

# GEF-8 REQUEST FOR MSP (1-STEP) APPROVAL

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### General Project Information

#### Project Information

Project Title:

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Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework in Uzbekistan in accordance with the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

Region: Europe and Central Asia	GEF Project ID: 11988
Country(ies): Uzbekistan	Type of Project: MSP
GEF Agency(ies): IUCN	GEF Agency Project ID:
Project Executing Entity(s): FAO	Project Executing Type: GEF Agency
GEF Focal Area (s): Biodiversity	Submission Date: 8/20/2025
Type of Trust Fund: GET	Project Duration (Months): 36
GEF Project Grant: (a) 1,784,863.00	GEF Project Non-Grant: (b) 0.00
Agency Fee(s) Grant: (c) 160,637.00	Agency Fee(s) Non-Grant (d) 0.00
Total GEF Financing: (a+b+c+d) 1,945,500.00	Total Co-financing 7,000,000.00
PPG Amount: (e) 50,000.00	PPG Agency Fee(s): (f) 4,500.00
PPG total amount: (e+f) 54,500.00	Total GEF Resources: (a+b+c+d+e+f) 2,000,000.00

Project Tags

CBIT: No NGI: No SGP: No Innovation: No Competitive Window: No

Project Sector (CCM Only):

Taxonomy:

Focal Areas, Biodiversity, Supplementary Protocol to the CBD, Biosafety, Influencing models, Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making, Convene multi-stakeholder alliances, Transform policy and regulatory environments, Stakeholders, Private Sector, Individuals/Entrepreneurs, Beneficiaries, Local Communities, Civil Society, Community Based Organization, Non-Governmental Organization, Academia, Capacity, Knowledge and Research, Learning, Knowledge Generation, Innovation, Capacity Development, Knowledge Exchange, Gender Equality, Gender Mainstreaming, Women groups, Sex-disaggregated indicators, Gender-sensitive indicators, Gender results areas, Awareness Raising, Knowledge Generation and Exchange

Rio Markers

Climate Change Mitigation	Climate Change Adaptation	Biodiversity	Land Degradation
No Contribution 0	No Contribution 0	Principal Objective 2	No Contribution 0

## Project Summary

Provide a brief summary description of the project, including: (i) what is the problem and issues to be addressed? (ii) what are the project objectives, and if the project is intended to be transformative, how will this be achieved? (iii), how will this be achieved (approach to deliver on objectives), and (iv) what are the GEBs and/or adaptation benefits, and other key expected results. The purpose of the summary is to provide a short, coherent summary for readers. The explanation and justification of the project should be in section B “project description”. (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

While living modified organisms (LMOs) can significantly contribute to addressing agricultural challenges, the environmental release of LMOs poses significant risks to biodiversity and agricultural ecosystems, including transgene flow that can reduce genetic diversity, negative impacts on non-target species, and potential weediness of transgenic crops. Currently in Uzbekistan, there are inadequate administrative measures and technical capacity to manage and monitor these risks or to track LMO commercialization. Additionally, the widespread use of genetically modified (GM) seeds threatens local plant varieties by promoting market dominance of patented GM seeds, leading to the displacement of indigenous crops. This shift can result in reduced biodiversity, dependency on costly GM seeds, and the erosion of traditional agricultural practices and cultural heritage.

Uzbekistan has adopted some biosafety regulations; however, these are incomplete and inadequately implemented, failing to fully align with the Cartagena Protocol. Critical gaps include the need for effective systems for LMO detection, identification, and risk assessment. The lack of a comprehensive legal and regulatory framework impedes the development of a national biosafety system. Additionally, despite political commitment, Uzbekistan struggles with insufficient national capacity for LMO detection and risk management, coupled with limited biosafety education. Socio-economic impacts of LMOs on local communities, small farmers, and food security, as well as geopolitical and trade considerations, also need to be better understood and incorporated into the assessment process.

