



**Regulation on organization and functioning
of the National Steering Committee**

**GEF Small Grants Programme
in Moldova**

January 2015

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ACRONYMS

CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CO	Country Office
CPMT	Central Programme Management Team
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
GEF	Global Environment Facility
NC	National Coordinator
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSC	National Steering Committee
RR	Resident Representative
SGP	Small Grants Programme
TAG	Technical Advisory Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services

1. General provisions

1.1. According to the mandate of the operational structure of GEF SGP, National Steering Committee (NSC) is the main country level body responsible for overall guidance and direction of the country Programme, projects selection and technical quality as according to GEF and SGP criteria and national GEF SGP strategy.

2. National Steering Committee Functions

2.1. NSC ensures implementation of GEF SGP in Moldova in a professional, non-preferential, transparent and efficient way. NSC members provide assistance on *voluntary* basis, and are:

- Members of non-governmental and community based organizations – the number of NSC members representing NGOs and CBOs should be at least 50.00% from the total number of NSC members. However, the presence of NGOs/CBOs network leaders or coordinators within NSC is not allowed due to potential conflict of interests.
- Scientists and representatives of relevant public institutions (academia, scientific institutions, universities, ministries, agencies etc.),
- Independent experts,.
- The UNDP Country Office and donors representatives.

2.2 Only the Ministry of Environment and UNDP CO are institutional members of the NSC, meaning the representatives of these two organizations will remain within the NSC permanently. To ensure program consistency and institutional memory, it is recommended the Ministry of Environment and UNDP CO designate the same staff member to attend the NSC meetings. Under unusual situation when alternate members attend the meetings, they should be given full power to make decisions on behalf of their respective agencies during the meetings.

2.3 The NSC members, except representatives of UNDP CO and Ministry of Environment, are acting as NSC members on individual capacity and *are not allowed to designate alternate members*.

2.4. The representatives from governmental agencies should serve as NSC members on their individual capacity, and should be able to make decisions during the NSC meetings without consulting with their respective Ministries.

2.5. In this way, NSC has the following functions and responsibilities:

1. Adaptation of GEF global policies and criteria to country circumstances, with support of SGP country team;
2. Approval, update, monitoring and evaluation of the GEF SGP National Strategy, using support of SGP country team;
3. Approval of operational rules for NSC;
4. Approval of criteria and procedures for selection of the project proposals;
5. Review of the annual work plan proposed by the National Coordinator;
6. Approval, according to established criteria and procedures of the project proposals based on its quality;
7. Support the Programme in raising co-financing either on project by project basis or for the Country Programme as a whole;
8. Ensures the technical and substantive content of SGP grants, and the administrative and financial capacity, either actual or potential;
9. Provide technical assistance and advice to SGP projects and NGO/CBO project

proponents;

10. The NSC, with the NC, are responsible for ensuring the procedures for project review and approval are participatory, democratic, impartial, and transparent, as well as all other aspects of Programme implementation at the country level are in accordance with the SGP Project Document for the relevant Operational Phase

11. Monitoring of the implementation of the approved projects, where and when necessary; NSC members are encouraged to actively participate in site visits, as part of ongoing monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of activities associated with the SGP and its projects;

12. Request amendments and/or halt of the projects according Monitoring and Evaluation findings, when and where necessary;

13. Support the Programme in linking its positive results, lessons learned, experiences and best practices to policy development in the relevant field (for example, environmental protections, rural development, etc.) and in improving development approaches and procedures at local and country levels.

14. Provide “Grantmakers+” functions, such as strategic guidance, policy directions, networking, advocacy and resources mobilization to support the SGP country program;

15. Support the promotion of GEF SGP to assure its visibility on national level, contribution to extensions of its projects in the country, these being extended in regional/national projects, replicated on national level.

2.6 Neither the NSC nor its individual members as Programme volunteers, hold any legal or fiduciary responsibility for the SGP or its activities.

