



FAO-GEF Project Implementation Report

2023

Period covered: 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023

Table of contents

1. BASIC PROJECT DATA	2
2. PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVING PROJECT OBJECTIVE(S) (DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE)	4
3. IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS (IP).....	6
4. SUMMARY ON PROGRESS AND RATINGS	8
5. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS (ESS)	10
6. RISKS	11
7. FOLLOW-UP ON MID-TERM REVIEW OR SUPERVISION MISSION	13
8. MINOR PROJECT AMENDMENTS	14
9. STAKEHOLDERS' ENGAGEMENT.....	15
10. GENDER MAINSTREAMING	18
11. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES	19
12. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES INVOLVEMENT	20
13. CO-FINANCING TABLE	21

1. Basic Project Data

General Information

Region:	Europe
Country (ies):	The Republic of Serbia
Project Title:	Enabling environment at policy, field and market levels for Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) in Serbia
FAO Project Symbol:	GCP/SRB/007/GFF
GEF ID:	10814
GEF Focal Area(s):	LD
Project Executing Partners:	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management (MAFW) - Directorate of Forests
Project Duration (years):	3
Project coordinates:	<i>Annex 2</i>

Project Dates

GEF CEO Endorsement Date:	27 September 2021
Project Implementation Start Date/EOD :	01-Apr-2022
Project Implementation End Date/NTE¹:	31 Mar 2025
Revised project implementation end date (if approved) ²	

Funding

GEF Grant Amount (USD):	USD 746,121
Total Co-financing amount (USD)³:	USD 3,183,000
Total GEF grant delivery as of June 30, 2023 (USD)	USD 291,594
Total GEF grant actual expenditures (excluding commitments) as of June 30, 2023 (USD)⁴:	USD 83,154
Total estimated co-financing materialized as of June 30, 2023⁵	USD 636,600

¹ As per FPMIS

² If NTE extension has been requested and approved by the FAO-GEF CU.

³ This is the total amount of co-financing as included in the CEO document/Project Document.

⁴ The amount should show the values included in the financial statements generated by IMIS..

⁵ Please refer to the section 13 of this report where updated co-financing estimates are requested and indicate the total co-financing amount materialized.

M&E Milestones

Date of Most Recent Project Steering Committee (PSC) Meeting:	23 June 2023
Expected Mid-term Review date⁶:	Sept 2023
Actual Mid-term review date (when it is done):	
Expected Terminal Evaluation Date⁷:	Sept 2024
Tracking tools/Core indicators updated before MTR or TE stage (provide as Annex)	<i>Annex 3</i>

Overall ratings

Overall rating of progress towards achieving objectives/ outcomes (cumulative):	<i>S</i>
Overall implementation progress rating:	<i>S</i>
Overall risk rating:	<i>L</i>

ESS risk classification

Current ESS Risk classification:	<i>L</i>
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Status

Implementation Status <i>(1st PIR, 2nd PIR, etc. Final PIR):</i>	1st PIR
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Project Contacts

Contact	Name, Title, Division/Institution	E-mail
Project Manager / Coordinator	Mr Predrag Jovic, National Project Coordinator	Predrag.Jovic@fao.org
Budget Holder	Mr Goran Stavrik	Goran.Stavrik@fao.org
GEF Operational Focal Point (GEF OFP)	Ms. Sandra Dokić	sandra.dokic@eko.gov.rs
Lead Technical Officer	Mr Norbert Winkler-Rathonyi	Norbert.Winkler@fao.org
GEF Funding Liaison Officer	Mr Kaan Evren Basaran, GEF Specialist, REU	Kaan.Basaran@fao.org

⁶ The Mid-Term Review (MTR) should take place after the 2nd PIR, around half-point between EOD and NTE. The MTR report in English should be submitted to the GEF Secretariat within 4 years of the CEO Endorsement date.

⁷ The Terminal Evaluation date should be discussed with OED 6 months before the project's NTE date.

2. Progress towards Achieving Project Objective(s) (Development Objective)

(All inputs in this section should be cumulative from project start, not annual)

