**GEF-6 GEF SECRETARIAT REVIEW FOR FULL-SIZED/MEDIUM-SIZED PROJECTS**

**THE GEF/LDCF/SCCF TRUST FUND**

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| GEF ID: | **9767** | | |
| Country/Region: | **Regional** | | |
| Project Title: | **Fostering Multi-country Cooperation over Conjunctive Surface and Groundwater Management in the Bug and Neman Transboundary River Basins and the Underlying Aquifer Systems** | | |
| GEF Agency: | **UNDP** | GEF Agency Project ID: | **5876 (UNDP)** |
| Type of Trust Fund: | **GEF Trust Fund** | GEF Focal Area (s): | **International Waters** |
| Program Manager: | **Steffen Hansen** | Agency Contact Person: | **Vladimir Mamaev** |

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|  | **CEO endorsement Review** |  |

| Questions | Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement | | Response to Secretariat comments |
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| 2. Is the project structure/ design appropriate to achieve the expected outcomes and outputs | 7/29/2019; AH)  Overall comments:  The project structure/component are along the lines of what is typical for a GEF project (and therefore the PIF approved), yet from PIF to endorsement is the time to firm up the formulation of the outputs and possible rewording of outcomes (as needed without changing the nature of the project) (see also select STAP and Council comments).  Furthermore, the Results framework in many occasions also needs more clearly formulated (less wordy), measurable indicators and provide corresponding targets. This will tremendously improve management and monitoring of the project when in implementation (see also more detailed comments under question 9 below) . Please review and revise and also align the Theory of Change with the project logic/results framework. | SH (4.21.2020): Not cleared. Refer to above comment: "The project structure/component are along the lines of what is typical for a GEF project (and therefore the PIF approved), yet from PIF to endorsement is the time to firm up the formulation of the outputs and possible rewording of outcomes (as needed without changing the nature of the project) (see also select STAP and Council comments)." | STAP and Council member comments fully addressed, Outcomes and Outputs sharpened and revised. |
|  | 4. Theory of change: Please adjust after /together with the results framework. The project logic and link of assumptions, activities and outputs and how they lead to the outcomes is often not very clear (see also qu. 9). The current impacts show in the ToC are not all within the project fW. | 4. SH (4.21.2020): Not cleared. Please see the STAP ToC Primer for guidance on how to construct a Theory of Change: <http://www.stapgef.org/theory-change-primer> Please also note that the revised ToC figure should be accompanied by an explanatory text section. | Addressed, Section revised as per STAP guidance, more explanatory text added. |
|  | Additional component specific:  Component 1:  6. activities under 1.1.1: Seem to suggest that the TDA aims at "Harmonization of typology and delineation of water bodies" and on " Development of surface and groundwater water quantity and water quality programs" .. If so, these are important outputs of the project and should be tracked as such. Else please clarify. | 6.SH (4.21.2020): Not cleared. Refer to "overall comments". | Addressed, additional outputs added as requested. |
|  | 7. The same activity 1.1.1 states under bullets a.) to e.) that the TDA will explore the aerial extent and connection between aquifers which would imply the modelling of the aquifers. This would be great and again, worth to list as output of the component. | 7. SH (4.21.2020): Not cleared. Refer to "overall comments". | Addressed, additional outputs added as requested. |
|  | 8. Outcome 1.3: Please clarify a tangible outcome and reformulate ! As written, it is unclear what is meant and the text below confuses further by explaining the definitions/meaning of eco-hydrology in general. | 8. SH (4.21.2020): Not cleared. In addition to clarifying a tangible Outcome and reformulating, per STAP guidance the Output description should contain details regarding specific concepts, techniques, modelling approaches, etc. that are appropriate for the integrated surface and groundwater system and its analysis. | Addressed as requested in STAP comments Text clarified and more details provided. |
| H the change | 9. Output 2.1.1. (page 54) - lists the preparation of guidelines, outreach documents, awareness raising tools AND terms of reference for the creation AND functioning of River Basin Commissions in the two project basins AND defining coordination AND information sharing mechanisms between the two Commissions.  - please split each of the items into distinct outputs to make them explicit. (though some of this seems to overlap e.g. with component 5?)  - later in that same output under 'activities' there are other distinct and well-placed activities described such as 'twinning arrangements', and an analysis of a recommendations for improving monitoring networks. etc.  Such accumulation of a large number of items in one output renders the project description very confusing and it makes it rather unclear what the project does and what it does not ! | 9. SH (4.21.2020): Not cleared. Refer to the above comment and to "overall comments". | Addressed, Outputs clarified, and activities rearranged, split and sharpened to avoid confusion. |
