

Note: The attached proposals were circulated to Standing Committee members in September 2006 and approved, based on comments received, in late October 2006. Only the proposals recommended for categories A1 and A2 are included in this public version of the document.

Small Grants Fund: approval of project proposals for 2006

***Action requested:* The Standing Committee is requested to make decisions on the allocation of SGF2006 funds to projects, and to approve the proposed amendment to the SGF Operational Guidelines.**

Note. In order to achieve a timely allocation of funds for the SGF2006 cycle, the Standing Committee at its 34th meeting (Decision SC34-17) agreed that the Secretariat's proposals for allocation of funds would be circulated to, and approved by, the Standing Committee through intersessional electronic circulation.

Income and funds available for allocation

1. In an effort to raise funds for the 2006 round of the Ramsar Small Grants Fund (SGF), the Secretariat wrote in early 2006 to all Ramsar Contracting Parties that are donor countries (as it has done in previous years) soliciting their support.
2. The contributions received up to 25 September 2006 are shown in Annex 1, which indicates that the funds available for allocation to SGF projects in 2006 amount to CHF 220,028.
3. These funds available for immediate allocation are sufficient to fund six SGF projects, a smaller number than for other recent years.

Project allocations

4. Following the established procedure, the Secretariat has reviewed and ranked the SGF projects using the approved form for SGF project evaluations. The form has been designed to provide both structure and objectivity to the way in which the Secretariat undertakes its assessment and preparation of recommendations for funding.
5. For the 2006 SGF cycle, 41 proposals were received that were administratively complete:
 - 15 from Africa
 - 5 from Asia
 - 5 from Europe
 - 14 from the Neotropics
 - 2 from Oceania

6. It should be noted that, as is customary practice, in order to seek equity of allocations among the Ramsar regions, the Secretariat has prepared its advice on a region by region basis and used this to formulate its overall recommendation by placing the top-scoring projects from each region into the first priority (Category A1) for immediate funding.
7. On the basis of the Secretariat's assessment, as shown in the list of projects by region in Annex 2, the projects have been divided into five categories - A1 and A2; B; C; and D as follows:
 - (A1) Projects that are technically sound and of highest priority for funding with the funds on hand: six projects – 1 from Africa, 2 from Asia, 1 from Europe, 1 from the Neotropics and 1 from Oceania. These are:
 - Benin & Togo** (SGF/06/BJTG/01)
 - Kyrgyz Republic** (SG/06/KG/01)
 - Vietnam** (SGF/06/VN/01)
 - Republic of Moldova** (SGF/06/MD/01)
 - Antigua & Barbuda** (SGF/06/AG/1)
 - Kiribati** (SGF/06/KI/01)
 - (A2) Projects recommended for funding (in priority order based on the assessment score received by each project) if additional resources should become available for the 2006 SGF cycle. A further CHF 456,050 is required to fully fund all 12 of the A2 projects.
 - (B) Projects that are technically sound and are of medium priority for funding from the SGF.
 - (C) Projects that are technically sound but of lower priority for funding from the SGF.
 - (D) Projects that, on the basis of the information provided, are not considered technically sound or feasible.
8. The Secretariat notes that for some A1 recommended projects the Secretariat's assessment has indicated that some clarifications are needed on elements of the project proposal as submitted, and recommends that the Standing Committee approve these projects subject to the clarifications being satisfactorily made before contracts for these projects are issued by the Secretariat.
9. The Secretariat recommends that the Standing Committee consider establishing, as in previous years, a reserve list of A2-rated projects for priority funding should sufficient additional funds become available from cancelled projects or from other sources. As for previous years, the Secretariat recommends the following three projects selected in a geographically equitable manner in order of priority be placed on the reserve list:

- Burkina Faso** (SGF/06/BF/01)
- Nepal** (SGF/06//NP/01)
- Ecuador** (SGF/06/EC/01)

Note that no other projects from Oceania have been category A-rated for the SGF2006 cycle.

12. The Secretariat has noted in its project assessments in the following tables that a number of A-rated projects (i.e. projects of a high quality) come from Contracting Parties which are in arrears with their payments of annual dues and/or which did not submit a COP9 National Report. The Standing Committee may wish to make note of this in giving their approval for projects to be immediately funded (A1) and those in the A2 list for funding if further funds become available.

