



Restoration and sustainable forest management of the Algerian Aleppo pine forest, ecosystem

Review PIF and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

11179

Countries

Algeria

Project Name

Restoration and sustainable forest management of the Algerian Aleppo pine forest, ecosystem

Agencies

UNDP

Date received by PM

4/12/2023

Review completed by PM

12/7/2023

Program Manager

Pascal Martinez

Focal Area

Multi Focal Area

Project Type

FSP

GEF-8 PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF) REVIEW SHEET

1. General Project Information / Eligibility

a) Does the project meet the criteria for eligibility for GEF funding?

b) Is the General Project Information table correctly populated?

Secretariat's Comments

May 1, 2023:

a) Yes, cleared.

b) The taxonomy is very limited and should include more relevant information such as sustainable forest management, forests, forest landscape restoration... Please complete.

October 25, 2023:

b) Thank you for the additional information provided in an uploaded document. Nevertheless, this information is needed in the Portal entry under "General Project information"/"Taxonomy" so that further portfolio analysis can be made using key words. Please complete this section accordingly.

November 29, 2023:

b) Thank you for the additional information. Cleared.

Agency's Comments

UNDP- 16 October 2023

A revised and upgraded Taxonomy list has been incorporated and attached to the PIF.

UNDP response ? 28 November 2023

The Taxonomy has been uploaded in the Portal under ?General Project Information?/
?Taxonomy?

2. Project Summary

Does the project summary concisely describe the problem to be addressed, the project objective and the strategies to deliver the GEBs or adaptation benefits and other key expected results?

Secretariat's Comments

May 1, 2023:

The summary exceeds the limit of 250 words (it currently includes 354 words). Please provide a shorter summary with a number of words up to 250 and also including clearly the expected GEBs and other key results of the project.

October 25, 2023:

Thank you for the amendment. Cleared.

Agency's Comments

UNDP- October 16, 2023

The summary has been reduced below the word limit of 250 words. The expected GEBs and other key results of the project have been explicitly included in the project summary.

3 Indicative Project Overview

3.1 a) Is the project objective presented as a concise statement and clear?

b) Are the components, outcomes and outputs sound, appropriate and sufficiently clear to achieve the project objective and the core indicators per the stated Theory of Change?

Secretariat's Comments

May 1, 2023:

a) Yes, cleared.

b)

b.1. Please add key indicators and expected results (including GEBs/GEF core indicators targets) in the Indicative Project Overview table.

b.2. Please clarify why the output 2.2.2 only includes non-wood forest products while the output 2.2.3 includes both wood and non-wood forest products.

October 25, 2023:

b.1. In the Indicative Project Overview table, the outcome 2.2 includes "GEF Core Indicator 11" but doesn't indicate any number. Also, such indicator shouldn't be related to one unique outcome. Please clarify.

b.2. Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

November 29, 2023:

b.1 Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

Agency's Comments

UNDP- October 16, 2023

b.1. Key indicators and expected results (including GEBs/GEF core indicators targets) have been added to the Indicative Project Overview table. This includes GEF core indicators 3, 4, 6 and 11.

b.2. Thank you for the question ? this was an oversight; non-wood forest products will also be included as part of Output 2.2.2. Output 2.2.2 has been amended to include wood forest products.

UNDP response - 28 November 2023

GEF Core Indicator 11 encompasses all types of beneficiaries across the project interventions, including for training and capacity building among government institutions (i.e., Component 1). For instance, under Outcome 1.2, training will directly target 200 forest professionals, as will Outcome 1.3, in targeting community members for capacity building on SFM. We have chosen to count most of the beneficiaries under Component 2 (Outcomes 2.1 and 2.2.) as those that will benefit from direct livelihood improvement opportunities (e.g., jobs, income). The project is targeting 850,000 beneficiaries as indicated in Section A of the PIF, of these 200,000 individuals are the direct beneficiaries. The total area of the Algerian Aleppo pine forest is a vast 1,158,500 hectares of which this project specifically focuses on three selected sites covering 342,034 ha, or 29.52% of the entire forest. These targeted forests lie in the High Steppe region, home to 30% of the nation's low-income households. Within this target area, approximately 850,000 individuals grapple with vulnerabilities stemming from economic and environmental challenges. The project aims at targeting at least 50% women who are significantly more exposed to heightened vulnerabilities in the project area considering lack of access to formal and decent work as well as limited access on financial services and products.

3.2 Are gender dimensions, knowledge management, and monitoring and evaluation included within the project components and appropriately funded?

Secretariat's Comments

May 8, 2023:

The consideration of gender dimension is very limited throughout the project rationale and description (it is not mentioned in the indicative project overview table nor in the description of the component). This dimension needs to be strongly enhanced in the project design. Please amend accordingly and in particular in the indicative project overview table and in the description of the component. In defining the gender-specific interventions, please make sure that women are engaged as active participants, engaged in decision-making, and not just passive beneficiaries of training or awareness-raising

opportunities. Please ensure also that when developing plans, policies, regulations, related documents, that these are gender-responsive.

October 25, 2023:

Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

Agency's Comments

UNDP- October 16, 2023

The project has been revised to fully integrate gender considerations throughout the proposal. The project places a strong emphasis on gender equality and community empowerment. It seeks to ensure that women, as direct resource users and managers, are actively involved in all stages of the project, from informing its design to its full implementation. The project recognizes the vital role women play in the sustainable management and restoration of Aleppo Pine forests in Algeria. By emphasizing gender-responsive conservation and sustainable use, the project aims to support women's participation and benefits from investments in conservation, management, and restoration of these forests. A detailed gender analysis will be conducted and a gender action plan prepared and costed during the PPG, and gender and sex-disaggregated indicators incorporated into the project results framework for tracking. Furthermore, the project's stakeholder engagement plan will be designed to facilitate equal participation, ensuring that women have access to decision-making processes related to the project, whether they are directly or indirectly involved in its implementation. The indicative project overview table and the description of each component now include gender-specific interventions.

3.3 a) Are the components adequately funded?

b) Are the GEF Project Financing and Co-Financing contributions to PMC proportional?

c) Is the PMC equal to or below 5% of the total GEF grant for FSPs or 10% for MSPs? If the requested PMC is above the caps, has an exception (e.g. for regional projects) been sufficiently substantiated?

Secretariat's Comments

May 1, 2023:

a) Yes, cleared.

b) Yes, the GEF Project Financing and Co-Financing contributions to PMC are proportional with 5% and 5.2% respectively. Cleared.

c) Yes, the PMC is equal to 5% of the total GEF grant. Cleared.

Agency's Comments

4 Project Outline

A. Project Rationale

4.1 SITUATION ANALYSIS

a) is the current situation (including global environmental problems, key contextual drivers of environmental degradation, climate vulnerability) clearly and adequately described from a systems perspective?

b) Are the key barriers and enablers identified?

