



Strengthening capacity of institutions in The Gambia to meet transparency requirements of the Paris Agreement

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

10485

Countries

Gambia

Project Name

Strengthening capacity of institutions in The Gambia to meet transparency requirements of the Paris Agreement

Agencies

CI

Date received by PM

4/9/2021

Review completed by PM

Program Manager

Pascal Martinez

Focal Area

Climate Change

Project Type

MSP

PIF **CEO Endorsement**

Part I ? Project Information

Focal area elements

1. Does the project remain aligned with the relevant GEF focal area elements as presented in PIF (as indicated in table A)?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 3, 2021:

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

Project description summary

2. Is the project structure/design appropriate to achieve the expected outcomes and outputs as in Table B and described in the project document?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 3, 2021:

1. As compared with the PIF version, the outcome indicators and targets have disappeared in table B. Please complete table the B with these indicators and targets.

2. Based on the description in the portal doc, the duration of the project should be 30 months. However it still shows as 24 months.

3. Please ensure the time between the "Expected Implementation Start" and the "Expected Completion Date" correspond to the number of months indicated under "Duration". This is not the case in the current version.

May 17, 2021:

3. The time difference between the "Expected Implementation Start" (7/1/2021) and the "Expected Completion Date" (12/2/2023) is 29 months and 2 days while the project duration is 30 months. Please correct.

4. In addition, there is no proportionality in the co-financing contribution to PMC. If the GEF contribution is kept at 9.9%, for a co-financing of \$136,602 the expected contribution to PMC must be around \$13,582 instead of \$8,398 (which is 6.1%). As the costs associated with the project management have to be covered by the GEF portion and the co-financing portion allocated to the PMC, the GEF contribution and the co-financing contribution must be proportional, which means that the GEF contribution to PMC might be decreased and the co-financing contribution to PMC might be increased to reach a similar level. Please amend either by increasing the co-financing portion and/or by reducing the GEF portion.

5. Also, the agency fees in table B amounts to 99,479\$ while at the top and in Table D it says 99,000. Please clarify and revise.

June 16, 2021:

Thank you for the amendments. Cleared.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 06/15/2021:

3. Time difference: This has now been made clearer: The "Expected implementation start date" by *mm/dd/yyyy* is: 7/1/2021 and the "Expected completion date" is 12/31/2023; and has been adjusted in both the ProDoc and CEO-A.

4. Overall co-financing for PMC has been adjusted to **\$14,355**

5. To clarify, the amount in Table B (\$99,479) is the Project Management Cost (PMC). This project's Agency fee (Table D) is US\$ 99,000. This was calculated as follows: 9% of US\$1,100,000.

CI-GEF 05/13/2021:

1) Outcome indicators and targets have been added in Table B.

2) the Agency is unable to change the duration as it is greyed out in the portal. Will reach out to ITS

3) Duration needs to be 30 months.

3. If this is a non-grant instrument, has a reflow calendar been presented in Annex D?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

Co-financing

4. Are the confirmed expected amounts, sources and types of co-financing adequately documented, with supporting evidence and a description on how the breakdown of co-financing was identified and meets the definition of investment mobilized, and a description of any major changes from PIF, consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 3, 2021:

If we refer to the table 21 in the Prodoc, the co-financing from CI should be referenced as "Grant" and "Investment Mobilized" and the one from the Ministry of Environment should be referenced as "In-Kind" and "Recurrent Expenditures". Please amend accordingly.

May 17, 2021:

The co-financing letters can be found in an annex of the Prodoc. In addition, please upload the letters in the document section of the Portal and make them accessible through the last column "Evidence" of Table C.

June 16, 2021:

Thank you for the amendments. Cleared.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 06/15/2021:

Co-financing letters uploaded.

CI-GEF 05/13/2021:

Co-financing table updated.

GEF Resource Availability

5. Is the financing presented in Table D adequate and does the project demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objectives?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 3, 2021:

Thank you for indicating the changes from the PIF, this is useful. Nevertheless, we need in addition that all the sections under the Project description be fully developed in the Portal (from a to g). Please complete accordingly.

May 17, 2021:

Thank you for the complement. Cleared.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 05/13/2021:

Sections A to G have been updated (in yellow highlights).

Project Preparation Grant

6. Is the status and utilization of the PPG reported in Annex C in the document?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 3, 2021:

The Annex C doesn't specify any expenditure but only the total cost. Please complete the table with the main expenditures.

May 17, 2021:

Thank you for the amendment. Cleared.

Agency Response

Core indicators

**7. Are there changes/adjustments made in the core indicator targets indicated in Table E?
Do they remain realistic?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 3, 2021:

There is an improvement in terms of number of beneficiaries. Cleared.

Agency Response

Part II ? Project Justification

1. Is there a sufficient elaboration on how the global environmental/adaptation problems, including the root causes and barriers, are going to be addressed?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 4, 2021:

No. Please see above. This section needs to be fully developed in the Portal. Please complete accordingly.