Proposal for amendment to SGF Operational Guidelines

13. Paragraph 36 of the SGF Operational Guidelines 2006-2008 indicates that “During implementation, and after projects are completed, Secretariat staff follow up and monitor SGF projects. Where possible, when traveling to countries that have received SGF funding, they visit project sites and meet with those responsible for project implementation.” In addition, paragraph 38 indicates: “The Secretariat, in agreement with the Administrative Authority of the recipient country, shall be allowed to visit the project site and/or the project implementing agency or agencies, and/or to designate one of the partners or collaborators to do so on its behalf, in order to have a first-hand appraisal of the progress made during implementation and/or the results obtained after completion of the project.”
14. In practice it is the Secretariat’s recent experience that owing to the limitations of the core travel budget it is very seldom possible for a member of Secretariat staff to visit an SGF project during its implementation. This is of concern, since it severely limits the opportunities for project monitoring and assessment, and for providing advice on implementation and any difficulties being experienced by the project implementers.
15. So as to ensure that such project visits are possible in the future, the Secretariat therefore recommends that an additional paragraph be added to the Budget guidance section of the Operational Guidelines, as follows:

“In preparing the project budget, an SGF project proponent should include a budget line for Secretariat travel and subsistence for an assessment and advisory visit to the project during its implementation. The Secretariat will provide, as part of its SGF Advisory Service, an estimate of the appropriate sum to be included in each project proposal since this will vary depending on the geographical location of each project.”
16. In most cases it is unlikely that this sum would exceed CHF 2,500 and will be much less in some cases. The Secretariat notes that this inclusion of the costs of Secretariat travel and subsistence for project visits has already for some time been included in the budgets for projects implemented under the Swiss Fund for Africa administered by the Secretariat.

Annex 1**SMALL GRANTS FUND - FUNDS AVAILABLE****SGF funds available for allocation in 2006
(in Swiss francs, as at 22.09.2006)****CONFIRMED FUNDS**

Surplus from previous year carried forward	2,665.00
Balances from closed projects	35,536.00

CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED FOR THE 2005 SGF CYCLE:

United Kingdom, Defra	81,781.00
Sweden, Sida	120,000.00

Minus 10% administration fee	(19,954.00)
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TOTAL AVAILABLE FOR ALLOCATION	CHF 220,028.00
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AMOUNT REQUIRED TO FUND THE PROJECTS IN CATEGORY A1	CHF 214,535.00
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Annex 2

Secretariat assessment of SGF 2006 projects and recommendations for funding

Category A1 projects, recommended for immediate funding	page 6
Category A2 projects, recommended for funding should additional funds for the 2003 SGF cycle become available	page 8
List of projects submitted by countries in Africa	not included
List of projects submitted by countries in Asia	not included
List of projects submitted by countries in Europe	not included
List of projects submitted by countries in the Neotropics	not included
List of projects submitted by countries in Oceania	not included

SGF 2006 - Category A1 projects, recommended for immediate funding, listed by Ramsar regions

