

Reporting Agency: UNDP/GEF Small Grants Programme
Country: Armenia



STANDARD PROGRESS REPORT

No. and title: The Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme
Reporting period: January 2009 – December 2009

I. PURPOSE

In 2009 the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP) will contribute to meet objectives related to poverty reduction and local empowerment as integral aspects of sustainable development and environmental protection. Conforming to the Country Programme Document strategic results and UNDAF Outcomes 4 and 1, the SGP will focus on supporting sound management of natural resources and contribute to reduction local poverty in accordance with the MDGs and PRSP.

The SGP will support grassroots initiatives in the focal areas of biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation, protection of international waters, prevention of land degradation and phasing out of persistent organic pollutants (POPs). The SGP is implemented in decentralized, democratic, transparent and country-driven manner.

The National Steering Committee (NSC), the central element of the programme, is composed of a national government representative, UNDP Country Office, the World Bank and civil society members representing NGOs, academia and science, with a majority of them coming from non-governmental sector.

II. RESOURCES

Country Operating Budget

Administrative support to the SGP country programme in Armenia is provided through Country Operating Budget (COB), which is aligned with the SGP operational year, i.e. 1 July to 30 June of consecutive year. The programme operational budget for July - December 2009 (the first six months of GEF-4 Operational Year 3) stands for US\$ 7,850.

UNDP TRAC Allocation

In October 2009 as per the budget revision the amount of US\$50,000 initially allocated to SGP was reprogrammed. Thus, out of US\$50,000 allocated US\$18,000.00 was spent and committed, and the leftover US\$32,000.00 was reallocated to the next year.

Grant Allocations to the Country Programme

Armenia as a new SGP participating country receives grant allocation from the Programme/GEF core resources. On May 15 2009, country programme in Armenia received its first grant allocation for the second year (Jul 08 - Jun 09) of SGP Operational Phase 4 (OP4) in the amount of US\$150,000. On July 7 2009 the subsequent US\$200,000 to the SGP Armenia for the third year of OP4 (Jul 09 – Jun 10), against expected US\$150,000 was allocated. As of November 2009, the SGP Armenia has committed in grants US\$206,784 out of US\$350,000.00.

SGP Portfolio co-financing involves the following organizations:

- Women in Europe for a Common Future

- WWF Armenia (World Wildlife Fund)
- Schweizer Vogelschutz SVS/BirdLife Switzerland
- "Lmbat" condominium of Artik town, Shirak marz; "Development Solutions Institute" For
- Armenia Inter-Church Charitable Round Table Foundation of the World Council of Churches
- World Vision Armenia
- ASSOGAL TOSCANA (EU)



Total co-financing of SGP portfolio stands for US\$403,284.00 of which US\$323,660.00 and US\$79,624.00 are cash and in-kind respectively.

III. RESULTS

On August 6, 2009 the second consecutive meeting of the SGP National Steering Committee was held. The members of the Committee reviewed seven applications submitted by NGOs/CBOs, which passed preliminary screening. As a result, five proposals were approved. The approved projects cover the following GEF focal areas: biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation, prevention of land degradation and elimination of POPs impact. All five projects commenced in September-October 2009 time period. The first interim financial and progress reporting by grantees and subsequent SGP team monitoring visits are expected in December 2009-January 2010.

Pursuant to RR's decision at Mid-term Outcome Board (July 2009), the recruitment of the SGP Assistant took place in September. Out of 47 submitted applications five candidates were shortlisted and invited for written test. Based on the results of the written test, three candidates were selected for the interview. The interview took place on September 18, 2009. Out of three candidates Ms. Svetlana Harutyunyan was selected for the position of the Programme Assistant.

The SGP team was settled in a new office in UNDP premises. The setup of the office is completed.

On October 26, 2009 the third subsequent meeting of the National Steering Committee took place. Out of three applications that passed preliminary screening, two proposals were approved with preconditions. The project proponents were given additional time and opportunity to amend/reformulate the proposals. Both projects successfully met the set preconditions and the activities commenced in November 2009. Being within the biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation GEF focal areas, these two projects supplemented the list of initially approved five SGP project.

The SGP team held regular consultation meetings with project proponent NGOs/CBOs, as well as provided reporting guidelines to current grantees.

The SGP National Coordinator conducted visits to the ongoing as well as to the potential project sites along with the NSC members. The NSC members are updated on the status of the ongoing projects on a regular basis.

IV. FUTURE WORK PLAN

The SGP Armenia will move ahead with grant making process which includes the following major steps:

- ✓ Commitment of leftover US\$143K of total GEF-4 grant allocation (US\$350K) in new grants by the subsequent NSC meeting(s) before July 2010 (end of GEF-4)
 - Continuous support to project proponents (NGOs/CBOs) through project concepts development and formulation (with NSC involvement)

- ✓ Oversight and monitoring of the ongoing SGP projects (with NSC involvement)
 - Continuous technical assistance and advise to the SGP on-going projects (with NSC involvement)
 - Review and acceptance of grantees' progress and financial reporting
 - Undertaking monitoring visits to the project sites and preparing successful monitoring record (with NSC involvement)
- ✓ Revision of the Country Programme Strategy (CPS) paper of the SGP Armenia in line with GEF-5 global strategic and national environment and development priorities
 - Conduction of a expanded stakeholder consultation meetings and an NSC workshop
 - Re-formulation of the CPS document and its subsequent approval by the NSC and CPMT
- ✓ Resource mobilization through partnership and co-funding opportunities from both traditional and nontraditional sources as follows:
 - Assessment of interests and priorities of international donor and development agencies and identification of opportunities for partnership and co-financing;
 - Attraction of private sector in SGP projects co-financing, also as a part of corporate social responsibility;
 - Involvement of Armenian Diaspora in SGP projects co-financing;
 - Mainstreaming SGP projects with UN agencies and GEF-funded larger projects;
 - Exploring opportunities for complementarity and cost sharing with state-funded projects and initiatives at local level.



V. FINANCIAL IMPLEMENTATION

SGP Resources	Budget (US\$)	Disbursed and committed (as of 26/11/09)	Delivery rates (%)	Comments
SGP Country Operating Budget for July-December 2009	7,850	4,174	53.1	Balances from the first 6 months (July – Dec 09) will be carried over to the second six months (Jan – Jun 10) of OP-4
Grant Allocation to SGP	175,000	206,784	118	The left over US\$143,216.00 (or 40.9% of total OP-4 grant allocation) is to be committed in grants till July 2010
UNDP TRAC allocation to SGP	18,000	18,000	100	Due to the budget revision the TRAC allocation was cut.