Please indicate the project's main progress towards achieving its objective(s) and the cumulative level of achievement of each outcome since the start of project implementation.							
Project or Development Objective	Outcomes	Outcome indicators ⁸	Baseline	Mid-term Target ⁹	End-of-project Target	Cumulative progress ¹⁰ since project start Level at 30 June 2023	Progress rating ¹¹
Promotion of FLR and LDN practices for the recovery and restoration of prioritized landscapes that sustain environmental services and food security and to establish support mechanisms for achieving and monitoring LDN at the national level	Outcome 1.1 Enhanced capacity in FLR planning and implementation to achieve LDN	<i>Capacity of FLR/LDN-related institutions enhanced for LDN incorporation into legal frameworks</i>	Capacity of FLR/LDN-related institutions insufficient for LDN incorporation into legal frameworks	Capacity of FLR/LDN-related institutions for LDN incorporation into legal framework increased	Capacity of FLR/LDN-related institutions for LDN incorporation into legal framework increased and strengthened	- Inter-sectoral expert group to support FLR implementation at national level established; - National baseline assessment study based on land use categories and LDN indicators under development; - Progress report on policy framework and other barriers preventing successful FLR prepared	S
	Outcome 2.1: FLR approaches selected for upscaling	<i>FLR approaches with potential for upscaling to achieve LDN selected</i>	<i>FLR approaches with potential for upscaling not selected</i>	<i>Progress report on FLR approaches with potential for upscaling prepared</i>	<i>FLR approaches with potential for upscaling in both pilot regions tested</i>	• Working group at local level to support FLR implementation in one pilot area established	S
		<i>Number of direct beneficiaries from project related investments</i>	0	50 families	50 families		Will be rated next year
		<i>Number of hectares under Forest Management Plans</i>	0	35,715 ha of forest in Dmitrovgrad under FMP 1,392 ha of forests in Zrenanjin under FMP	35,715 ha of forest in Dmitrovgrad under FMP 1,392 ha of forests in Zrenanjin under FMP		Will be rated next year
	Outcome 3.1: Monitoring and dissemination of lessons learned to support scaling up of FLR to the national level	<i>Lessons-learned to support scaling up of FLR to the national level operational, disseminated and monitored</i>	<i>Lessons-learned to support scaling up of FLR from previous projects analyzed</i>	<i>Implementation of project based on expected results and lessons learned</i>	<i>Project delivers expected results and shares lessons learned</i>		Will be rated next year

⁸ This is taken from the approved results framework of the project.

⁹ Some indicators may not identify mid-term targets at the design stage (refer to approved results framework) therefore this column should only be filled when relevant.

¹⁰ Please report on results obtained in terms of Global Environmental Benefits and Socio-economic Co-benefits as well.

¹¹ Use GEF Secretariat required six-point scale system: **Highly Satisfactory** (HS), **Satisfactory** (S), **Moderately Satisfactory** (MS), **Moderately Unsatisfactory** (MU), **Unsatisfactory** (U), and **Highly Unsatisfactory** (HU).

Action Plan to address MS, MU, U and HU ratings

Outcome	Action(s) to be taken	By whom?	By when?
Outcome 2.1			
Outcome 3.1			

3. Implementation Progress (IP)

(Please indicate progress achieved during this FY as per the Implementation Plan/Annual Workplan)

Outcomes and Outputs ¹²	Indicators (as per the Logical Framework)	Annual Target (as per the annual Work Plan)	Main achievements ¹³ (please avoid repeating results reported in previous year PIR)	Describe any variance ¹⁴ in delivering outputs
Outcome 1.1 Enhanced capacity in FLR planning and implementation to achieve LDN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity of FLR/LDN-related institutions enhanced for LDN incorporation into legal frameworks 			
Output 1.1.1: Inter-sectoral expert groups to support FLR implementation established and strengthened	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inter-sectoral expert group to support FLR implementation established Capacity of inter-sectoral expert group to support FLR implementation at local and central level raised through several meetings with national and international LDN experts 	100% 10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inter-sectoral expert group to support FLR implementation established Work in progress 	
Output 1.1.2: Baseline assessment of national land use categories & LDN indicators conducted at national level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National baseline assessment study based on land use categories & LDN indicators conducted 	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and assessment of policy instruments & incentives for LDN through FLR at national level Review and assessment of afforestation methods/practices and potential for LDN through FLR at national level Review and validation of the existing LDN baseline assessment at national level 	
Output 1.1.3: Policy frameworks and other barriers preventing successful FLR such as institutional political economy reviewed and policy instruments & incentives for FLR recommendations provided with consideration of gender issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft of policy framework recommendation created Report on all barriers preventing FLR and strategy for their removal prepared Report on proposal for policy instruments and incentives taking in consideration gender issues for FLR proposed 	10% 10% 10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work in progress Work in progress Work in progress 	

¹² Outputs as described in the project Logframe or in any approved project revision.

¹³ Please use the same unit of measurement of the project indicators as per the approved Implementation Plan or Annual Workplan. Please be concise (max one or two short sentence with main achievements)

¹⁴ Variance refers to the difference between the expected and actual progress at the time of reporting.

Output 1.1.4: Road map for upscaling of FLR interventions at the national level developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Road map for upscaling of FLR interventions at the national level developed 	0%		
Outcome 2.1: FLR approaches selected for upscaling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FLR approaches with potential for upscaling to achieve LDN selected Number of direct beneficiaries from project related investments Number of hectares under Forest Management Plans 			
Output 2.1.1: Working group at the local level for participatory FLR implementation established and strengthened	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working group at local level to support FLR implementation established Capacity of the working group at local level for FLR implementation support raised through several meetings with national and international FLR-LDN experts 	100% 10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 Identification WSs organised in both pilot municipalities Work in progress 	
Output 2.1.2: Pilot landscapes based on categories with higher impact identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot landscapes in both pilot areas with higher LD impact identified 	40%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terrain work ongoing 	
Output 2.1.3: FLR approaches tested on the ground in target municipalities taking into consideration gender issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FLR approaches tested (at least 10 official agreements with land owners for afforestation, 9 green business trainings on 200 ha) on the ground in target municipalities taking into consideration gender issues 	0%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work will start in 2024 	
2.1.4 Experiences on FLR shared and exchanged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experiences on FLR and LDN shared and exchanged through two seminars in pilot areas & regional seminars 	0%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work will start in 2024 	
Outcome 3.1: Monitoring and dissemination of lessons learned to support scaling up of FLR to the national level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lessons-learned to support scaling up of FLR to the national level operational disseminated and monitored 			
Output 3.1.1: Project results monitored and evaluated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring and evaluation system operational Monitoring system to determine changes in the values of LDN indicators 	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st PPR 	

4. Summary on Progress and Ratings

Please provide a summary paragraph on progress, challenges and outcome of project implementation consistent with the information reported in sections 2 and 3 of the PIR.

