

SEF Approved Projects

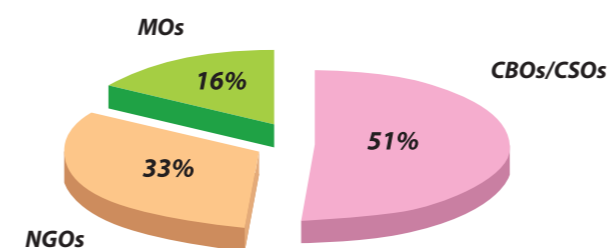
In 2006, after two calls for applications, there were 131 eligible proposals submitted to SEF. 43 projects from different geographical areas throughout the country were approved (see Table).

Table: Geographical Distribution of SEF Projects (2006-2007)

Region	Number of Projects
Northern Mountains	8
Red River Delta	5
North Central	11
South Central	4
Central Highland	3
Eastern South	2
Cuu Long River Delta	7
Nation-wide	3
Total	43

* One project, SEF/09/06, was canceled.

Chart: Classification of SEF Projects by Organization Types



In this period, SEF grantees vary from resource users' groups, interest groups, clubs, small cooperatives, village communities to NGOs and mass organizations (see Chart).



The Sida Environment Fund in 2006 - 2007



Piloting Ideas

In addition to changes in the composition of grantees, SEF also decided to shift its focus from supporting "traditional projects" to piloting new initiatives with specific interest in promoting participation of civil society in environmental protection and natural resource management.

Organisational Development for Civil Society Organisations

During this period, SEF sees a large number of projects allocating significant efforts in supporting the establishment and organisational development of community groups and local organisations. Supported activities include providing participation opportunities for different interest groups, training and capacity building on organizational development and management, and helping raise the voice of communities in environmental issues. Many projects focus on helping small groups at village and commune levels to organise themselves.

Promoting Volunteerism and Networking

In recent years, Vietnam witnesses a new movement in environmental protection with newly established voluntary groups and organisations that gather young volunteers and students to solve environmental problems. Hoi

An Conservation Club and Green Ocean Youth Group in Danang are two typical examples that SEF currently supports through project funding. SEF also provides support to People and Nature Reconciliation (PanNature) for carrying out technical support and networking for environmental youth volunteer groups to seek for and carry out environmental solutions.

Tackling Challenging Environmental Issues

Along with the booming growth of Vietnam's economy, there are many environmental problems arisen that may pose serious threats to the society. During this period, SEF is tackling several challenging environmental issues through its funding support. A project in Vinh city (Nghe An) is working on promoting environmental-friendly food products through creating a scientific and technical network for distributing information about food safety for business, producers and consumers. Another project in Ho Chi Minh city is trying to bring up the environmental conflicts between industrial sector and local communities through an intensive research in industrial parks in Ho Chi Minh, Dong Nai, and Ba Ria-Vung Tau.

Supporting Community Voice

Environmental degradation and loss of natural resources are directly affecting the life of local people in many areas throughout Vietnam. SEF helps raise voice of affected communities through supporting activities that provide opportunities to involve local people in dialogues, express their concerns in meetings and local radio programmes. Most importantly, SEF empower local people and organisations through giving them opportunity to manage and carry out their own projects.

Promoting Right-based Approach

A new approach through model of management, protection and development of sustainable natural forests based on people rights is being piloted in Phu Mau commune by Nature Care, a local NGO in Hue. This project helps inform local people about their rights and supports them practise these rights in the management, protection and development of their forests. In addition to improve knowledge of local people in terms of state laws and policies related to forests, Nature Care also assists communities to maintain and utilise traditional knowledge in land use, forest management and forest protection.

Involving Local Communities in Decision Making

To improve the quality of environmental protection and biodiversity conservation in the buffer zone of Dakrong Natural Reserve (Quang Tri), the Centre for Natural Resources and Environmental Studies has proposed an overall communication solution. This project promotes active participation of communities, especially the Van Kieu ethnic minority, in the process of decision making, implementing, monitoring and evaluating for creating the communication strategy and action plan on environmental protection. It helps encourage local people to participate in the process of decision making for issues related to their life.

Moving forward

A Brief History

During 1990s, there was an emerging trend of local initiatives in the field of environmental protection and natural resource management, which were initiated by different players ranging from grass-root level to national scale. These new change factors include researchers, non-governmental organisations, and grass-root groups, who often have less access to governmental budget or outside funding. However, there was not any funding mechanism that directly supports these initiatives to protect the environment and manage natural resources at community level.

