

About the GEF

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is a financial mechanism for six multilateral conventions: the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, the Minamata Convention on Mercury, and the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement.

The Partnership includes 186 member governments, 18 Agencies as well as civil society, Indigenous Peoples, women, and youth, with a focus on integration and inclusivity. GEF finances projects that address environmental issues (climate change, biodiversity loss, land degradation, etc.) in developing countries, generating global environmental benefits.

Additional information can be found in [The GEF at a Glance](#).

GEF funds are replenished by donor countries every four years. Funding is then allocated to projects that generate global environmental benefits by addressing environmental degradation in 144 recipient countries, including members of UfM. Each recipient country designates two officials to interact with the GEF: the Political Focal Point and the Operational Focal Point (OFP). The list of Focal Points for the 186 countries can be accessed [here](#).

Every GEF project must be endorsed by the respective OFP before being approved for funding. Project implementation is the responsibility of the GEF Agency and the selected national executing entity. But OFPs are also expected to oversee GEF project implementation in their countries.

Financial Support to OFPs on Project Oversight

The GEF works to support OFPs regularly, and implements various activities targeted to building their capacity (workshops, seminars, among others).

For the current GEF-8 replenishment cycle (2022-2026), a budget line was approved to further empower and support OFPs in undertaking project oversight as part of the new Country Engagement Strategy.

This particular “support to OFPs” component is explained in the [Programming Directions](#) document, as follows (page 213):

“Operational support to OFPs. The Country Support Program (CSP) will continue to build the capacity of OFPs to manage their GEF portfolio. In addition, it is proposed to include *a procedure that will allow OFPs to access dedicated funds that will enable them to effectively oversee and monitor their GEF portfolio for the entire GEF-8 cycle*. This dedicated support will cover the costs of field visits facilitating OFPs to perform their responsibilities in overseeing project execution during the whole four-year cycle. The utilization of this procedure is optional and flexible, if and when OFPs require access to this additional support”.

A budget line for this component has been approved, for a total of **\$5.8 million for 144 countries**, in the [Country Engagement Strategy Implementation Arrangements](#) document (page 2), which says:

“Financial Support to GEF Operational Focal Points will enable them to effectively oversee and monitor their GEF portfolio. Access to these dedicated funds is optional and flexible.”

The GEF is looking to work with regional institutions that can help disburse these GEF funds to OFPs, either directly as funds transfers or as a combination of training and funds transfers, as appropriate.

Background on the Country Engagement Strategy and Available Funding

The GEF-8 Country Engagement Strategy aims at empowering countries in the ownership of their portfolios, and in turn, maximize the impact of GEF resources. Its implementation is based on three interconnected components a) Upstream Technical Dialogues, b) the Renewed Country Support Program, and c) Knowledge and Learning¹.

Further empowering GEF Operational Focal Points (OFPs) is at the core of these activities, by enabling them to efficiently program and manage their GEF portfolio. One of the key roles of OFPs is to be fully informed on ongoing projects, their development and implementation, by Agencies and the GEF Secretariat².

Because some OFPs lack resources to effectively oversee their GEF portfolio, a dedicated budget line was approved by the GEF Council to provide support to GEF OFPs in GEF-8³ to help them effectively oversee their GEF portfolio.

At its 63rd meeting in November 2022, GEF Council approved an allocation of \$5.8 million in dedicated GEF funds for this purpose, to be allocated amongst 144 recipient country OFP offices between 2022 and 2026.

The majority of this dedicated support will be to cover eligible costs of project oversight activities, including field visits, facilitating OFPs to perform their responsibilities in overseeing project execution during the whole four-year GEF replenishment cycle. Utilization of these resources is optional and flexible, and OFPs able to receive direct funding can request access to these funds through agreements developed between the GEF and regional partners, in an amount up to \$32,000.⁴

This dedicated support will complement the continuous support provided by the GEF Secretariat to build the capacity of OFPs to manage their GEF portfolio of projects.

The GEF and regional partners will use the remaining portion of this funding to organize regional training sessions for OFPs and their staff to strengthen OFP capacity in project oversight, including best practices and available tools, and to cover the cost of regional institutions which will assist the GEF in operationalizing these resources.

¹ [Summary of Negotiations of the Eighth Replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund](#), GEF/C.62/03 (June 2022)

² [Practical Steps to Improve Coordination and Workflow in the GEF Partnership](#), GEF/C.55/Inf.09 (November 2018)

³ [Country Engagement Strategy Implementation Arrangements for GEF-8](#), GEF/C.63/05 (November 2022)

⁴ [Summary of Negotiations of the Eighth Replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund](#), GEF/C.62/03 (June 2022)

For OFPs that cannot receive direct funding for project oversight, the GEF will work with qualified regional institutions to design and deliver customized national training on project oversight to the extent feasible, tailored to the country's needs and worth up to \$32,000.