May 17, 2021:

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 05/13/2021:

Section has been updated (in yellow highlights).

2. Is there an elaboration on how the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects were derived?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 4, 2021:

No. Please see above. This section needs to be fully developed in the Portal. Please complete accordingly.

May 24, 2021:

1. We welcome the detailed information on the challenges and barriers in relation to transparency. To better understand the baseline scenario, provide a brief summary of how the NC and GHG inventory process has been undertaken in the Gambia ? which sectors are involved, what IPCC methodology is used, are there QA/QC processes in place, what is the status of an IT systems (are there none, if so how is data collected and managed currently?) etc. Additionally, the alternative scenario mentions the existence of a taskforce and sector hubs ? please provide additional details on the current institutional arrangements that may exist. In this context, the incremental reasoning section states ? for the first time in the Gambia, there will be a GHG inventory?. Please provide, as mentioned above, existing processes in place for inventory collection. In sum, this baseline scenario section should provide an overview of the current status of transparency arrangements and technical capabilities for GHGI and MRV systems (adaptation, mitigation and support). If none exist, please state clearly.

2. Please provide a brief overview of the Gambia's NDC for both mitigation and adaptation.

3. The description under "Implications for BAU scenario" is more relevant to the incremental cost reasoning section. Please move this text to section "5) Incremental/additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline, the GEFTF, LDCF, SCCF, and co-financing".

4. The table 6 and table 7 list several "associated baseline projects" (including GEF SGP, Nagoya Protocol...) and "Baseline initiatives at national level in The Gambia" but the link with the CBIT project is often unclear. Please ensure only relevant projects for the Gambia are selected, explain how each of them are related to this CBIT proposal and remove the other projects including CI projects.

5. In particular, please clarify if the ICAT and PATPA projects mentioned cover the Gambia. If they do, please provide additional details in terms of the aspects of transparency it covers. If not, please remove from the table.

June 16, 2021:

Thank you for the amendments and clarifications. Cleared.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 06/15/2021:

- 1) The section has been adjusted. Paragraph 47 has been expanded and specific paragraphs 48 and 49 added in the ProDoc to provide an overview of the NC and GHG inventory processes. This information has also been added to the CEO-A. A paragraph (currently Para 65 in the ProDoc) has been added to give some additional details on the arrangements for GHG inventory and MRV operations in the country. This has also been incorporated in the CEO-A under the section 3 on alternative scenario.
- 2) This has now been addressed by addition of NDC mitigation information in the ProDoc to para 62 and addition of a specific Para 63 on adaptation options envisaged by the Gambia government in the short, medium and long term. This information has also been incorporated into the CEO-A.
- 3) The text under "Implications for BAU scenario?" has been moved to CEO-A section 5) Incremental/additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline, the GEFTF, LDCF, SCCF, and co-financing? and subtitled "Expected contributions from the baseline?" and a new text has been edited to fit under "implications for BAU scenario?".
- 4) The Tables 6 and 7 in the CEO-A have been edited as well as Tables 5 and 6 in the ProDoc; and the linkages with the CBIT project included for the relevant projects. Projects that closed more than five years ago or whose linkages to the CBIT project are remote or weak have been removed from the tables.
- 5) At the time of preparing the CBIT project, The Gambia was planning to apply to be included in the ICAT programme in response to an ICAT call for proposals <https://climateactiontransparency.org/funding-extension-2020/> and, if successful, that will provide leverage for the CBIT project activities as both have a focus on capacity building to support greater transparency.

PATPA on the other hand has a climate change knowledge portal as well as a climate and development knowledge network that the CBIT project could benefit from and thus closer linkage to the initiative will be useful. These texts have been incorporated in Table 6 as explanation for potential linkage.

CI-GEF 05/13/2021:

Section has been updated (in yellow highlights).

3. Is the proposed alternative scenario as described in PIF/PFD sound and adequate? Is there sufficient clarity on the expected outcomes and components of the project and a description on the project is aiming to achieve them?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

May 4, 2021:

No. Please see above. This section needs to be fully developed in the Portal. Please complete accordingly.

May 24, 2021:

1. What is included in expected MRV systems remains unclear: does this include mitigation, adaptation and support? Or only a subset of these. Please clarify.
2. Assisting in the improvement of transparency over time is one of the three key aims of the CBIT. Please clarify the activities contributing to improve transparency over time.
3. The alternative scenario, mainly includes the list of the components, outcomes and outputs, but it does not provide enough detail to really understand what is planned to do, such as in the Prodoc and other parts of the description in the Portal. Please elaborate the alternative scenario with more details about the concrete activities being supported under each output, their articulation within the project and their relevance as regard to the identified needs and baseline. In particular, please ensure clarity on the following: The national taskforce and existing framework and how they will be strengthened specifically through the CBIT project (Output 1.1.1); What is meant by in line with UNFCCC standards, and how this would align with MPGs (Outcome 1.2); On the establishment of an online MRV system: its link with Component 3 and the KM platform and if this MRV system is specifically for GHG Inventory and mitigation NDC or broader (Output 1.2.2); The technical aspects of NDC tracking such as developing indicators, and in which component/output of the project.
4. Component 3: Please provide additional details on the purpose, audience and included information of the online knowledge management platform for data sharing activities and how it may influence policymaking in the country. We note the the link with the global CBIT platform: please comment on specifically what the purpose of this would be and how it will leverage existing information in this CBIT global coordination platform. Also, please clarify on how this online platform will be maintained, and if training will be provided to users to understand the value and purpose of the platform.
5. We learn in the innovative section about an integrated monitoring and reporting system. Please clarify where this fits in in the components and provide additional details, including how 'machine learning, remote sensing' approaches will be adopted.
6. Table 5 mentions that the BTR should be supported under this project and the Output 2.1.3 is the preparation of a BUR to be submitted to UNFCCC . Please note that CBIT funding window should be used to support ETF and not necessarily the UNFCCC reporting requirements. The project components remain aligned with this but please, clarify which reporting is targeted (BTR or BUR?) and ensure it will not be carried out at the expenses of the CBIT project objectives.
7. In the TOC, the identified problems should be related to the transparency requirements the project intends to respond.

June 16, 2021:

Thank you for the amendments and clarifications. Cleared.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 06/15/2021:

1) Clarity has been provided that MRV systems include mitigation, adaptation and support. We have strengthened the ProDoc in paragraph 62 and added Paragraphs 63 and 65. This information has also been incorporated under section 3- *Proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project?* in the CEO-A.

2) The contribution to improvement of transparency in the long term includes, among others, support to establishment and strengthening of a national task force (activities under Para 90 in ProDoc), Strengthening sectoral focal points (activities under para 92), Technical guidance and trainings (activities under Paras 95, 96, 97 and 98) in addition to activities under component 2 described in Paras 102, 103 and 108 in the ProDoc. This information on detailed activities has now been incorporated in the CEO-A as well. In summary, these activities will strengthen the Gambia's technical and institutional GHG data collection, processing, storage, and sharing systems hence over time, the Gambia will be able to continually prepare GHGI reports, track progress made towards achieving their NDCs hence result in improved climate transparency.

3) The detailed activities have been incorporated under each of the outputs in the CEO-A as well.

a) Activities with respect to strengthening of the national task force has now been provided in the CEO-A with the details under output 1.1.1.

b) The outcome 1.2 seeks to establish a functioning MRV system in which GHG data from the key IPCC sectors (energy, industrial processes and product use, agriculture, land-use change and forestry, and waste) is aggregated and analyzed based on IPCC methodologies. Technical guides on data transmission and communication in compliance with IPCC standards will be developed for collecting and managing NDC information. MRV equipment will be procured to strengthen technological capacity of sector hubs. Training of Trainers (ToTs) workshops on management of the MRV system and GHGI will be conducted to strengthen capacity of national institutions to apply the MRV system and track NDC implementation.

c) The MRV system is broader and to enable tracking the NDC implementation (which includes Mitigation, adaptation and support activities). The information will improve understanding of progress made by The Gambia towards achieving the NDC and outline support needed and received that will enable The Gambia to realise the commitments provided in the NDC as indicated under component 3. The MRV system will be for broader achievement of the ETF requirements.

d) Activities under component 3 will support the NDC tracking, particularly through the enhanced accessibility to information, and indicator development may be finalised, by discussions within the coordination institutional framework under component 1. Additional information has been added to para 97 in the ProDoc as well as in the relevant section of the CEO-A.

4) Para 107 of the ProDoc has been strengthened with additional information outlining the purpose, audience and potential information to be shared. The relevant section of the CEO-A has also been edited and the information added.

The on-line platform will be hosted by MECCNAR (Para 108 of ProDoc), staff will be trained, and the platform will be integrated within the existing structure of MECNAR to ensure sustainability.

5) Through component 3 of the project an integrated monitoring and reporting platform will be established, and this is described under Paragraphs 107, 108 and 109 of the ProDoc. More information has been added to Para 107 for clarity. Robust computers and human capacity developed under Components 1 and 2 will enhance effective matching of users and access to remote sensed data.

6) This project will contribute to the on-going process for preparation of the first BUR for the Gambia, through the enhanced capacity of the sector hubs to provide better inputs of data and information to the process. Table 5 in the CEO-A and Table 4 in the ProDoc have accordingly been adjusted. Statement in table five has been adjusted accordingly. Output 2.1.3 was updated to, **Output 2.1.3:** Sector Hubs participate in the process of preparation of the Biennial Update Report (BUR). The relevant indicators, targets and activities have also been adjusted accordingly in the CEO-A and ProDoc.

7) TOC figure 4 has been adjusted accordingly (problems linked to capacity requirements that will be addressed by CBIT project have been incorporated)

CI-GEF 05/13/2021:

Section has been updated (in yellow highlights).

