

Concept Note

National Inception Workshop for Small Grants Programme- Operational Phase 8

India's rich ecological diversity, spanning mountains, forests, wetlands, coastal and marine ecosystems, supports globally significant biodiversity while sustaining the livelihoods, food security, and well-being of millions of people. However, these ecosystems are increasingly threatened by biodiversity loss, habitat degradation, climate change, pollution, and unsustainable resource use. The *Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework* recognizes that reversing biodiversity loss requires integrated, inclusive, and locally led action, while the *IPBES Global Assessment* highlights that biodiversity decline is driven by interacting direct and indirect drivers that demand coordinated responses across sectors (IPBES, 2019; CBD, 2022)¹. Addressing these complex and interconnected challenges therefore requires integrated, locally driven solutions that simultaneously conserve ecosystems, strengthen climate resilience, and improve community well-being.

In India, the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) is implemented by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Government of India, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) serving as the National Host Institution. In the last three decades, the Programme has enabled civil society organizations and community institutions to lead innovative, community-driven initiatives that conserve biodiversity, strengthen climate resilience, and promote sustainable livelihoods while contributing to India's national priorities and global environmental commitments.

Building on the achievements of the seventh operational phase, Operational Phase 8 adopts an integrated landscape and seascape approach to address the complex linkages between biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, sustainable livelihoods, and ecosystem restoration. The programme will support innovative, community-led interventions across India's priority landscapes, namely the Aravallis, Western Ghats, Coastal Landscapes, North-East India, and the Himalayas. Its strategic priorities include community-based conservation of threatened ecosystems and species, sustainable agriculture and fisheries, low-carbon energy access, chemicals and waste management, and sustainable urban solutions, while promoting innovation, social inclusion, and multi-stakeholder partnerships.

The National Inception Workshop marks the formal launch of GEF-SGP Operational Phase 8 in India and serves as a strategic platform for bringing together representatives from government, UNDP, TERI, the National Steering Committee, civil society organizations, research institutions, technical experts, and other stakeholders to develop a shared

¹ IPBES. (2019). *Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*. Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

CBD. (2022). *Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework*. Convention on Biological Diversity, Montreal.



understanding of the programme's vision, strategic priorities, implementation framework, and expected outcomes.

The workshop will also facilitate technical deliberations on the OP8 Landscape Strategies for the Aravalli, Coastal, and North-East Landscapes, enabling stakeholders to validate strategic priorities, exchange knowledge and experiences, identify opportunities for collaboration, and strengthen partnerships for effective programme implementation.

Objectives

- Launch the GEF Small Grants Programme – Operational Phase 8 (SGP-OP8) in India and present its vision, strategic priorities, and implementation framework.
- Develop a common understanding among stakeholders on programme implementation modalities and expected environmental, social, and livelihood outcomes.
- Validate the Landscape Strategies for the selected landscapes through technical deliberations and stakeholder feedback.
- Strengthen collaboration among government agencies, civil society organisations, research institutions, and technical partners for effective implementation.