



**GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY**  
INVESTING IN OUR PLANET

**SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES  
AND THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY**

# **BUILDING LASTING PARTNERSHIPS**

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) has been a strong partner and supporter of sustainable development for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) since it was founded over 25 years ago. The GEF has supported the development of green and blue economy approaches in SIDS because nowhere is the inextricable connection between people's wellbeing, prosperity, and the environment clearer than on small islands. In recent years, growing recognition of the vital importance of the oceans to economies and livelihoods in SIDS has increased calls for integrated blue economy approaches. At the same time, SIDS face fundamental challenges that must be tackled immediately - including high vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, limited land and water resources, and often unsustainable natural resource use.



The GEF has a mandate to protect the global environmental commons—the biodiversity, water, oceans, healthy forests, land, and stable climate on which the planet and human health depend. Nowhere are the pressures on these resources more immediate than in Small Island Development States (SIDS), in view of their unique and particular vulnerability. SIDS, therefore, need enhanced and urgent action. At the same time, SIDS provide opportunities to lead the way and be a model for transformational change, such as transitioning to low carbon development pathways. Over more than 25 years the GEF has supported projects in critical areas for SIDS such as biodiversity protection, resilience to climate change and other shocks, increased energy access through renewable energy and energy efficiency, halting and reversing land degradation, cooperation on international waters, and improved chemicals management. In total, the GEF has provided more than US\$578 million in country allocated finance across all focal areas. In addition, SIDS participated in a significant number of regional and global projects and programs that overall totaled an additional US\$ 810 million. GEF finance has leveraged several times that amount in additional resources for sustainable development. The current GEF 7 funding cycle (2018 – 2022) continues to provide strong support and an emphasis on the needs of SIDS and Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

## Partnerships

The GEF represents a partnership among its member countries and 18 GEF agencies that implement GEF projects and programs. GEF funding serves as a catalyst that enables stakeholders to come together, including governments, development partners, global environmental conventions, intergovernmental institutions, non-governmental organizations and the private sector to support major projects and programs. These partnerships are designed from the outset to last far beyond the life of a single project and often have impacts far greater than originally anticipated. GEF's work aligns with the call for increased cooperation, partnerships, and support voiced, for example, in the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, the Sendai Framework, and the Sustainable Development Goals, and supports the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.

## Integrated Resource Management from *Ridge-to-Reef*

The size, remoteness, and limited natural resource base of SIDS means that successful development requires an integrated approach. While SIDS are confronted by obvious challenges, they also offer unique opportunities for innovation and transformational change at scale. Integrated approaches to the governance and management of land, water, forest, biodiversity, and coastal resources

can contribute to enhanced livelihoods, reduce poverty, and increase resilience. The GEF is working with island countries in the Pacific, Africa, and the Caribbean to produce food sustainably, manage water responsibly, and produce energy efficiently, all while ensuring ecosystems remain intact through an ecosystems-based, integrated approach known as *Ridge-to-Reef* (R2R) which is blending GEF national and regional resources where appropriate. This approach is designed to reverse the degradation of coastal resources by finding ways to reduce the flow of untreated wastewater, chemicals, nutrients, and sediments from land-based agriculture, forestry, and cities into deltas, coastal zones, and oceans. Consequently, under a R2R approach, Integrated Water Resource Management and Integrated Coastal Management plans come together to inform long-term sustainable use of natural resources while limiting the impact on the fragile environment in SIDS and aiming for greater impact.

## Blue Economy

SIDS have made notable progress and demonstrated leadership in recent years to enhance the protection of marine resources to sustain and grow national economic opportunities. GEF-7 presents a unique opportunity to assist SIDS in addressing a suite of stressors to their ocean resources such as overfishing, land-based sources of pollution, and loss and damage of key coastal and marine ecosystems. Over the next four years GEF will be strengthening national Blue Economy opportunities through a combination of national and regional investments. GEF investments will aim to sustain healthy coastal and marine ecosystems; catalyze sustainable fisheries management; and address pollution reduction in marine environments. The GEF will assist SIDS in identifying sustainable public and private national investments within the Blue Economy space, through funding of collective management of coastal and marine systems and implementation of integrated ocean policies and legal and institutional reforms.