In the reporting period, the overall implementation of activities under every project outcome is behind schedule compared to the original plan, but in accordance with the revised workplan.

Under Component 1, the central part of the project, the scheduled activities and preparatory work were finalized on time.

Activities under Component 2 continued during the reporting period, those which depend on the results of the component 1 will start in the second half of 2023 or in 2024.

Under Component 3, reporting on activities is on time. The M&E system is in place. Concerning co-financing activities, especially in cash, the Forest Fund of the Republic of Serbia provided originally planned funds, in-kind contributions of other project partners have been provided as well. The selected consultants for implementing project activities meet the required quality standards.

The challenges - as in the previous reporting period - faced in project implementation were connected to down-to bottom approach of the project activities (first national then local level) and consequently results which are dependent on the results of National assessment study (including the aspects of local/pilot areas) are delayed. Some other delays are connected to identifying suitable counterparts at local level having the necessary capacities for project implementation.

Development Objective (DO) Ratings, Implementation Progress (IP) Ratings and Overall Assessment

Please note that the overall DO and IP ratings should be substantiated by evidence and progress reported in the Section 2 and Section 3 of the PIR. For DO, the ratings and comments should reflect the overall progress of project results.

	FY2023 Development Objective rating¹⁵	FY2023 Implementation Progress rating¹⁶	Comments/reasons¹⁷ justifying the ratings for FY2023 and any changes (positive or negative) in the ratings since the previous reporting period
Project Manager / Coordinator	S	S	The overall implementation of activities has been performed in a timely manner and with satisfactory quality related to the planned outputs for the reporting period.
Budget Holder	S	S	The budget has been maintained in a solid manner and it has been properly ensured that expenditures are made and resources used in accordance with FAO's rules and regulations.
GEF Operational Focal Point¹⁸	S	S	Provided report on progress is satisfactory.
Lead Technical Officer¹⁹	S	S	The overall implementation of activities is satisfactory. Project is transparent and in accordance with implementation arrangements. Produced PIR's satisfying.
FAO-GEF Funding Liaison Officer	S	S	Some delay is experienced in launching the project's activities; however, the Inter-Sectoral Expert Group, which should guide the further implementation is organized and the field activities should accelerate to speed up the delivery of planned activities.

¹⁵ **Development Objectives Rating** – A rating of the extent to which a project is expected to achieve or exceed its major objectives.

For more information on ratings and definitions, please refer to Annex 1.

¹⁶ **Implementation Progress Rating** – A rating of the extent to which the implementation of a project's components and activities is in compliance with the projects approved implementation plan. For more information on ratings and definitions, please refer to Annex 1.

¹⁷ Please ensure that the ratings are based on evidence

¹⁸ In case the GEF OFP didn't provide his/her comments, please explain the reason.

¹⁹ The LTO will consult the HQ technical officer and all other supporting technical Units.

5. Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS)

Under the responsibility of the LTO (PMU to draft)

Please describe the progress made complying with the approved ESM plan. Note that only projects with **moderate** or **high** Environmental and Social Risk, approved from June 2015 should have submitted an ESM plan/table at CEO endorsement. This does not apply to **low** risk projects. Add new ESS risks if any risks have emerged during this FY.

Social & Environmental Risk Impacts identified at CEO Endorsement	Expected mitigation measures	Actions taken during this FY	Remaining measures to be taken	Responsibility
ESS 1: Natural Resource Management				
ESS 2: Biodiversity, Ecosystems and Natural Habitats				
ESS 3: Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture				
ESS 4: Animal - Livestock and Aquatic - Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture				
ESS 5: Pest and Pesticide Management				
ESS 6: Involuntary Resettlement and Displacement				
ESS 7: Decent Work				
ESS 8: Gender Equality				
ESS 9: Indigenous Peoples and Cultural Heritage				
New ESS risks that have emerged during this FY				

In case the project did not include an ESM Plan at CEO endorsement stage, please indicate if the initial Environmental and Social (ESS) Risk classification is still valid; if not, what is the new classification and explain.

Initial ESS Risk classification (At project submission)	Current ESS risk classification Please indicate if the Environmental and Social Risk classification is still valid ²⁰ . If not, what is the new classification and explain.
L	L

Please report if any grievance was received as per FAO and GEF ESS policies. If yes, please indicate how it is being/has been addressed.

²⁰ **Important:** please note that if the Environmental and Social Risk classification has changed, the ESM Unit should be contacted and an updated Social and Environmental Management Plan addressing new risks should be prepared.