Secretariat's Comments

May 1, 2023:

a)

a.1. Under the current trends and baseline scenario, the four maps on climate risk scenarios are difficult to read (no legend, big white squares...). Please provide clearer maps.

a.2. It is not clear how important is the deforestation in the project targeted area (is the 6% of forest loss at country level?). Please clarify the forest and biodiversity loss and the degradation occurring in the project area.

a.3. The description of the drivers is very general (agriculture expansion, overgrazing, forest fires, illegal logging...). Please provide more details on these activities, the involved stakeholders and their motivation.

a.4. The project area is said to comprise 40% of Aleppo Pine forests of the country and under the "Upscaling and replication potential", we learn that the area of the project covers 331,680 ha and the Algerian Aleppo pine forest covers close to 1,158,500 ha. This doesn't look consistent. Please clarify the relative importance of the Aleppo Pine forests in the project targeted area (% in the project area and % in the country).

b)

b.1. In the project description of the "Ecosystem management challenges", the challenges/barriers doesn't clearly match with those identified in the diagram of the TOC and the barriers under "Insufficient forest ecosystem valorization and social issues" are very general or are not barriers. Please identify clearly the barriers which need to be overcome and ensure they are consistent with the TOC and proposed outputs.

b.2. The first paragraph under "Global Environmental **Benefits:**" refers actually to the country plans to implement SDGs and Rio Conventions. Please move and merge this

paragraph with the information provided in section "C. ALIGNMENT WITH GEF-8 PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES AND COUNTRY/REGIONAL PRIORITIES".

October 25, 2023:

a) and b) Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

Agency's Comments

UNDP- October 16, 2023

a.1. All maps have been moved to Annex C. Project Location and are now clearly labeled with georeferenced data included.

a.2. More detail on deforestation has now been included in Section A of the PIF. Additional detail on deforestation in the target area has also been added, specifically in the Beni Imloul Forest area, the deforestation rate since the year 1990 is 40%, and in that same timeframe there has been a 60% loss of forest cover in the Telagh forest area

a.3. The specific drivers have been expanded upon and provided under section A. Current trends, the baseline scenario as well as stakeholders and their motivation have been added as well.

a.4. Thank you for catching this. The figures presented are correct however the percentage was incorrect. The correct percentage to be targeted is 29.52% of Aleppo Pine forests of the country. This data has been revised in the proposal within Section A as well as Annex C.

b)

b.1. The challenges and barriers in the project description have been refined and those identified have been integrated into a revised Theory of Change (TOC). The proposal has been revised to ensure consistency across all sections.

b.2. As suggested, the first paragraph under "Global Environmental Benefits?" has been moved and merged with the information provided in Section C.

4.2 JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT

a) Is there an indication of why the project approach has been selected over other potential options?

b) Does it ensure resilience to future changes in the drivers?

c) Is there a description of how the GEF alternative will build on ongoing/previous investments (GEF and non-GEF), lessons and experiences in the country/region?

d) are the relevant stakeholders and their roles adequately described?

Secretariat's Comments

May 1, 2023:

a) Partially, considering the problems and barriers. But the baseline is not appropriately described. We learn in the project description that the GEF investment will support the government's planned investments in the forest sector but we don't know what these investments are. Please fully describe the baseline related to this project including the planned investments and existing initiatives from the public sector and any other relevant stakeholders.

b) Yes in theory as the proposed activities should improve the resilience of the targeted landscapes and systems. Cleared.

c) No, there is no description of ongoing/previous investments (GEF and non-GEF), lessons and experiences in the country this project could build on. For instance, what will the significant co-financing as investment mobilized be used for in this project? Please elaborate on this aspect which is an important element to justify the need of the proposed new investments.

d) Partially. The description of the involved stakeholders and their role is vague. Please clarify the different categories of stakeholders relevant for the project (such as institutions, local governments, individuals, households, communities and business/enterprises...) and their respective role in the targeted landscapes, in the description of the context and in the description of the project components.

October 25, 2023:

a) Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

c) The Annex A includes financing tables, no related investments this project can build on and/or articulate with. Please clarify where the information can be found and ensure it includes the description of ongoing/previous investments (GEF and non-GEF), lessons and experiences in the country this project will build on (we don't find this information clearly in the current version of the PIF).

d) Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

November 29, 2023:

c) Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

Agency's Comments

UNDP- October 16, 2023

4.2.a The government's planned investments for each of the target sites have now been provided in the PIF:

While investments have generally been low in forest conservation and restoration, various ministries are working to reduce pressures on forest ecosystems in the targeted

areas. The government has committed 7,595,846 USD for the three forest areas between 2020 and 2025 (see detail Annex A). These funds are utilized for creating forest infrastructure, including forest roads for better accessibility and fire prevention, conducting reforestation efforts to replenish and expand forested areas, and performing silvicultural work to ensure sustainable forest management. Financing from the GEF is critical for catalyzing sustainability of these investments and future ones, to integrate SFM best practices and facilitate generation of local and global environmental benefits, as well as social ones in line with Algeria's own commitments within the MEA framework and national development priorities. The GEF's support will also amplify the impact of the government's investment and ensure the implementation of innovative global best practices, addressing both immediate challenges and long-term resilience of the forest ecosystems.?

The baseline forestry and rural development related to this project including the planned investments and existing initiatives from the public sector and any other relevant stakeholders have been expanded upon under section A on current trends and baseline scenario.

4.2.c Annex A provides details regarding the investment mobilized for the project, specifically highlighting the allocation of 24 million dollars (2023-25) obtained from the government-funded Dam Project. Annex A also includes past and current sub-projects that the project will build on or develop synergies with.

4.2.d The role and responsibility of stakeholders have been incorporated into each of the project components.

UNDP response - 28 Nov 2023

Section A highlights that the project is strategically positioned to synergize with a suite of ongoing GEF-funded initiatives and national programs, all of which are instrumental in addressing land degradation, desertification, and biodiversity loss in Northern Algeria. Specifically, the project will establish strong linkages with FAO-implemented initiatives such as the "Rehabilitation and integrated sustainable development of production landscapes of cork oak forests in Algeria" (GEF ID 9806), and the "Integrated Forest and biodiversity management for sustainable development in the Biban mountain range" (GEF ID 10170). Additionally, it will align with the UNDP-implemented project on developing a national strategy for access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing in line with the CBD and its Nagoya Protocol (GEF ID 5808).

The project is also set to contribute to, and be informed by, national level activities under new GEF-financed projects including the Umbrella Programme for NBSAP Update, the Global Biodiversity Framework Early Action Support, the Eighth Operational Phase of the GEF Small Grants Programme, and the Umbrella Programme for Biodiversity Finance Plans, all led by UNDP.