The proposed project aims to enhance the conservation and sustainable use of Uzbekistan’s globally significant biodiversity by strengthening the management of risks associated with LMOs. It aligns with GEF-8 BD objective 2, focusing on effectively implementing the Cartagena Protocol. The project will develop a national biosafety policy and regulations, build capacity for implementing the Cartagena Protocol, and establish systems for LMO risk assessment, management, and monitoring. By creating a robust regulatory framework and technical infrastructure, including laboratories and trained personnel, the project will ensure that LMO risks are adequately assessed and managed, yielding substantial global environmental benefits.

GEF financing is essential to address barriers hindering the safe handling of LMOs in Uzbekistan, such as the lack of a comprehensive policy, legal framework, institutional capacity, and public awareness. This funding will support the creation of a policy and legal framework, including stakeholder consultations, hiring experts, and conducting capacity-building workshops for government officials. It will also fund the development of administrative systems, including an online LMO database, technical guidelines, laboratory adaptation and training for laboratory and border control personnel. Public awareness campaigns and capacity-building activities will promote knowledge among stakeholders and ensure gender-responsive initiatives, addressing gender disparities in agriculture and biodiversity.

## Project Description Overview

### Project Objective

To provide technical guidance and assistance for the implementation of the regulatory framework on LMO biosafety, including the establishment of administrative systems and institutional arrangements, such as laboratories for LMO detection and human resource capacities for the assessment of potential risks to biodiversity.

### Project Components

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1. Development and operationalization of the biosafety policy, regulatory and institutional framework in accordance with the Cartagena Protocol

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Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
276,900.00	3,500,000.00

Outcome:

1.1 National biosafety regulatory framework developed in alignment with the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

Indicators:

- Draft national biosafety policy
  
- At least 3 sectorial regulations integrating and operationalizing the biosafety policy framework drafted
  
- Increased capacity on biosafety policy and regulatory implementation across relevant state institutions, in line with Convention on Biological Diversity and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

1.2 Administrative systems and institutional arrangements for biosafety at the national level aligned with principles and needs of the harmonised policy framework

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Indicators:

- Functioning centralized administrative system for LMO applications established
  
- Functioning technical and decision-making body for biosafety established
  
- Established institutional arrangements for biosafety tasks and decision-making
  
- Stakeholder consultation mechanisms established
  
- Functioning National Biosafety Clearing-House with online presence and acting as a repository for reporting and information sharing in accordance with obligations under the Cartagena Protocol established

Output:

.1.1 Biosafety policy developed to enable the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol in the country

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1.1.2 National biosafety regulations and sectoral rules/guidelines drafted in connection with the ongoing policy process in the country, taking into consideration gender aspects, including cross-reference policies within the agriculture sector, such as seed policies, organic law among others

1.1.3 Regulatory proposal for LMO food and feed labeling drafted in a gender-sensitive and participatory manner, to enable adequate consideration of public choice and in alignment with the national needs

1.1.4 Gender-balanced training of relevant government officials involved in implementing the biosafety policy and regulatory framework carried out in accordance with gender equality and policy coherence

1.2.1 Centralized administrative system to handle applications for LMOs destined for contained use, intentional introduction into the environment, and for direct use as food or feed, or for processing elaborated in a participatory and gender sensitive manner (and with cross-sectorial approach)

1.2.2 National technical and decision-making body for biosafety constituted with appropriate multi-disciplinary membership and attention to gender and diversity issues

1.2.3 Institutional arrangements and procedures for biosafety regulation, risk assessment, risk management and monitoring, clear identification of LMO imports and decision-making developed

1.2.4 National Biosafety Clearing-House developed to facilitate the exchange of scientific, technical, environmental and legal information on LMOs at the national level

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## 2. Strengthening technical capacity for implementation of the biosafety legal framework

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
1,093,863.00	800,000.00

Outcome:

2.1 National capacity for LMO risk assessment, risk management and monitoring enhanced

Indicators:

- Risk assessment, risk management and monitoring procedures and mechanisms, including technical guidelines in accordance with the requirements of the Cartagena Protocol