3. Mandate and NSC appointment

3.1. The selection of NSC members is done by National Coordinator, in consultation with UNDP Resident Representative. NSC members should have an abiding interest and commitment for working with communities and share a vision of what sustainable development and "*thinking globally, acting locally*" might mean in terms of linking the GEF focal areas with community needs and concerns. NSC non-governmental members must have high credibility and wide experience working with local communities and CSOs in the country and thus can represent their needs and interests in committee discussions. Strong, experienced, and technically competent civil society representation in the NSC is crucial as a means of keeping the SGP responsive to its mandate to work with CSOs and CBOs. These members must also have the requisite knowledge about GEF Focal Areas and/or specific themes such as gender, sustainable livelihoods, and knowledge management. Governmental and donor agency members should hold positions relevant to the work of the SGP and at a level where they could make decisions on behalf of their agencies. NSC members overall must be able and willing to discuss constructively and develop consensus decisions. The UNDP RR provides the appointment letters on behalf of the SGP.

3.2. The UNDP Resident Representative or his/her delegate, usually the UNDP Cluster Leader on Sustainable Development or Program Analyst, represents the UNDP in the NSC.

3.3. Upon accepting appointment to the NSC, members commit themselves to ensure complete objectivity and transparency of the NSC, both in fact and in appearance. The NSC must avoid the appearance of self-dealing, conflict of interest, or undue influence (in this way, NSC members sign the Declaration on Conflict of Interest, Declaration of confidentiality and impartiality– Annex 1).

3.4. The NSC members are assigned with a 2-year mandate, each member having the right to hold this function of not more than 2 consecutive mandates. The mandate of the NSC members can be extended through an official letter of appointment from UNDP Resident Representative (subject of ratification by the GEF SGP Global Manager).

3.5. In case if a member fails to complete the full term of office, a new member shall be appointed by UNDP Resident Representative (subject to ratification by the GEF SGP Global Manager).

3.6 In order to avoid change of all NSC members at the same time, rotation of NSC members will be agreed in consultations between the NC, the SGP Global Manager and the UNDP Resident Representative.

3.7 In case if the need of rotation of NSC members within NSC will be identified, the NC will propose a calendar of rotation following the rules:

- The representatives of UNDP CO and Ministry of Environment cannot be rotated;
- number of active NSC members representing NGOs and CBOs should be more than 50.00% from the total number of NSC members;
- The total number of acting NSC members should be the same as established by Regulation;

3.8 After the rotation calendar will be agreed, the NC will inform the NSC members on the decision.

4. Technical Advisory Group

4.1. The NSC may also constitute **Technical Advisory Groups (TAGs)** with a pool of voluntary experts on call to serve as a technical sub-committee, for review of proposals and in relation to specific areas of programming and partnership development. The TAG can also be tasked to provide specific technical guidance in specialized areas of work, such as carbon measurement, payments for ecosystem services, marketing and certification of products, transboundary diagnostic analysis, and other relevant fields. In addition, TAGs may also be formed in response to donor and co-financing requirements mobilized for the SGP country Programme.

4.2. TAG members will be proposed by NC in consultation with UNDP CO and endorsed by the NSC. TAG members may be added on *ad hoc* basis and shall be endorsed by NSC.

4.3 TAG members serve according to functions and responsibilities foreseen in **Terms of Reference for TAG members.**

4.4 Evaluation of project proposals by TAG member is done on request of NC or NSC. The NC chooses the TAG member for evaluation based on his/her professional experience. Evaluation of project proposal is done in reasonable time, but not more than 5 working days per project proposal.

5. Meetings and Rules of Order

5.1. NSC is meeting at least three times a year or on needed basis, to select and approve project proposals, and if there are, at least three project proposals, and review or discuss programming directions and policies as well as other strategic, management and operational issues, as

appropriately. The *ad-hoc* NSC meetings will take place whenever it is necessary, with at least 3 days advance notice for NSC members.