On the non-GEF front, the government of Algeria has committed substantial funds towards forest conservation and restoration in the targeted areas, with specific allocations detailed in Annex G of the PIF. These funds are allocated for creating vital forest infrastructure, reforestation, and sustainable forest management efforts, all of which are crucial for the long-term resilience of the forest ecosystems.

The GEF's financial support is pivotal in this context, as it will catalyze the sustainability of these investments, ensuring the integration of best practices in sustainable forest management, and facilitating the generation of both local and global environmental benefits. This strategic alignment and building upon existing investments and initiatives will ensure that the project is not operating in isolation but is instead contributing to a larger, cohesive effort towards sustainable forest management and conservation in Algeria.

In terms of lessons learned, previous and ongoing initiatives have highlighted the importance of integrating community participation, addressing deforestation drivers proactively, and implementing measures against climate change impacts. These insights will be invaluable in guiding the implementation of the GEF-funded project, ensuring that it adopts a holistic approach to forest conservation, integrates innovative global best practices, and delivers lasting and sustainable benefits for both the environment and the local communities.

Additional language and reference to Section A has been added to Annex G to clarify the above.

5 B. Project Description

5.1 THEORY OF CHANGE

a) Is there a concise theory of change that describes the project logic, including how the project design elements will contribute to the objective, the expected causal pathways, and the key assumptions underlying these?

b) Are the key outputs of each component defined (where possible)?

Secretariat's Comments

May 2, 2023:

a)

a.1. Partially. The narrative of the TOC doesn't include the assumptions underlying the causal pathways. Please complete the key causal pathways and their logic including the assumptions.

a.2. The provided diagram of the TOC has a very low definition and is very difficult to read. Please copy readable diagram in the description (after revising it taking into account the comments in this review).

b)

b.1. The outputs are not clearly presented for all the components/outcomes (this is particularly the case for the outcome 2.2). Under each expected outcome, please describe clearly all the outputs/activities and ensure they are consistent with the Indicative Project Overview table at the beginning of the project description and with the TOC.

b.2. The structure of component 1 is unclear: outcomes 1.1 and 1.2 look similar and both include building or improving "institutional and technical capacity". Also the summary of component 1 include "the establishment of institutional arrangements for forest governance" which is not reflected in the in the outputs. Please clarify the component 1 with clear different and complementary outputs and outcomes.

b.3. The lack of incentive and legal framework to involve the private sector is presented as a key challenge/barrier. Under the scenario with GEF funding we learn the project will

incentivize private sector investments and support three value chain for selected wood and non-wood forest products. Nevertheless, while this is a crucial element for the project success and its sustainable and transformational impact, there is no description of the outputs 2.2.1 and 2.2.2. What are these three value chains and stakeholders involved? What are potentially the wood and non-wood forest products? What are the possible financial mechanisms considered?... Please elaborate thoroughly on the concrete activities/outputs allowing the achievement of the outcome 2.2 and identify expected targets so that the achievement of this outcome can be monitored.

b.4 Community empowerment is said to be among the key aspects of the design of this project. Please clarify how this will be achieved in the description of the outputs.

b.5. Limited law enforcement is presented as a barrier/challenge. Please clarify the project output(s) that is expected to address this barrier/challenge.

b.6. Under the output 3.1, what does "disseminate strategies" concretely mean? Please clarify.

October 25, 2023:

a) and b) Thank you for the additional information, clarification and adjustments.
Cleared.

Agency's Comments

UNDP- October 16, 2023

a.1. Addressed in the document. The narrative of the TOC has been revised and now includes the assumptions underlying the causal pathways (Figure 1).

A.2. The TOC diagram has been revised to enhance its clarity and improve its visual representation.

b.

b.1. Outcome 2.2 has been revised, and its outputs/activities are now consistent with the Indicative Project Overview table and TOC. In addition, an additional outcome, outcome 2.3 has been added ? Outcome 2.3. Efficient financing solutions developed to facilitate sustainable investments in wood and non-wood forest value chains, and to conserve and restore forest ecosystems.?

b. 2. Outcome 1.1 of the project supports the establishing and strengthening of an enabling environment to support the conservation, sustainable management, and utilization of the Algerian Aleppo pine forest. This outcome entails the development and implementation of adapted by-laws that offer precise directives for sustainable forest management practices and will support development/updating of forest management plans and decision-support tools. It also emphasizes the importance of effective law enforcement, fostering collaboration and coordination among stakeholders, and facilitating the active participation of local communities in decision-making processes. Outcome 1.2 of the project centers on enhancing technical capacities of institutions mandated with forest management responsibilities at the national and subnational levels

for evidence-based management. It emphasizes the importance of acquiring and applying scientific knowledge to guide improved forest conservation and restoration efforts. Outcome 1.3 then is intended to support capacities and participation of local communities in SFM and FLR, through community-led approaches informed by gender-responsive technical guidance. This outcome is also meant to target CSOs and forest user associations as an important conduit for community-led SFM and FLR and ensure that they are equipped with the capacities and skills to guide communities in the implementation of forest management plans, in collaboration with government institutions.

b.3. Component 2. Output 2.2.2 has been revised to now read as ? Output 2.2.2. - Support CSOs/Forest Associations (i.e., Forest User Groups) and SMMEs with a focus on women to adopt sustainable practices within value chains for specific wood (thinning posts), NWFPs, and use of forest ecosystem services ensuring green jobs creation, income generation and gender inclusive benefit sharing.? Under this output a market analysis will be undertaken to identify potential markets for sustainably sourced wood and non-wood forest products, such as Aleppo Pine Seeds, aromatic and medicinal plants. In addition, under output 2.3.1 a payment for ecosystem services (PES) mechanism will be tested and operationalized, that will provide incentives for local stakeholders to reduce pressure on forests, restore ecosystems and/or engage in wood, non-wood forest products, and forest ecosystem services-related value chains.

b.4. Community empowerment is the key aspect of the design of this project and focuses on the active participation of the local community including women, creating gender-sensitive guidelines for community-based conservation and forest management and, promoting the active involvement of communities in the restoration of forest landscapes through participatory approaches. This focus has been better integrated across the component description. The project seeks to provide training and support to local civil society organizations and forest associations, empowering them with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively coordinate and implement forest management plans at the community level. The project will also strengthen women-led organizations and target women-led businesses (output 2.3.1).