Country / Project code	Project Title	Amount requested (SFr)	Assessment score	Comments
Africa				
Benin & Togo SGF/06/BJTG/01	Projet Transfrontière d'Appui à la Gestion Participative des Ressources de Mangrove du Chenal Gbaga au Sud-Est du Togo et au Sud-Ouest du Bénin	40,000	59	<p>Management, restoration & poverty reduction. A transfrontier project on the mangroves at the border of Benin and Togo, the objectives are to conserve the ecosystem's biodiversity, sustainably manage the mangroves and fish resources, and reduce the local people's poverty through alternative income activities. The main outputs will be 600 trained local community members, 100ha of regenerated mangroves, strengthened management institutions, reduced pressure on the resources and alternative revenues. Some further clarifications to aspects of the proposal are needed before project initiation.</p> <p>The Standing Committee may wish to note their approval of projects that neither Benin nor Togo submitted a COP9 National Report, and that Togo has not paid annual dues since 2001.</p>
Asia				
Kyrgyz Republic SG/06/KG/01	Development of National Wetland Conservation Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic	40,000	57	<p>National wetland strategy. Development of a National Wetland Conservation Strategy for the Kyrgyz Republic, through activities including active participation of stakeholders, review of national policies on land-use, and natural resource management. It plans to define stakeholders and working group to organize workshops to define goals and objectives of the national strategy. A well-prepared proposal with a clear budget and work plan.</p> <p>The Standing Committee may wish to note in their approval of projects that since its accession in 2002, Kyrgyz Republic has not paid any annual dues.</p>
Vietnam SGF/06/VN/01	Community-based Wise Use of the Local Wetland at Xuan Thuy Ramsar Site, North of Vietnam	38,310	56	<p>Local community capacity-building & livelihoods. The project aims to improve livelihoods of local community through activities like establishing and maintaining community based organizations (CBO) or interest groups such as mushroom growing or eco-tourism groups. It also proposes for direct liaison between the site management authority and CBOs, raise public awareness and local capacity building about the importance of wetlands by group meetings using participatory approach, open discussions and training. It also targets to construct an ecological shrimp pond as an example of environmentally sound farming technique to change the local shrimp farmers' aquaculture intention. Project experience could form a good demonstration study case study for sharing with other mangrove areas.</p>

Country / Project code	Project Title	Amount requested (SFr)	Assessment score	Comments
				The Standing Committee may wish to note in their approval of projects that Vietnam has annual dues owing since 2003.
Europe				
Republic of Moldova SGF/06/MD/01	Management Scenario Development for the Unguri – Holosnita New Ramsar Site and Awareness Raising on the Ramsar Convention Wise Use Policy	40,000	53	Wetland management. Objective of the project is the development of the zoning and management framework for this Ramsar site in the Dniester Basin in the north-eastern part of Moldova in the bordering area to Ukraine. Basing on the zoning and determination of regimes, the Convention policies will be promoted at national level. Further to this the tourist potential will be assessed and locally discussed with the main stakeholders. At same time it is planned to initiate cooperation with Ukrainian partners to recognize the area as transboundary Ramsar Site and to support the joint governing of the river basin. At the national level, the management plan and recommendations will be introduced in forest organization documents and local authorities as well as the private sector.
Neotropics				
Antigua & Barbuda SGF/06/AG/1	Inventory of Wetlands: Antigua & Barbuda	36,225	60	National Wetland Inventory. Having recently joined the convention, A&B does not currently have a comprehensive wetland inventory nor a wetland policy. This project aims at gathering detailed information on all wetlands in the country in order to assess their status and values, and produce a map. In turn, this information will assist in the identification of priority sites and management strategies to promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands. A concise and clear proposal that will significantly increase the capacity of the country to implement the Convention.
Oceania				
Kiribati SGF/06/KI/01	National Preparatory Activities for accession to the Ramsar Convention in Kiribati	20,000	59	Preparatory Assistance. The main objective is to help the country to accede the Ramsar convention. It will be done through mobilizing appropriate local and international consultants, liaison with relevant regional organizations (SOPAC etc), and stocktaking exercise of existing information as relevant to the proposed site. It plans to review and recommend on the legislation, policies and regulations relevant to the site management. A clear and well written proposal with good technical quality. The budget needs some clarifications.

Category A2 projects, recommended for funding should additional funds become available for the SGF 2006 cycle, listed in order of priority for funding based on assessment score