## Land — a Valuable Resource

Land degradation presents a unique challenge for SIDS in particular due to their size along with diverse soil types, topography, and geological hazards and the added vulnerability to climatic variability and change. GEF's work in land degradation (LD) — specifically desertification and deforestation — has emphasized the need to take an integrated approach to sustainable land management while ensuring the sustainability of livelihoods. The GEF has now expanded this approach to include the UNCCD guiding principle of Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN). LDN is "a state whereby the amount of healthy and productive land resources necessary to support ecosystem services remains stable or increases within specified temporal and spatial scales." GEF's support to



SIDS has evolved in the same way, as we seek to ultimately halt and reverse land degradation, restore degraded ecosystems, and sustainably manage resources. LD financing to SIDS in previous replenishments has included single country-based projects as well as support through a global initiative which is supporting 15 SIDS to identify LDN baselines and define national LDN targets.

## Protected Areas

GEF supports strengthening the fundamental aspects linked to the sustainability of protected area systems: long-term finance, ecosystem representation, and building capacity for effective management. GEF will continue to promote the participation of local communities, especially women, in the design, implementation, and management of protected area projects through frameworks such as indigenous and community conserved areas and traditional management systems. GEF will also promote protected area co-management between government and local communities or others where appropriate. The GEF supports strategies to reduce the negative impacts of tourism, fisheries, agriculture, and other natural resource use within and outside of protected areas as well as understanding the value of nature and incorporating it into decision-making processes.

## Invasive Alien Species

Invasive Alien Species (IAS) are the primary cause of species extinctions in island ecosystems. If left unchecked, IAS can degrade critical ecosystem services on islands, such as the provision of water and the productivity of coastal areas. The GEF will support the implementation of comprehensive prevention, early detection, control, and management, while emphasizing a risk management approach that focuses on the highest risk invasion pathways. The GEF welcomes regional cooperation and engagement of non-traditional partners on IAS that seek to overcome the challenges of limited resources and capacity for IAS. Targeted eradication will be supported in specific circumstances where proven, low-cost, and

effective techniques can result in the extermination of targeted IAS and the survival of globally significant species and/or ecosystems.

## Chemicals and Waste

Toxic chemicals and waste present acute challenges to the fragile ecosystems SIDS. There are several opportunities for SIDS to access GEF resources in GEF-7 to manage and reduce harmful chemicals and waste. As part of the GEF-7 strategy, under a specific program (program 3) of the Chemicals and Waste Focal Area, SIDS can access funding to implement sustainable, low and non-chemical development in their territories through regional and national approaches. This program will seek to address the sound management of chemicals and waste through strengthening the capacity of sub-national, national, and regional institutions and strengthening the enabling policy and regulatory framework in these countries. The program will provide support to the development of public-private partnerships specifically adapted to the circumstances of LDCs and SIDS to enable the sound management of chemicals and waste. SIDS can also access the funding for other applicable programs in the Chemicals and Waste Focal Area.

## Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency

Sustainable and affordable energy supplies, which consist of renewable energy (RE) development and energy efficacy (EE) promotion, are crucial to SIDS in their pathways to achieve SDG7 and the Paris Climate Agreement.

With continued technology advancement renewable energy — including wind, solar, hydroelectric, tidal, geothermal, and biomass - is a viable alternative to fossil fuel-based energy in SIDS, given the high import costs for fossil fuel. These renewable sources are also less vulnerable to the volatility of the international fossil fuel markets and bring added benefits of stimulating employment, local economic growth.

