

# GEF Small Grants Programme in Trinidad and Tobago

## Information Brochure

### Community Action, Global Impact



**SGP** The GEF  
Small Grants  
Programme



Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.



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This brochure was written by Veni Apwann in collaboration with Asclepius Green, under Asclepius Green's Small Grant TRI/SGP/OP5/CORE/MF/12/06 *Sharing Lessons Learnt and Capacity Building in Project Implementation for GEF SGP Grantees*.

**For up to date information on the GEF SGP in Trinidad and Tobago, see:**

<http://www.undp.org.tt/GEF-SGP/index.html>

<http://www.facebook.com/GEFSGPTT>.

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# Acronyms



|      |                                      |
|------|--------------------------------------|
| CBO  | Community-Based Organisation         |
| CSO  | Civil Society Organisation           |
| CVFA | Caura Valley Farmers Association     |
| GEF  | Global Environment Facility          |
| NC   | National Coordinator                 |
| NGO  | Non-Governmental Organisation        |
| NSC  | National Steering Committee          |
| POP  | Persistent Organic Pollutant         |
| SGP  | Small Grants Programme               |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |



## A. What is the GEF Small Grants Programme and Why Does it Matter?



The GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP), implemented by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), is the main channel through which the Global Environment Facility or GEF (see Box 1) provides grant funding to civil society organisations (CSOs).

In tune with its tagline Community Action, Global Impact, the SGP provides financial and technical support to CSO projects that conserve and restore the environment while enhancing people's well-being and livelihoods at the community level. This is particularly important in the Caribbean where most of our livelihood activities revolve around natural resources (for example, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, craft production). Yet the very resources on which we depend for our livelihoods and well-being are rapidly being degraded. These include the rivers that provide our freshwater, the coral reefs that attract tourists and act as fish nurseries, and the forests we use for recreation and

that provide craft and building materials and contribute to mitigating climate change.

The SGP provides two kinds of grants: planning grants and full grants. Planning grants provide up to US\$5,000 and full grants up to US\$50,000 (though you will receive your grant in TT\$ at the prevailing rate of exchange). Planning grants can be very helpful in preparing for a bigger project or for groups that do not have much experience in proposal development and project management. For example, a planning grant could provide you with funding to conduct a thorough and participatory project identification process, to assess which capacities you already have and which you want to build, and to identify experts who can support you in specialist technical areas of project design or implementation (see also, Box 5: Tips and Lessons Learnt from Other Grantees).

### Box 1: What is the GEF?

The **GEF**, or **Global Environment Facility**, was established in 1992, the year that the Rio Earth Summit put the concept of sustainable development on the global agenda. It aims to create partnerships with international institutions, government agencies, civil society organisations and the private sector to address global environmental issues, while also supporting national sustainable development initiatives. Currently, the GEF is the largest public funder of projects to improve the global environment.

Since 1991, the GEF has achieved a strong track record of support to developing countries and countries with economies in transition, providing US\$10.5 billion in grants and leveraging \$51 billion in co-financing for over 2,700 projects in over 165 countries. Through its Small Grants Programme, the GEF has made more than 14,000 small grants directly to civil society organisations with a total value of US\$ 634 million.

Adapted from <http://www.thegef.org/gef/whatisgef>, downloaded on 23 October 2012.



## B. How is the GEF SGP Administered?

The SGP is implemented in Trinidad and Tobago (and many other countries) by the UNDP. The main point of contact is the National Coordinator (NC), who is assisted by a National Steering Committee (NSC), made up of representatives from UNDP and other international development agencies, government, private sector, academia and civil society. The NC and the NSC perform a variety of functions, which include:

- leading the participatory development of a country programme strategy that outlines the strategic direction and national priorities for the SGP over a four-year period. The current country programme strategy (2011-2014) can be downloaded from <http://www.undp.org.tt/GEF-SGP/documents/CPSTT2011-2014.pdf> and Box 2 highlights its main areas of focus;
- evaluating project proposals to determine whether they meet SGP criteria and whether technical support will be needed during project implementation;
- advising on project design and implementation;
- monitoring projects during the implementation phase;
- evaluating projects at key points during, and on completion of, the project;
- organising capacity building workshops and networking opportunities for actual and prospective grantees.