Priority for funding	Assessment score	Country / Project code	Project Title	Amount requested (SFr)	Comments
1	55	Burkina Faso SGF/06/BF/01	Projet Pilote d'atténuation de la pression sur les ressources de la mare d'Oursi par des activités de gestion rationnelle et de Réduction de la Pauvreté autour de la Mare (Activité – Socio Economiques et de gestion durable)	34,498	<p>CEPA & local community management. The project involves both local communities and government and aims to improve the environment, the use of the resources and people's livelihoods around the Mare d'Oursi Ramsar site. Objectives are to develop CEPA tools with local stakeholders regarding resource use; to improve the cultivation around the wetland by women and teach ways to better conserve food; to grow bourgou grass for livestock; to improve fishing and fish availability; to protect the local environment. Some minor budget amendments are required.</p> <p>The Standing Committee may wish to take into account in their approval of projects that Burkina Faso last paid annual dues in 2004.</p>
2	54	Nepal SGF/06//NP/01	Sustainable Wetland Management for Wildlife and People at Jagdishpur Reservoir, central Nepal	38,964	<p>Valuation, local community capacity-building, CEPA & livelihoods. The goals of the project are to improve local communities understanding on the values of wetlands as well as threats to their own livelihoods and to disseminate information on best practice methods for the wise use of wetlands in the area. It will be done through conducting a participatory wetland valuation assessment and surveys to assess bird human conflicts, water quality and quantity, threats to the Reservoir and associated wetlands from invasive alien species. The project also aims to improve skills of local communities for alternative income generation and establish micro credit financing. It plans to do through exploring the most efficient indigenous income generating sources, training and establishing a reserve fund. This project would help in capacity building of local people about wetland values, which is one of the main problems at the site. It also supports in poverty alleviation for local communities. Some budget clarifications are needed.</p>

Priority for funding	Assessment score	Country / Project code	Project Title	Amount requested (SFr)	Comments
3	52	Ecuador SGF/06/EC/01	Monitoring program, protection and health of the “Ñucanchi-Turopamba” wetland complex as a proposed Ramsar site for Ecuador. Programa de monitoreo, vigilancia y estado de salud del complejo de humedales “Ñucanchi-Turopamba” propuesto como sitio Ramsar par	39,958	Assessment and Management. The integrity of the “Ñucanchi-Turopamba” Ramsar site is essential to the water supply of Quito (the country’s capital), and is currently being threatened by the construction of water works. This project aims at elaborating a detailed assessment (model, GIS, map, database) to determine the “minimal flow” needed to maintain the ecological character of the site, establish monitoring programs, closing seasons for hunting/fishing, and the training park rangers. Regulated fishing would provide the financial resources for the long-term management of the site. The proposal was submitted in 2005, receiving a high score but not being funded. It was assessed in detail by the AA for its technical viability before receiving the endorsement.
4	54	Madagascar SGF/06/MG/01	Wetland Ecological Assessment in the south eastern region of Madagascar between Andringitra National Park and Andohahela Park	38,700	Inventory & Ramsar site designation. The project aims to carry out an inventory of the wetlands in south-eastern Madagascar in order to document their biological and socio-economic features and threats. It will recommend conservation actions and the wetlands that qualify as Ramsar sites will be put forward for designation. Awareness of local users will be raised through five workshops.
5	53	Kenya SGF/06/KE/02	Developing Awareness And Educational Materials On Ramsar Sites In Kenya:	31,829	CEPA. Preparation of educational and awareness materials (videos, posters and brochures) for different government and non-government stakeholders on Kenya’s five Ramsar sites. Workshops will be held to create networks between twin wetland stakeholders and a newsletter will be produced to raise further awareness of this. Project will need modifications to the budget and the work plan, as it could be undertaken in a shorter time and some expenses could be reduced. Raising awareness of Kenyan Ramsar sites of other stakeholders, including other government ministries, should be included. The Standing Committee may wish to note in their approval of projects that Kenya has not paid annual dues since 2004.

