

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) Trust Fund

About the GEF Trust Fund

The GEF Trust Fund is one of the three funds administered by the Global Environment Facility. The Global Environment Facility was established in October 1991 as a pilot program in the World Bank to assist in the protection of the global environment and to promote environmental sustainable development. The GEF would provide new and additional grants and concessional funding to cover the "incremental" or additional costs associated with transforming a project with national benefits into one with global environmental benefits. The UNDP, UNEP and World Bank were the three initial implementing partners. In 1994, the GEF was restructured and moved out of the World Bank system to become a permanent, separate institution. Since 1994, the World Bank has served as the Trustee of the GEF Trust Fund and has provided administrative services.

Initially, the GEF was selected to serve as financial mechanism for the following international conventions: the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (1992) and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992). Later, it also became the financial mechanism for the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (2001) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (2003).

Replenishment of the Trust Fund takes place every four years based on donor pledges that are funded over a four-year period. The Trust Fund has so far received a total of \$10,885 billion from its 39 donors. The GEF funds a broad array of project types that vary depending on the scale of GEF resources, the project needs and the issue addressed.

Areas of work

GEF funds are available for activities in the following seven focal areas:

- Biodiversity
- Climate change
- International waters
- Land degradation
- Sustainable forest management
- Ozone layer depletion
- Persistent organic pollutants

Eligible countries

A country is an eligible recipient of GEF grants if it is eligible to borrow from the World Bank (IBRD and/or IDA) or if it is an eligible recipient of UNDP technical assistance through its country Indicative Planning Figure (IPF). Further, the country should meet the eligibility criteria established by the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the relevant convention.

The following UNECE countries are eligible for funding: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

Project selection criteria

Any eligible individual or group may propose a project. However, to be taken into consideration, a project proposal has to fulfill the following criteria:

- It is undertaken in an eligible country.
- It is consistent with national priorities and programs.
- It addresses one or more of the GEF Focal Areas, improving the global environment or advancing the prospect of reducing risks to it.
- It is consistent with the GEF operational strategy.
- It seeks GEF financing only for the agreed-on incremental costs on measures to achieve global environmental benefits.
- It involves the public in project design and implementation.
- It is endorsed by the government of the country in which it will be implemented.

Each of the GEF member countries has designated an officer responsible for GEF activities, known as the GEF Operational Focal Point, who plays a key role in assuring that projects are aligned to meet the needs and priorities of the respective country.

How to apply

Before drafting a project proposal, the applicant should contact the relevant Country Operational Focal Point and verify that the proposal complies with the selection criteria. Then the GEF Agencies will assist the eligible applicants in the development, implementation, and management of GEF projects. They are the channel between countries and the GEF for the project approval process and participate in GEF governance as well as in the development of GEF policies and programs. They are responsible for the creation of the project proposals and the managing of GEF projects. These agencies include the following organizations: Asian Development Bank, African Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, FAO, Inter-American Development Bank, International Fund for Agricultural Development, UNDP, UNEP, UNIDO and the World Bank.

Once the preparatory steps are taken, the proponent should develop the Project Identification Form (PIF), in close coordination with the GEF Agency and following the internal project cycle procedures. Once the PIF is ready, the Agency will submit it to the GEF Secretariat for approval.

For more information, please visit the GEF website <http://www.thegef.org/gef/>

Contact

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