b.5. Indeed, there is limited law enforcement in the management of the Algerian Aleppo Pine forest landscape. To address this, the project has strategically integrated outputs across its components. Under Component 1 (Outcome 1.1), the project will support the development and updating of forest by-laws, which will clarify how forests will be used, and define allowable and unallowable actions and set out parameters for human-environment interactions in the forest landscape. Strengthening institutional capacities, will ensure that entities responsible for managing forests are better equipped to monitor forest use and ensure that policies, strategies and regulations are implemented and complied with. This is complemented by Outcome 1.2, which focuses on training practitioners with modern tools, directly supporting management capacities, including for monitoring and enforcement. Component 2 further supports this through Output 2.1, which actively involves local communities in forest management. By fostering a sense of ownership, communities become natural allies in law enforcement. Additionally, the introduction of a payment for ecosystem services mechanism under Output 2.3.1 of Component 2 serves as a deterrent against illegal activities by making sustainable practices more rewarding. Furthermore, the knowledge management and awareness-building component, Component 3, ensures that revisions in management frameworks and regulations are widely communicated to the public. Special emphasis is placed on raising awareness among local populations about the forest conservation, sustainable use and restoration, and the benefits of such investments for communities and their livelihoods.

b.6. Replaced 'disseminate' by 'implement'. It is about implementing strategies for sharing/exchanging knowledge, and lessons and communicating project results and impacts, including women's engagement.

5.2 INCREMENTAL/ADDITIONAL COST REASONING

Is the incremental/additional cost reasoning properly described as per the Guidelines provided in GEF/C.31/12?

Secretariat's Comments

May 2, 2023:

As the baseline is not described, the incremental cost reasoning remains unclear. Please elaborate on the incremental cost reasoning of this GEF funded project taking into account the current baseline scenario including the expected co-financing.

October 25, 2023:

Thank you for the clarification and additional information. Cleared.

Agency's Comments

UNDP- October 16, 2023

The baseline scenario has been further elaborated on in Section A and an elaboration of the incremental cost reasoning has been added to the section under 'Scenario with GEF Funding.'

5.3 IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

a) Is the institutional setting, including potential executing partners, outlined and a rationale provided?

b) Comments to proposed agency execution support (if agency expects to request exception).

c) Is there a description of potential coordination and cooperation with ongoing GEF-financed projects/programs and other bilateral/multilateral initiatives in the project area

d) Are the proposed elements to capture and disseminate knowledge and learning outputs and strategic communication adequately described?

Secretariat's Comments

May 2, 2023:

a) and b)

a.1. We take note that UNDP expects to play an execution role on this project. The justification "Considering the working environment in Algeria" is too vague. Please note that in the GEF project 10170 recently approved in the same country, the GEF Agency FAO is not justifying the need to execute project activities. Also, UNDP says "The two other UN organizations [including FAO] have limited technical capacities to undertake the project implementation". This looks surprising considering FAO's mandate and the fact that FAO is currently implementing a GEF project on Cork Oak forest production landscapes in Algeria. Please provide a more detailed justification of such arrangement and an estimated detailed budget of the executed functions that are planned to be executed by UNDP. At this stage or during PPG phase, please note that such an exception to GEF policy needs also to be officially requested by the OFP and justified by the demonstration that there is no other third party able to undertake these function.

a.2. The description says "UNDP Algeria CO has received an official request from Government to implement the project under a support to National Implementation Modality". Please upload this request in the document tab of the Portal.

a.3 The paragraph "There are three UN organizations accredited at GEF, ... UNDP staff providing oversight will report to Nature, Climate and Energy team leader" is repeated in 2 different part of the description. Please remove unnecessary repetitions.

a.4. If this is justified and accepted, UNDP should be mentioned as "Executing Partner" along with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in the "General Project Information" (at the beginning of the project description).

c) There isn't any description of potential coordination and cooperation with ongoing GEF-financed projects/programs and other bilateral/multilateral initiatives in the project area. Please clarify and complete as needed.

d) The knowledge management approach includes the identification of best conservation, restoration and sustainable management measures, which will be compiled by relevant institutions "to ensure long-term adoption and dissemination of developed knowledge and know-how". It is unclear if this measures/lessons are coming from the project or not (PES in particular is not mentioned in the components description) and how concretely they will be collected and compiled. Beyond the training and capacity-building activities made available to a wider audience, the strategic communication of the project is not clear. Please elaborate further on the knowledge management strategy and ensure lessons from the project are captured in this strategy.

October 25, 2023:

a.1. We take note of the request from the government and of the list of activities to be executed by UNDP. Nevertheless the requested justification of the arrangement and the estimated budget of these activities are not provided. Please provide these elements (a

rough estimate of the budget or a maximum amount will suffice). Please also note and correct in the OFP letter the GEF project ID which is wrong.

a.2. Thank you for uploading the Note Verbale. Cleared.

a.3. Thank you for the amendment. Cleared.

a.4. This comment is not addressed. Please address this comment.

c) At this stage, a description of potential coordination and cooperation with ongoing GEF-financed projects/programs and other bilateral/multilateral initiatives in the project area is expected (even briefly). Please clarify where this information can be found.

d) Thank you for the additional information. Cleared.

November 29, 2023:

a.1. Thank you for the additional information provided including the justification and the budget expected to be executed by UNDP. Please note the following:

- a.1.1. For the CEO endorsement, the project must demonstrate that the national executing agency will have the final decision on all the budget expenses of the project.

- a.1.2. As the UNDP knows, the implementation and execution roles on GEF projects are meant to be separate per policy and guideline. The GEFSEC will analyze any requests for dual role playing by an agency at the time of CEO endorsement and only approve those cases that it deems warranted on an "exceptional" basis. We strongly encourage the UNDP to look at third party options as a preferred way forward. We also strongly encourage the agency to discuss any and all options for execution that do not include the government with the GEFSEC early in the PPG phase. The technical clearance of this PIF in no way endorses any alternative execution arrangement.

c. Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

Agency's Comments

UNDP- October 16, 2023

a.1. The exact details of how much of the budget will be executed by UNDP is not yet available and will be fully defined at the PPG stage in the project workplan and budget, but the request from government includes support for the following functions:

- ? Management of payment processes
- ? Contractual Services for Individuals (including recruitment and contract issuance)
- ? Staff selection and recruitment process
- ? Staff HR and Benefits Administration and Management
- ? Procurement of Goods and Services
- ? Travel Management

The OFP letter of request for execution support is attached.

a.2. A letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is uploaded to the portal with the review sheet and the revised PIF.

a.3. Unnecessary repetition has been removed.

c. Some information on coordination and cooperation with several national institutions is provided. More details on the implementation and coordination arrangements will be developed during the full Project Preparation phase (PPG phase).

d. The knowledge management strategy and approach has been strengthened including the key elements that will be included in the knowledge management strategy for the project.

UNDP response - 28 Nov 2023

a1. The arrangement and the budget estimation provided detail in Section B of the PIF, under the heading "Implementation Arrangements?".

a4. UNDP has been changed to executing partner in the PIF

c) This can be found in Section A of the PIF and has been summarized under the comments for section 4.2.