6. Risks

The following table summarizes risks identified in the Project Document and reflects also any new risks identified in the course of project implementation (including COVID-19 related risks). The last column should be used to provide additional details concerning manifestation of the risk in the project, as relevant.

	Type of risk	Risk rating ²¹	Identified in the ProDoc Y/N	Mitigation Actions	Progress on mitigation actions	Notes from the Budget Holder in consultation with Project Management Unit
1	Lack of close cooperation between key institutional stakeholders, as well as among local stakeholders such as the public administrations and public enterprises for forestry	Low	Y	The LDN/FLR inter-sectoral, multi-stakeholder expert group at the national level (output 1.1.1.) and the working group at the local level for participatory FLR (output 2.1.1.) will make sure that a close cooperation between key institutional stakeholders, as well as among local stakeholders will take place. They will enable effective and coordinated cooperation and communication among ministries, chambers, research institutes (national) and NGOs, civil society (public forestry enterprises), municipalities and land owners (local) in order to achieve LDN common goals.		
2	Lack of interest of local forest or land owners to sign FLR implementation agreement	Low	Y	Detailed planning with comprehensive data and stakeholder analysis on pilot sites should provide a good overview about potential sites for intervention and interested stakeholders that can create sustainable agreements for FLR implementation on a long-term basis.		
3	Low technical capacity in operationalizing LDN at national and local level halting the project's progress	Low	Y	Trainings on green business (FLR/LDN management practices) based on effective learning practices for strengthening value chains will be conducted in the pilot municipalities. Additionally, manuals for all 3 mentioned topics (agroforestry, silvopastoral and nurseries) targeting women will be developed (outcome 2.1.3). Also through output 2.1.4 (i) promotion seminars on multiple LDN and FLR benefits will be conducted in the target municipalities with national and local stakeholder representatives. Finally, regional exchanges on LDN and field visits to learn on best practices will be organized. At the national level FLR/LDN related institutions will celebrate consultative meetings for the revision and validation of all the project outputs (1.1.2, 1.1.3 and 1.1.4)		
4	Lack of political support to LDN	Medium	Y	The interest and support from Serbia has been manifested through the various ongoing projects and programmes investing in LDN (UNCCD Umbrella II, Cross-Sectoral Land Management etc., see international baseline scenario). Furthermore, political will and support to LDN is reflected in the LDN target setting programme. Lastly, this project ensures Government participation in its activities and trainings.		

²¹ Risk ratings means a rating of accesses the overall risk of factors internal or external to the project which may affect implementation or prospects for achieving project objectives. Risk of projects should be rated on the following scale: Low, Moderate, Substantial or High. For more information on ratings and definitions please refer to Annex 1.

	Type of risk	Risk rating ²¹	Identified in the ProDoc Y/N	Mitigation Actions	Progress on mitigation actions	Notes from the Budget Holder in consultation with Project Management Unit
5	Climate change	Medium	Y	Climate change is expected to affect the forest sector in Serbia. Forest composition, structure and distribution will change in response to changes in temperature and precipitation. Increased temperatures combined with more intense and frequent droughts may also increase the risk of forest fires. Forest Management Plans will account for future changes in climate in their design. The project will closely collaborate with "The Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan" project funded by the European Union to address climate vulnerability considerations on degraded land and forests and to include climate related data in the LDN baseline assessment. For this, the project will coordinate with the Ministry of Environmental Protection. Also LDN and FLR measures will increase biomass, soil organic carbon content and biodiversity, improve water flow and quality, and improve species and systems productivity, thus increasing the resilience of production systems and ecosystems, and reducing the vulnerability of rural livelihoods to climate change impacts.		
6	Lack of up to date spatial data and information regarding FLR and LDN for the local level assessment	Low	Y	The digital cadaster in Serbia is about to be finished. Recently adopted INSPIRE directive obliges all public institutions the sharing of own spatial and other information with other public institutions. Project analysis can provide up to date actual land use information in the field. Project can establish close cooperation and procedures with necessary public institutions for future interventions regarding FLR – LDN in other municipalities in Serbia. Gender disaggregated data related to forestry sector in Serbia are not available. The project will start creating these data.		
7	Prevalence and eventual increase of COVID 19 pandemic in the country affecting project planning and execution.	Medium		The proposed project will work within the framework of COVID-19 Socio Economic Response Plan for Serbia, which provides a series of recommendations for the country to address the short and long term challenges created by the pandemic. The Plan focuses on 6 areas: Health, Social Protection, Jobs, Employment and Small Medium Size Enterprises, Macro economy and international cooperation, Resilience, Environment and Climate Change. The project will support implementation of recommendations within the context resilience, environment and climate change. In addition, lessons learnt from other programs and projects implemented in the country by the project's executors and implementation agency under COVID 19 restrictions contribute to better planning, as well as to the identification and implementation of appropriate risk-mitigation measures and remote tools and methodologies in order to reach project beneficiaries, including carrying out face-to-face activities. The project directly supports the small-holder families (up to 4 ha) to improve their livelihoods through 1. Selecting agroforestry and artisan processing best practices – growing and processing medicinal and aromatic plants, mushroom and wild fruits, best suited to territory and stakeholders preferences 2. Silvopastoral systems for growing livestock, game and bees and development of attached short value chains for services and products 3. Nurseries growing and restoration services provision		

Project overall risk rating (Low, Moderate, Substantial or High):

FY2022 rating	FY2023 rating	Comments/reason for the rating for FY2023 and any changes (positive or negative) in the rating since the previous reporting period
L	L	Risks remain at the same level for the time being, but may decrease with full impact of mitigation measures taken.