- Functioning contingency protocols for potential LMO accidents

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## 2.2 National capacity for LMO identification, detection and enforcement enhanced

### Indicators:

- Functioning of 4 national centralized laboratories for LMO analysis
- Technical guidelines for LMO detection and identification developed
- Laboratory personnel able to perform LMO analysis for identification and detection purposes
- LMO border control tasks performed by customs officers, with an administrative mechanism for sending samples to laboratories

## 2.3 Ability to take into account socio-economic considerations in decision-making strengthened

### Indicators:

- Technical guidelines for socio-economic assessment developed
- Government officials trained (of which 40% are women) to take socio-economic considerations into account

## 2.4 Gender-sensitive public awareness, education and public participation in decision-making on biosafety enhanced

### Indicators:

- Intersectoral public awareness and participation strategy developed
- Civil servants, academia/scientists, civil society, farmers and the private sector adequately aware of biosafety issues
- Functioning repository for information and communication materials under the national BCH
- Gap analysis and modification of curricula to include relevant biosafety topics

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### Output:

2.1.1 Decision-making procedures and mechanisms for assessing environmental and health risks of LMOs developed and validated by the national authorities responsible for different uses of LMOs

2.1.2 Mechanisms established for emergency response in case of accidents involving LMOs

2.1.3 Specific technical guidelines and manuals on risk assessment, risk management and monitoring, and emergency response plans with due consideration for gender sensitivity developed

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2.1.4 Specialized personnel trained to perform the tasks of risk assessment, risk management and monitoring, in accordance with gender equality and social inclusion principles

2.2.1 Existing laboratory facilities adapted for LMO detection, with adequate human resources and infrastructure to carry out analyses

2.2.2 Specific technical guidelines and manuals on LMO detection and identification developed

2.2.3 Training of laboratory personnel for LMO identification and detection carried out, including at regional laboratories in accordance with gender equality and social inclusion principles

2.2.4 Specialized personnel trained to perform the tasks of control of LMOs at airports and customs checkpoints

2.3.1 Socio-economic considerations, including gender-related considerations, integrated into biosafety decision-making processes through clear procedures and guidelines

2.3.2 Capacity on socio-economic considerations built among relevant government agencies and ministries in accordance with gender equality and social inclusion principles

2.4.1 Public awareness and participation strategy developed in accordance with obligations under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and other relevant laws and awareness raising activities on gender and biodiversity conducted for the staff, local communities and policymakers

2.4.2 Targeted awareness-raising activities implemented in accordance with gender equality and social inclusion principles

2.4.3 Coordinated governmental system for public access to information on biosafety, including through the use of the National Biosafety Clearing-House

2.4.4 Gaps in university-level education for biosafety identified and curricula strengthened to include biosafety issues

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### 3. Project management and knowledge-sharing process

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
174,900.00	1,500,000.00

Outcome:

3.1 Gender-sensitive project monitoring system operational and providing systematic information on progress in meeting the project outcome and output targets

Indicators:

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- Functioning M&E system and GEBS and co-benefits established

### 3.2 Knowledge and results shared with relevant actors

#### Indicators:

- Process to share knowledge arising from the project established

- Timely reporting to the Cartagena Protocol

- Regional network strategy on LMO applications established

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#### Output:

3.1.1 Development of a performance framework (M&E plan) defining roles, responsibilities, and frequency for collecting and compiling data to assess project performance.

3.2.1 Outcomes of this project shared with inter alia, the CBD Secretariat, other Parties to the Cartagena Protocol, particularly from the region, and other stakeholders

3.2.2 Submission of National Reports on implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

3.2.3 Submission of project reports and other relevant information to the Biosafety Information Resource Centre

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## M&E

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
77,000.00	400,000.00

#### Outcome:

Project M&E effectively conducted

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#### Output:

A. Periodic monitoring undertaken

B. Mid-term and Terminal evaluations undertaken

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## Component Balances

Project Components	GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
1. Development and operationalization of the biosafety policy, regulatory and institutional framework in accordance with the Cartagena Protocol	276,900.00	3,500,000.00
2. Strengthening technical capacity for implementation of the biosafety legal framework	1,093,863.00	800,000.00
3. Project management and knowledge-sharing process	174,900.00	1,500,000.00
M&E	77,000.00	400,000.00
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1,622,663.00</b>	<b>6,200,000.00</b>
Project Management Cost	162,200.00	800,000.00
<b>Total Project Cost (\$)</b>	<b>1,784,863.00</b>	<b>7,000,000.00</b>

Please provide justification

## PROJECT OUTLINE

### A. PROJECT RATIONALE

Briefly describe the current situation: the global environmental problems and/or climate vulnerabilities that the project will address, the key elements of the system, and underlying drivers of environmental change in the project context, such as population growth, economic development, climate change, sociocultural and political factors, including conflicts, or technological changes. Describe the objective of the project, and the justification for it. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

### Global environmental significance

#### Biodiversity and cultural heritage in Uzbekistan

1. Biodiversity plays a crucial role in Uzbekistan's ecological, economic, and social spheres, making it a matter of paramount importance for the nation's sustainable development. Situated at the crossroads of Central Asia, Uzbekistan boasts a diverse range of ecosystems, including deserts, steppes, mountains, and wetlands. This rich tapestry of habitats supports a vast array of about 4300 known species of higher plants, 10% of which are endemic. There are 715 known species of vertebrates, which include 77 fish species, 61 reptile species, 467 bird species and 107 mammals; the degree of endemism of reptiles and fish is as high as 50 per cent<sup>[1]</sup>.
2. Of particular interest is the presence of wild relatives of cultivated plants or 'crop wild relatives' (CWR) of great importance as a genetic resource and gene pool to breeding programs of globally economical valuable plant varieties, such as apples, walnut, almond, persimmon, and other species. CWRs contain valuable genetic traits such as disease resistance, tolerance to environmental stresses like drought or salinity, and higher nutrient content which enable them to adapt to climate change conditions. In addition, CWRs contribute to ecosystem functions such as soil fertility, pollination, and pest regulation. Preserving their habitats helps maintain ecological balance and supports the overall health of ecosystems. Uzbekistan is also rich in

worldwide consumed vegetable crops, such as: onions, carrots, radishes, and other vegetables. The spicy and aromatic plants and medicinal plants used by the local population are highly valued in the republic<sup>1</sup>.

3. Uzbekistan's rich biodiversity and environmental heritage contribute to the diverse range of ecosystems. The vast Kyzylkum and Karakum deserts dominate much of Uzbekistan's landscape and are home to unique arid-adapted flora and fauna, including drought-resistant plants like saxaul and ephemeral desert blooms. Extensive grasslands and steppe regions cover significant portions of Uzbekistan and these ecosystems support a diverse array of herbaceous plants, including grasses and wildflowers, which provide habitat and forage for numerous wildlife species such as steppe eagles, bustards, and rodents. The Tian Shan and Pamir-Alay mountain ranges in eastern Uzbekistan harbor unique montane ecosystems characterized by diverse vegetation zones ranging from subalpine meadows to alpine tundra.
4. These ecosystems support a variety of endemic plant species, as well as iconic wildlife such as the snow leopard, ibex, and Marco Polo sheep. Uzbekistan's wetlands, including lakes, rivers, and marshes, are critical habitats for migratory birds, waterfowl, and aquatic species. The Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers, along with important wetland areas like the Aydar Lake and Arnasay Lake, provide vital breeding and stopover sites for millions of birds during their annual migrations along the Central Asian Flyway with 54 Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs)<sup>[2]</sup>, including five wetland Ramsar sites and 52 Important Bird Areas (IBAs). Finally, riparian zones along riverbanks and watercourses support lush vegetation and diverse wildlife, acting as important corridors for species movement and providing ecosystem services such as erosion control and water filtration. These ecosystems are particularly vital for maintaining water quality and biodiversity in the arid regions<sup>[3]</sup>. It is also host of two World Heritage Sites (Western Tien-shan and Tudakul and Kuyuzmazar Water Reservoirs).
5. Although the country has a satisfactory number and size of protected areas (14% of the country's territory - ca. 6,3 million ha) and areas with conservation measures in place; the negative impact on natural landscapes is largely increasing. In general, the loss of biodiversity is occurring at the ecosystem level, with most ecosystems impacted by human activity. One of the major threats to biodiversity is habitat change, as most of the land in the semi-desert and arid lowlands and foot-hills have been converted for irrigation-based agricultural use, mainly for the cultivation of cotton, wheat, rice and other crops.
6. Biodiversity conservation is also intrinsically linked to Uzbekistan's cultural heritage and identity. Many indigenous communities have developed deep connections with their surrounding environments, incorporating local flora and fauna into their traditions, rituals, and folklore. By preserving biodiversity, Uzbekistan safeguards this cultural heritage for future generations, fostering a sense of pride and belonging among its people. Additionally, maintaining healthy ecosystems ensures access to ecosystem services such as clean water, air purification, and climate regulation, which are vital for human health and well-being.

