	Nepal	CDP decision deferred to 2021
6	Sao Tome and Principe	Recommended for graduation by CDP and endorsed by ECOSOC; General Assembly resolution forthcoming
7	Solomon Islands	Recommended for graduation by CDP and endorsed by ECOSOC; General Assembly resolution forthcoming
8	Tuvalu	Recommended for graduation by the CDP in 2012; ECOSOC decision deferred to 2021

**This LDC is scheduled to graduate during GEF-7.*

GEF SUPPORT TO GRADUATING LDCs

10. If an LDC is able to have a new PIF approved during GEF-7 prior to the confirmation of its graduation by the General Assembly, it is eligible to receive support from the LDCF until its confirmed graduation.

11. Non-LDCs and graduated LDCs may submit proposals to the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), or consider using their STAR resources to formulate a project that will enhance climate resilience while generating global environmental benefits as defined in the GEF-7 Programming Directions document.

⁴ The country information has been taken from the LDC profiles that can be accessed from: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/least-developed-country-category/lcsc-at-a-glance.html>

ANNEX 1
LDCF Portfolio Overview for Graduated LDCs

	<i>Project</i>	<i>LDCF approval timeline</i>	<i>LDCF grant (\$M)</i>	<i>Status</i>
CAPE VERDE:				
Graduation date: 20 December 2007				
1	NAPA formulation	2003	0.22	Completed 2007
2	NAPA Implementation: Building Adaptive Capacity and Resilience to Climate Change in the Water Sector in Cape Verde (ID 3581)	- Operational Focal Point (OFP) endorsement letter dated 19 December 2007 - PIF submission date: 27 Dec 2007 - Council PIF Approval date: 6 May 2008	3.69	Closed. Terminal evaluation completed in 2015 ⁵
3	Member of 22-country global MSP: Technical Assistance to Francophone LDCs to Implement the UNFCCC8/CP8 Decision	2003	0.2	
<i>Total for NAPA Implementation (Cape Verde)</i>			3.69	
EQUATORIAL GUINEA				
Graduation date: 4 June 2017				
	NAPA formulation	2012	0.22	Completed 2013
	No NAPA Implementation Projects	N/A	N/A	N/A
MALDIVES				
Graduation date: 1 January 2011				
1	NAPA formulation	2003	0.22	2008

⁵ The Terminal Evaluation for this project can be accessed at. <https://www.thegef.org/project/building-adaptive-capacity-and-resilience-climate-change-water-sector-cape-verde>

Project		LDCF approval timeline	LDCF grant (\$M)	Status
2	NAPA Implementation 1: Integrating Climate Change Risks into Resilient Island Planning (ID 3847)	2009	4.6	Closed. Terminal evaluation completed in 2016 ⁶
3	NAPA Implementation 2: Increasing Climate Change Resilience of Maldives through Adaptation in the Tourism Sector (ID 4431)	- OFP endorsement letter: 2 December 2010 - PIF submission date: 19 December 2010 - PIF approval by CEO: 3 June 2011	1.8	Closed. Terminal evaluation completed in 2017 ⁷
Total for NAPA Implementation (Maldives)			6.4	
SAMOA				
Graduation date: 1 January, 2014				
1	NAPA Formulation	2002	0.22	2005
2	NAPA Implementation 1: Integrating Climate Change Risks into the Agriculture and Health Sectors in Samoa (ID 3358)	2007	2.0	Closed. Terminal evaluation completed in 2014 ⁸
3	NAPA Implementation 2: Integration of Climate Change Risk and Resilience into Forestry Management (ID 4216)	2010	2.7	Closed. Terminal evaluation completed in 2016 ⁹

⁶ The Terminal Evaluation for this project can be accessed at: <https://www.thegef.org/project/integrating-climate-change-risks-resilient-island-planning>

⁷ The Terminal Evaluation can be accessed at: <https://www.thegef.org/project/increasing-climate-change-resilience-maldives-through-adaptation-tourism-sector>

⁸ The Terminal Evaluation for this project can be accessed at: <https://www.thegef.org/project/integrating-climate-change-risks-agriculture-and-health-sectors-samoa>

⁹ The Terminal Evaluation for this project can be accessed at: <https://www.thegef.org/project/integration-climate-change-risk-and-resilience-forestry-management-iccif>

<i>Project</i>		<i>LDCF approval timeline</i>	<i>LDCF grant (\$M)</i>	<i>Status</i>
4	NAPA Implementation 3: Enhancing the Resilience of Tourism-reliant Communities to Climate Change Risks (ID 4585)	2011	2.2	Under implementation ¹⁰
5	NAPA Implementation 3: Economy-wide integration of CCA and DRM to reduce climate vulnerability of communities in Samoa (ID 5417)	2013	13.4	Under implementation ¹¹
<i>Total for NAPA Implementation (Samoa)</i>			20.6¹²	

¹⁰ CEO Endorsement documentation for this project can be accessed at: <https://www.thegef.org/project/enhancing-resilience-tourism-reliant-communities-climate-change-risks>

¹¹ CEO Endorsement related information for this project can be accessed at: <https://www.thegef.org/project/economy-wide-integration-climate-change-adaptation-and-drmrr-reduce-climate-vulnerability>

¹² In 2014, the LDCF ceiling was \$20 million. Samoa therefore accessed the full amount available to it, prior to graduation.