4. Is there further elaboration on how the project is aligned with focal area/impact program strategies?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 4, 2021:

No. Please see above. This section needs to be fully developed in the Portal. Please complete accordingly.

May 25, 2021:

The description is general or limited to listing 3 project components in the last column of table 9. Please be more specific presenting how this project, with its activities and outcomes, is aligned with the GEF Programming Directions and particularly with Proposed Programming Priorities at national level.

June 16, 2021:

Thank you for the additional information. Cleared.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 06/15/2021:

Further description has been provided in Table 9 of the CEO-A and also included in the Table 13 of the ProDoc.

CI-GEF 05/13/2021:

Section has been updated (in yellow highlights).

5. Is the incremental reasoning, contribution from the baseline, and co-financing clearly elaborated?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 4, 2021:

No. Please see above. This section needs to be fully developed in the Portal. Please complete accordingly.

May 25, 2021:

Yes, cleared (please see the comment 3 above under the baseline scenario).

Agency Response

CI-GEF 05/13/2021:

Section has been updated (in yellow highlights).

6. Is there further and better elaboration on the project's expected contribution to global environmental benefits or adaptation benefits?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 4, 2021:

No. Please see above. This section needs to be fully developed in the Portal. Please complete accordingly.

May 25, 2021:

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 05/13/2021:

Section has been updated (in yellow highlights).

7. Is there further and better elaboration to show that the project is innovative and sustainable including the potential for scaling up?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 4, 2021:

No. Please see above. This section needs to be fully developed in the Portal. Please complete accordingly.

May 25, 2021:

Please clarify how the in-house capacity built, especially through training sessions, will not be lost due to high staff turn-over.

June 16, 2021:

Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 05/13/2021:

Section has been updated (in yellow highlights).

Project Map and Coordinates

Is there an accurate and confirmed geo-referenced information where the project intervention will take place?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

March 8, 2020:

There is no specific location as the project interventions are at country level. Cleared.

Agency Response

Child Project

If this is a child project, is there an adequate reflection of how it contributes to the overall program impact?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

N/A

Agency Response

Stakeholders

**Does the project include detailed report on stakeholders engaged during the design phase?
Is there an adequate stakeholder engagement plan or equivalent documentation for the implementation phase, with information on Stakeholders who will be engaged, the means of engagement, and dissemination of information?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 6, 2021:

Thank you for uploading the SEP. Nevertheless, a comprehensive description needs also to be provided in the Portal under the stakeholders section. Please complete.

May 25, 2021:

Thank you for the complement. Cleared.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 05/13/2021:

Section has been updated (in yellow highlights).

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Has the gender analysis been completed? Did the gender analysis identify any gender differences, gaps or opportunities linked to project/program objectives and activities? If so, does the project/program include gender-responsive activities, gender-sensitive indicators and expected results?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 6, 2021:

As commented above, a comprehensive description needs to be provided in the Portal under the stakeholders section. Please complete accordingly.

May 25, 2021:

Thank you for the complement. Cleared.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 05/13/2021:

Detailed information about the GMP has been added

Private Sector Engagement

If there is a private sector engagement, is there an elaboration of its role as a financier and/or as a stakeholder?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 6, 2021:

The description is very limited while some private stakeholders are considered in the SEP and the development of emission factors in collaboration with relevant sectors would be expected to meet the project objectives. Please elaborate further on the relevant sectors and stakeholders in line with the project description that needs to be fully developed in the Portal.

May 25, 2021:

Thank you for the complement. Cleared.

Agency Response CI-GEF 05/13/2021: More information has been added on private sector involvement and engagement with the project -refer to the CEO-A document

Risks to Achieving Project Objectives

Has the project elaborated on indicated risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved? Were there proposed measures that address these risks at the time of project implementation?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 6, 2021:

On COVID-19, please briefly consider also the opportunity of the project to contribute to build back better by increasing the resilience capacity through improved data and monitoring system.

May 25, 2021:

Thank you for the complement. Cleared.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 05/13/2021: More information about the potential for the project to contribute to building back better by increasing resilience is provided

Coordination

Is the institutional arrangement for project implementation fully described? Is there an elaboration on possible coordination with relevant GEF-financed projects and other bilateral/multilateral initiatives in the project area?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 6, 2021:

1. The description on coordination with other relevant projects / initiatives is missing. Please add.
2. Please clarify what is exactly Vital Signs in the Portal description (which refers it as a "program") and justify the rationale for considering this entity as executing agency between the GEF agency and the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change & Natural Resources (MECCNAR).
3. In the Chart, Vital Signs appears to be the main executing agency (receiving the funds from the GEF agency and providing them to the MECCNAR). Given this arrangement, please clarify why the Department of Parks and Wildlife under the MECCNAR is

presented as the only executing Partner at the beginning of the project description in The Portal.

4. Please provide a summary of the of the PMU including its role and composition and remove from that section the TORs of each of its members which should be included as an annex of the Prodoc.

May 25, 2021:

1. Please include in the section the table 14 of the Prodoc and remove table 8 in the baseline scenario in the Portal (with is the same as table 14).