## Box 2: Desired Results of the Trinidad and Tobago Country Programme Strategy 2011-2014

- Demonstrated contribution from T&T SGP projects to the 5th GEF Operational Plan objectives (see Box 3).
- More SGP projects have been implemented in central and south Trinidad.
- More projects have been implemented in the following focal areas: climate change, international waters, chemicals and land degradation.
- Education and advocacy on environmental issues relating to the GEF SGP focal areas have increased.
- CBOs and NGOs in Trinidad and Tobago have stronger institutional capacity as well as improved skills in key areas such as project identification, proposal writing and project implementation.
- Improved linkages between and contribution from SGP project activities to the formulation and implementation of national policies.
- Improved linkages between SGP and other grant making and technical support agencies that focus on environmental conservation and sustainable livelihoods.
- Lessons learnt from improved monitoring and evaluation of SGP projects are documented and widely disseminated.



## C. What Projects are Eligible for SGP Funding?



There are five main ('focal') areas of project activity that the SGP funds:



**Chemicals**



**Climate Change**



**Biodiversity**



**International Waters**



**Land Degradation**



"No conservation activity could be successful without community engagement. It was the passion of the community people that made the project a success." Mark Webster, Project Manager, Guardian Life Wildlife Fund's project Community-Based Educational Outreach and Training Programme to protect the Pawi in Trinidad.

Projects can be national or local in scope but the SGP always places strong emphasis on the impact the project will have at the community level.

Projects are also expected to fall into one or more of the following categories:

- **Demonstration:** the project tests an approach that could then be adapted/adopted elsewhere if successful.
- **Capacity Development:** the project builds the capacity of the grantee or other stakeholders in the community or communities in which it works. Such capacity building can include building organisational capacity (e.g. leadership capacity, financial, administrative or human resource systems, conflict management) as well as capacities that relate directly to environmental conservation and sustainable livelihoods (e.g. skills in sustainable agriculture or fisheries, or building resilience to climate change).

### Box 3: Desired Results of the 5<sup>th</sup> GEF SGP Operational Phase (OP5)

#### Biodiversity

1. Improved sustainability of protected areas and indigenous and community conservation areas through community-based actions.
2. Mainstreamed biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in production landscapes, seascapes and sectors through community initiatives and action.

#### Climate Change

3. Development and transfer of low-greenhouse gas technologies at the community level.
4. Increased energy efficient, low-greenhouse gas transport at the community level.
5. Conservation and enhancement of carbon stocks through sustainable management and climate proofing of land use, land use change and forestry.

#### Land Degradation

6. Maintenance or improvement in the flow of agro-ecosystem and forest ecosystem services to sustain livelihoods of local communities.
7. Reduction of pressures at community level from competing land uses (in the wider landscapes).

#### International Waters

8. Sustainable transboundary water body management through community-based initiatives.

#### Chemicals

9. Phase out of POPs and chemicals of global concern at community level.

#### Capacity Building

10. Enhanced and strengthened capacities of CBOs and NGOs to engage in consultative processes, apply knowledge management to ensure adequate information flows, implement convention guidelines, and enhanced capacities of CBOs and NGOs to monitor and evaluate environmental impacts and trends.

- **Applied Research/Policy Analysis:** the project makes strategic use of innovative technologies or approaches in scientific or social research, focusing on outcomes that could shape or inform national policy.
- **Information/Networking/Policy Dialogue:** the project focuses on stakeholder networking and peer exchange to share information, knowledge, experiences or skills. It could also include using innovative approaches to shaping policy and building stakeholder capacity for effective participation in policy processes.

Finally, projects are also expected to contribute to achieving the Country Programme Strategy (see Box 2 above) and to the desired results of

the 5th GEF SGP Operational Phase (see Box 3). OP5 has a particular focus on projects that target women, indigenous groups, farmers and youth but other target beneficiaries are also acceptable.

The SGP office will work with you to ensure that your project ideas match all the requirements and to help you determine which categories the project best fits into. So it makes sense to contact the National Coordinator as early as possible in your proposal development.

To give you a better idea of the wide range of projects the SGP has funded, Box 4 provides a brief overview of projects that have been undertaken or are currently underway in Trinidad and Tobago under the various focal areas.