UNDP response - 5th December 2023

Thank you for your suggestion and UNDP has taken note of the comment. UNDP will conduct a comprehensive option analysis for project execution during the early stage of PPG phase.

5.4 a) Are the identified core indicators calculated using the methodology included in the corresponding Guidelines (GEF/C.54/11/Rev.01)?

b) Are the project's indicative targeted contributions to GEBs (measured through core indicators)/adaptation benefits reasonable and achievable?

Secretariat's Comments

May 2, 2023:

a)

a.1. Please clarify under the core indicator table the kind of restoration considered in this project (the cost of restoration is very variable depending on the kind of restoration).

a.2. Please justify why the indicator 4.1 (improved management to benefit biodiversity) has been selected and not the indicator 4.3 (sustainable land management in production systems).

a.3. Considering the planned activities in term of restoration and sustainable forest management, please also report expected benefit under the indicator 6.1 (GHG emission

mitigation). An estimate is expected at PIF stage. Please note that for this indicator the expected period of accounting is 20 years.

b) Probably, depending on the kind of restoration. Potentially cleared.

October 25, 2023:

a)

a.1. The GEF comment was referring to restoration (what kind of restoration) while the agency response is about all the indicators. Please address this comment.

a.2. Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

a.3. Thank you for considering the indicator 6.1. Please indicate the methodology used and provide the calculation to assess the climate mitigation result at this stage.

b) Potentially cleared depending on the response to comment a.1. above.

November 29, 2023:

a.1. and b) Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

a.3. Thank you for providing the calculation. The expected results looks ambitious because of the large area considered where the degradation will be strongly decreased. This will need to be further assessed during PPG stage. Cleared.

Agency's Comments

UNDP- October 16, 2023

a.1. After the indicators table, there is a highlight of what each GEF8 indicator is targeted by the project, the size of the area that will benefit from interventions contributing to those indicators, and the targeted change and impact. a.2. The most relevant indicator should be 4.3 ? sustainable land management in production systems and it has been incorporated into the Core Indicator table and throughout the PIF.

Indicator 4.1, which focuses on 'improved management to benefit biodiversity,' primarily targets areas where the primary objective is biodiversity conservation. While biodiversity conservation is undeniably crucial, the project's primary emphasis is on the sustainable use and management of forest landscapes, which often involves a balance between conservation and productive use. The project recognizes that the forests in Northern Algeria, especially the High Steppe region, are not just biodiversity reservoirs but also vital socio-economic assets for local communities. These forests provide livelihoods, resources for subsistence, and play a role in local and national economies. On the other hand, Indicator 4.3, 'sustainable land management in production systems,' aligns more closely with the project's objectives. This indicator emphasizes the integration

of both productive and sustainable use of land resources without compromising their ecological integrity. Given that the project seeks to promote both the conservation and productive use of the Algerian Aleppo pine forest ecosystem, it is essential to ensure that the land's productive capacities are maintained and enhanced in a sustainable manner. This includes sustainable harvesting, agroforestry practices, and other sustainable land management techniques that benefit both the environment and the local communities.

In essence, while biodiversity conservation is a component of the project, its broader goal is to ensure that the forests are managed sustainably to meet both ecological and socio-economic objectives. In light of this Indicator 4.1 has been dropped and instead Indicator 4.3 is adopted.

a.3. GEF-8 Indicator 6: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated (metric tons of CO₂e) has been added with an indicative figure of 153,000 Tons. This will be further refined and calculated at the PPG phase.

UNDP response - 28 Nov 2023

a.1. The project primarily focuses on FLR within the Algerian Aleppo pine forest ecosystem. This approach is holistic and integrates SFM practices to enhance the resilience, productivity, and biodiversity of the forest landscapes. The restoration activities will include a combination of assisted natural regeneration, enrichment planting, and the establishment of agroforestry systems, tailored to the specific needs and conditions of the target areas. These practices aim to restore ecological functionality and enhance the provision of ecosystem goods and services, while also contributing to improved livelihoods for local communities. This language has been added to the core indicator table section.

Outcome 2.1, Output 2.1.1. *Implement FLR strategies and interventions across 76,500 ha of degraded Algerian Aleppo Pine Forest, ensuring the active participation of women in restoration activities*, describes indicative activities/interventions under this Output in the PIF.

This output will prioritize natural regeneration as a cost-effective method of restoration, including natural forest regrowth and assisted natural regeneration (ANR), with limited active restoration where relevant and necessary. Indicative activities include:

? Identify the degradation hotspots across the 76,500 ha of Aleppo Pine forest landscape and prioritize areas for key interventions depending on the type and level of degradation, and the current land uses.

? Identify the appropriate restoration options, techniques, and interventions for eliminating threats to forest growth and limiting forest disturbance, e.g., preventing the spread of fires by building firebreaks and clearing forest floor of dry debris; controlling cattle grazing patterns/establishing seasonal enclosures to protect tree saplings; removing invasive grasses and shrubs; channeling water into soil; weeding, pruning, fertilizing, enrichment planting and reintroduction, and pruning branches, etc.

? Mobilize local stakeholders (e.g., individuals, families, smallholder farmers, forest managers through appropriate mechanisms (e.g., cash-for-work schemes) to implement the relevant identified techniques in the forest landscape, covering 76,000 ha.

? Establish 500 ha of Aleppo Pine (*Pinus halepensis*) woodlots through community-based reforestation activities, ensuring support to women and youth-managed nurseries in collaboration with Forest Associations and other user groups.

a.3. The methodology used is from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 2022. EX-ACT: Ex-ante Carbon-balance Tool. Retrieved from <https://www.fao.org/in-action/epic/ex-act-tool/suite-of-tools/ex-act/en/> and provided the calculation to assess the climate mitigation result at this stage. The project formulation team will provide exact results during the project document formulation process.

UNDP response - 5th December, 2023:

Based on the review comment, UNDP has recalculated the target under Core Indicator 6.1 using only the target to conserve and restore 76,500 hectares of Aleppo Pine Forest, with projected greenhouse gas emission reductions estimated at 8,382,098 metric tons of CO₂e. The PPG will undertake further review and validation through detailed calculations, utilizing comprehensive baseline studies and assessments.

5.5 NGI Only: Is there a justification of financial structure and use of financial instrument with concessionality levels?

Secretariat's Comments N/A

Agency's Comments

5.6 RISKS

- a) Are climate risks and other main risks relevant to the project described and addressed within the project concept design?
- b) Are the key risks that might affect the project preparation and implementation phases identified and adequately rated?
- c) Are environmental and social risks, impacts and management measures adequately screened and rated at this stage and consistent with requirements set out in SD/PL/03?