7. Follow-up on Mid-term review or supervision mission (only for projects that have conducted an MTR)

If the project had an MTR or a supervision mission, please report on how the recommendations were implemented during this fiscal year as indicated in the Management Response or in the supervision mission report.

MTR or supervision mission recommendations	Measures implemented <u>during this Fiscal Year</u>

Has the project developed an Exit Strategy? If yes, please describe	No exit strategy has been developed for the Project yet.
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8. Minor project amendments

Minor amendments are changes to the project design or implementation that do not have significant impact on the project objectives or scope, or an increase of the GEF project financing up to 5% as described in Annex 9 of the GEF Project and Program Cycle Policy Guidelines²². Please describe any minor changes that the project has made under the relevant category or categories. And, provide supporting documents as an annex to this report if available.

Category of change	Provide a description of the change	Indicate the timing of the change	Approved by
Results framework			
Components and cost			
Institutional and implementation arrangements			
Financial management			
Implementation schedule			
Executing Entity			
Executing Entity Category			
Minor project objective change			
Safeguards			
Risk analysis			
Increase of GEF project financing up to 5%			
Co-financing			
Location of project activity			
Other			

²² Source: <https://www.thegef.org/council-meeting-documents/guidelines-project-and-program-cycle-policy-2020-update>

9. Stakeholders' Engagement

Please report on progress and results and challenges on stakeholder engagement (based on the description of the Stakeholder engagement plan) included at CEO Endorsement/Approval during this reporting period.

Stakeholder name	Role in project execution	Progress and results on Stakeholders' Engagement	Challenges on stakeholder engagement
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management (MAFW) -Directorate of Forests (DoF)	<p>The Directorate of Forests is one of the main beneficiaries of the project. The DoF will lead the project implementation process along with FAO. It will have the responsibility to create and lead the LDN inter-sectoral expert group (output 1.1.1.) and to prepare together with the national project coordinator the consultative meetings with relevant stakeholders. The LDN inter-sectoral expert group will build on the existing expert team from the National Centre for Climate Change and Desertification of the University of Belgrade, Faculty of Forestry that elaborated the "Report on the applied methodology and identification of targets to achieve LDN in the Republic of Serbia" with an active participation of the UNCCD Special Working Group for the Implementation of Activities pertaining to LDN. The group will be composed of representatives of administrative and strategic planning units and research institutes, spatial planning unit, directorate for agriculture soils, directorate for forestry, RGZ, etc.</p> <p>The LDN inter-sectoral expert group will meet at least twice a year during the project lifetime. In the first year of the project, the expert group will revise and validate the methodology of all project relevant assessments (LDN, afforestation and potentiality, policy instruments and incentives) (output 1.1.1.). In the second year, LDN experts will downscale the LDN assessment at the pilot level and identify target municipalities with its pilot landscapes (output 2.1.2). Additionally, FLR approaches will be tested on the ground (output 2.1.3) and lessons learned and good practices systematically documented for replication and scaling (output 2.4.1). The project coordinator together with members of the LDN inter-sectoral expert group will be responsible for supervising the activities and LDN assessments results in the pilot landscapes. In the last year, the group will meet to validate project results and the road map for upscaling of FLR interventions at the national level (output 1.1.4.). This expert group should remain active after the finalization of the project to guide the process of FLR upscaling at the national level and to undertake regular monitoring and validation of LDN status reporting in Serbia (output 3.1.1.).</p> <p>DoF will support the inter-sectoral expert group in the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active participation of DoF representatives in inter-sectoral multi-stakeholder expert group • Forest data sharing with LD experts • Support project partners to apply for the Forest Fund • Make recommendations to adapt policies and programmes to support FLR upscaling interventions and to support the achievement of LDN at national level like for example to consider introduction of forest restoration measures into the national Rural Development Plan and IPARD <p>Furthermore, the DoF will provide co-financing through the Forest Fund.</p>	Continued full engagement and support	N/A
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management (MAFW) Directorate for Agriculture Land (DAL)	<p>DAL and all other relevant government entities will be part of the LDN inter-sectoral expert group. They will be involved in extensive consultations to understand their current and potential role in promoting and implementing FLR and LDN, and to address conflicts and barriers, for example with regard to data sharing (output 1.1.2.).</p> <p>DAL will support the inter-sectoral expert group in following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active participation of DAL representatives in inter-sectoral expert group • Agriculture land data sharing with LDN experts <p>Make recommendations to adapt policies and programmes to support FLR upscaling interventions and to support the achievement of LDN at national level</p>	Continued engagement	N/A
Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP), notably Sector for Nature Protection and	<p>MEP and all other relevant government entities will be part of the LDN inter-sectoral expert group. They will be involved in extensive consultations to understand their current and potential role in promoting and implementing FLR and LDN, and to address conflicts and barriers, for example with regard to data sharing (output 1.1.2.).</p>	Continued full engagement and support	N/A