#### **Agricultural systems, food security and rural livelihoods**

7. Uzbekistan is an agrarian country with diverse and relatively favourable soil and climatic conditions for producing 2 to 3 crops per year. In 2020, the total volume of agricultural, forestry and fishery products (services) amounted to UZS 260.3 trillion, representing a 28.2 percent share of the total Gross domestic product (GDP) in the country<sup>[4]</sup>. Three main agricultural systems are present: (a) (large-scale) state-planned agriculture (i.e. cotton and wheat); (b) (small to medium scale) commercial agriculture (i.e. rice, sunflowers, vegetables), as well as (c) (small-scale) subsistence agriculture (i.e. fruits and vegetables).
8. The country's agricultural sector relies heavily on diverse genetic resources for crop breeding. Even in the case of foreign species, such as cotton, wheat and rice; locally adapted varieties are essential to maintain crop productivity in Uzbekistan's arid agroecosystem. In addition, traditional farming practices, which often incorporate diverse crop varieties and indigenous knowledge, not only enhance resilience to environmental stressors but also safeguard genetic diversity essential for future food security. Furthermore, Uzbekistan's unique natural landscapes attract tourists interested in wildlife observation, ecotourism, and adventure activities, thus generating revenue and employment opportunities.
9. Therefore, the importance of the agricultural sector goes far beyond its contribution to the GDP and economic output. It provides the social context in which rural households – which constitute most of the population - can subsist and sustain their existence<sup>[5]</sup>. Protecting and sustainably managing these diverse ecosystems are essential for ensuring the conservation of unique species but also for maintaining ecosystem services and cultural heritage which are vital for human well-being.
10. The Global environmental significance, global environmental benefits and the importance of sustainable agricultural systems for biodiversity conservation and for the economic development of the country will be explored in more detail in Annex B "Baseline Scenario and the problem to be addressed".

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## Problems to be addressed and justification

### Transboundary transport of LMOs

11. The Republic of Uzbekistan is a double land-locked country with several transport routes including the Eurasian Land Bridge, also known as the New Silk Road and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) (from 2013). A new railway project will not only establish a southern route for the New Eurasian Continental Bridge but also create a new land-sea corridor, enhancing the overall transportation network of the Asia-Europe continent<sup>[6]</sup>. The BRI also includes roads that have been used by freight services that connect China to Europe. In this case, genetically modified grains spilled from moving trains or trucks could create a substantial impact on wild crop relatives, wildlife and protected areas. The issue of LMOs in transit between border countries may be important to address specifically.

### Importing of LMO food or other products for local consumption

12. Production and global trade of LMOs are also rapidly increasing and are facilitated due to trade agreements. For example, China currently grows 2.9 million hectares of genetically modified cotton and papaya. Recently, China approved several varieties of GM corn and soybean<sup>[7]</sup>. In addition, about 30% of Uzbekistan's food is imported from the Russian Federation and data on the supply of food from Russia may even be underestimated, as some of the goods enter the country through intermediaries from Kazakhstan. Since Russia is not a Party to the Cartagena Protocol, it does not report LMO approvals under the UN Biosafety Clearing House mechanism, as well as reports on safety assessments of any such crops if grown in the country.

