

Ecological Connectivity in GEF-8 Integrated Programs

The new [Montreal-Kunming Global Biodiversity Framework](#) adopted by the 15th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) emphasizes the importance and contribution of **ecological connectivity** to achieve environmental conservation commitments, including

- Goal A as a fundamental requirement for the functionality of ecosystems;
- Targets 2 as a part of maximizing the benefits and outcomes of restoration for entire landscapes and seascapes;
- Target 3 to achieve 30x30 objectives of land, freshwater, and marine areas being effectively protected, conserved, and managed; and
- Target 12 for increasing benefits from “green and blue spaces” in urban/densely populated areas.

Toward implementing the new framework, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) has issued a [Call for Expression of Interest \(EOIs\)](#) to countries through their Operational Focal Points for supporting 11 Integrated Programs (IPs) under the eighth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund (GEF-8, July 2022 to June 2026). The Call was accompanied by a [template](#) with detailed instructions for completion, including requirements for eligibility, details for demonstrating commitment toward the program-level objectives, and potential for multiple global environmental benefits. **The deadline for submitting EOIs to the GEF Secretariat is 17 February 2023.**

The [Center for Large Landscape Conservation \(CLLC\)](#), [IUCN WCPA Connectivity Conservation Specialist Group \(CCSG\)](#), and partners are available to collaborate in a diversity of ways to consider more specific opportunities as expressions, proposals, and projects are prepared and implemented across the IPs. This could include working with countries to:

- Increase understanding about ecological connectivity science, policy, and practice;
- Assess and monitor effects of various sectoral impacts on the connectivity of terrestrial, freshwater, and marine ecosystems including wildlife species and habitats;
- Identify, prioritize, plan, and manage for conserving connectivity values;
- Apply science-based solutions for avoiding and mitigating fragmentation; and
- Enhance capacity to measure and report progress.

Overall, the IPs provide multiple opportunities for accelerating the conservation of ecological connectivity, thereby contributing to implementation of framework as well as numerous other [international policy commitments](#). The following Integrated Program objectives and key interventions contain entry points for maintaining, enhancing, and restoring ecological connectivity within and across boundaries:

Wildlife Conservation for Development IP:

- *Maintaining and restoring connectivity of wildlife populations and landscapes through generating value from wildlife and its habitats will reduce biodiversity loss and enhance human wellbeing.*

Greening Transportations Infrastructure Development IP:

- *Halting and mitigating increasing habitat fragmentation and loss of connectivity due to infrastructure development, by avoiding placing infrastructure in critical ecosystems; maintaining flows / connectivity for fluvial transport; and maintaining or enhancing wildlife crossings or other natural infrastructure to increase connectivity and facilitate the movement of animals.*

Amazon, Congo, and Critical Forest Biomes IP:

- *Improving connectivity of forest, freshwater and aquatic resources in each biome at national, sub-national, transboundary levels which also help resident and migratory species.*

Ecosystem Restoration IP:

- *Approaches for restoration of degraded ecosystems, with a focus on ecosystem types which are selected on the basis of various criteria including habitat and species connectivity.*

Sustainable Cities IP:

- *Integrating nature in urban development and regional planning aiming at bringing nature into cities.*

Blue and Green Islands IP:

- *Developing land use/coastal zone planning to support conservation and sustainable use of critical ecosystems, sustainable management of marine and coastal ecosystems, and sustainable fisheries management.*

Net-Zero Nature-Positive Accelerator IP:

- *Preserving and enhancing carbon sinks in natural ecosystems, including forests and agroforestry systems with large carbon stocks such as peatlands that are crucial for many migratory species including dugongs and many species of birds.*

Consult the [Guidance Note for Countries and GEF Agencies on Participation in the GEF-8 Integrated Programs](#) for more information and for IP-specific criteria for country eligibility.

Summary of GEF-8 Process

Important Dates/ Deadlines	Activities
16 January 2023	GEF to issue official call and template for “Expression of Interests” (EOIs) for participation in the IPs. The official call for EOIs will contain detailed instructions and requirements for each IP so interested countries can provide the best possible representation of their commitment to contribute toward program targets and outcomes. Governments to decide if they will submit a GEF-8 proposal under one of the Integrated Programs and if so, with which implementing agency and executing partner(s) they will work for their child project.
17 February 2023	Deadline for submission of completed EOIs. Governments need to submit EOIs with the support of their selected implementing agencies. Selected countries will be notified.
31 March 2023	Deadline for submission of Concept Note templates for child projects to be included in the Program Framework Document.
12 April 2023	Deadline for Project Identification Forms (PIF) to be received by the GEF Governments to decide if they will submit a GEF-8 proposal as a stand-alone project using STAR resources from the biodiversity, climate change and/or land degradation focal areas (STAR resources are now fully flexible for all countries).

*Note: Subject to extent of subscription by countries and availability of funds, an initial batch of IPs with fully developed PFDs will be considered for presentation at the **June 2023 Council meeting**, following the regular calendar for composition of Work Program. Fully subscribed IPs with PFDs that do not make it into the June 2023 Work Program will be included in the **December 2023 Work Program**.*

GEF-8 Contacts

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Ecosystem Restoration	Conservation International (CI)	Miguel Morales, mamorales@conservation.org
Sustainable Cities	World Bank (WB)	
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Congo Basin	UNEP	
Meso-America	IUCN	Sebastien Delahaye, sebastien.delahaye@iucn.org
West Africa	CI	
Indo-Malay	IUCN-FAO	
Circular Solutions to Plastic Pollution	UNEP-WWF	
Blue and Green Islands	UNDP	
Greening Transportation Infrastructure Development	WWF	
Net-Zero Nature-Positive Accelerator	UNEP-ADB-CAF	
Wildlife Conservation for Development	WB	Inela Weeks iweeks@worldbank.org
Elimination of Hazardous Chemicals from Supply Chains	UNEP	

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