This dedicated support aims at further empowering the OFPs to:

- Have more direct knowledge of and control over GEF projects/portfolio in their country.
- Increase coordination among OFPs, key national agencies and stakeholders of the GEF portfolio in each country.
- Enhance their capacity in conducting project oversight and M&E

Eligible Activities

The following activities will be considered eligible for the use of the dedicated funds for OFPs:

A. OFP Travel to Project Sites

Funds can be used by OFPs to conduct site visits to GEF-funded projects in their country, including for the purpose to meet in person and onsite with project coordinators and executing agencies, representatives from the GEF Agency and project beneficiaries, as well as to oversee progress in the field.

Funds could cover travel, accommodation and subsistence for the OFP or one designated OFP representative, and up to two additional officials/experts designated to travel with him/her to visit project sites under execution.

B. Meetings for Improved Portfolio Oversight

Funds can be used to cover the costs associated with the organization of the following in-country events for improved portfolio oversight, including meals and accommodations:

- Meetings of the National Steering Committee, in countries where such committees are established.
- Consultations with relevant stakeholders, including key national agencies, project executing agencies, stakeholders engaged in projects, civil society, among others.
- Regular briefings with GEF Agencies and project executing entities, to receive regular updates on progress being achieved and challenges being faced. Other government agencies can be invited to these briefing, to encourage coordination.
- Information sharing sessions with GEF Agencies, engaging all those present in the country. Key government agencies can also be invited to these sessions.
- Events to share knowledge and lessons learned with relevant national stakeholders engaged in GEF projects.
- Reports preparation and distribution.

C. Data and Knowledge Sharing in Support of Project Oversight

Funds can cover the costs associated with the production of the following data and knowledge sharing products:

- Creation and maintenance of a website for the GEF portfolio in the country, to include a database of projects –past projects, those under execution, and those under preparation.
- Production of reports and knowledge products, to include project level data.
- Compiling and sharing best practices and lessons learned.

D. Regional Training in Support of Project Oversight

The GEF may support the organization of a one to two day regional training session for OFPs on project oversight. *All OFPs (one per country in the respective region) will be eligible to attend these sessions and their travel and accommodation costs along with the travel and accommodation costs of one additional staff member from each OFP office will be covered by the GEF funds.* Training components will be tailored to GEF project oversight needs and will include presentations by GEF Secretariat staff, by OFPs to share their experiences, challenges, and lessons learned, training materials, group work, and a field visit as feasible. The training will be designed to: (i) strengthen OFP understanding of their roles and responsibilities, including opportunities to enhance impact through a “whole-of-government” approach; (ii) build OFP capacity to review and oversee their portfolio of GEF-funded projects throughout the project cycle, from design to implementation; and (iii) enhance OFP ability to efficiently use the resources provided under this agreement. The training is also intended to build visibility of GEF’s work as well as sharing of project oversight related lessons and experiences among OFPs as well as GEF Council Members who may not be OFPs. For efficiency, the training may be held in conjunction with other events convened or supported by GEF. The GEF will cover the cost of any GEF staff participation separately.

E. National Project Oversight Training

For OFPs that cannot receive direct funding, GEF may support the organization of a national project oversight training that is customized to the needs of the country and its GEF portfolio, either in-person or virtually, as feasible. The overall cost of this national training will not exceed \$32,000 which is the amount that the OFP would have received in direct funding.

Training components will include expert presentations, training materials, group work and a field visit as feasible. Training content will be developed in the same manner as for the Regional Training (see paragraph D. above), customized to the country context and language, tailored to GEF project oversight needs and prepared in consultation with the local OFP staff as well as GEF staff who may attend the training and contribute, as appropriate. For efficiency, the training may be held in conjunction with other events convened or supported by GEF. The GEF will separately cover the costs of any GEF staff participants.

Non-Eligible Activities

The following activities will not be eligible for funding under this support:

- International travel (ticket and daily subsistence allowance) except to attend GEF organized regional project oversight training sessions as set out in this agreement.

- Procurement of computer hardware and other equipment (including furniture, phones and vehicles).
- Recurring expenditure of any kind (e.g. OFP salary, staff recruitment and/or salary, rent, etc.).
- Institutional strengthening and capacity building for OFPs and/or his/her office staff. This support is being provided by the GEF Secretariat through other initiatives.
- Recruitment of consultants for monitoring and evaluation, as this is already financed as a component of every GEF project and is under the responsibility of the GEF Agencies.
- Per diems.