Secretariat's Comments

May 2, 2023:

a) The following risks are unclear: "Political and Governance", "Macro-economic", "Strategies and Policies", "Technical design of project or program", "Institutional capacity for implementation and sustainability", "Fiduciary: Financial Management and Procurement", and "Stakeholder Engagement". In addition, for these risk, the identified mitigation measure is not provided by the project (it's an external factor). For each

identified risk, please make very clear what is the identified risk and what is the mitigation measure(s) considered in the project design.

b) The "Environment and Social" risk is rated as "Low". Considering the description under the project rationale, shouldn't this risk be considered at least as "Moderate"? Even if the project is successful, it may take years before providing alternative revenue and decrease pressure on forests. Please justify or reassess the rating for this risk.

c) Yes, cleared.

October 25, 2023:

a) and b) Thank you for the additional information and amendment. Cleared.

Agency's Comments

UNDP- October 16, 2023

5.6.

a) The risk table has been revised with more clearly identified risks and mitigation measures.

b) The "Environment and Social" risk has been revised and is now rated as "Moderate".

5.7 Qualitative assessment

a) Does the project intend to be well integrated, durable, and transformative?

b) Is there potential for innovation and scaling-up?

c) Will the project contribute to an improved alignment of national policies (policy coherence)?

Secretariat's Comments

May 2, 2023:

a) Yes, but this still needs to be demonstrated by a more detailed description of relevant activities as requested above. Cleared.

b) Yes, particularly through capacity building of different kind of stakeholders at national and local levels and through the development of economic incentives. cleared

c) The improvement in terms of policy coherence is not clear as the expected coordination mechanisms and intersectoral works (with other Ministries such as the Ministry of Environment) are not presented in the outputs/outcomes. Please elaborate in this aspect which is important to achieve sustainable and transformative change.

October 25, 2023:

c) It is unclear where the information on policy coherence can be found (Section C is about the alignment with GEF- 8 programming strategies and country and regional priorities). Please clarify and ensure policy coherence (alignment of different national policies and intersectoral-interministerial coordination as appropriate) is described.

November 29, 2023:

Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

Agency's Comments

UNDP- October 16, 2023

5.7.c The policy coherence has been more clearly identified and coordination mechanisms described under section C. The role of the General Directorate of Forestry (DGF) is presented in the outputs/outcomes.

UNDP response - 28 Nov 2023

Section A outlines the current status of national policy within the sector and Section C outlines Algeria's international commitments. The project supports the objectives of the National Climate Plan (PNC), emphasizing the forest sector's role in adaptation priorities. The project also acknowledges the existing challenges in policy coherence and intersectoral coordination. The outdated forest management plans, dating back to the 1970s and 1980s, and the lack of enabling environments for local communities and the private sector to participate in forest conservation, highlight the need for updated policies and strategies. The project aims to address these gaps by facilitating policy dialogue, updating forest management plans, supporting the revision of forests bye-laws, supporting the development of decision-support tools and building capacity for implementation of policies and enforcement of laws that enable forest protection and disincentivize forest degradation and loss.

The Algerian government's renewed commitment to sustainable forest management, demonstrated by increased funding and support for forest programs, provides a solid foundation for the project. The Forest Law of 1984, which promotes sustainable and participatory forest practices, and the development of a strategy for Non-Wood Forest Products (NWFPs), further underscore the government's dedication to involving various stakeholders in sustainable forest value chains.

The project taps into existing platforms for dialogue and stakeholder engagement, leveraging the institutional setup provided by the state. This includes the National Forestry Commission, the Intersectoral Commission for the Adoption of Anti-Erosion Development, and operational committees at the wilaya (territorial) level. These platforms facilitate cross-sectoral coordination and ensure that the project is embedded in the national framework for forest management and biodiversity conservation.

The project areas, located within the ambit of the Green Dam project, further benefit from specialized platforms set up to combat desertification and rejuvenate the Green Dam initiative. This includes the national body to combat desertification, an intersectoral steering committee, a technical and scientific committee, and local committees across all 13 wilayas involved in the Green Dam programme. These platforms provide an additional layer of support, coordination, and expertise, ensuring that the project is well-integrated into the national efforts to combat desertification and promote sustainable land management.

To summarize, the project is well-aligned with national policies, international commitments, and ongoing initiatives, providing a holistic approach to address the challenges of forest degradation and biodiversity loss. However, it also recognizes the existing policy gaps and challenges in intersectoral coordination, and is designed to address these issues, ensuring a comprehensive and effective response to the conservation and sustainable management of the Algerian Aleppo pine forest ecosystem.

The alignment/challenges with the national policies from Section A of the proposal have been summarized and included in Section C to better clarify the policy coherence.

6 C. Alignment with GEF-8 Programming Strategies and Country/Regional Priorities

6.1 Is the project adequately aligned with focal area and integrated program strategies and objectives, and/or adaptation priorities?

Secretariat's Comments

May 2, 2023:

The description of how the proposed interventions are aligned with GEF-8 programming strategies and its Focal Areas (BD, CCM and LD) is missing. Please complete.

October 25, 2023:

Thank you for the additional information. Cleared.

Agency's Comments

UNDP- October 16, 2023

6.1 Added to Section C.

6.2 Is the project alignment/coherent with country and regional priorities, policies, strategies and plans (including those related to the MEAs and to relevant sectors)

Secretariat's Comments

May 2, 2023:

Yes, cleared.

Agency's Comments

6.3 For projects aiming to generate biodiversity benefits (regardless of what the source of the resources is - i.e. BD, CC or LD), does the project clearly identify which of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework the project contributes to and how it contributes to the identified target(s)?

Secretariat's Comments

May 2, 2023:

The project aims to generate biodiversity benefits but no targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) are identified. Please clearly identify which of the 23 targets of the BGF the project is expected to contribute to and how it contributes to these targets.

October 25, 2023:

Thank you for identifying the GBF targets. Nevertheless, how the project contributes to each of the identified targets is not mentioned. Please clarify.

November 29, 2023:

Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

Agency's Comments

UNDP- October 16, 2023

6.3. Targets have been identified and added, under section C.

UNDP response - 28 Nov 2023

The project's alignment with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) is integral to its design and objectives. Below is a detailed explanation of how the project contributes to each of the identified GBF targets:

Target 2: ?Ensure that at least 30 percent globally of land areas and sea areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and its contributions to people, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.?

? Contribution: The project aims to restore 76,500 hectares of the Algerian Aleppo pine forest ecosystem, integrating sustainable forest management practices over 265,534 hectares. This contributes to expanding the area under conservation, ensuring ecological representation, and enhancing connectivity within the landscape.

Target 10: ?Ensure all areas under agriculture, aquaculture, and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity.?

