

Small Grants Fund: approval of project proposals for 2008

Action requested: The Standing Committee members are requested to approve the proposed funding allocations to projects outlined in this document.

Income and funds available for allocation

1. In an effort to raise funds for the 2008 round of the Ramsar Small Grants Fund (SGF), the Secretariat is writing to all Ramsar Contracting Parties that are donor countries soliciting their voluntary financial support. This is done later than in previous years, given the fundraising efforts undertaken earlier to sponsor delegates to attend COP10. Available results of the fundraising appeal will be presented to the 38th meeting of the Standing Committee. It is hoped that additional voluntary donations will be made before the end of 2008.
2. The surplus from previous years carried forward and the balance from closed projects are shown in Annex 1, indicating that the funds available for allocation to projects in 2008 amount to CHF 41,222.
3. These funds available for immediate allocation are sufficient to fund only one SGF project.

Project allocations

4. Following the established procedure, the Secretariat has reviewed and ranked the SGF projects using the approved form for proposal 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 2008 SGF cycle, 23 proposals were received that were administratively complete:
 - 9 from Africa
 - 4 from Asia
 - 3 from Europe
 - 6 from the Neotropics
 - 1 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 A) for funding.

7. On the basis of the Secretariat's assessment, the projects have been divided into three categories – A1, A2 and B as follows:
 - (A1) Projects that are technically sound and of highest priority for funding with the funds on hand (sufficient to fund one project): 1 from Africa. This is:
Cape Verde (SGF/08CV/1)
 - (A2) Projects that are technically sound and recommended for funding (in priority order, based on the assessment score received by each project) if additional resources become available for the 2008 SGF cycle. A further CHF 631,263 is required to fully fund all 18 projects in this category.
 - (B) Projects that, on the basis of the information provided, are not considered technically sound or feasible (four projects).
8. The Secretariat notes that for the A1-A2 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 among the A2-rated projects for priority funding should sufficient additional funds become available. The Secretariat recommends the following three top-scoring projects, selected in a geographically equitable manner, in order of priority be placed on the reserve list:
Nepal (SGF/08/NP/1)
Turkey (SGF/08/TR/1)
Chile (SGF/08/CHI/1)

Should more funds become available to fund further projects, they will be selected in a geographically equitable manner, following their decreasing scoring order, as shown in the table in Annex 2 listing all A-rated projects.
10. The Secretariat has noted in its project assessments in the following tables that a number of A-rated projects come from Contracting Parties that are in arrears with their payments of annual dues and/or which did not submit a COP10 National Report. The Standing Committee may wish to make note of this in giving their approval for the order of projects to be funded, if further funds become available.

Closed projects

11. Following the deadlines to receive reports (nine months after receipt of the first payment for the progress report, six months after completion of the project for the final report, and a cancellation deadline of three years after the signature of the contract), the Secretariat proposes to close two long outstanding projects. These are projects for which no final report was received, or no clear expenditure report provided, although the Secretariat sent

several reminders to the beneficiaries and national administrative authorities over the past few years. This concerns two projects in Africa:

Gambia (SGF/02/GM)

Mauritius (SGF/02/MU)

The Secretariat proposes that the money originally earmarked for the final installments to these projects should be re-allocated to the 2008 funding cycle, in order to make an additional CHF 15,970 available for project proposals submitted in 2008.

Annex 1**Small Grants Fund – funds available****SGF funds available for allocation in 2008****(in Swiss francs CHF, as at 26 September 2008)****FUNDS LIKELY TO BE AVAILABLE**

Surplus from previous year carried forward

CHF 25'252

Balance from closed projects

CHF 15'970

CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED FOR THE 2008 SGF CYCLE (to be advised):

0

Minus 10% administration fee

(0)

TOTAL AVAILABLE FOR ALLOCATION**CHF 41'222****AMOUNT REQUIRED TO FUND THE PROJECTS****IN CATEGORY A1****CHF 35'692**

Annex 2

Secretariat assessment of SGF 2008 projects and recommendations for funding

SGF 2008 - Category A1 – A2 projects, recommended for funding, listed in order of their assessment score