13. Uzbekistan's food security and local industry context will entail the importation of some of these LMOs for direct consumption or for propagation under local conditions. Food safety and LMO food labelling issues will need to be addressed well, in coherence with future national technical regulations and regulations present in regional instruments, such as Commonwealth of Independent States<sup>[8]</sup> modal laws and regulations.

### Environmental release of LMOs

14. The environmental release of LMOs poses threats to biodiversity and agricultural biodiversity through *inter alia* transgene flow and contamination of sexually reproducible species leading to fitness advantages (loss of genetic diversity), negative impacts on non-target animal species feeding on transgenic crops and impacts at ecosystem level by potential weediness of transgenic crops competing with wild species in border areas and forest fragments<sup>[9]</sup>. LMOs might be released in the environment either intentionally for growing or unintentionally. Currently, the country has no administrative measures or technical capacity to identify potential sources for such releases, to monitor and manage the risks posed by them and to gather and share information on LMOs being commercialized and grown in the region.

15. The widespread adoption of GM seeds has the potential to significantly undermine the commercialization of local plant varieties. GM seeds, often patented by large agricultural corporations, can dominate markets, squeezing out indigenous or locally adapted plant varieties<sup>[10]</sup>. This monopolization can lead to a loss of biodiversity as traditional crops are replaced, disrupting local ecosystems and diminishing resilience to pests and diseases. Additionally, reliance on GM seeds may perpetuate a cycle of dependency among farmers, as they become increasingly reliant on purchasing expensive seeds and associated chemical inputs, rather than saving and exchanging traditional seeds<sup>[11]</sup>. Furthermore, the commercialization of GM seeds may overshadow the cultural significance and heritage attached to local plant varieties, threatening traditional agricultural practices and knowledge systems. Overall, the adoption of genetically modified seeds can exert a negative impact on the diversity, sustainability, and autonomy of agricultural systems reliant on local plant varieties.

### Use of agrochemicals associated with LMOs

16. Half of the world's LMO production is herbicide-tolerant crops. The associated agrochemical is sprayed in the entire cultivation area several times throughout the crop's life cycle. The use of herbicide-tolerant crops in other countries has shown that the spread of herbicide-resistant weeds has brought about substantial increases in the number and volume of herbicides

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applied<sup>[12]<sup>12</sup>,<sup>[13]<sup>13</sup>,<sup>[14]<sup>14</sup></sup>. Because of the intensive use of such agrochemicals, farmers became dependent on them and lost important options for weed control in their fields.</sup></sup>

17. Therefore, the use of LMO herbicide-tolerant crops and their associated chemicals would add an extra burden to the country as increasing amounts of agrochemicals would generate even larger residues in the environment (e.g. soil). The country has no administrative mechanisms in place to perform LMO risk assessment to address the technological package associated with LMO varieties that are dependent on herbicide or pesticide sprays.
18. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is designated as the financial mechanism of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) as well as of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety under the CBD. The Cartagena Protocol's objective is to help ensure an adequate level of protection in the field of safe transfer, handling, and use of living-modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology that may have adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, also taking into account risks to human health, and specifically focusing on transboundary movements.
19. The proposed project will contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of Uzbekistan's biodiversity of global significance through strengthening capacities to manage potential risks arising from LMOs. It is aligned with GEF-8 BD objective 2 "To effectively implement the Cartagena and Nagoya protocols (Goals A, B and C of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework - GBF)" as it will (i) help develop that National Policy on Biosafety and associated regulations to ensure its implementation, (ii) build relevant national capacity to support the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (CPB), and (iii) build national capacity for LMO risk assessment, risk management and monitoring. Implementing a robust policy, and regulatory and institutional biosafety framework will allow the country to ensure that potential risks of LMOs are properly assessed and managed before environmental release, thereby generating significant global environmental benefits.

