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4 April 2011

NOTIFICATION

Expedited Access to GEF Funding for Revising National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and Submission of Fifth National Report

Dear Madam/Sir,

I am very pleased to bring to your attention the communication addressed to the GEF Operational Focal Points from Mrs. Monique Barbut, Chief Executive Officer and Chairperson of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), with respect to the expanded and expedited access to GEF funding for enabling activities including national biodiversity strategies and action plans in response to the guidance from the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Mrs. Barbut emphasized that the GEF has reserved up to \$500,000 for enabling activities, per country and per focal area, outside of the STAR allocations. Parties can choose one of the three modalities to access the requisite resources: (i) Direct Access with the GEF Secretariat; (ii) Through a GEF Agency or (iii) Through the UNEP Umbrella projects under development, directed specifically for LDCs and SIDs.

The Secretariat of the Convention has been working very closely with the Secretariat of the Global Environment Facility, in order to assist in your efforts to update and revise national biodiversity strategies and action plans as well as prepare national reports. The GEF intervention at the national level will be complemented by the on-going support at regional and sub-regional level for the revisions of NBSAPs financed under the Japan Biodiversity Fund.

Please accept, Madam/Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Ahmed Djoghlaif
Executive Secretary

Attachment

To: National Focal Points of the Convention, SBSTTA, ABS, Protected Areas, Clearing-House Mechanism

April 01, 2011

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to inform you of the GEF Secretariat's plans to assist GEF-eligible Parties meet their reporting obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The many enabling activities, such as national communications under the UNFCCC as well as National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans and biosafety reports under the CBD, remain a top GEF priority. Therefore I want to emphasize that the GEF will continue to provide the resources for these activities, with the GEF-5 provision that has reserved up to \$500,000, per country and per focal area, outside of the STAR allocations.

Given our considerable experience with these activities, we now have put in place a number of ways for you to access resources for projects: this includes National Communications under the UNFCCC, and all of the biodiversity enabling activities under the CBD.

The first way is through direct access. As a result of the reforms which I have put in place countries can now access the GEF directly---without going through an agency--- for enabling activities. If you wish to use the direct access modality, please contact the GEF secretariat directly.

The second way is directly through a regular GEF agency. You can contact your preferred GEF agency directly, and they will work with you to develop the relevant project proposal and documentation for submission to the GEF Secretariat for approval. If, for any reason, you encounter difficulties in accessing a proper agency for these activities, I would like to hear from you immediately.

Third, there are currently two special UNEP Umbrella programs under development, one for climate change national communications, and the other for National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (biodiversity national reports), directed specifically for LDCs and SIDs. If you wish to participate in these programs, you will need to send an endorsement letter directly to UNEP.


In summary, you can choose either one of these three modalities to access the resources you require: (i) Direct Access with the GEF Secretariat, (ii) Through a GEF Agency or (iii) Through the UNEP Umbrella projects under development.

Given the urgency of the deadline for the Second National Report on biosafety (September 30, 2011), the GEF Secretariat has been working with UNEP and the CBD Secretariat to finalize three umbrella MSPs that will expedite disbursement of the small grants, so that you can prepare the reports and submit them to the CBD Secretariat. We expect to finalize the approval of these MSPs very shortly. An announcement will be made in the GEF website, and another letter will be sent to GEF operational focal points and CBD focal points announcing the project.

We continue to be committed to working closely with you to provide as many options as possible to ensure the timely and effective disbursement of resources to allow the completion of these relevant activities. For GEF-5, we would like to emphasize an agenda that is country-driven and this is another reason why we have offered these various options to you.

If you need further information, please contact us at the GEF Secretariat.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barbut', with a large, sweeping flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Monique Barbut
CEO and Chairperson
Global Environment Facility