? Contribution: The project promotes SFM and FLR approaches, ensuring that forestry practices contribute to biodiversity conservation. It also aims to improve knowledge management and capacity-building in these areas, fostering sustainable practices in forestry.

Target 11: ?Maintain and restore ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods, and well-being.?

? Contribution: By restoring degraded forest ecosystems and implementing SFM practices, the project will enhance the provision of ecosystem services, including water regulation and soil stabilization, which are crucial for local communities' health, livelihoods, and well-being.

Target 19: ?Ensure that people are encouraged and enabled to make responsible choices and take positive actions for biodiversity through awareness, education, and public participation.?

? Contribution: The project includes components aimed at raising awareness and building capacities among local communities and stakeholders. This will empower them to participate actively in conservation efforts and make informed decisions that positively impact biodiversity.

The above explanation has been added to section C.

7 D. Policy Requirements

7.1 Is the Policy Requirements section completed?

Secretariat's Comments

May 2, 2023:

Yes, cleared.

Agency's Comments

7.2 Is a list of stakeholders consulted during PIF development, including dates of these consultations, provided?

Secretariat's Comments

May 2, 2023:

Yes, cleared.

Agency's Comments

8 Annexes

Annex A: Financing Tables

8.1 Is the proposed GEF financing (including the Agency fee) in line with GEF policies and guidelines? Are they within the resources available from (mark all that apply):

STAR allocation?

Secretariat's Comments

May 1st, 2023:

Yes, cleared.

Agency's Comments

Focal Area allocation?

Secretariat's Comments

May 1st, 2023:

Yes, cleared.

Agency's Comments

LDCF under the principle of equitable access?

Secretariat's CommentsN/A

Agency's Comments

SCCF A (SIDS)?

Secretariat's CommentsN/A

Agency's Comments

SCCF B (Tech Transfer, Innovation, Private Sector)?

Secretariat's CommentsN/A

Agency's Comments

Focal Area Set Aside?

Secretariat's Comments

N/A

Agency's Comments

8.2 Is the PPG requested within the allowable cap (per size of project)? If requested, has an exception (e.g. for regional projects) been sufficiently substantiated?

Secretariat's Comments

May 1st, 2023:

Yes, the PPG requested is \$150,000 which is allowed for FSP above \$3 million. Cleared.

Agency's Comments

8.3 Are the indicative expected amounts, sources and types of co-financing adequately documented and consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines?

Secretariat's Comments

May 1st, 2023:

1. In-kind is normally classified as 'recurrent expenditure'. Please revise the below which are classified as 'investment mobilized' to 'recurrent expenditures'. Otherwise, please revise 'in-kind' to any other option that fits 'investment mobilized'.

Recipient Country Government	Government of Algeria	In-kind	Investment mobilized	18,000,000.00
------------------------------	-----------------------	---------	----------------------	---------------

2. The name of co-financier "Government of Algeria" is very broad. Can't it be more specific with the name of the Ministry or institution contributing?

October 25, 2023:

1. This comment is not addressed as "In-kind" still appears classified as 'Investment mobilized'. Please address this comment.

2. This comment is not addressed as the name of co-financier is still "Government of Algeria" in the co-financing table. Please address this comment.

November 29, 2023:

1 and 2. Thank you for the amendments. Cleared.

Agency's Comments

UNDP- October 16, 2023

8.3.1 Thank you for your suggestion and revised accordingly.

8.3.2. Name has been provided ?Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

UNDP response - 28 Nov 2023

This was likely a mistake in transferring from the PIF to the portal. The co-financier is the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the in-kind is ?recurrent expenditure.?

This has now been fixed in the GEF portal.

Annex B: Endorsements

8.4 Has the project been endorsed by the country?s(ies) GEF OFP and has the OFP at the time of PIF submission name and position been checked against the GEF database?

Secretariat's Comments

May 1st, 2023:

Yes, cleared.

Agency's Comments

Are the OFP endorsement letters uploaded to the GEF Portal (compiled as a single document, if applicable)?

Secretariat's Comments

May 1st, 2023:

Yes, cleared.

Agency's Comments

Do the letters follow the correct format and are the endorsed amounts consistent with the amounts included in the Portal?

Secretariat's Comments

May 8, 2023:


1. The executing partner in LoE (UNDP) is different than that in Portal (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development). As mentioned above, leaving UNDP Algeria as the executing partner is still not yet approved. Therefore, there are two options: (i) if approved by the Secretariat, under exceptional basis, please provide an email from the OFP clarifying that the above mentioned Governmental institutions will also be the executing partners (please append the email to the documents tab); or (ii) please provide a new LoE which is consistent with the Portal entry.

To: Pradeep Kurukulasuriya
Executive Coordinator – Environmental Finance
Bureau for Policy and Programme Support .

Subject: Endorsement for Restoration and forest management of the Algerian pine forest, with an integrated and participatory approach promoting the Aleppo pine, NWFPs and ecosystem-based adaptation solutions to climate change.

In my capacity as GEF Operational Focal Point for Algeria, I confirm that the above project proposal (a) is in accordance with my government's national priorities (including, if available, the priorities identified in the National Adaptation Plan of Action and/or the National Capacity Self-Assessment and our commitment to the relevant global environmental conventions; and (b) was discussed with relevant stakeholders, including the global environmental convention focal points.

I am pleased to endorse the preparation of the above project proposal with the support of the GEF Implementing Agency(ies) listed below. If approved, the preparation of the proposal will be supported by and the project executed by UNDP Algeria. I request the GEF Implementing Agency(ies) to provide a copy of the project document before it is submitted to the GEF Secretariat for CEO endorsement / Approval.

General Project information 		
Project Title:	Restoration and sustainable forest management of the Algerian Aleppo pine forest	
Region:	Algeria	GEF Project ID:
Country(ies):	Algeria	Type of Project:
GEF Agency(ies):	UNDP	GEF Agency ID:
Executing Partner:	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development	Executing Partner Type:
GEF Focal Area (s):	Multi Focal Area	Submission Date :

2. The title in LoE (?Restoration and forest management of the Algerian pine forest with an integrated participatory approach promoting the Aleppo pine, NWFPs and ecosystem-based adaptation solutions to climate change?) is different than the title in the Portal (?Restoration and sustainable forest management of the Algerian Aleppo pine forest ecosystem?) ? please either change the LoE or to modify the title in Portal. Later on, the title can be modified with the PM approval.


REF: 03-23/ALG- OFP -GEF/MEER.

Algiers, April 10th 2023

To: Pradeep Kurukulasuriya
Executive Coordinator – Environmental Finance
Bureau for Policy and Programme Support .

