

OPERATING REGULATIONS FOR THE NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE

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National Steering Committee

The Global Environment Facility's Small Grants Programme (SGP) in Armenia

1. General provisions

- 1.1 The National Steering Committee (NSC) is the central element of the SGP (further referred to as the "programme") which provides overall guidance and direction to the country programme, including development, periodic revision, and implementation of the country programme strategy, and adaptation of global policies and criteria to country circumstances. The NSC carries out monitoring and progress assessment of the programme activity and contributes to establishing mechanisms for the programme sustainability in Armenia. The NSC is responsible for selecting and approving projects and for ensuring and monitoring their technical and substantive quality.
- 1.2 The NSC consists of eleven (11) voluntary members from the non-governmental organizations, academic and scientific institutions, international and national donor organizations, private sector, UNDP Country Office and the government. The overwhelming majority of the NSC members should be from the non-governmental sector.
- 1.3 As a matter of principle, the NSC (and the SGP as a whole) must organize its work on the basis of objectivity and transparency, both in fact and in appearance.
- 1.4 In its work the NSC is guided by the main principle of the SGP: achievement of environmental benefits through participation of local communities and civil society in addressing environmental problems. The majority of the non-governmental sector in the composition of the NSC reflects the principle of decentralized approach to decision-making within the scope of the SGP.

2. NSC functions and duties

The main functions and duties of the NSC include:

- 2.1 Development and approval of the country programming strategy of the SGP in Armenia which serves as a framework for country programme operations;
- 2.2 Promotion and advocacy of the SGP at the national level, and dissemination of the information on the activities of the SGP in the country;
- 2.3 Consideration and assessment of conformity of the submitted grant project proposals pre-selected by the National Coordinator, with established criteria and procedures of the Programme, as well as practical possibilities for their realization;
- 2.4 Decision-making on approval, reformulation or rejection of the project proposals submitted for financing through the GEF SGP in Armenia;
- 2.5 Realization of monitoring and evaluation of the country programme performance.

3. NSC terms of office and appointment

- 3.1 The NSC is formed through selecting candidates invited by the UNDP Resident Representative. The members of the NSC serve for a period of three years. However, in case of exceptional experience and commitment to the programme, the member can be reappointed to serve an additional three-year term. The personal composition of the NSC is approved by the SGP Global Manager on the advice of the UNDP Resident Representative in Armenia.
- 3.2 In the event that a member cannot serve the full term, a new member can be appointed by UNDP Resident Representative, either to serve the term of the previous member, or serve the full term.
- 3.3 The UNDP Resident Representative or its representative (SGP focal point) executes functions *ex officio* as a member of the NSC.
- 3.4 The membership in the NSC should not be considered as something transferable or delegable.
- 3.5 If a member of the NSC does not attend at least three cycles of project proposal considerations in the NSC, his/her membership can be stopped with the appointment of a new member of the NSC by the UNDP Resident Representative.

4. NSC general operating procedure

- 4.1 The NSC meets for SGP Armenia grants decision-making at least once in 3 months. The notice of session in writing is sent to the members of the NSC at least 5 working days prior to the scheduled meeting.
- 4.2 The next session of the NSC is convoked by the National Coordinator in case of availability of at least 3 project applications corresponding to the criteria and requirements of the SGP, or availability of the adequate project proposals which total amount makes not less than US\$25,000.
- 4.3 In the end of each session, the NSC appoints its Chairperson from the members by the general voting with the period of powers till the end of the following session of the NSC. The UNDP Resident Representative and SGP National Coordinator cannot discharge the duties of the NSC Chairman.
- 4.4 In case of a need to consider of a seasonal or non-typical project proposal, the National Coordinator has the right to call for an emergency meeting of the NSC, by sending the

notice in writing to the members of the NSC at least 5 working days prior to the scheduled meeting.

- 4.5 To consider other urgent questions connected with the programme activity, upon the initiative of the UNDP Resident Representative, the NSC chairman, the National Coordinator or the members of the Committee, emergency meetings can be convoked. A notice in writing about the planned NSC emergency meeting is sent to all members of the NSC by the initiator at least 5 working days prior to the meeting date.
- 4.6 All decisions are considered as passed by the NSC if not less than 6 members of the NSC attended the meeting.
- 4.7 The chairperson of the NSC is a moderator to all sessions of the NSC. The chairperson also assists in the preparation of the following session of the NSC.
- 4.8 The SGP country team carries out functions of the Secretary to the NSC, and participates in the discussions of the NSC as an *ex officio* member, but has no right to vote in the course of consideration of project proposals.

5. Grants consideration and NSC decision-making

- 5.1 Project proposals received from NGOs and CBOs for SGP financing are short-listed by the SGP National Coordinator. The National Coordinator presents project proposals for consideration to the members of the NSC and schedules a preliminary term for carrying out the session of the NSC for grants decision-making.
- 5.2 Normally, consideration time by the members of the NSC of the submitted proposals should be one calendar month before the session of the NSC. This time is needed for a detailed consideration and assessment of the project proposals. However, in case when certain project proposals require less time for consideration, the following session of the NSC can be appointed earlier.
- 5.3 When considering project applications, the members of the NSC fill out the assessment form of how the project fits the SGP criteria. This form documents the basis why the member NSC has come to a certain opinion under each specific project application i.e. why the member of the NSC has voted for an approval, reformulation or rejection of the project application.
- 5.4 The project applications are presented for discussion at the sessions of the NSC by the SGP project proponents and National Coordinator. After presentation of the applications, each member of the NSC shall express a substantiated opinion.
- 5.5 When possible NSC operates on the basis of consensus rather than formal voting. Otherwise, the voting procedure follows the presentation and discussion of the applications.
- 5.6 No member of the NSC shall participate in the review or approval of any project in which that member, or an organization with which that member is associated, has an interest. In such cases, the member shall be excused from both the discussion and decision on the project. In such cases, s/he is obliged to inform the other members of the NSC and to abstain from discussion and decision-making.
- 5.7 Members of the NSC are obliged to provide for objectivity in the decision-making process using the principle of observance of the SGP criteria stated in the Country Programme Strategy, consensus, to exclude questions of personal character and any conflict of interests, and possible external impacts.

5.8 In case of argument on disputable questions, or ambiguity of interpretation of some cases, the decision of the UNDP Resident Representative will have the decisive force.

6. NSC procedural arrangements

6.1 As a rule, sessions of the NSC shall be held in the UNDP Office in Armenia.

6.2 To convene a session of the NSC, at least 6 its members must be present. In case of not availability of a member of the NSC in a session for a good reason, such member can express his/her opinion by e-mail, attaching a fully completed SGP assessment form.

6.3 All decisions of the NSC are to be reflected in the meeting minutes. After each session, the minutes are distributed to all members of the NSC. Upon receipt of a written notice of their consent to the description of the discussed questions from all members of the NSC, the current Chairperson to the NSC shall sign the report. The record of the NSC decision under each specific project application in the report is the basis to sign the grant agreement (Memorandum of Agreement) between the grantee organization and the UNDP Resident Representative.

6.4 The key document regulating the rules and operating procedure of the NSC is the present regulations. The regulations are considered as coming into force after approval by all members of the NSC and signature by its current Chairperson. The regulations can be changed only after consideration and approval by all members of the NSC.

6.5 The members of the NSC should inform the current chairperson of the NSC and SGP National Coordinator on planned long-term absence, change of job and-or post, and about change in the contact details.