|  | 10. Outcome 3.1 - agree with STAP comment which is not addressed. Please address. | 10. SH (4.21.2020): Not cleared. Refer to the above comment and to "overall comments". In addition, please note that the current Portal table B Outcome description reads " ...builds country and regional Institutions and their capacity and commitment to reforms and investments.". When one looks at other places in the submitted documents, including the RFs, the Outcome description reads: "...build country and regional Institutions capacity and commitment to reforms and investments." Please revise the Outcome and introduce consistency throughout the PRODOC, Portal submission and their different tables. | Coherence throughout the PD text was checked and text was revised throughout Prodoc, Portal submission and various tables |
|  | 11. Pilots: please provide some additional information on the envisioned type and scope (incl. average $ amount) for the demo projects. Right now, the criteria do not aid to assess this. | 11.SH (4.21.2020): Not cleared. Please note that the PPG phase constitutes an opportunity to engage with partners to define the pilot baseline, activities and the underlying selection criteria. Please expand the Output 3.1.1. description in the PRODOC and GEF portal submission so that it reflects work undertaken during the PPG phase. | Done, please see revised section 3.1.1 |
|  | 12. Please tighten the linkage between Outcome 4.1 and output 4.1.1. | 12. SH (4.21.2020): Cleared, however, please update the Output activity description to include info on the sustainability of the Basin councils beyond the lifespan of the project. Note that any updates to the PRODOC should be reflected in the GEF portal submission. | Done, text revised throughout Prodoc and Portal |
|  | 13. Please clarify if the project will support Flood Risk Management plans \_mentioned under "Activities" bottom of page 56. | 13. SH (4.21.2020): Not cleared. Thanks for adding text specific to Flood Risk Management plans. Please note that there are inconsistencies regarding the formulation of Output 4.2.1 across the GEF Portal submission and the PRODOC submission. | Addressed, explanatory text added, the project will produce Flood Risk Management plans. |
|  | 14. Please rethink how/if the formulation of management actions in the SAP is truly likely to be informed by the results from the pilot demonstration activities (see top page 57). Is it realistic to expect such early results in time to inform SAP formulation ? | 14.SH (4.21.2020): Not cleared. Please add text to the Output 3.1.1 description specifying that one of several pilot selection criteria is for pilots to be able to inform the SAP formulation in a timely fashion. | Text added as requested |
|  | 15. Component 5: Please list the aim to develop a Communication Strategy and a Capacity Building Strategy as project outputs - now listed as activities only and not tracked in the RF. These are substantive outputs and good to document them as such. | 15. SH (4.21.2020): Not cleared. Please amend the RF (in the PRODOC and the Portal submission) so that each of the new Outputs has a baseline, mid-term target to end-of-project target | Prodoc RF and Portal submission revised accordingly. |
|  | 16. Please expand section 4.8 "Stakeholder Engagement" and please describe the roles of key stakeholders (incl. among agencies listed) in the project implementation. Ownership and leadership of country institutions will be key to the sustainability of project results. | 16. SH (4.21.2020): Not cleared. Please expand section 4.8 "Stakeholder Engagement" by explaining the specific roles of key stakeholders. Please note that while the PRODOC sections 2.2 – 2.6 contain a generic description of Ministries/agencies and their mandates, these sections do not include sufficient info regarding the specific Roles and Responsibilities of key government ministries, agencies and NGO stakeholders as part of project execution. Finally, and in addition to expanding section 4.8, please submit (in the form of an Annex) an overview of the meetings conducted with relevant stakeholders during the PPG phase. | Addressed, stakeholders’ sections revised, summary table of stakeholders roles and responsibilities added, Annex H provides overview of consultation with stakeholders during PPG. |
|  | Additional comments received as new comments after review on 4.21.2020 | |  |
|  |  | 18. SH (4.21.2020): The Portal Table B Output 4.2.2 and 4.2.3 are missing from the PRODOC description (including the RF) and the Portal CEO Endorsement submission sections (including the RF). Please makes sure that all Outputs activities are thoroughly described and featured in the PRODOC/ Portal CEO Endorsement submissions, including in all relevant tables and figures (e.g. Results Framework and Work Plan tables etc.). | Coherence throughout the PD text was checked and text was revised throughout Prodoc, Portal submission and various tables |
|  |  | 19. SH (4.21.2020): The portal table B Outcome 5.1 contains Outputs which are not captured in the Portal submission text or in the PRODOC Project description or associated annexes, e.g. yearly work plans etc. On a general note, it will be necessary to expand Output activity descriptions specific to Outcome 5 in the PRODOC and the GEF Portal before it is possible to evaluate their merits. | Agreed, text in the portal is fixed now. |