climate changes, and other relevant Ministries	<p>MEP will support the inter-sectoral expert group in following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active participation of MEP representatives in inter-sectoral expert group • Environmental and climate data sharing with LDN experts • Responsible for climate vulnerability considerations on degraded land and forests • Support project partners to apply for the Environmental Fund • Make recommendations to adapt policies and programmes and create synergies to support FLR upscaling interventions and to support the achievement of LDN at national level such as reorienting budget flows to small ecological projects for value chains greening and green business initiatives together with the National Employment Services 		
Academic and research institutions	<p>Academic institutions such as the National Centre for Climate Change and Desertification of the University of Belgrade, Faculty of Forestry and the Environment and Sustainable Development Study Programme of the Singidunum University, will be part of the LDN inter-sectoral expert group.</p> <p>Academic institutions are expected to play a key role in the LND/FLR potentiality assessments (national and local) as well as in capacity building, information management and dissemination activities (output 1.1.2. and 2.1.4).</p> <p>Academic and research institutes will support inter-sectoral expert group in following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active participation in inter-sectoral expert group • Validation of study/assessments results on FLR interventions to achieve LDN • Integrating results of the project into faculty curriculum (knowledge sharing and system-wide capacity development to ensure sustainability) • Preparing research agenda based on gaps identified during preparation of FLR initiatives (for example using participatory research approaches) • Participation in training activities and support in identification of FLR initiatives most likely to be owned by local communities • Make recommendations to adapt policies and programmes to support FLR upscaling interventions through for example inputs for revision of Local Sustainable Strategies 	Continued full engagement and support	N/A
The Coordination Body for Gender Equality (CBGE) of the Prime Minister's Office	<p>The Coordination Body for Gender Equality (CBGE) of the Prime Minister's Office is the main body for gender equality of Serbia. It provides technical advice and coordination support on gender equality issues. The Gender Focal Point (GFP) of the project will get in touch with the Coordination Body for Gender Equality to assess possible cooperation with the Body in order to successfully implement the projects Gender Action Plan (GAP).</p> <p>CBGE could support the project activities in following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make recommendations to adapt municipal Sustainable Development Strategies that rarely include any gender related issues in order to support the achievement of LDN at national level. This project could support the definition of actions related to LDN with a gender perspective in municipal Sustainable Development Strategies 	No real engagement for now	N/A
Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia	<p>The Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia is a key partner in providing socio-economic data, which will help better in understanding the socio-economic aspects that impact land and forest degradation so that strategies to address them can be developed. The Statistical Office is also a key partner in advancing towards the nationalization and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The concept of LDN and the SDG 15.3, sub-indicator 15.3.1. ("Percentage of degraded land and soil of the total area of land resources") are particularly relevant for this project.</p>	Continued engagement and support	N/A
Chamber of Forestry, Hunting Chamber	<p>The Chamber of Forestry and Hunting Chambers will be part of the LDN inter-sectoral expert group and will be an important ally of the project for the dissemination of information through its network of members and partners (output 2.1.4).</p> <p>The Chamber of Forestry and Hunting Chambers will support the inter-sectoral expert group in following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active participation of Chamber of Forestry in training design for afforestation and agroforestry interventions • Dissemination of results at national level through seminars & information sharing within internal chamber network • Organization of best practice field trips and stakeholder discussion and panels <p>It will provide co-financing through training and advisory services.</p>	Continued engagement and support	N/A
NGOs and civil society organizations (Pokret gorana Kikinda and Pokret gorana Dimitrovgrad)	<p>NGOs and civil society organizations in Serbia will provide valuable knowledge about participatory work with local communities, establishment of local public private partnerships and public advocacy as well as trainings for various rural development businesses, especially for women and youth. The most important organizations are hunting and fishing associations, environmental and rural development-oriented NGOs and CSOs.</p>	Continued engagement and support	N/A

	<p>They will be essential to support project implementation at the local level through the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organising participatory work with local communities and mobilisation of stakeholders for discussions as well as for capacity building actions, trainings etc. • Participating in all activities concerning increasing benefits from wood and non-wood products by involving marginalised groups in new short value chains (employment creation with new small and mid/scale businesses) • Collecting qualitative data for LDN baseline assessments • Participating in afforestation and nurseries establishment. • Systematically documenting good practices and lessons learned for national replication and up-scaling <p>The forestry, education & environmental organisation Pokret gorana in Dimitrovgrad and Kikinda has shown deep interest in supporting the project implementation at the local level.</p>		
Target municipalities and local communities (in Kikinda and Dimitrovgrad), private land and forest owners	<p>Target municipalities and local communities will be the main beneficiaries of the project as well as important partners for project implementation at local level. They will be part of the working group at the local level for participatory FLR that will meet at least once a year during the project lifetime and will be composed of local stakeholder such as, spatial planning units, local environmental NGOs, local RGZ, etc.</p> <p>The municipalities and local communities/ landowner(s) will be key in supporting “official” agreements committing themselves to provide land for afforestation. They will be also the main beneficiaries of the trainings on alternative practices (output 2.1.3).</p> <p>Participants of the working group at the local level for participatory FLR will be involved in all relevant consultations, to contribute their understanding and perspectives on FLR and LDN, land and forest degradation trends, afforestation methods and policy instruments and incentives. The working group will ensure that women and men residing in the pilot areas will be informed and engaged. They will be involved in the validation of strategies, training activities and implementation of FLR and LDN at local level. Furthermore, they will play an important part in disseminating information (output 2.1.3).</p> <p>The local level working group will be closely linked with the national level expert working group to ensure alignment and mutually beneficial leveraging. Local level representation in the national level expert group will be ensured by appointing/assigning two delegates (male and female) from the two target municipalities to participate in the national level expert group.</p>	Continued support in pilot areas	N/A
National/local cadastral offices in Kikinda and Dimitrovgrad	<p>The national/local cadastral offices will support the inter-sectoral expert groups at national and local level in the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide spatial data relevant for pilot sites and their national upscaling possibilities • Make recommendations to adapt national legislation for supporting FLR implementation 	Continued support	N/A
State and private forest companies	<p>State and private forest management companies will support the inter-sectoral expert groups at national and local level in the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest data sharing with LDN experts • Support project partners to apply for the Forest Fund • Possible support in implementation of at least one pilot project 	Continued support	N/A