Country	Score	Project title	Project beneficiary	Amount requested (CHF)	Total budget (CHF)	Summary
Cape Verde SGF/08/CV/1 A1	61	Protecting key wetlands in Maio Island, Cape Verde	WWF Cape Verde Mrs Celeste Benchimol	35'692	45'532	Inventory, designation and management of a new Ramsar site. Cape Verde is keen to add to its already designated 3 sites. This project proposes to carry out surveys on the wetlands of Maio Island focusing on Salina Porto Ingles. The threats facing this and other wetlands in Cape Verde are increasing pressure from mass-tourism and changing land use driven by agriculture. The project proposes the use of Salina Porto Ingles as a case study for: biodiversity assessment; setting up a monitoring network; developing a plan for sustainable resource use involving the local community and authorities and continued work of an already existing project to develop a comprehensive wetland-conservation project.
Nepal SGF/08/NP/1 A2	57	Designation of Lake - Cluster of the Pokhara Valley of West Nepal in the Ramsar List	National Lake Conservation Development Committee(NLCDC)	27'015	36'591	Site designation and public awareness. The project aims to raise awareness on values and threat to wetlands, to survey the site according to the need of the Ramsar Information Sheet and bring together various stakeholders for consultation for site designation. This site is one of the important clusters of lakes of the country.
Turkey SGF/08/TR/1 A2	55	Effective Management of the Ramsar Sites in Turkey	Doga Dernegi - Bird life partner in Turkey	40'000	66'238	Implementing management plan and stakeholders awareness. In 2003 Turkey adopted the National Wetland Strategy and with that also the management plans for six Ramsar Sites. It has been experienced that for an effective site management it is necessary to involve local communities through a participatory process. The project aim will be to use Kizilirmak Delta Ramsar Site as a pilot site to implement its recently finalized management plan through local monitoring and local management system. Along side, leaflets and posters on the wise use of wetlands and Turkish Ramsar Sites will be produced for raising environmental awareness amongst stakeholders and communities.

Country	Score	Project title	Project beneficiary	Amount requested (CHF)	Total budget (CHF)	Summary
Chile SGF/08/CHI/1 A2	52	Management plan design for the Ramsar site Bahía de Lomas, conservation in austral Chilean Patagonia	Comisión Nacional del Medio Ambiente (CONAMA)	34'557	73'588	Management plan, participatory approach and conservation in a Ramsar site. Development of a Management Plan to maintain the ecological character of Ramsar Site Bahía Lomas, through participative management in order to identify, coordinate and implement necessary actions and strategies for the protection and conservation of this site.
Cameroon SGF/08/CM/3 A2	52	Implementation of the Action Plan 2008-2009 of the Ramsar Convention in Cameroon	Division des Etudes, des Projets et de la Coopération (DEPC) MINEP	40'000	76'763	Development of management plans and of a regional network "CongoWet". Cameroon aims to put in place a management plan for its 3 designated Ramsar sites as well as other newly identified wetlands that are rich in biodiversity, support a multitude of people and industries. The degradation of these wetlands is due to anthropogenic actions and climate change. The purpose of this project is to: put into action the Ramsar Strategic Plan of 2009-2014; ensure participation and coordination of activities in wetlands at the local and national level; finalize the creation of the regional network of Central African wetlands 'CongoWet' and increase the surface area of designated wetlands in Cameroon.
Uruguay SGF/08/UY/1 A2	51	Implementaion of the National Strategy to remove the site Bañados del este y Franja Costera from the Montreux Record	Dirección General de Recursos Naturales Renovables – MGAP Ing. Agr. Dra. Angelita Gómez	34'960	46'916	Removing a Ramsar site from the Montreux Record. The project aims to remove the Ramsar site Bañados del Este y Franja Costera from the Montreux Record (included in 1990). This is to be accomplished through an assessment of the current conditions and those that put the site in the Montreux Record, a project on hydrological regulation in the site, and the designation of new Ramsar sites to compensate for the damages caused in Bañados del Este y Franja Costera.