|  |  | 20. SH (4.21.2020):  Please note an additional example of a lack of clarity between Outcome, Outputs and Indicators:  The Outcome 2.2. description reads as follows: "Overall cross-sectoral coordination of actions at the national level improves cooperation and defuse nexus conflicts in the two basins."  The Output 2.2.1 description reads as follows: "Mechanisms for coordination and exchanges with other relevant projects and initiatives put in place."  In the RF, the Indicator description specific to Output 2.2.1 reads as follows: "TORs of national Basin Councils prepared"  Yet, when one reads the Output 2.2.1 activity description (PRODOC pp 55), it reads as: "During project meetings efforts will be made to invite representatives of other on-going projects to make sure that information is shared. Formats making it possible to include similar information sharing in bilateral Commission meetings will also be developed and proposed." There seems to be a lack of alignment between the Output description and the associated RF indicator. | Addressed, Outcomes, Outputs and indicators aligned, sharpened and reformulated. |
|  |  | Commissions. An expanded baseline will make it more clear as to how such bodies can be expected to become fully operational within the lifespan of the project. In general, if the project assumes that the ToRs will lead to fully functional Basin Councils and Basin Commissions, then please consider if wording to this effect can be captured as part of the End of Project Target specific to Output 2.1.1 and 2.2.1 in the RF? | The establishment of, and interactions between National Basin Council (of intersectoral nature), and the transboundary River Basin Commissions, are the key results that the project aims to achieve. Countries are fully committed to this goal, and the EU approximation process provides the necessary incentives, as clearly shown in the ToC diagram. The end of project targets are, for both bodies, the “submission for adoption by governments” of the relevant ToRs. The actual adoption – a political decision – is beyond the control of the project.  The mid-term and end of project targets for the two outputs, coincide with those of the outcome. |
| come |  | 22. SH (4.21.2020): Please remove annex B from the PRODOC. | Removed from both documents |
|  |  | 23. SH (4.21.2020): Regarding PRODOC annex XII  Please revise the budget notes to clearly indicate how UNDP prorates PMC cost from technical consultants, preferably based on a better defined TORs for consultants (both international and national). Further, please make clear where the Project Manager and Project Monitoring and Evaluation Officer are budgeted from? Please note that staff who manage the project e.g. manager, director, finance, admin and procurement officer should be charged to PMC, and technical staff to project components. | Addressed in the budget note and revised TOR for PM/CTA |
|  |  | 24. SH 4.21.2020):  Please note that the Social and Environmental Screening Report does not contain a signature. It is GEFs impression that during the PPG phase, the SESP is revised based on the findings of the PPG and signed by the relevant UNDP Country Office representative. Please upload a signed version of the report. | As per our safeguards policy and processes, the ProDoc-stage SESP should only be signed after PAC/LPAC. |
|  |  | 25. SH (4.21.2020): To ensure country/regional ownership, usually agencies are just members of PSCs or some even just observers. Please explain the choice of Project Executive and consider if this role is not better placed with the countries. | For all UNDP Implemented project the SC meetings are co-chaired by UNDP RTA and the National focal points, as this is regional project. Revised accordingly. |
| 5. Is co-financing confirmed and evidence provided? | (7/29/2019; AH)  Co-financing letters have been provided.  Please note that the letter from the Ministry of Environment of Lithuania doesn’t specify any number but refers to a “validated Project Document (Validation Meeting, 16-17 March 2019). The UNDP prodoc includes Lithuania’s co-financing number. Please also include minutes of the Validation Meeting or how other means to support the amount of Lithuania co-finance. | SH (4.21.2020): Not cleared. Please note that the minutes of the validation meeting do not contain any reference to the Lithuania co-finance contribution. Please provide documents that support the listed amount of Lithuanian co-finance. The document should also confirm that the co-finance will be made available during the time frame of the anticipated GEF/UNDP project. | *The letter will be sent soon* |
| 9. Does the project include a budgeted M&E Plan that monitors and measures results with indicators and targets | 2. The Results FW (page 67 onwards) is included but needs clearer formulation of indicators. Current wording is in many instances very wordy - please provide simple, clear, measurable indicators and corresponding mid-term and end of project targets. Often indicators read like outputs or targets making it rather unclear what is to be achieved and how it will be measured.  (just one example among many: "Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) identifying major issues of transboundary concern for the two basins prepared and submitted for adoption by the four riparian countries" - this is an indicator (?) but reads like an MT output and not an indicator or means of verification). | SH (4.21.2020): The extent to which the above comment have been addressed will be evaluated once the comments specific to the review sheet box 2 have been addressed | Addressed, indicators in RF have been clarified and sharpened. |