10. Gender Mainstreaming

Information on Progress on Gender-responsive measures as documented at CEO Endorsement/Approval in the gender action plan or equivalent (when applicable) during this reporting period.		
Category	Yes/No	Briefly describe progress and results achieved during this reporting period
Gender analysis or an equivalent socio-economic assessment made at formulation or during execution stages.	YES	<p>During the preparation of the project document, a gender assessment in communities in the pilot areas which included field research, was conducted to identify women's and men's use of and dependency on forests. According to the assessment's findings, men are predominantly engaged in firewood collection, whereas women tend to be more engaged in the collection of non-wood forest products (NWFPs). Forest work is socially considered to be more appropriate to men, and private forests are registered in the name of a male family member, who usually tends to take the decisions regarding the family forests. Women also are less likely to attend meetings related to forest management and use. More information and knowledge on economic opportunities in relation to forests was identified as a key need and interest by both, women and men. Even though partly depending on forests for their livelihoods, they do not feel to have sufficient information on how to improve their livelihoods with forests.</p> <p>A gender mainstreaming strategy has been incorporated throughout the project document, and all relevant outputs include gender and social inclusion considerations, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the project supports the development and implementation of indicators to monitor the use of forests disaggregated by sex, age, educational level, which will feed the FIS and will allow for improved decision making. Preidentification of 50 households interested for FLR on going, final decision on involvement in the project during the next reporting period. the project develops training modules on socio-economic issues in sustainable forest management, including gender mainstreaming related issues. Training modules in the process of development and planned to be implemented in 2024 the project develops special measures to ensure that the extension service and incentives reaches those most vulnerable parts of rural population in pilot areas, both women and men. Planned to be realised in the form of recommendation for 2024. In addition, the M&E system on the project will include gender sensitive indicators. M&E consultant will include gender indicators in 2024. <p>Contact of gender consultant: Suzana Djordjevic Milosevic, Res Rustica <resrusticaserbica@gmail.com></p>
Any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women's empowerment?	YES	
Indicate in which results area(s) the project is expected to contribute to gender equality (as identified at project design stage):		
a) closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources	YES	
b) improving women's participation and decision making	YES	
c) generating socio-economic benefits or services for women	YES	
M&E system with gender-disaggregated data?	YES	
Staff with gender expertise	YES	
Any other good practices on gender	NO	

11. Knowledge Management Activities

Knowledge activities / products (when applicable), as outlined in Knowledge Management Approach approved at CEO Endorsement / Approval <u>during this reporting period.</u>	
Does the project have a knowledge management strategy? If not, how does the project collect and document good practices? Please list relevant good practices that can be learned and shared from the project thus far.	Based on the results of the project in the previous reporting period Knowledge management strategy is planned to be developed during the next reporting period.
Does the project have a communication strategy? Please provide a brief overview of the communications successes and challenges this year.	Yes. 2 times guest at local TV (Dimitrovgrad and Kikinda).
Please share a human-interest story from your project, focusing on how the project has helped to improve people's livelihoods while contributing to achieving the expected Global Environmental Benefits. Please indicate any Socio-economic Co-benefits that were generated by the project. Include at least one beneficiary quote and perspective, and please also include related photos and photo credits.	n/a
Please provide links to related website, social media account	https://upravazasume.gov.rs/medjunarodni-projekti/
Please provide a list of publications, leaflets, video materials, newsletters, or other communications assets published on the web.	
Please indicate the Communication and/or knowledge management focal point's Name and contact details	Sara Pašić National Communications and Outreach Assistant FAO Project Office in Serbia Sara.Pasic@fao.org

12. Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Involvement

Are Indigenous Peoples and local communities involved in the project (as per the approved Project Document)? If yes, please briefly explain.

If applicable, please describe the process and current status of on-going/completed, legitimate consultations to obtain Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) with the indigenous communities.

Do indigenous peoples and or local communities have an active participation in the project activities? If yes, briefly describe how.