## The Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change Project (PACC)

THE REGIONAL PROJECT IS ENHANCING THE CAPACITY OF 14 PACIFIC SIDS TO ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE WATER RESOURCES, COASTAL MANAGEMENT, AND FOOD SECURITY SECTORS BY DEMONSTRATING ADAPTATION TECHNOLOGIES AND BY INTEGRATING CLIMATE CHANGE RISK AND ADAPTATION CONSIDERATIONS INTO RELEVANT DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND PLANS.

### SELECTED PACC PROJECT RESULTS



SUPPORTING 40,560 PEOPLE ACROSS 80 VILLAGES OR COMMUNITIES TO IMPLEMENT CONCRETE ADAPTATION MEASURES IN CROP PRODUCTION AND WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT;



STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITIES OF 160 GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS IN CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION;



DEVELOPING OVER 20 NATIONAL POLICIES, PLANS, OR FRAMEWORKS FOR ENHANCED ADAPTATION, AS WELL AS A REGIONAL GUIDE ON MAINSTREAMING ADAPTATION IN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING.

While RE is replacing fossil fuels to meet increasing energy demand in SIDS, EE will remain an immediate priority for sustainable and affordable energy use for SIDS due to its lower investment costs. Advanced energy efficient technologies, such as energy efficient lighting, air conditioning, appliances, and building envelopes are the most cost-effective options for commercial buildings and homes to reduce energy demand and cut greenhouse gas emissions in SIDS.

To facilitate transformational change in energy consumption systems for SIDS, GEF-7 offers two specific opportunities to support RE and EE investments: “De-centralized renewable power with energy storage” promotes RE innovation and technology transfer in SIDS; “Accelerating energy efficiency adoption” will improve energy efficiency, such as for the hotel industry, commercial buildings, and homes.

The GEF will continue to support SIDS to strengthen national energy security, develop clean energy policies, catalyze private investments, and facilitate the use of advanced RE and EE technologies in agriculture, urban and rural development, and with co-benefits to health, poverty eradication, gender equality, and women’s empowerment.

## SIDS and Climate Resilience

SIDS are among the most vulnerable countries in the world to adverse impacts of climate change, given that they are often geographically isolated, prone to natural hazards, and low-lying. Development tends to be centered along the coast, and dependent on climate-sensitive sectors such as fisheries, tourism, water resources, and agriculture.

The GEF adaptation program supports investment, policy, and capacity-building measures in a range of sectors vulnerable to climate risk, including agriculture, disaster risk management, urban and coastal management, natural resources management, and health. Through its two adaptation funds, the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), the GEF has built an active portfolio of projects across SIDS in Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

In GEF-7 (2018-2022), the LDCF and SCCF will continue to support adaptation priorities identified by countries to build near, medium, and long-term climate resilience, with special focus on: (i) Disaster preparedness and resilience including through early warning systems and ecosystem-based approaches; (ii) Innovative tools to manage risk such as risk insurance facilities, risk pooling, risk transfer, and supportive policy and capacities; and

(iii) ‘Win-win’ solutions that can deliver adaptation as well as global environmental benefits, such as clean and resilient energy, climate-resilient smallholder food systems, and integrated urban planning.

Building the capacity of the private sector to engage in adaptation, and mainstreaming gender considerations, are also important aspects of the program. Both the LDCF and SCCF support national as well as regional and global projects and programs.

## GEF-7 Resources Available for SIDS

The GEF is allocating US\$233 million in GEF-7 for countries within the GEF SIDS constituency as national allocations to address pressing sustainable development challenges. Beyond country allocations, there are other resources available via the GEF Trust Fund, such as from a special window for SIDS and LDCs under the Chemicals and Waste focal area, regional funds available under the International Waters focal area, resources via the Small Grants Program, and support for fulfilling convention obligations. In addition, LDCF/SCCF funds are available to SIDS.

### REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF GEF 7 STAR RESOURCES IN SIDS