2 and 3. Thank you for the clarification. Nevertheless we don't find the announced attached document "Segregation of Duties Policy". Please provide this document or clearly indicate where it can be found in the submission package.

4. We don't see the difference with the previous version. Please provide a summary of the PMU role and composition and remove the TORs of the PMU staff (they need to be in the Prodoc). In addition, we note that a GHG specialist is part of the PMU. Shouldn't have this specialist broader qualifications since MRV systems is broader than just inventory? Please clarify and consider completing his TORs accordingly.

5. Under CBIT sector Hubs, the figure 5 is mentioned. However there is no figure 5 in the portal description. Please note figure 5 in the Prodoc became figure 4 in the Portal and amend as needed.

6. On budget:

(i) The Staff-project manager should be charged under the PMC and not across the components, unless he undertake technical activities. In such a case, this should be reflected in his TORs and limited to enable her/him to undertake the project management duties. Please clarify and amend.

(ii) the Staff-Finance and Grants Officer should be charged under the PMC and not across the components. Please amend accordingly.

(iii) The expenses under "Equipment" and "Other Direct Costs" which are not specific to a technical component should be charged under the PMC. Please amend accordingly.

(iv) Please clarify what "Rent and Operations -Vital signs" covers exactly and note that the GEF doesn't pay additional fee.

June 16, 2021:

1, 4 and 5. Thank you for the amendments and clarifications. Cleared.

2 and 3. In Figure 4: Project implementation arrangements, the Executing Support Partner (TBD) appears to be the one which receives all the funds from the GEF Agency, as if this partner were the unique and actual executing agency for the whole project. Nevertheless, the description says "MECCNAR will be responsible for overall project management and execution during implementation". Also, in the budget, the responsibility for the execution is shared among MECCNAR, TBD, and Huridac and Third Party Contractors. Please note that the executing agency(ies) receiving the funds from the GEF Agency needs to be clearly identified in the budget and in the project description and its (their) functions need to be clearly presented. Also, the information provided on the Institutional Arrangement needs to be consistent throughout the submission package including the project description, the budget and the TORs.

6. On Budget:

(i) and (ii) The Staff-project manager cost charged under the PMC is only 12% of its total cost. Nevertheless, according to his/her TORs, nearly all his/her activities as listed under "The main responsibilities of the project manager will be to:" are exclusively related to project management. Please clarify and ensure the budget and expenses under the components are consistent with the TORs. The same applies for the "Finance and Grants Officer".

(iii) Thank you for the clarification. Nevertheless, some budget items such as office rent, telephone and internet costs, office operational supplies, office Furniture-Desk and Chairs are clearly corresponding to project management expenses. Please consider the possibility of using the co-financing contribution to the PMC.

(iv) The activities supported under "Rent and Operations -Partner(TBD)" should be clearly presented in the project description and be consistent with the budget, and notably with the share of the expenses charged across the components and under the PMC. Please complete accordingly.

August 19, 2021:

1. We don't see the change in the organigram in the Portal description (figure 4) which still presents a Executing Support Partner (TBD). Please update this figure so that it is consistent with the organigram in the Prodoc (figure 5).

2. Also, the indication of "Vital Signs and Third Party Contractors" as Executing entity in the Budget remains unclear and let the possibility that all the corresponding items be executed by Vital Signs. This is not acceptable as the total amount of these items represents 58% of the budget. Including the other items clearly tagged under the execution of Vital Signs, the total amount executed by Vital Signs would be \$700,000 or 64% of the budget. This would be very high. Please remove the unclear Executing Partner "Vital Signs and Third Party Contractors" in the budget and clearly indicate what items falls under the responsibility of Vital Signs and what items falls under the

responsibility of the MECCNAR. This clarification is very important to enable the Secretariat to see the scope of the requested exception and assess whether it can be granted.

3. Please note that the OFP letter remains vague regarding the executing functions of CI and there is no associated budget. The letter lets the possibility of very different scenarios. In the letter the executing services provided by the MECCNAR seem to be even more extended than those of Vital Signs, which would not be reflected by a situation where Vital Signs would be responsible for 64% of the project budget.

4. Please note that the paragraph 159 is not about Vital Sign's role in the Prodoc.

5. On the budget:

(i) and (ii): The TORs of the Staff- Finance and Grants Officer doesn't show activities clearly contributing to the outcomes of the technical components (related to GHG inventory and MRV system). We also note that the budget includes 2 staff finance officers. Please clarify and consider charging this staff under the PMC (it could be the by the co-financing contribution to the PMC).

(iii) and (iv): Thank you for the clarification. Please note that the office rent mentioned in the 2nd foot note should be charged under the PMC. Please amend accordingly.

(v): In addition, we note that the most expensive item is for a "Staff- Technical Conservation Specialist". Nevertheless we don't find the corresponding TORs in the Prodoc and we don't understand the role of a conservation specialist in a CBIT project. Please clarify.