Country	Score	Project title	Project beneficiary	Amount requested (CHF)	Total budget (CHF)	Summary
Belize SGF/08/BZ/1 A2	50	Ecological Assessment of the Sarstoon-Temash National Park Sphagnum Bog, Belize, Central America	Lynette Gomez, Sarstoon Temash Institute for Indigenous Management	40'000	123'329	Inventory, biodiversity assessment and participatory approach. This project aims to elaborate a detailed ecological assessment of the Sarstoon Temash National Park (Ramsar site) Sphagnum peatland, a unique ecosystem across all of Central America, which will provide information on the extent and condition of the wetland area through florist and faunal surveys, on the environmental history of this regionally unique ecosystem and will highlight its biodiversity and conservation value and will promote participation of local indigenous communities in the conservation of the national park. Information collected during this assessment will highlight the biodiversity and conservation value of this Sphagnum peatland and further promote its conservation nationally and regionally.
Argentina SGF/08/AR/1 A2	50	Argentinean wetlands: a contribution to the inventory of our wetlands	Fundación Humedales / Wetlands International	39'979	80'130	Elaboration of a technical publication on wetlands. There is currently lack of updated and published information regarding the main ecosystems of wetlands in Argentina as a source for its identification, conservation and wise use. This project aims to elaborate a technical publication "Wetlands of Argentina", which will compile and synthesize the available information of their wetlands, to make it accessible and to be used as a tool for wetland management. It will be widely distributed among the key actors dealing with the conservation and wise use of wetlands in this country.
Guatemala SGF/08/GT/1 A2	50	Wise use of the Rio Sarstún, an area for multiple users	Marco Vinicio Cerezo, Fundación para el Desarrollo y la Conservación (FUNDAECO)	38'873	58'393	Participatory approach, Communication, Education and Public Awareness. This project aims to strengthen the active participation of local communities and the wise use of the transboundary watershed of Río Sarstún (2 Ramsar sites: Sarstoon Temash in Belize, and Reserva de Usos Múltiples del Río Sarstún in Guatemala). The main activities will include workshops for local communities and fishermen on the wise use of wetlands, new guidelines for the sustainable use of fishing resources, mapping of threats in the watershed, and posters.

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Mauritius SGF/08/MU/1 A2	44	Community Empowerment for the Wise Use of the Marine Wetland of Rivulet Terre Rouge Estuary Bird Sanctuary	Mr Kheswar Beeharry Panray - Environmental Protection & Conservation Organisation - EPCO	33'955	43'250	Communication, education and public awareness Rivulet Terre Rouge Bird Sanctuary is a Ramsar site in Mauritius that contains several species of endemic flora and fauna. It also serves as a refuge and forging ground for migratory birds. RTEBS faces several threats such as the over exploitation of resources by the local community, open yard poultry, boat movement, bird flu threat from migratory birds etc. In order to mitigate the effects of these threats this project aims to educate and prepare the local community on how to address these problems. The education programme they suggest is in line with that of CEPA, Agenda 21 and the MDGs. The main activities include learning workshops, the preparation and implementation of an adaptation strategy plan.
Marshall Islands SGF/08/RM/01 A2	43	The designation and improved management of Marshall Islands' second wetland of international importance, Namdrik Atoll	Marshall Island Environment Protection Authority (RMIEPA) John Bungitak	40'000	53'519	Site designation and participative management plan. The project aims to designate a second Ramsar Site in Marshall Islands using a participatory approach with all the stakeholders and the baseline inventory biodiversity of atoll's wetlands. It also plans to develop a management plan for the site.
Liberia SGF/08/LR/1 A2	41	Initiating Management Actions at the Ramsar sites in Liberia	Mrs Cecelia Kollie, national focal point, Environmental Protection Agency	39'947	44'692	Developing training, management plans and a legislative framework for Liberian wetlands. Liberia has five Ramsar sites that face threats which affect the flora and fauna species, as well as local communities who depend on the wetlands for their subsistence. This project aims to improve management by involving the wetland technicians, local community members and other stakeholders in: enhancing of knowledge and understanding of the ecological processes, values and services of wetlands; training on how to manage and use their wetlands; developing an appropriate wetlands legislative framework for Liberia; developing planning and management systems for Liberia's wetlands; and establishing a computerized database on the Ramsar sites in the country.