5.2. Notice on next NSC meeting will be sent in writing to NSC members, at least seven calendar days in advance. The invitation to NSC meeting will include agenda, and the electronic version of project proposals that will be examined.

5.3. In case of receiving a project proposal whose implementation depends on season conditions, non-typical projects or other urgent issues, NC will inform on the meeting 5 calendar days in advance.

5.3. Communication and the referring NSC documentation will be done in official languages of the country, or in English.

5.4. A NSC meeting can take place if at least 50.00% from the total number of NSC members are present or have sent their written opinion on the issues, which require voting, and/or evaluation forms for the received projects. If this criterion is not fulfilled, a new date for the NSC meeting is proposed. When individual NSC members cannot join NSC meetings, they forego the right to participate in decision-making process during the meetings.

5.5. Members of the NSC **serve on a voluntary basis**, without any financial compensation.

5.6. Reimbursement of expenses such as **travel** to project sites and NSC meetings will be provided. Reimbursement of expenses such as travel should be approved by the NC prior to the actual expenditure and will follow standard SGP procedures, not overcoming the travel and daily subsistence provisions of the Moldovan Legislation¹. Public transport should be used as a mean of transportation, when and where possible:

(1) Full reimbursement of the costs for public transport means (bus and/or train).

If not, and when approved by the NC, the following reimbursement is applicable:

(2) Using car (automobile) for travel: the price of the gasoline used x kilometers traveled to and from the venue. The NC will provide forms.

(3) If there is an overnight stay, when approved by the NC, the costs for full accommodation in a hotel of max “B category” will be covered. Only original stamped and signed bills (invoices) are valid, also signed by the NSC member submitting them.

5.7. The NSC meetings are chaired by **Chairperson** from among its regular members. Neither the UNDP Resident Representative nor his/her delegate may serve as the Chair. The Chair presides at NSC meetings in accordance with the agreed and adopted **NSC Rules of Order**, and facilitates the process of consensus building in NSC deliberations.

5.8. The NSC operates based on consensus rather than formal voting. Specific procedures and rules of order for NSC deliberations, including voting procedures and quorum requirements, should be proposed by the NC and NSC members and adopted by the NSC prior to any substantive deliberations or determinations.

5.9. NSC members’ associated NGOs or CBOs are not eligible to receive SGP grants. Exemption of this rule can be granted by the Global Manager under exceptional basis. NC is responsible to get prior approval from the Global Manager before presenting the NSC members’ associated

¹ Governanemental Decision nr.10 dated from 05.01.2012 on approval of Regulation on delegation of employees from the Republic of Moldova. The full text of the legal document can be found by following the link <http://lex.justice.md/md/341850/>

proposals for NSC review. During the review, the associated NSC members are not allowed to participate in the review or approval of any of the projects in which that member, the organization with which that member is associated, has an interest. In such cases, the member should announce his potential conflict of interest and shall be excused from both the discussion and decision on the project.

5.10 As a matter of principle, the NSC (and the SGP as a whole) must operate in as transparent manner as possible. The NC should maintain an official record of each NSC meeting, which is available to the public. However, in order to protect NSC members from external pressures, neither the identities of NSC members, nor the attributed statements of NSC members during deliberations, shall be disclosed.

5.11. Being invited by at least two NSC members, GEF SGP TAG experts can participate at the NSC meeting, but having an advisory role.

5.12. Regular meetings of the NSC ordinarily include the following agenda items:

- Report on status and progress of the country and global SGP;
- Status reports and updates on projects and activities in implementation;
- Financial report on execution of grant allocation;
- Presentation of project proposals for consideration

5.13. The NSC members who cannot participate in the following NSC meeting can send their opinions, evaluation forms and comments on project proposals to National Coordinator by email. NC will communicate this information to meeting participants during the NSC meeting. Opinions received after the NSC meeting will not be taken into consideration.