Priority for funding	Assessment score	Country / Project code	Project Title	Amount requested (SFr)	Comments
6	50	Paraguay SGF/06/PY/1	Implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008 for Paraguay: present state, thorough monitoring, potentials and first collaborative management pilot project. Cumpliendo el Plan Estratégico 2003-2006 de la Convención Ramsar para Paraguay: estado act	40,000	National and site-specific assessment & management. The project has a general (national) and site-specific component. In the first case it aims at assessing the state of all Ramsar sites in Paraguay (GIS, map) to identify those requiring immediate action; while in the second case it will develop a draft management and monitoring plan for the “Lago Ypoa” Ramsar site, training local actors and involving them in the management of this site. This is an excellent proposal that would deliver increased capacities at both the national and local levels. The Standing Committee may wish to note in their approval of projects that since its accession in 1996 Paraguay has neither paid any annual dues nor submitted any National reports to COP.
7	49	Lebanon SGF/06/LB/01	Safeguarding our Wetland: A community initiative to promote Kfar Zabad wetlands for birds, nature and people.	40,078	Local community capacity-building & CEPA. The project aims to contribute to safeguard and wise management of the Kfar Zabad wetland to improve livelihoods to local communities. It will be done through socio-economic survey and cultural aspects of the village, capacity building and public awareness on importance of wetland. It will also identify Kfar Zabad as potential Ramsar site. Activities like ecotourism, and integrated pest management practices are intended in this project. It is not fully clear in the submitted proposal as to how the balance of activities will lead to improved livelihoods, and the budget will need to be reduced.
7	49	Costa Rica SGF/06/CR/01	Conservation of the Jabiru (Jabiru mycteria) in Costa Rica: An effort for the protection of wetlands. Conservación del Jabirú (Jabiru mycteria) en Costa Rica: Un esfuerzo para la protección de los humedales	40,000	Restoration and management. Taking the endangered Jabiru (Jabiru mycteria) as the basis for conservation efforts, this project intends to conduct a thorough assessment of those wetlands critical for the breeding and nesting of this species (which are believed to include three Ramsar sites). Later stages would involve the introduction of an array of management strategies to restore these sites and an ambitious education and outreach campaign. The ultimate goal would be the establishment of a network of wetlands critical for the conservation of the Jabiru - a model which could later be replicated elsewhere in the region. The project is ambitious but of good quality.
9	48	Albania SGF/06/AL/01	Development of a management plan for the “LUGINA E VALBONES National Park”. Other Educational and training activities	39,987	CEPA, training & wetland management. The project area is located in a high altitude river basin and karst area of the Albanian Alps. Main goal of this project is to address the perception, values and wise use of wetlands through comprehensive educational activities for local people and particularly school children. The project aims to make locals better users of this site, to maintain it and to contribute to poverty reduction. One aspect is the development of ecotourism. Furthermore, the project includes the development of a fishing

Priority for funding	Assessment score	Country / Project code	Project Title	Amount requested (SFr)	Comments
					policy and the drafting of a Management Plan for the National Park including zoning and prioritizing of future actions to follow up e.g. in the field of species conservation. An ambitious but well-presented project.
10	47	Mali SGF/06/ML/01	Systeme d'aide au monitoring, a la conservation et a l'utilisation rationnelle des zones lacustres nord du Delta Interieur du Niger au Mali	40,000	Inventory/GIS. The project will produce updated maps of the Inner Niger Delta Ramsar site and its land use, showing changes (due to climate variability) in the area over the past 30 years. It will train members of the PAZU, Ramsar's AA, on GIS skills and provide it with a database to continue working with these methodologies in other wetlands in the country. The updated information should assist in preparing better management plans of sites. The budget needs to be modified and reduced.
10	47	Armenia SGF/06/AM/01	Development, Formulation of Implementation Strategy, and the Launch of the National Wetland Policy in Armenia	40,000	National wetland policy. The central objective of the proposal is the elaboration of a National Wetland Policy with an action plan and implementation time frame. Beginning with the definition of stakeholders, enhancement of the communication and coordination amongst institutions and organizations it is leading to public awareness campaigns and the elaboration of a feasibility study on Armenian wetlands (including mapping of Ramsar sites). It is not clear the extent to which the policy would be effectively developed and implemented in the absence of a functioning national wetland committee, and a high proportion of the requested funds is for preparing maps of Ramsar Sites.
12	46	Cuba SGF/06/CU/01	Restoration of the Hydrological Functions of the Eastern Sector of the Ciénaga de Zapata Ramsar site. Restauración del funcionamiento hídrico del sector oriental del sitio Ramsar Ciénaga de Zapata	32,114	Wetland restoration. The largest wetland and Ramsar site in Cuba has been affected by the building of infrastructure works in the 1960s and 1970s. Since the physical removal of these waterworks is not viable, the project plans to reestablish the natural hydrological functions of the wetland's Western sector through the construction of a regulating mechanism, the implementation of monitoring & management strategies, and various other education and awareness-raising activities. The project is feasible but only with some amendments. More details in the proposal are required to assess its full viability.