## Box 4: Snapshots of Some Recent and Ongoing Projects in Trinidad and Tobago



### BIODIVERSITY

#### Community-Based Educational Outreach and Training Programme to protect the Pawi in Trinidad

This capacity building project, coordinated by the Guardian Life Wildlife Fund, aims to educate key stakeholders, including hunters and the local communities in areas in which the Pawi (also known as Piping Guan or pipile pipile) has been sighted, about the threatened status of this species and its national importance and value to conservation. Building and maintaining these relationships, and encouraging education and interest in the Pawi is intended to lay the foundation for ecotourism and sustainable livelihoods based around the Pawi and its habitat. The main communities involved are Blanchisseuse, Brasso Seco, Brasso Tamana, Grande Riviere, Guayaguayare, Matelot, Matura and Moruga.



#### Belle Garden Wetland, Tobago - Sustainable Community Based Wetland Assessment for the Improvement of Conservation and Educational Efforts

Environment Tobago implemented a pilot programme to map and continuously monitor the condition of the Belle Garden Wetland in Tobago, using a community-based approach. Project staff and contracted experts trained and supported 11 community members (six females and five males) from the Belle Garden and surrounding communities in conducting field assessments, raising community awareness and identifying sustainable uses of the wetland resources. The community members were also trained in species identification, designing and managing tours, eco-tour guiding, GPS systems, and monitoring and evaluating the wetland and its flora and fauna. By the end of the project, the local

trainees had established their own community-based organisation, the Belle Garden Wetland Association.

**"Motivation and pride are keys to project success and achieved by recognition by your community." Percival Melville, Public Relations Officer, Belle Gardens Wetlands Association**



## **CLIMATE CHANGE**

### **Community Action to Build Climate Change Resilience in Trinidad and Tobago**

The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) is implementing this demonstration project, in conjunction with stakeholders in Caura, to help the community to adapt to the impacts of climate change through:

- increased knowledge and understanding of the impacts of climate change; and
- community action to develop and implement resilience-building strategies.



Community capacity building included a knowledge sharing workshop, building skills in participatory video, and development of a resilience-building plan. The documentation of the results of implementing the plan and analysis of lessons learned are intended to support the demonstration aspect of the project, so that similar approaches can be adopted/adapted in other communities.

**"Every time I come to Caura I learn something new; I congratulate the people of this community on their willingness to learn and their willingness to see about their community. This production on climate change and global warming is a serious thing and I am glad there are communities like this treating with this as a serious issue and using something that can be shared with other communities and I would want to share this resource in other areas in which I work." Local Councillor Prakash Bharath**



## **INTERNATIONAL WATERS**

### **Tobago Coastal Ecosystem Mapping Project**

This project, led by the Buccoo Reef Trust, in partnership with the Tobago House of Assembly, Coral Cay Conservation and the Youth for Environmental Awareness of Habitats group, collected baseline data on the status of the coral reef, mangrove and seagrass ecosystems around the island of Tobago. The goal was to provide relevant information for effective policy-making and management of coastal resources. The project featured strong community participation, education and

capacity-building components to assure continuity of interest and participation in the conservation of Tobago's marine ecosystems.



## **LAND DEGRADATION**

### **Issues of Sustainable Development for Maracas Valley, Trinidad And Tobago**

In response to the community's concerns about the type of development taking place in the Maracas Valley, the Maracas Valley Action Committee undertook a research and information/networking/policy dialogue project designed to inform future planning and development. They undertook a number of activities and studies including:

- a series of community and wider stakeholder consultations;
- a socio-economic study to determine population densities and movements during the study period;
- a land use study to monitor the changes in land use and land capability; and
- an environmental study to evaluate the effect of changes in land use patterns.

The project documented significant negative impacts on the environment from construction, quarrying and unsustainable farming practices and came up with a number of recommendations for government and local stakeholders.



### **Improving Waste Management Practices of Hotels, Farmers and Schools in Tobago**



The Travel Foundation of Tobago, a network of government, private sector, CSO and research interests in Tobago tourism, is implementing a project designed to improve the waste management practices of hotels, farmers and schools in Tobago. It is promoting sustainable agriculture practices, and particularly improved agricultural waste practices and organic methods of crop production. The project is also promoting composting in order to reduce the volume of organic matter that is deposited in Tobago's only landfill at Studley Park.