August 27, 2021:

Thank you for the additional information provided. Please update accordingly the information in the very beginning of the Project description in the Portal under "Other Executing Partner(s)", adding Vital Signs and under "Executing Partner Type", adding the type of organization of Vital Signs.

August 27, 2021:

Thank you for addressing the last comment. Cleared.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 08/25/2021:

1) Organogram updated in the portal

2) Please note that 20% of the budget will stay with Vital Signs to provide both technical and operational support/capacity building 44% of the funds will be granted as sub-contracts managed by Vital Signs, since MECNNAR at this point lacks the capacity to handle these activities. The 20% of the funding staying with VS will cover the time of VS staff to manage these contracts and procurement and to provide technical support on behalf of the government.

<i>Budget by Funding Recipient</i>		
	Amount	Percent of Total
Vital Signs in-house	\$ 219,024.00	20%
Sub-contracts passing through Vital Signs	\$ 480,976.00	44%
MECNNAR	\$ 400,000.00	36%
	\$ 1,100,000.00	100%

As detailed in the letter "Justification for Vital Signs Programme as an Execution Support Partner for the Gambia CBIT Project", during the project preparation with the support from the Government of Gambia, a capacity assessment of potential execution partners was carried out. The results of the assessment showed weak financial management systems and low financial capacities within MECNNAR and alternative options. Therefore, to ensure proper disbursement of the \$480,976 in sub-contracts, the procurement funds will flow through Vital Signs. Vital Signs follows CI's procurement process which aligns with the GEF minimum fiduciary standards. The procurement process however will be carried through a capacity-building partnership with the Ministry via the PMU. Specifically, the Ministry will be responsible for the following (1) providing inputs in the development of the ToRs and approving the final ToRs/RFPs with the necessary GEF flow downs; (2) having at least one representative on each procurement evaluation panel, certifying CI's conflict of interest clause; (3) being involved in the contracting, following CI's contracting policies and guidelines. This will assure that the Government has input in decision-making, while also experiencing the process to build their capacity (see Para 158 of the ProDoc)

3) As clarified above, 20% of the budget will stay with Vital Signs. The description of the activities in the ProDoc (paragraphs 156 -158) and the exception letter are directly linked to Vital Sign's budget. The 20% of the funding staying with VS will cover the time of VS staff to manage these contracts and procurement and technical support on behalf of the government.

4) Noted. Paragraphs 156 -158 cover the role of Vital Signs.

5) ToRs of the Finance and Grants Officer (ProDoc Appendix X part c) is updated to show additional linkage with technical components. While the majority of the Finance and Grants officer's role will be related to PMC, a portion of the activities

can be directly linked to the technical components. We had significantly reduced the amount charged to components, but believe that the current amount supports the ToR. We are unable to increase the PMC for this position and understand that a portion of their PMC activities will have to be co-financed. However, due to the typically lower co-financing ratios for an enabling activity project such as CBIT funding, the project overall is limited in this capacity.

There are two finance staff because one is part of the PMU and the other is under Vital Signs. The need for both finance officers is critical for accountable and efficient financial management, however, the PMC amount is insufficient. The two Financial and Grants officer positions are not full-time staff of the project.

The Finance and Grants officer for Vital Signs will lead the procurement process and ensure that technical deliveries meet the GEF minimum fiduciary standards. The Financial Officer in the PMU is necessary for financial management and internal controls of GEF funding flowing directly to the PMU. A portion of both positions will be co-financed. The total GEF funding going to both finance positions is \$73,182.

iii) and iv) Per the budget, only 20% of the total project is going directly to VS. The funds primarily comprise of the technical and financial personnel support necessary to effectively carry out the project. Vital Signs, as with any institution carries operational costs that correlate with its personnel. In line with accounting best practices, this methodology for calculating rent and operational expenses detailed in footnote 2 of the budget, is directly allocated based on technical and administrative level of efforts, which is itself based on auditable tracking of the time spent on projects. Applying this "best practices" methodology, office rent costs are utilized for the delivery of all project components including providing technical oversight for the delivery of the Green House Gas (GHG) data management for the GHGI and MRV system, facilitating strategic engagement, monitoring, building the technical and financial capacities of MECNNAR. Additionally, CBIT funding is an enabling activity that typically has lower co-financing ratios.

v) Please note that the title of the Technical Conservation Specialist has been revised to Climate Transparency Specialist to show linkage with the CBIT project's scope of work. This function is essential to assure that the project applies lessons learned from previous experience in executing CBIT projects. The ToR for this position had not been included before, because we had understood that it was only when a position charged to components and PMC that there was a need for a ToR. However, we have created it and it is in the ProDoc (Appendix X part d)

CI-GEF 08/04/2021:

CI Vital Signs will play an execution role. The **OFP exception letter** has been secured. A **supporting document justifying Vital Sign's execution** function is appended. This justification captures evidence of a "screen" in the country, explaining why Vital Signs is the ideal candidate to support the government and why other organizations were not selected to carry out this task.