In response to this demand, the Sida Environment Fund (SEF) was established by the Swedish Embassy in Hanoi and started its operation since July 1997. SEF primarily aims at promoting local initiatives in environmental protection and sustainable use of natural resources. Over eight years of implementation, SEF has supported 188 projects throughout Vietnam, covering its influence across the nation. Beyond its achievements in helping protect Vietnam's environment and natural resources,

SEF has undoubly reached a more significant goal: creating a network of local practitioners to solve environmental problems.

To cope up with social change process in Vietnam, SEF recognizes the need to renovate its approach in supporting environmental protection and natural resource conservation. In the period of 2006 and 2007, SEF puts more focus on supporting capacity building and institu-

tional development of civil society organizations. This approach reflects well the current trend of decentralization and more active participation of grass-root players of the society in environmental protection and natural resource management in Vietnam.

SEF Advisory Group

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Mrs. Hoang Thanh Tam

Members

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Mr. Nguyen Huy Hien
Mr. Ly Hoa Khuong
Mr. Tran Vo Hung Son
Mrs. Bui Thi Thanh Thuy
Mr. Trinh Le Nguyen

Secretary cum accountant

Ms. Nguyen Thi Viet Hoa



Channeling Funding to Local Beneficiaries

Funding from Sida is channeled to Vietnamese beneficiaries through SEF (Figure 1). SEF is led and governed by a team of Vietnamese advisors (Advisory Group - AG). AG includes eight members, representing different areas of the society, including government agencies, non-government organisations, academic institutions, and media agencies in different regions. These advisors join and work for SEF on voluntary basis. They provides overall guidance, strategic planning for the fund, establishes project eligibility criteria, screens and selects project proposals to submit to Sida for approval. In addition, AG members also monitor and evaluate funded projects from different geographical areas throughout the country (Figure 2).

SEF provides funding directly to its grantees based on agreement in the approved project documents and project time frame. SEF and AG members gradually visit and check project progress, as well as provide necessary support to local project managers.

Figure 1: SEF Institutional Mechanism

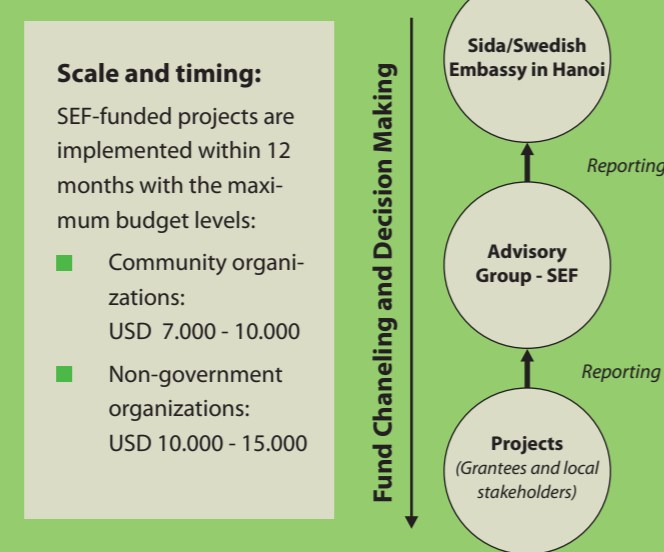
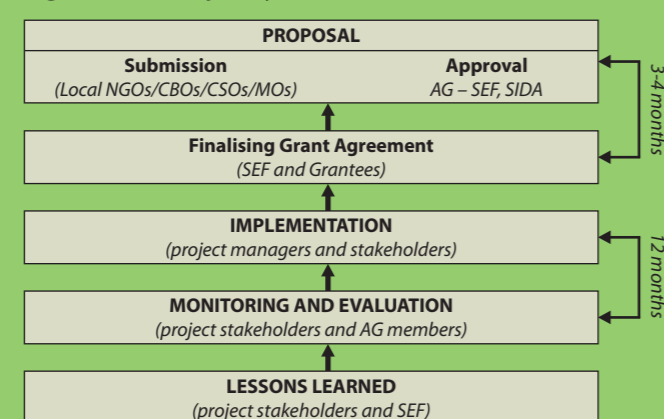


Figure 2: SEF Project Cycle



Supported Activities

- Capacity building and institutional development for non-government organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), and other civil society organizations (CSOs).
- Awareness raising and environmental campaigns at community level.
- Applying of simple environmental friendly technologies with focus on public participation and promotion of traditional knowledge associated with ecosystems.
- Networking of different interest groups, local institutions; and raising their voice on environmental issues.
- Information dissemination through mass media.

Eligibility Criteria for Project Selection

- Supporting to small-scale and short-term projects.
- Having direct positive effects on the environment and reflecting local needs and priorities.
- Managed by NGOs, CBOs, or CSOs.
- Giving priority to projects with participation and representation of poor people, community groups in process of decision-making for environmental issues related to their daily life.
- Giving priority to innovative and catalytic projects and representing geographical balance.

Contact us

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