Subject: Endorsement for Restoration and forest management of the Algerian pine forest, with an integrated and participatory approach promoting the Aleppo pine, NWFPs and ecosystem-based adaptation solutions to climate change.

In my capacity as GEF Operational Focal Point for Algeria, I confirm that the above project proposal (a) is in accordance with my government's national priorities (including, if available, the priorities identified in the National Adaptation Plan of Action and/or the National Capacity Self-Assessment and our commitment to the relevant global environmental conventions; and (b) was discussed with relevant stakeholders, including the global environmental convention focal points.

General Project information 			
Project Title:	Restoration and sustainable forest management of the Algerian Aleppo pine forest ecosystem		
Region:	Algeria	GEF Project ID:	11179
Country(ies):	Algeria	Type of Project:	FSP
GEF Agency(ies):	UNDP	GEF Agency ID:	9690
Executing Partner:	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development	Executing Partner Type:	Government
GEF Focal Area (s):	Multi Focal Area	Submission Date :	4/12/2023

October 25, 2023:

1. Not address yet as having UNDP Algeria as the executing partner is still not yet approved considering the absence of justification and estimated budget.

2. Thank you for the amendment. Cleared.

November 29, 2023:

1. The role of UNDP Algeria as the co-executing partner is accepted at PIF stage based on the justification provided. Cleared

2. Letter of Endorsement: the template utilized for this project removed the footnote that conditions the selection of the executing partner to the following: "Subject to the capacity assessment carried out by the GEF Implementing Agency, as appropriate". Per the email sent to agencies back in March when we were aiming to constitute June 2023 Work Program, Agencies were informed that LoEs "with modifications cannot be accepted and will be returned". While the removal of the footnote seems to be trivial, it is not: this footnote reduces the chances of having an executing partner that does not meet the fiduciary and procurement standards required to safely execute the project. Please upload in the document tab of the Portal an email from the OFP accepting this footnote to be part of the LoE (this is an alternative to request a new LoE).

December 7, 2023:

Thank you for providing a new letter of endorsement including the required footnote.
Cleared.

Agency's Comments

UNDP- October 16, 2023

The project title will modify in the GEF Portal as described in the OFP endorsement.

UNDP response - 28 Nov 2023

The arrangement and the budget estimation provided detail in Section B of the project document, under the heading "Implementation Arrangements".

UNDP response - 5th December 2023

A recently signed Letter of Endorsement (LoE), which incorporates a footnote, has been endorsed by the OFP and is now available in the document tab of the Portal.

8.5 For NGI projects (which may not require LoEs), has the Agency informed the OFP(s) of the project to be submitted?

Secretariat's Comments N/A

Agency's Comments

Annex C: Project Location

8.6 Is there preliminary georeferenced information and a map of the project's intended location?

Secretariat's Comments

May 1st, 2023:

1. There is no preliminary georeferenced information. Please complete adding this information.

2. The project location is not clear. We learn in the project description that the forests targeted by the project are located in the High Steps region. Nevertheless there isn't any map showing clearly where this region is. In addition 3 maps of several forests are copied without precisising where they are in the country and how they relate with the project (the title and the legend of these maps doesn't show the relation with the project). Please provide a clear unique map of the project locations (showing also the High Steps region and the Green Dam) and in the same map or in a separate one, showing where the project location is in the country.

October 25, 2023:

Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

Agency's Comments

UNDP- October 16, 2023

1. The georeferenced information is provided in the maps.
2. Several additional maps have been added to Annex C to give a better visual of where the targeted forests are located.

Annex D: Safeguards Screen and Rating

8.7 If there are safeguard screening documents or other ESS documents prepared, have these been uploaded to the GEF Portal?

Secretariat's Comments

May 2, 2023:

Yes, cleared.

Agency's Comments

Annex E: Rio Markers

8.8 Are the Rio Markers for CCM, CCA, BD and LD correctly selected, if applicable?

Secretariat's Comments

May 2, 2023:

Yes, cleared.

Agency's Comments

Annex F: Taxonomy Worksheet

8.9 Is the project properly tagged with the appropriate keywords?

Secretariat's Comments

May 1st, 2023:

As mentioned above, the taxonomy is very limited and should include more relevant information such as sustainable forest management, forests, forest landscape restoration... Please complete.

October 25, 2023:

Please consider the comment above on Taxonomy.

November 29, 2023:

Thank you for the additional information. Cleared.

Agency's Comments

UNDP- October 16, 2023

A revised and improved taxonomy list is included in the revised PIF at annex F.

UNDP response - 28 Nov 2023

The taxonomy has been fixed in the GEF portal.

Annex G: NGI Relevant Annexes

8.10 Does the project provide sufficient detail (indicative term sheet) to take a decision on the following selection criteria: co-financing ratios, financial terms and conditions, and financial additionality? If not, please provide comments. Does the project provide a detailed reflow table to assess the project capacity of generating reflows? If not, please provide comments. Is the Partner Agency eligible to administer concessional finance? If not, please provide comments.

Secretariat's Comments N/A

Agency's Comments

9 GEFSEC Decision

9.1 Is the PIF and PPG (if requested) recommended for technical clearance?

Secretariat's Comments

May 8, 2023:

Not yet, please address the comments raised above.

October 25, 2023:

Not yet, please address the remaining comments.

December 1st, 2023:

Not yet, please address the remaining comment.

December 7, 2023:

The remaining comments have been addressed. The PIF and PPG are now recommended by PM for clearance.

Agency's Comments

UNDP- October 16, 2023

The PIF has been extensively revised to address the GEFSEC's comments

9.2 Additional Comments to be considered by the Agency at the time of CEO Endorsement/ Approval

Secretariat's Comments

November 29, 2023:

As mentioned above:

1. Considering the important executing role of the Implementing Agency, for the CEO endorsement, the project must demonstrate that the national executing agency will have the final decision on all the budget expenses of the project.
2. The GEF Agency has been notified the following in the Review Sheet: the implementation and execution roles on GEF projects are meant to be separate per policy and guideline. The GEFSEC will analyze any requests for dual role playing by an agency at the time of CEO endorsement and only approve those cases that it deems warranted on an 'exceptional' basis. We strongly encourage the UNDP to look at third party options as a preferred way forward. We also strongly encourage the agency to discuss any and all options for execution that do not include the government with the GEFSEC early in the PPG phase. The technical clearance of this PIF in no way endorses any alternative execution arrangement.
3. Please revise carefully the calculation of the core indicator 6.1.

Agency's Comments N/A

Review Dates

	PIF Review	Agency Response
First Review	5/8/2023	10/16/2023
Additional Review (as necessary)	10/25/2023	11/21/2023
Additional Review (as necessary)	12/1/2023	12/4/2023
Additional Review (as necessary)	12/7/2023	
Additional Review (as necessary)		