The **Organogram in the ProDoc (Figure 5) and CEO-A document (Figure 4)** has been revised to make the EA (MECCNAR) prominent in the diagram. Additionally, in the **implementation arrangements section, the role of MECCNAR and VS have been updated** to match activities in the exception letter

MECCNAR's role has been rewritten to match what's in the signed exception letter. Refer to the ProDoc (Paragraph 153) and CEO Endorsement (Part 6 Institutional Arrangement and Coordination).

Vital Sign's role has been rewritten to reflect its execution role. Refer to the ProDoc (Paragraph 156 - 159) and CEO Endorsement (Part 6 Institutional Arrangement and Coordination).

Vital Sign's budget has been revised to cover execution tasks outlined in the exception letter.

Information provided on the Institutional Arrangement is consistent throughout the submission package including the project description, the budget, and the TORs.

Budget:

Project Manager:

The Project Manager's title has been revised to "Climate Specialist/ Project Lead" to demonstrate their technical contribution

The PMC for the Project Manager has been increased to 23%

The Climate Specialist/ Project Lead TORs in the ProDoc (Appendix X part a) has been updated to include technical aspects.

Finance and Grants Officer:

The Finance and Grants officer TORs in the ProDoc (Appendix X part c) has been updated to show linkage with the component. In the TORs, we have added the point, *"Build capacity of technical staff with regards to policies and procedures, as well as to conduct prohibited practices trainings to technical staff."* The sections in the TORs where changes have been made are highlighted in yellow.

Based on the above justification, the Finance and Grants officer costs have been spread across components.

Operational supplies are required during technical project delivery especially during GHG data management (data collation, analysis, and reporting) for the support of the development of the national GHG Inventory, and development and reproduction of training and communication materials for partners and stakeholders. It was added as a footnote to the budget.

CI deploys a capacity-building approach that includes the development of a national GHG inventory by participants during training. This ensures they emerge as experts having experience of practically developing at least one national GHG Inventory. Since national-level GHG datasets will be collated from different sectors, and machines capable of managing this heavy load of data are required, specialized equipment will be purchased. These will be used mostly during technical project work. It was added as a footnote to the budget.

CI-GEF 06/15/2021:

1) Tables updated

2 and 3) Given that Vital Signs is no longer supporting this project. The Segregation of Duties Policy is no longer applicable here.

4) The TORs of the PMU have been removed from the CEO Endorsement and only retained in the ProDoc. The Greenhouse Gas Specialist Terms of Reference are part of Annex X in the ProDoc. The specialist will provide both GHG and MRV related technical expertise. As outlined in the detailed ToRs, the GHG specialist will work on various tasks across the four components that are not related to project management.

5) Figure 4 in the portal.

6)

i) The project manager will also play a technical role throughout the project to ensure that the required technical capacity to meet the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) requirements are met. The project manager cannot just be limited to project management, as the post requires someone with technical expertise to facilitate the delivery of each technical component and ensure the success of the project. Comprehensive ToR have been provided in Appendix X.

ii) Please note that this position is not part of the PMU, rather it will have an important role supporting the overall project and the government as EA to build their capacity and assure that the EA is able to meet the GEF Minimum Fiduciary Standards by supporting the capacity building of the government, which is not a project management cost. Therefore, this position is shown across all components and PMC.

iii) The equipment and Other Direct costs are shared across PMC and Components because it is based on the level of effort and necessary to also deliver on technical inputs. We kindly request that this not be changed.

iv) CI would like to clarify that this is not an additional fee. Per GEF Policy, other Operations Costs are an allowable cost which is a necessary cost in order to deliver the project results. CI and the government will identify an organization on the ground that can support the project implementation, which would require these costs to be charged based on the level of effort, which is not just related to project management, but also on delivery of technical inputs. We kindly request that the budget is left as is to assure that the organization that is identified on the ground is able to undertake the project activities and support the Government in its role as EA.

CI-GEF 05/13/2021:

1) The planned coordination with other relevant GEF-financed projects and other initiatives is included.

2) The Executing Agency (EA) is the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Natural Resources (MECCNAR)

3) Vital Signs has not been added to Part 1 because it is not an Executing Agency (EA). MECCNAR is the Executing Agency (EA). Vital Signs is a delivery partner playing a critical role in administering the funds on behalf of MECCNAR. Funds flow through Vital Signs to ensure financial accountability and reporting given the capacity and bureaucratic challenges at MECCNAR.

Vital Signs will also provide operational and technical support to the EA (MECCNAR) through its CBIT expertise.

