

TERMS OF REFERENCE
Guiana Shield Facility
National Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee

Background

The ecosystems of the Guiana shield region of South America (hereinafter referred to as the Guiana Shield eco-region) include the large forested mountain systems that form the watersheds between the Amazon and Orinoco rivers, as well as savannahs and wetlands. Specifically, they cover 250 million hectares of mostly pristine rain forests, bounded roughly by the Amazon River to the South, the Japari-Caqueta River to the Southwest, the Sierra de Chiribiquete to the West, the Orinoco and Vichada Rivers to the Northwest and North, and the Atlantic Ocean to the East.



Map of the Guiana Shield eco-region

In ecological terms, the Guiana Shield eco-region is of immense importance to the world. The eco-region is made up of several unique ecosystems that:

- store approximately 10-15% of global freshwater supply
- store about 50 billion tonnes of carbon
- support an estimated 20,000 vascular plant species, of which about 35% is endemic
- provide habitat for rich biodiversity, including 975 species of avifauna, 282 mammalian species, 280 reptilian species, 272 amphibian species and 2,200 fish species.

Despite the known threats (illegal logging, gold mining, and large scale infrastructure and agricultural activities) to the integrity of the unique ecosystems, the countries of the region pursue alternative development paths that increasingly focus on maximising use of the value of natural resources and minimising their loss or degradation. However, a comprehensive regional planning process for the conservation and sustainable development of the Guiana Shield is needed to complement individual country efforts to manage common problems and pursue region-wide human development.

The presentation and circulation of updated information on the Guiana Shield is critical to informing the regional planning process as well as regional priorities for conservation and sustainable development. There is good knowledge of the importance of the unique ecosystems of the Guiana Shield, but exchange of information for national and regional cooperation to address common threats to the ecosystems is lacking. The Guiana Shield Facility (GSF) project aims to fill this information gap.

The GSF is a multi-donor funding facility, which aims to support the conservation and sustainable development of the unique ecosystems of the bio-diverse Guiana Shield eco-region. It is an initiative of the European Union and UNDP and builds on the gains made during previous phases of the Guiana Shield Initiative (GSI).

Objectives of the GSF

The **overall objective** of the GSF is to promote and support the conservation and sustainable development of the Guiana Shield eco-region. The strategy is to set up the GSF as a multi-donor funding facility for the long-term financing of the activities needed to ensure the ecological integrity of the Guiana Shield eco-region, one of the most important eco-regions in the world.

To help achieve this overall objective, the following **specific objectives** have been formulated:

- The GSF to be a long-term forum and vehicle to address national and overarching regional, in particular, environmental issues related to management of the ecosystems of the Guiana Shield eco-region;
- To maintain the GSF as a sustainable financial vehicle for the conservation and sustainable development of the Guiana Shield eco-region;
- To support the exchange of knowledge and capacity building to enhance the conservation and sustainable development of the Guiana Shield eco-region.

Governance structure of the GSF

The GSF and GSF Secretariat are hosted by the United Nations Development Programme, represented by the Guyana country office. The UNDP will set up a Regional Advisory Board (RAB) and, in each participating country (potentially, Brazil, Colombia, French Guiana, Guyana, Suriname, Venezuela), a National Multi-stakeholder Steering Committee (NMSSC).

Regional Advisory Board

The RAB shall be a non-voting body and works by consensus. The RAB shall meet once a year in person and in the most cost-efficient way. Additional consultations may take place preferably in writing or by e-mail.

The main responsibilities of the RAB shall be:

- a) Within the framework of the GSF, provide strategic direction on the operations of the GSF and on related approaches
- b) Give support to the process of embedding the GSF in the Guiana Shield eco-region
- c) Support trans-boundary and regional cooperation within the Guiana Shield eco-region
- d) Provide feedback on progress reports, monitoring and evaluation exercises with regard to the operations of the Facility in meeting its objectives
- e) Provide input and/or guidance to transboundary and regional work plans and budgets as well as related reports and outputs produced
- f) Provide guidance, exchange lessons learned, good practice guidance on work plans established by the NMSSCs
- g) Provide guidance to draft terms of references related to monitoring and evaluation exercises
- h) Serve as a platform for exchange of lessons learned, best practice
- i) Play a role in promoting the GSF to potential donors

The RAB shall consist of representatives from each NMSSC, UNDP and the community of donors, in total not exceeding 12 (indicative).

National Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee

The NMSSC shall be set up in each participating country of the Guiana Shield eco-region, in consultation with the Governments.

The NMSSC shall be a non-voting body and works by consensus all within the limits and scope of the GSF project.

The NMSSC shall meet twice a year in person in the most cost-efficient way in their relevant country. Additional consultations of the NMSSC shall take place preferably in writing or by e-mail.

The main responsibilities of the NMSSC shall be:

- a) Prepare input for the RAB on strategic directions related to operations of the GSF and on related approaches
- b) Prepare input for the RAB related to the process of embedding the GSF in the region
- c) Elaborate and agree upon relevant work plans and related budgets, expected results and objectively verifiable indicators
- d) Provide feedback on progress reports, outputs produced, relevant monitoring and evaluation exercises
- e) Provide guidance to relevant draft terms of reference for monitoring and evaluation exercises, studies, other
- f) Serve as a platform for exchange of experiences and lessons learnt, best practice

- g) Play a role in promoting the GSF to potential donors that may wish to make financial or in-kind contribution to the GSF
- h) Provide guidance and feedback to the RAB and GSF Secretariat in general as well as on (draft) work plans, budgets, logical framework and other kinds of relevant reports and studies.

Each NMSSC should consist of representatives from government, civil society, UNDP and the donor community.

Observers having an interest in the GSF may be invited to attend meetings. In principle, the GSF will not carry costs related to their participation.

It is recommended to have a rotating chairperson.

Minutes of NMSSC meetings shall be recorded and shall be disseminated to the UNDP, NMSSC members and other interested parties.

Work plans

Financial support under the GSF will be allocated to activities defined in work plans, using templates designed by the UNDP.

The UNDP shall put out a call for proposals and manage the selection process through to allocation of funding in consultation with partners. Call for proposals shall apply to civil society organisations, NGOs and community based organisations.

For this purpose shall be developed:

- Work plans with local/national activities with their expected results and objectively verifiable indicators that have been agreed upon by the relevant NMSSC
- Work plans with cross-boundary/regional activities with their expected results and objectively verifiable indicators that have been agreed upon by the NMSSCs concerned or through the RAB.

All work plans must be approved by the UNDP before GSF funds are released. Operationally, the GSF Secretariat, acting under the direction of the UNDP, will verify the compliance of approved work plans with established rules before final approval by the UNDP.

Matters concerning research, data, as well as results, from conducted and associated research and intellectual property rights and other related matters, will be specified in the work plans, and respect national laws and regulations governing such work.

Proposals from Governments for national or regional-scale projects shall not be subject to a competitive call for proposals.

Communication and visibility

Each work plan must include measures giving visibility to the GSF's donors and investors, other than banners on documents, and if relevant the work plans must include a specific budget to support such measures.

Duration

The duration of the GSF is in principle unlimited but in practice, will depend on the availability of funds and investments. The present phase will run up to 31 December 2014.