## CHEMICALS

### **Caura Valley Community Based Integrated Management Initiative: Decreasing the Use of Persistent Organic Pollutants in the Caura Valley**

The Caura Valley Farmers Association (CVFA) designed this project to promote environmentally friendly methods for crop protection and production while empowering local farmers by enhancing their literacy. Research focused on eliminating the use of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) and highly and moderately hazardous pesticides (WHO class 1b and II). CVFA catalysed implementation of improved crop protection and production practices through polyculture field trials, research into soil improvement techniques and decreased pesticide use, together with sensitisation workshops for both farmers and consumers. The Caura farmers also networked locally, regionally and internationally to promote the exchange of information on ecological crop management initiatives. Capacity building included basic, numeric and computer literacy courses, as well as discussions and lectures on polyculture and farming practices, including the integration of indigenous cultural practices. The result has been the development of an alternative eco-friendly crop management strategy with increased profitability and reduced dependency on imported resources.



## D. Who Can Access the Grants?

Any civil society organisation (CSO) in Trinidad and Tobago can apply for a grant, provided it is either registered as a non-profit company under the 1995 Companies Act or has a letter of registration from a government ministry, such as Ministry of Community Development or Ministry of

Sports. While it may not be feasible for start-up groups, registration as a non-profit company is the better option as it gives you legal standing and enables you, after being registered for two years, to apply to the Board of Inland Revenue for charitable status. Legal registration and char-

## Definition of Civil Society Organisation

SGP does not specifically state what a CSO is but the following definition from the World Bank provides some guidance.

“The term civil society refers to the wide array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) therefore refer to a wide of array of organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labor unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations”. <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/CSO/0,,contentMDK:20101499~menuPK:244752~pagePK:220503~piPK:220476~theSitePK:228717,00.html>.

itable status make you more attractive to grant-makers, and especially private sector funders.

When the NC and NSC receive your application, they will want to check that your organisation has the capacity to implement the project. These are some of the things they will want to know and that you should consider yourself before sending in a proposal.

## Organisational capacity

- a) How long has the organisation been in existence?
- b) Does it have a clear vision and mission?
- c) Does it have a properly constituted Board or Management Committee that meets regularly?
- d) Does it have sound financial and administrative record-keeping and reporting systems?
- e) Can it provide accounts, preferably audited accounts, for the past two years?

## Project capacity

- a) Has the organisation successfully implemented projects on a similar scale in the past?
- b) Does the organisation possess the necessary skills to implement the project? If not, has it identified external experts that it can draw on for support?
- c) Does it have legal ownership or access to the land, buildings and equipment on which the project depends?
- d) Does the budget look realistic? Can the organisation provide backup information to justify the proposed expenditures?

They will also want to know specific things about the project objectives and these are outlined under **Section F. How will your proposal be evaluated?**

“We look for defined leadership and we look to see if the organisation has a clear leadership and group structure, what is the stage of the NGO’s development or maturity, what is their ability to management of conflict? We’ve seen in the past that projects can fail if the group does not know how to iron-out internal differences that arise. And very important we look at their ability to demonstrate financial accountability and reporting.” Grace Talma, Chair, SGP National Steering Committee



## E. How Do You Access a Grant?

“You have to be in the community, don’t be afraid to walk and talk.” Glenda Gonzales, Project Co-ordinator, The St. James Empowerment Foundation

The formal steps in accessing an SGP grant are to complete an SGP Project Concept Form and then, if this is accepted, a Full SGP Proposal Template. However, we recommend that you take the following steps to avoid unnecessary effort and to reduce the possibility of disappointment.

1. Make sure that your project idea responds to a genuine need in your community that fits into one of the SGP focal areas. This is best done by conducting a participatory needs assessment with other key stakeholders, including the proposed beneficiaries.
2. Once you have identified in broad terms the project that you want to do (particularly the objectives, activities and desired results), arrange a meeting with the NC to discuss your ideas. S/he will advise you whether you meet the basic criteria for a grant (see Sections D above and F below). S/he will also provide you with the current versions of the application forms.

S/he may recommend that you start with a planning grant so that you can build additional capacity or stakeholder buy-in. But

you may anyway want to look at the full grant proposal template as it provides some helpful guidelines, tips and explanations on proposal writing that may help you even at the concept note or planning grant stage.

