

Press release

For immediate release

27 January 2026

UNOPS and GEF join forces to strengthen Environmental Leadership in 27 countries

Inter-regional workshop provides financial support and technical training to GEF Operational Focal Points strengthening project oversight and ensure environmental initiatives achieve maximum potential

Istanbul, Türkiye.- UNOPS and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) rolled out an inter-regional training workshop for the GEF Operational Focal Points (OFPs) in 27 countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, the Middle East, Latin America & Caribbean and Asia. The initiative aims to strengthen national capacities for overseeing GEF-funded projects and ensure an effective implementation of environmental initiatives.

Participating countries include Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Türkiye, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan; Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Syria, and Yemen; Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela; as well as Mongolia, Nepal, and Bhutan.

The two-day workshop scheduled for January 27–28, 2026 is hosted by the Government of Türkiye in Istanbul. The workshop offers a comprehensive learning program with an agenda that combines high-level insights from the GEF Secretariat and UNOPS staff with peer-to-peer knowledge sharing among OFPs. To ground these discussions in practice, participants will take part in a field visit to a GEF-funded projects providing a practical perspective on effective project implementation.

“This is important training, because of the crucial role that you play in our joint efforts to tackle climate change, which we know poses an existential threat to our world. We need to be far more ambitious - in planning, implementing and bridging the climate finance gap. Yet the scale of it means no single institution can respond alone. Your role as Operational Focal Points is key, coordinating across government, engaging civil society, and connecting with local communities. We know that lasting impact comes when countries lead and communities are at the centre. “ said Jorge Moreira da Silva, Executive Director, UNOPS.

“This initiative strengthens Operational Focal Points’ oversight and monitoring capacities, empowering them to take greater ownership of their portfolios and maximize the impact of GEF resources. By fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange through targeted training and field visits, we are creating opportunities for focal points to learn from one another and optimize the management of GEF-funded projects. Investing in our partners’ capacity is essential to delivering impactful environmental outcomes that benefit both people and nature,” said Fred Boltz, Head of Programming, GEF.

As the GEF prepares to enter its ninth replenishment cycle, this initiative comes at a pivotal moment for redefining implementation modalities—placing greater emphasis on government transparency, local ownership, and long-term environmental impact. Since its establishment, the GEF has successfully provided more than \$27 billion in financing, primarily as grants, and mobilized another \$155 billion for country-driven priority projects. These resources serve as a strategic catalyst for sustainable development, mobilizing significant co-financing from national governments, multilateral partners, and the private sector to strengthen institutional capacity and deliver resilient, long-term outcomes for both people and the planet.

UNOPS appreciates the longstanding collaboration with the GEF, including flagship initiatives such as the Small Grant Programme (SGP) and International Waters Portfolio, in partnerships with the GEF Implementing Agencies. As a UN entity focused on providing practical solutions, UNOPS supports the translation of climate and environmental commitments into action, through integrated project management, procurement, infrastructure, human resources and financial solutions. This role allows UNOPS to effectively support countries in advancing on the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Goals while responding to the growing demand for sustainable development practices.



ENDS

Notes to the editors:

- References (links) to GEF, UNOPS website, announcements, etc.

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About UNOPS

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About the Global Environment Facility

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is the world's largest multilateral fund for the environment. Its family of funds work together to address the planet's most pressing challenges in an integrated way. Its financing helps developing countries address complex challenges and work towards meeting international environmental goals. Over the past three decades, the GEF has provided more than \$27 billion in financing, primarily as grants, and mobilized another \$155 billion for country-driven priority projects. Read more: <https://www.thegef.org/>