|  | 4. Furthermore, please assure that the indicators measure what contributes and leads to the respective outcome. Some of this needs reformulation/adjustment: e.g. Outcome 4 reads: "Strengthened institutional cooperation, coordination and information sharing ...." ..." improves the sustainability of the shared resources." The output indicator for this are TORs . Progress on these could account for the cooperation but says nothing about sustainability of the shared resources. Outcomes, Indicators and Outputs 5 are equally unclear in formulation.  Note: above are examples and the entire RF needs to be worked through in the same spirit (another "indicator " that is sticking out as actually describing actions of the project: " National Basin Councils identify possible priority actions, conforming to conjunctive management and privileging nature based approaches, to address major transboundary issues of concern, enhance resilience to climatic changes, and reconcile water nexus use conflicts in the two basins". Please revise such indicators so they are conforming with "SMART" attributes. | SH (4.21.2020): The extent to which the above comment have been addressed will be evaluated once the comments specific to the review sheet box 2 have been addressed. | Indicators in RF have been clarified and sharpened. |
|  | 5. Please also review and verify that the 'data collection' matches the outputs and indicators. E.g. it seems unclear how the TDA is a measure for pilots . This may contribute to the identification , but nothing more and does not aid in tracking the results /impacts of the pilots. | SH (4.21.2020): Thanks, ensuring alignment between "data collection" and the Outputs and indicators. Per council and STAP guidance, revisions must be made to the Outcomes and Outputs. Please ensure that "data collection" matches the revised RF. | STAP and Council member comments fully addressed, Outcomes and Outputs sharpened and revised. |
| 11. Has the Agency adequately responded to comments at the PIF[[1]](#footnote-1) stage from: |  |  |  |
|  GEFSEC | (7/29/2019; AH)  Not entirely, some comments have not been addressed.  - GEFSEC asked a PIF stage to include mention of an awareness and fundraising effort for SAP implementation, such as a donor partner conference. | SH (4.21.2020): Not cleared. Please note that the new Outputs specific to Outcome 5 (featuring in the portal table B) have not been added to the PRODOC project description or the Portal Component, Outcomes or Output description. Please add the new Outputs and include in their activity descriptions , amongst other core activities, the raising of awareness of donors. | Output 5.1.2 and 5.1.3 were added  and the text in the portal has been updated |
|  | - the request was for explicitly stating the data sharing protocols/mechanisms. Please list as outputs (this currently seems buried in the text.) | SH (4.21.2020): Not cleared. Refer to comments in the review sheet box 2. | Addressed, added to 2.2.1 |
|  STAP | (7/29/2019; AH)  No , some comments have not been addressed in Annex B i.e. not answered in the agency response. Please address (many coincide with the GEFSEC endorsement review):  1. More precise definition of some of the outcomes appreciated. | SH (4.21.2020): Not Cleared. Refer to comments in review sheet box 2. | STAP and Council member comments fully addressed, Outcomes and Outputs sharpened and revised. |
|  | 2. Greater specificity of a strategy for engaging institutional partners and their resulting changes in capacities and actions - see STAP review) | 2. SH (4.21.2020): Not cleared. Please address the STAP comment | Addressed through Revised stakeholders’ section and new annex G |
|  | 3. More specific on ecohydrology (component 3) see STAP | 3. SH (4.21.2020): Not cleared. Refer to comment in review sheet box 2. | STAP comments fully addressed, detailed explanation of concepts, techniques, modelling approaches sharpened and revised. |
|  | 5. Rework stakeholder section/table and include roles | 5. SH (4.21.2020): Not cleared. The PRODOC Stakeholder Engagement section should reflect the dialogue with key stakeholders during the PPG phase and include a section/table with roles and responsibilities of key partners. Please note that currently the PRODOC sections 2.2-2.6 do not contain such info. | Addressed through Revised stakeholders’ section and new annex |
|  | 6. Comments on cooperation and exchange with other basins (Drina, ICPDR) | 6. SH (4.21.2020): Not cleared. Please include specific language in the PRODOC/Portal submission specific to the foreseen exchanges with the WB Drina project. Further, please incorporate text into the PRODOC/Portal submission and with the intent of addressing the following comment from STAP: "Additionally STAP suggests that the project seeks not only to foster communication between the two emerging river basin commissions, but in consultation with the participating governments formally invites observers from the Danube ICPDR to participate, at a suitable review point, to comment on drafts of technical and governance-related findings generated by the project."? | The Drina being a karst river in the Dinaric karst (Bosnia and Serbia) has very little in common with the Bug and Neman rivers. However, as indicated in the revised prodoc, Portal submission , some level of exchange will be established to accommodate the request of STAP.  ICPDR involvement added. |
|  GEF Council | (7/29/2019; AH)  No , some Council comments have not been addressed and the response seem to disqualify them.  1. Please revise some of the outcome formulations (more precise; measurable goals)  2. Roles and responsibilities of stakeholders | SH (4.21.2020): Not cleared. Per comments from the council member, please revise some of outcome formulations and address comments specific to Roles and responsibilities of stakeholders. | STAP and Council member comments fully addressed, Outcomes and Outputs sharpened and revised. Roles and responsibilities of stakeholders provided in a new table under stakeholders engagement section. |

1. If it is a child project under a program, assess if the components of the child project align with the program criteria set for selection of child projects. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)