



# **INCLUSIVE GEF ASSEMBLY CHALLENGE PROGRAM**

## **CALL FOR SUBMISSION OF INITIATIVES**

**SUBMIT BY MAY 29, 2023**

## Background

1. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) was established on the eve of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit to help tackle our planet's most pressing environmental problems. Today, the GEF is an international partnership of 185 countries, international institutions, civil society organizations (CSOs), and the private sector that addresses global environmental issues.
2. The Government of Canada will host the Seventh GEF Assembly in August 2023. Held every four years, the Assembly is the GEF's highest governing body and gathers representatives of all its 185 member countries, 18 implementing agencies, civil society organizations (CSOs), Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities, academia, media, and business leaders to celebrate achievements. The event is a landmark occasion to share knowledge, ideas, and solutions to some of the world's most pressing environmental issues.
3. Canada's vision for hosting the GEF Assembly includes its commitment to inclusive engagement and community building, including meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities, youth, women and girls, civil society and CSOs, and communities engaged in delivering global environmental benefits and building resilience to climate change through inclusive and innovative approaches. In this context, the Assembly presents an opportunity to engage non-state actors in GEF's mission by recognizing and supporting their work at the grassroots level on transformative solutions for the planet and people.
4. To realize this vision, the GEF Secretariat is launching an **Inclusive GEF Assembly Challenge Program**<sup>1</sup> with the engagement of GEF Constituencies and with support from the Government of Canada as the host of the Seventh GEF Assembly. The objective of this Challenge Program is to catalyze inclusive and innovative on-the-ground action, to be implemented by a wide range of partners, that addresses global environmental priorities and climate change challenges. This could cover topics such as climate action, nature-based solutions, sustainable land and water management, water security, sustainable livelihoods, institutional empowerment, knowledge management and other innovative solutions.
5. This special initiative for the GEF Assembly builds on the experiences and success from the Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation, which has been implemented since 2019 in alignment with the *GEF-7 Programming Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change for the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and the Special Climate Change*

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<sup>1</sup> GEF 2022, [Inclusive GEF Assembly Challenge Program](#), Council Information document GEF/LDCF.SCCF.33/Inf.04

*Fund (SCCF)*, and to be expanded in the GEF-8 period.<sup>2,3</sup> The objective of the Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation is to catalyze innovation to harness the power of private sector actors for achieving adaptation results. With two calls for proposals, the Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation is currently supporting close to 20 highly innovative proposals that are proposed and executed by a wide range of partners, including CSOs, philanthropic organizations, start-ups, private sector partnerships, micro-finance providers, among others.

### **Call for Submission of Initiatives**

6. The GEF is organizing a call for submission of initiatives under the Inclusive GEF Assembly Challenge Program. Submissions selected under the program will be recognized in a high-level Ministerial event at the Seventh GEF Assembly in Vancouver, Canada. Each initiative will also be provided up to \$100,000 of funding support to maximize its impacts in delivering adaptation and environmental benefits of global and local importance. The amount of funding for the winners will be decided by the GEF Secretariat based on fund availability and proposed activities. The winning initiatives will also be connected through a global coordination and knowledge platform for peer learning, partnership development and capacity building. The funding for the Challenge Program will be provided through the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) through a medium-sized project (MSP).
7. The submitted initiatives will be prioritized and nominated with the engagement of the 32 GEF constituencies.
8. To be eligible for support, the activities in the proposed initiatives need to be implemented in a developing country/countries and/or with participation of developing country personnel or institutions.
9. Institutions from developed country constituencies are allowed to submit initiatives if the activities are implemented in/for developing countries with benefits. Furthermore, the submissions may also support north-south partnerships and networks/cross-learning opportunities, where some active participants may be from developed countries.
10. The initiatives proposed for submission can be implemented by public community-based organizations, civil society, CSOs, Indigenous Peoples organizations, Local Community

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<sup>2</sup> GEF 2018, [GEF Programming Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change for the LDCF and the SCCF and Operational Improvements](#), Council document GEF/LDCF.SCCF.24/03.

<sup>3</sup> GEF 2022, [GEF Programming Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change for the LDCF and the SCCF for the GEF-8 Period of 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2026 and Operational Improvements](#), Council document GEF/LDCF.SCCF.32/04/Rev.1.

groups, youth, and women and girls groups/institutions. Submissions from these organizations with activities implemented in GEF recipient countries are eligible.