5.14. In cases when the NSC decides to evaluate a project proposal(s) by email, and a consensus on the respective proposal cannot be reached the respective project will be discussed during the following NSC meeting.

5.15. In cases when two NSC members' score a project proposal with a difference of 25 p., and a consensus on the respective proposal cannot be reached the respective project will be discussed during the following NSC meeting.

5.16. The minutes of the meetings are prepared in the official language of the Republic of Moldova by NC. The list of approved projects signed by all members present in the meeting is prepared in English.

5.17. The list of approved projects should include the budget amounts approved for each project and be sent to UNOPS within 1 working day after the NSC meeting.

5.18. The project approval sheet (including a list of projects with information of approval, rejection or further information requested) should be signed on site during the meeting. **The Minutes should be ready within 15 days following the related NSC Meeting.** The minutes should remain confidential and should not be disclosed to applicants nor the public.

5.19. The information of the selected Project Proposals will be posted on the SGP Moldova internet site. More detailed evaluation information is to be considered confidential and must not be disclosed by the NSC members to the applicants nor to the public.

5.20. The NSC should review and sign-off on project proposals that are reformulated or adjusted after being provisionally approved by the NSC, prior to submitting them to the UNDP Resident Representative for Memorandum of Agreement signature.

5.21. Documentation on all NSC meetings will be kept on file in GEF SGP Office by NC. The mee copy of signed project approval sheet will be kept in UNDP CO.

6. Project Concepts

6.1. Project concepts are preliminary presentation of a project idea, which NGOs would like to develop. The description of the project idea should not exceed 1-2 pages. These can be sent by email, fax or mail to GEF SGP Office in Moldova. NC will analyze if the project concept fits in GEF SGP requirements and will inform the requestor on recommendations for elaboration of the project proposal.

6.2. When reviewing the project concept NC can request technical expertise from one or two members of TAG.

6.3. The received project concepts will be registered in the IN/OUT Register of GEF SGP, on the date when NC received these through mail, courier, e-mail or fax. The review process of the project concept will last not more than 20 calendar days from the date when these were received.

6.4. When submitting a project concept, the proponent can request a grant for elaboration of the project proposal. The proponent will explain in a clear way the activities, which will be implemented, and the responsibilities of the stakeholders.

7. Planning Grants: grants for elaboration of the project proposal

7.1. **Grants for elaboration of the project proposal** (planning grants) are a useful tool for the potential beneficiaries who would like to prepare a project proposal based on approved project concept by NSC, but do not experience or have reduced capacities to prepare a competitive project proposal.

7.2. The maximum value of a planning grant is 2.000 USD. Types of activities that can be funded (the list is not exhaustive):

- Organization of seminars with participation of community members and of a specialized moderator in order to prepare the project proposal in a more parcipatory way;
- Technical assistance in project proposal elaboration, evaluation and baseline study, establishing the relevant indicators, preparing the monitoring and evaluation plan.

7.3. **Planning grants** are approved by NSC, taking into consideration the specifics and complexity of the proposed project (as described in the approved project concept). The proponent will explain in a clear way the activities, which will be implemented, and the responsibilities of the stakeholders.

8. Project proposals. Decision making and evaluation process

8.1. **Evaluation of the project proposals** – the first step in the evaluation process is verification of conformity with the general rules of the GEF SGP, such as:

- project should be relevant to one or several of the GEF focal areas,
- The project should reflect the needs of the community or communities and/or stakeholders that would be involved.
- the project has to reach the marginalized poor and vulnerable communities, especially when there are no other donors present, and where development baseline conditions have not been met,
- the project should reflect the needs of GEF SGP Country Program Strategy,
- each project proposal has to include a Monitoring and Evaluation work-plan,
- The salaries should not be paid by GEF SGP grant;
- Share of co-financing, has to be 50%, or as decided by the NSC. The general requirement for GEF SGP is to receive co-financing in proportion of US\$ 1:1 for each granted US dollar;
- Grant amount for a project should not be more than US\$ 50 000. In special cases, grants for “strategic projects” that consolidate efforts of several communities and CSOs could be provided as a maximum of US\$ 150 000. Strategic projects will have to be pre-screened by the Central Program Management Team before being presented to NSC.
- No grantee can receive funds exceeding US\$ 50 000 in one Operational Phase.
- No payments should be foreseen to members of the CSO or family members of the president of the CSO from the GEF SGP funds. These payments can be foreseen from co-financing.