While Vital Signs is a part of CI, it is a distinct unit within the Africa Field Division that is responsible for conservation science. CI confirms that there is clear segregation of duties between CI-GEF and Vital Signs/Africa Field Division. Please find attached the Segregation of Duties Policy. Additionally, the agreement that will be signed between CI-GEF and the Vital Signs/Africa Field Division clearly defines the duties of these divisions and mandates segregation of duties

The Vital Signs Monitoring Programme (www.vitalsigns.org) was established in partnership with the Earth Institute at Columbia University and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research in South Africa. While set up as a programme to collect and integrate data on agriculture, ecosystems, and livelihoods; it has now emerged as a bigger conservation science programme that develops decision support tools for countries in Africa. Recently, the Vital Signs has supported the CBIT Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda programs as a delivery partner and applied its science skills and experience to provide guidance in the development of national GHG inventories and

online climate platforms. Moreover, one of the tools, Trends. Earth, developed with support from the GEF is now a prominent carbon emissions determination tool for the AFOLU sector. It is this technical knowledge and expertise that Vital Signs will bring to this project.

4) Only a summary of the PMU including its role and composition is captured. TORs of each of PMU members have been removed from this section

Consistency with National Priorities

Has the project described the alignment of the project with identified national strategies and plans or reports and assessments under the relevant conventions?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 6, 2021:

Thank you for the information provided. Cleared.

Agency Response

Knowledge Management

Is the proposed ?Knowledge Management Approach? for the project adequately elaborated with a timeline and a set of deliverables?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 7, 2021:

The KM approach is incomplete in terms of timeline and budget of the key deliverables (Table 4 covers only part of it). Please note that the KM approach also depends on the project components description which is currently lacking in the Portal and therefore may need further elaboration depending on the project description in the Portal.

May 25, 2021:

Thank you for the complement. Cleared.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 05/13/2021:

Additional information provided with details of relevant outputs and deliverables by component indicated in Table 18 (CEO-A document) and Table 15 (ProDoc)

Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS)

Are environmental and social risks, impacts and management measures adequately documented at this stage and consistent with requirements set out in SD/PL/03?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 7, 2021:

Yes, the Safeguard Screening Form and Analysis is in the Appendix 5 of the Prodoc. Cleared.

Agency Response

Monitoring and Evaluation

Does the project include a budgeted M&E Plan that monitors and measures results with indicators and targets?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 7, 2021:

1. Please remove the PMC description and budget from this section. In addition, please note that "table 18" doesn't correspond to the relevant table number and correct accordingly.

2. The item "GEF Indicator Tracker" seems expensive (\$18,950) as compared to the other items and considering there is only one GEF core indicator (number 11). Please explain and clarify.

May 25, 2021:

Thank you for the amendments. Cleared.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 05/13/2021:

The table outlining the PMC summary has been removed from the M&E section in both the ProDoc (Table 19) and CEO-A document (Table 6)

For clarity, we have removed the Table number. The statement has been updated to read as follows: ?The funding for the evaluations will come from the project budget?

Benefits

Are the socioeconomic benefits at the national and local levels sufficiently described resulting from the project? Is there an elaboration on how these benefits translate in supporting the achievement of GEBs or adaptation benefits?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
May 7, 2021:

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response
Annexes

Are all the required annexes attached and adequately responded to?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
May 7, 2021:

Please attach the map and project budget table respectively under the Annex D and E.

May 25, 2021:

Thank you for adding the missing annexes. Cleared. (when adjusting the budget, please update the annex E)

Agency Response Map and budget attached.
Project Results Framework

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
May 7, 2021:

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

GEF Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

Council comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

STAP comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

Convention Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

Other Agencies comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

CSOs comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

Status of PPG utilization

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 7, 2021:

Please see the comment above on the status and utilization of the PPG.

May 25, 2021:

Thank you for the complement. Cleared.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 05/13/2021:

PPG utilization updated.

Project maps and coordinates

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 7, 2021:

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

Does the termsheet in Annex F provide finalized financial terms and conditions? Does the termsheet and financial structure address concerns raised at PIF stage and that were pending to be resolved ahead of CEO endorsement? (For NGI Only)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

N/A

Agency Response

Do the Reflow Table Annex G and the Trustee Excel Sheet for reflows provide accurate reflow expectations of the project submitted? Assumptions for Reflows can be submitted to explain expected reflows. (For NGI Only)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

Did the agency Annex H provided with information to assess the Agency Capacity to generate and manage reflows? (For NGI Only)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

GEFSEC DECISION

RECOMMENDATION

Is CEO endorsement recommended? (applies only to projects and child projects)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 7, 2021:

Thank you for the submission. The project is not yet recommended for CEO approval. Please address the comments raised above.

May 25, 2021:

Not yet. Please address the remaining comments.

June 16, 2021:

Not yet. Please address the remaining comments.

August 19, 2021:

Not yet. Please address the remaining comments.

August 27, 2021:

Not yet. Please address the remaining comment.

August 27, 2021:

Thank you for addressing the comments, the project can now be recommended for CEO Approval.

Review Dates

	Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review	5/7/2021	
Additional Review (as necessary)	5/25/2021	
Additional Review (as necessary)	6/16/2021	
Additional Review (as necessary)	8/19/2021	

**Secretariat Comment at
CEO Endorsement**

**Response to
Secretariat
comments**

**Additional Review
(as necessary)**

8/27/2021

CEO Recommendation

Brief reasoning for CEO Recommendations