13. Co-Financing Table

Sources of Co-financing ²³	Name of Co-financer	Type of Co-financing	Amount Confirmed at CEO endorsement / approval	Actual Amount Materialized at 30 June 2023	Actual Amount Materialized at Midterm or closure (confirmed by the review/evaluation team)	Expected total disbursement by the end of the project
NG	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management (MAFW) - Directorate of Forests (DoF)	Grant	400,000	80,000.00		400,000
NG	MAFW - Directorate of Forests (DoF)	In-kind	675,000	135,000.00		675,000
NG	MAFW - Directorate for Agriculture Land (DAL)	Grant	75,000	15,000.00		75,000
NG	MAFW - Directorate for Agriculture Land (DAL)	In-kind	100,000	20,000.00		100,000
NG	MAFW – Sector for Rural Development	Grant	75,000	15,000.00		75,000
NG	MAFW – Sector for Rural Development	In-kind	100,000	20,000.00		100,000
CSO	Chamber of Forestry Engineers	In-kind	75,000	15,000.00		75,000
CSO	Faculty of Forestry – Belgrade	In-kind	400,000	80,000.00		400,000
CSO	Institute of Forestry - Belgrade	In-kind	200,000	40,000.00		200,000
CSO	Institute for Lowland Forestry and Environmental Protection – Novi Sad	In-kind	500,000	100,000.00		500,000
LG	Municipality of Dimitrovgrad	In-kind	100,000	20,000.00		100,000
CSO	Pokret Gorana	In-kind	100,000	20,000.00		100,000
Implementing Agency	FAO	Grant	383,000	76,600.00		383,000
TOTAL			3,183,000	636,600.00		3,183,000

Please explain any significant changes in project co-financing since Project Document signature, or differences between the anticipated and actual rates of disbursement

²³ Sources of Co-financing may include: Bilateral Aid Agency(ies), Foundation, GEF Agency, Local Government, National Government, Civil Society Organization, Other Multi-lateral Agency(ies), Private Sector, Beneficiaries, Other.

Annex 1. – GEF Performance Ratings Definitions

Development Objectives Rating. A rating of the extent to which a project is expected to achieve or exceed its major objectives.	
Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Project is expected to achieve or exceed all its major global environmental objectives, and yield substantial global environmental benefits, without major shortcomings. The project can be presented as “good practice”
Satisfactory (S)	Project is expected to achieve most of its major global environmental objectives, and yield satisfactory global environmental benefits, with only minor shortcomings
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Project is expected to achieve most of its major relevant objectives but with either significant shortcomings or modest overall relevance. Project is expected not to achieve some of its major global environmental objectives or yield some of the expected global environment benefits
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Project is expected to achieve of its major global environmental objectives with major shortcomings or is expected to achieve only some of its major global environmental objectives)
Unsatisfactory (U)	Project is expected not to achieve most of its major global environment objectives or to yield any satisfactory global environmental benefits)
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	The project has failed to achieve, and is not expected to achieve, any of its major global environment objectives with no worthwhile benefits.)

Implementation Progress Rating. A rating of the extent to which the implementation of a project’s components and activities is in compliance with the project’s approved implementation plan.	
Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Implementation of all components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised implementation plan for the project. The project can be resented as “good practice
Satisfactory (S)	Implementation of most components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan except for only a few that are subject to remedial action
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Implementation of some components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan with some components requiring remedial action
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Implementation of some components is not in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan with most components requiring remedial action.
Unsatisfactory (U)	Implementation of most components is not in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	Implementation of none of the components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan.

Risk rating. It should assess the overall risk of factors internal or external to the project which may affect implementation or prospects for achieving project objectives. Risk of projects should be rated on the following scale:	
High Risk (H)	There is a probability of greater than 75% that assumptions may fail to hold or materialize, and/or the project may face high risks.
Substantial Risk (S)	There is a probability of between 51% and 75% that assumptions may fail to hold or materialize, and/or the project may face substantial risks
Moderate Risk (M)	There is a probability of between 26% and 50% that assumptions may fail to hold or materialize, and/or the project may face only moderate risk.
Low Risk (L)	There is a probability of up to 25% that assumptions may fail to hold or materialize, and/or the project may face only low risks.

Annex 2.

GEO LOCATION INFORMATION

The Location Name, Latitude and Longitude are required fields insofar as an Agency chooses to enter a project location under the set format. The Geo Name ID is required in instances where the location is not exact, such as in the case of a city, as opposed to the exact site of a physical infrastructure. The Location & Activity Description fields are optional. Project longitude and latitude must follow the Decimal Degrees WGS84 format and Agencies are encouraged to use at least four decimal points for greater accuracy. Users may add as many locations as appropriate. Web mapping applications such as [OpenStreetMap](#) or [GeoNames](#) use this format. Consider using a conversion tool as needed, such as: <https://coordinates-converter.com> Please see the Geocoding User Guide by clicking [here](#)

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	Geo Name ID	Location & Activity Description
Dimitrovgrad	43.0184	22.7820		FLR (afforestation)
Kikinda	45.8297	20.4500		FLR (afforestation)

Please provide any further geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions is taking place as appropriate.

ANNEX 3. Tracking tools/Core indicators updated



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BD-TrackingTool-Prc