3. Complete the project concept form and submit it to the NC, who will review it, discuss it with the Technical Committee, and either recommend it to the NSC for review and approval or suggest further changes before doing so.
4. Once the NSC has approved the concept note, you will be invited to develop your ideas into a full proposal or planning grant application. This goes through the same process of being reviewed first by the NC and the Technical Committee and then by the NSC. You will usually be invited to an NSC meeting to make a presentation on the project and answer any questions NSC members may have.
5. After reviewing the proposal, the NSC will accept the proposal or return it to you with a request that further work be done to refine the project ideas.
6. A few weeks after the proposal is accepted, you will receive your first grant payment. Grants are usually paid in three or four instalments, corresponding to key project stages or deliverables.

“One of the things I found that was very heartening was the people at the GEF Small Grants Programme assisted us throughout the proposal preparation stage. It’s not a standoffish kind of programme. It is accessible and there are people there who are willing to give of their time, their expertise and their knowledge to help any community go forward.” Suyen Carrera, Public Relations Officer of the Caura Valley Village Council.



## F. How Will Your Proposal be Evaluated?



The NSC's evaluation checklist may vary from time to time but is likely to including the following considerations:

1. Does the project clearly contribute to one or more of the GEF SGP focal areas?
2. Will the project contribute to the desired outcomes of the current Country Programme Strategy?
3. Does the project address a priority need in the community?
4. Does it target any of the SGP's priority beneficiaries – women, indigenous groups, farmers and youth.
5. Is there evidence of stakeholder and beneficiary involvement in identifying the need and buy-in for the project?
6. Will the project contribute to the development or improvement of sustainable livelihoods in the community?
7. Is the project in line with the organisation's vision and mission?
8. Will the project contribute to building the capacity of the grantee organisation and/or the community/beneficiaries?
9. Who will benefit from the project? For example, will it benefit those marginalised by poverty, gender, age, disability etc?
10. Are the objectives clearly stated and SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timebound)?
11. Are the results (outputs, outcomes and impacts) clearly stated and measurable?
12. Are the proposed activities likely to achieve these objectives and results?
13. Are the proposed activities realistic within the proposed timeframe and budget?
14. Does the budget look realistic and have the in-kind and/or co-financing requirements been met?
15. Is there a clear monitoring and evaluation plan and approach?
16. Is it clear who will lead the project, who are the other members of the project team, and how responsibilities will be divided?
17. Does the project team have all the necessary competencies to implement the project effectively?
18. Is the project likely to generate any conflict within the organisation or the community, and if so, has conflict management been factored into the project design?
19. Are the benefits from and results of the project likely to be sustainable once the project is over?
20. Is the project innovative? If successful, could it be adapted/adopted in other communities?

## Box 5: Tips and Lessons Learnt from Other Grantees

1. Do not be put off by some of the technical language used in SGP documents; consult the NC if there is something you don't understand. Like you, s/he wants to see effective and relevant projects implemented in your community!
2. Consider using a planning grant to clarify your project ideas and build the stakeholder buy-in and capacity that will be needed to implement the full project.
3. Writing your own project proposals is the best way to ensure you understand what the project will do and how. If you don't have proposal writing skills, use the planning grant to build them. If you do ask an outside expert to write all or some of the proposal, make sure that you understand exactly what this is committing you to. Proposals written in clear, straightforward language are easier for everyone to understand!
4. Do not tackle a project that is much bigger than anything you have done before unless you have acquired new people and skills in the organisation. It is much better to do something well on a smaller scale than to fail on something big. This will build everyone's confidence in the organisation and prepare you for successful bigger projects later on.
5. Similarly, don't be tempted to apply for the full US\$50,000 just because it is available. Budget carefully what your project really needs and apply for that amount. Include a contingency fund to cover the unexpected (currently SGP allows up to 5% of the total for contingency).
6. Consider the grant as an opportunity for organisational strengthening and building key technical and management skills.
7. Consider whether your project is likely to generate or worsen existing conflicts, either within your organisation or the community. New money coming into organisations and communities can create rumours and rifts, and many environmental issues inherently involve conflicts and tradeoffs. If conflict is a possibility, factor into your project some time and money for conflict management activities.
8. Do not expect to be able to start implementing your project immediately. There are several steps in the application process (see Section E) and the timeframe from initial discussion of your idea to approval of a full project grant and receipt of initial funding is generally between 2 and 6 months.

### Photo credits:

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