



Small Grants Programme to Promote Indigenous Groups in Tropical Forests

Concept Paper

6 February 2007

Background

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), together with the European Commission, is currently implementing the “Small Grants Programme for the Operations to Promote Tropical Forests (SGP PTF)”, a regional programme that operates in 8 countries in South and Southeast Asia, of which Malaysia is one.

In Malaysia, the SGP PTF was established with the overall objective of promoting sustainable forest management by local stakeholders. The principal thrust of the SGP PTF is the execution by civil society organisations of small forest related projects at the community level. SGP PTF aims to alleviate the lives of the poor, dependent on the forests by strengthening the link between economic enterprise and sustainable forest use and management. Existing projects under SGP PTF support activities that encourage capacity building in community forestry and enhance the indigenous communities’ ability to upgrade their lives. The strategies identified by the communities were specific to their needs and included activities such as in-situ conservation, ecotourism, handicrafts, agroforestry, natural resource management and revival of traditional knowledge.

UNDP Malaysia is committed to trying to support the continuation and replication of the innovations in community forestry developed under SGP PTF beyond the current funding cycle which ends in September 2007. UNDP Malaysia is seeking partnerships with financial and technical support from multi-stakeholders to ensure continuation of a small grants programme targeting forest-based indigenous communities. Financial commitments may comprise all or part of the costs necessary to undertake the programme. Financial commitments may comprise:

- (i) financial contributions as part of a pooled funding arrangement to be managed by UNDP and/or
- (ii) support for the sustainability of individual ongoing projects

Justification

Through micro-grants, the new small grants programme (SGP) will continue to develop alternative and sustainable livelihood initiatives for indigenous communities most of whom are categorized as hardcore poor, enterprises and entrepreneurial skills that significantly decrease the pressure on forest resources. The programme will encourage capacity building within small community organizations. The SGP seeks to make the community organizations to be efficient project managers, able to plan, report, evaluate and manage small funds. An aim is that they become more pro-active and able to engage in multi-stakeholder dialogues.

Through knowledge management, the programme will provide visibility, awareness and an avenue to disseminate innovations, experiences and best practices learned. The programme will continue to demonstrate the strong link between natural resource management, poverty alleviation and the preservation of local indigenous knowledge. As with the current SGP PTF the programme will provide SGP provides a support system that assists small communities access technical assistance and develop their capacity in independent project management. It will also continue to empower indigenous women and recognizes the need to be gender sensitive in bringing about sustainable forest management.

SGP will be promoting the following Millennium Development Goals:

MDG 1 - Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.

MDG 3 - Promote gender equality and empower women

MDG 7 - Ensure environmental sustainability

SGP will support the following thrusts of the Ninth Malaysia Plan:

Thrust 3 - address persistent socio-economic inequalities constructively and productively,

Thrust 4 - improve the standard and sustainability of quality of life

Thrust 5 - strengthening the institution and implementation capacity.

Objectives

The overall objective is to reduce hardcore poverty among the forest-dependent indigenous communities by strengthening the link between economic enterprise and sustainable forest use and management. Specifically the aims are:

- To support initiatives that promote and demonstrate community-based management and sustainable use of forest resources;
- To provide capacity building towards implementation of sustainable, income-generating initiatives in remote communities;
- To support the documentation of best practices in sustainable forest management and the spread of successful community level strategies and innovations to influence policy makers;
- To support activities that will lead to policy recommendation/formulation based on actual experience of the SGP and its partner communities in implementing forestry and forest-related projects;
- To encourage state governments to scale up initiatives started through the SGP;
- To support selected ongoing projects initiated under the SGP PTF.

Project Outputs

- Decrease local hardcore poverty among the indigenous groups,
- Increase in community-initiated sustainable livelihood projects,
- Promotion of Malaysia's commitment to sustainable forestry management,
- Production of publications on best practices in sustainable livelihoods for indigenous communities, especially women
- Increased awareness of the situation of forest-based indigenous communities

Timeline

The project will be undertaken from September 2007 to December 2009.

Management

The new SGP will be guided by a national steering committee including representatives from government (EPU, NRE), civil society, private sector and academia. Project funds will be managed according to UNDP's global standards of transparency and full accountability. Regular monitoring will take place and there will be an annual evaluation.

Programme Budget

The cost of the programme will be USD 1 million over the period of 2 ¼ years. Of this total amount, a minimum of USD700,000 (70%) will be dispersed as grants for community projects.

It is proposed that there will be a maximum of 18 grants dispensed over the two year period, ranging from a maximum of USD50,000 for any individual grant to a minimum of USD30,000, thus implying an average of USD40,000. Approximately 50% of these grants will be given to ongoing initiatives and the other 50% to entirely new initiatives. For all grants, there will be a new call for proposals and the proposals will be selected by the Steering Committee.

Budget Item	USD	Percentage
Microgrants	700,000	70.0
Training, Workshops and Meetings	15,600	1.5
Visibility	30,000	3.0
Monitoring and Evaluation	14,000	1.4
Office Staff	141,750	14.0
Office Equipment	17,700	2.0
Programme Review & Audit	16,000	1.6
General Management Services	30,000	3.0
Miscellaneous	16,600	2.0
TOTAL	1,017,150	100.0

February 07, 2007