8.2. After receipt of the project proposals, NC can request additional information and documentation. The proponent has to send the additional information in not more than 5 days after the NC’s request.

8.3. Each NSC member will fill in an evaluation form for each of the evaluated project proposal. In the evaluation form, the NSC members will include all the comments to the respective project proposal. The NSC members prior to the NSC meeting or during the respective NSC meeting will present the signed and dated evaluation forms.

8.4. The NSC approves the structure of the evaluation form. It consists of a list of criteria, according to which the project proposal is evaluated. Each criteria can be evaluated through scoring from the minimum 0 points to the maximum as established in the form. The final scoring of the project proposal is a consensus core as agreed by the NSC members during the NSC meetings. The project proposal, which will score with at least 70% from the total maximum of points, will be recommended to receive the grant.

8.5. The evaluation process of project proposal will last not more than 6 weeks from the date of receipt.

9. Final dispositions

9.1. Venue of the NSC meetings will be UNDP Country Office. In case of different venue location, the NC will inform in advance the NSC.

9.2. The main document which regulates the activity of the NSC is this regulation. The Regulation was approved by the NSC in November 2013 and updated on January 2015 following the GEF SGP Mission from November 2014.

9.3. The regulation can be updated by NC based on decision of NSC or on recommendation of Global GEF SGP. The Regulation has to be updated within 1 month after the NSC decision or Global GEF SGP recommendation.

9.4. The NSC members should inform the NC on the planned long-term absence, changes of posts and contact data.

10. Interpretation of this document and conflict resolution

10.1. When there are disputes about specific stipulations and implications of this TOR among NSC members and stakeholders, the final interpretation right resides with the SGP Global Manager and UNDP Resident Representative in Moldova.

ANNEX 1. DECLARATION ON THE CONFLICT OF INTEREST – DECLARATION OF CONFIDENTIALITY AND IMPARTIALITY

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME (GEF SGP)
MOLDOVA

NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE (NSC)

DECLARATION ON THE CONFLICT OF INTEREST – DECLARATION OF CONFIDENTIALITY AND IMPARTIALITY

I, member of the National Steering Committee (NSC), hereby declare that I will fulfill all my obligations as a voluntary member of the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme (GEF SGP) in Moldova to the best of my ability and by the highest standard of conduct. I will serve as a fair and impartial advisor at all times, and refrain from participating in any decisions where there may be a potential conflict of interest between my obligations to The GEF SGP NSC and to my personal and/or professional interests. I am aware of the provisions set in, and I will follow the GEF SGP Operational Guidelines, “Guidelines, Criteria and Forms for Project concepts and Project proposals”, and the GEF SGP Moldova Regulation on organization and functioning for the NSC. Specifically, I will abide by the following codes of ethics:

- Neither the NGO with which I am associated or about which I am not able to reach an objective, unbiased opinion, nor I as an individual will participate in the SGP Call for Applications during my term of membership in the NSC.
- I will not accept any money, valuable articles, or favors from any party, which may result in the expectation of favorable consideration of a grant application.
- I will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all information, which is not in the public domain, especially pending grant applications and rejected applications, and others as set in the Regulation on organization and functioning for the NSC.
- I agree to hold in trust and confidence any information or documents ("confidential information") disclosed to me or discovered by me or prepared by me in the course of or as a result of the evaluation of project proposals and shall not be disclosed to any third party.

(Full name and surname)

(Signature)

(Place and Date)