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Niger SGF/08/NE/1 A2	41	Elaborating the National Policy for Wetlands in Niger	Monsieur Abdou Malam Issa. Ingénieur des Eaux et Forêts. Directeur de la Faune et de la Chasse.	40'000	40'000	National wetland policy and actions plan. The purpose of this project is to prepare for the implementation of the national policy concerning management of the 12 Ramsar designated wetlands in Niger as directed by Recommendation 6.9 from the 6th Conference of the Parties.
Guinea SGF/08/GN/1 A2	40	Conservation of the West African Manatee (<i>Trichechus senegalensis</i>) in the Tristao islands	Réseau Guinéen des Zones Humides	38'336	53'360	Education and public awareness. The Tristao Islands found in the North-West region of the Guinea Republic are composed of various ecosystems that act as habitats to the endangered West African Manatee (<i>Trichechus senegalensis</i>) which is on the IUCN Red List. The purpose of this project is to put in place conservation measures to protect the manatee: increase awareness of the value of the West African Manatee; educate local communities on the impact of their activities on the manatees; put in place management plans to stop destruction of the habitats; promote alternative livelihood activities to ensure change in the activities of hunters and other manatee exploiters.
Gabon SGF/08/GA/1 A2	38	Implementation of the National Wetland Policy	Côme NDJOKOUNDA, National Focal Point, Direction de l'Environnement et de la Nature	30'822	30'822	Capacity building, identification and designation of new Ramsar sites. There are 6 already designated Ramsar sites and 3 proposed sites in Gabon. However there remain numerous unstudied wetlands. The implementation of the Convention at the national level is faced with several problems e.g. lack of tools and mechanisms with which to effectively implement the convention. The purpose of this project is to change this by: creating a National Ramsar Committee; Identification and designation of new sites; Educating the individuals and institutions responsible for sustainable use of resources in wetlands; and creation of an online national Ramsar site network.

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Kenya SGF/08/KE/1 A2	37	Development of Wetland Bio-indicators through community Approach to Sustainable Utilisation of Natural Resource	Allai Orimba, Lake Victoria Sunset Birders, Birdlife Partner in Kenya	39'970	46'060	Development of Wetlands bioindicators. Combating biodiversity loss in the Dunga, Kusa, Koguta and Yala Wetlands which form part of the Lake Victoria shores is essential. They are habitats to numerous endemic bird species and have various benefits and values to local communities. They face severe anthropogenic threats: unsustainable agriculture and over harvesting of papyrus. This project proposes development of wetland bio-indicators which will also play a role in the effort to: influence the government of Kenya to designate the four wetlands as community conservation areas; to develop national wetland policy; to allocate a satisfactory budget for environmental activities and to mainstream environmental education.
Albania SGF/08/AL/01 A2	36	Natural resources and Ramsar Status approach for the authorities, management institutions and other parties with interest in the Lake Skhodra	REC albania	37'638	42'533	Public awareness and capacity building. The project aims at raising public awareness and capacity building about the Lake Shkodra and River Buna Ramsar Site in the region throughout a conference that will bring together all different stakeholders including private sector, government bodies and universities. The site is the largest lake on the Balkan Peninsula, and it is shared between Albania and Montenegro. The project will strength the cooperation and cross border exchange between these two countries. Amongst other activities, also a study tour to the Butrint Ramsar Site for exchanges on the best lessons learnt and also to promote a better network between site managers.
Bangladesh SGF/08/BD/01 A2	35	People acting through social mobilization for the conservation and wise use of the wetlands in the southwest coast of Bangladesh	Coastal Development Partnership, Mr. Syed Jahangir Hasan Masum	40'000	45'740	CEPA and site designation. The project aims at publishing booklet, poster, leaflet, etc to disseminate Ramsar Convention messages among local communities and to promote wetland wise use. The objective is also to design a website describing tools, activities and projects relevant to Sundarban wetlands and to update information to promote the site designation.

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Georgia SGF/08/GE/01 A2	34	Atlas and Field guide of Kolkheti peatlands and its flora	Society for Conservation of Wild Nature "Tchaobi"	38'815	38'815	Communication. The Wetlands of Central Kolkheti are unique peatland ecosystems found on the Black sea coast that supports many endangered and rare plant and animal species. The rapidly increased economic pressure and the lack of knowledge on the biological value of this area expose the site to high vulnerability and big threat. The aim of this project is filling the gap in knowledge with compiling an exhaustive and compact field guide book with maps and drawings for this site that will be widely distributed, that could assist stakeholders in their decision making processes and could raise its protection level.