11. The proponents can directly submit their initiatives to the GEF Secretariat. The GEF Secretariat will facilitate the process of selection of winners as outlined in the section “Application Modality”. The winners will be invited to the GEF Assembly in Canada where their work will be acknowledged. GEF Secretariat may provide funding support for travel and other logistics support to facilitate participation of winners in the Assembly. The proposed funding support to selected initiatives for further implementation will be grant-based, while the grant resources can also be utilized as micro-finance and other forms of blended finance. The GEF Secretariat will engage GEF Agencies at a later stage in this regard in line with GEF policies and procedures.

### **Selection Criteria**

12. The selection process will identify and prioritize initiatives that are aligned with the goals of the Challenge Program. The following criteria will be used for the selection:
  - (a) Success and potential of ongoing/recent initiatives in addressing global environmental and climate change problems and their impacts on the ground;
  - (b) Impact and extent of engagement of groups or organizations including: local communities, LGBTQ2S+, civil society, youth, women, Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities and people living with disabilities;
  - (c) Activities or interventions having an inclusive approach in engaging stakeholders and targeting beneficiaries in the delivery of climate adaptation and global environmental benefits;
  - (d) Degree of innovation including, but not limited to, technologies, finance, capacity building, business models, and partnership models in local solutions to environmental and climate challenges;
  - (e) Commitment to learning and sharing of experiences;
  - (f) Willingness to engage in the GEF partnership and respect GEF policies and standards;
  - (g) Clarity, quality, and feasibility of the proposed activities and budget;
  - (h) Sustainability of the initiative and potential of scaling up.

13. Submissions will be assessed based on these criteria and selected to ensure a diverse and balanced distribution among eligible regions, as well as a range of stakeholders and proponents.
14. All submissions are expected to be from ongoing/existing initiatives by proponents and need to describe their impact and what activities will be advanced with the funds requested through this Inclusive Assembly Challenge Program to maximize adaptation and global environmental benefits. Initiatives submitted by individuals will not be accepted.
15. The funds for the Challenge Program winners will be made available through an MSP from the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF). In addition to the individual projects, the Challenge Program will also finance a global component to enhance learning outcomes among selected institutions and generate new knowledge for global sharing.

### **Application Modality**

16. The submissions can be made by any public<sup>4</sup> or civil society group or organization. They can also be made by, Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities, persons living with disabilities, LGBTQ2S+, youth, women and girls' organizations. Only one submission per organization will be considered.
17. The submissions describing the initiatives should include the information indicated in the application template with a proposed budget in US dollars. The submissions will be pre-screened by the GEF Secretariat based on the key selection criteria indicated above and then the shortlisted initiatives will be shared with the GEF Constituencies for their nomination.
18. The GEF Secretariat will constitute a Selection Committee which will review the nominations and make the final selection. The Selection Committee will comprise of the GEF Secretariat and the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) of the GEF. Representatives from GEF's relevant stakeholder groups, such as the CSO Network, Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group (IPAG), and Gender Partnership will be invited to participate in the Selection Committee. A representative from a youth-based organization will also be invited to participate.
19. The initiatives selected by the Selection Committee will be presented at the Assembly. The proponents of these selected initiatives will be further supported to develop their proposals for potential funding by the SCCF and will also receive capacity and network building support. The funding to these selected initiatives through SCCF will be provided through a Medium-Sized Project (MSP), managed according to the GEF Project and

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<sup>4</sup> Public communities based organizations

Program Cycle Policy<sup>5</sup> and Guidelines.<sup>6</sup> An identified GEF partner Agency will submit the project as per standard GEF procedures for the review of the GEF Secretariat via the GEF Portal. Opportunities to learn from, and interact with, relevant GEF stakeholder groups will also be supported.

20. GEF finance for the initiatives supported through this Challenge Program will be outside any GEF related country allocations or caps and, therefore, will not affect them. Letters of endorsement from the GEF Operational Focal Point are not required for the submission of initiatives but may be required prior to inclusion in the PIF or CEO Approval packages.

### **Submission and Contact**

21. Please [fill out this online form](#) for submission of initiatives.
22. **Initiatives are to be submitted by 29 May 2023.** Any questions regarding the call for proposals should be directed to [challengeprogram@thegef.org](mailto:challengeprogram@thegef.org).
23. Finalists will be contacted by the end of June 2023. Winners will be announced at the Seventh GEF Assembly in August 2023. The GEF Secretariat will not respond to individual queries about the status of the selection process. Only the finalists will be contacted by the GEF Secretariat.

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<sup>5</sup> [Project and Program Cycle Policy](#), Policy/OP/PL/01, December 20, 2018.

<sup>6</sup> GEF, 2020, [Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy](#), GEF/C.59/Inf.3 July 20, 2020.