## Relevant Stakeholders

20. The project work area encompasses the entire country territory and possesses a great variety of stakeholders, including from public, NGOs, farmers' cooperatives and associations, private companies and universities and research institutes that carry on tasks and activities related to the scope of this project, in special in biodiversity conservation and biosafety themes. The stakeholders' details are displayed in the "Annex J: Stakeholder Engagement Plan" (please refer to Annex J).
  21. In the public sphere, The Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change is the state body of executive authority responsible for implementation of the policy and regulation of relations in the environmental protection, as well as protected natural areas. It is also the competent authority for the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol and the Biosafety Clearing House Focal Point for the country. In addition, according to the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 275 (May 2020) "On measures to implement the provisions of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety of the Convention on Biological Diversity (Montreal, January 29, 2000)", aside from the Ministry of Ecology and Environmental Protection and Climate Change; the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation are also authorized state bodies which are included in the State Expert Council. And the National Coordination Center is considered the Center of Genomics and Bioinformatics of the Academy of Sciences. The project will work closely with these authorities, strengthening its actions and capabilities in LMO transboundary movements and LMO handling through a series of activities related to the legal and regulatory biosafety framework, the institutional, technical, and human resource capacities and in assessing the economic, legal, and social impacts of LMOs. Details of their role in the project are available in Annex E (please refer to Annex E). The Public sector is fundamental for the project's success and its future sustainability. So, in this sense, the project seeks to strengthen and leverage public policies and actions, enhancing its impacts not only in the country but also in the region.
  22. Research institutes play a pivotal role in enhancing capacity in biotechnology and biodiversity conservation through a multifaceted approach. The Institute of Genetics & Plant Experimental Biology of AS RUz, The Research Institute of Breeding, Seed Growing and Agrotechnology of Cotton Growing, The Research Institute of Vegetables, Melons and Potatoes, The Plant Genetic Resources Research Institute, and The Academy of Sciences Agriculture Institute will provide specialized training programs and workshops aimed at educating scientists, policymakers, and practitioners in the latest biotechnological techniques and biodiversity conservation strategies. These initiatives will foster a skilled workforce equipped to tackle complex challenges in agriculture and environmental management. Additionally, research institutes serve as hubs for collaborative research projects, facilitating knowledge exchange and networking among national and international experts. Furthermore, these research institutes have often engaged in outreach activities, including public awareness campaigns and educational initiatives, to promote understanding and appreciation of the importance of biodiversity and sustainable biotechnological practices in previous projects. Overall, research institutes play a crucial role in building human and institutional capacity to address pressing
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issues related to biotechnology and biodiversity conservation, ensuring a more sustainable and resilient future for both ecosystems and societies.

23. In the civil society sector, there is a strong commitment from the Council of Farmers, Dehkan Farms and Landowners in promoting actions regarding technical assistance and awareness raising of conservation of local landrace varieties. The project will work together with this Council, seeking to strengthen social technologies, networks and local organizations capacities, which is fundamental for future project sustainability. These local organizations have the potential to leverage positive impacts in the territory, contributing to its sustainable development, biodiversity conservation and improvement of producer's livelihoods.
24. Finally, the private sector will be engaged in the project, especially in actions regarding the detection, identification and labelling of LMOs, as well as supporting producers for the implementation of export regulations regarding the presence of LMOs in agricultural products. The project will work closely with these actors to engage the private sector in actions needed for the organic production systems and value chain transformations towards social, economic and environmental sustainability.

## Remaining barriers

### Lack of coherent legal and regulatory framework

25. Although several regulations relevant to biosafety have been adopted, these are sparse, not fully implemented and do not cover all aspects of the Cartagena Protocol. Under existing regulations, there is a need to fully operationalize LMO detection and identification as well as a risk assessment system throughout all sectoral competent authorities. The lack of an effective legal and regulatory framework to conduct LMO identification and risk assessment constitutes a major barrier to the implementation of a national biosafety framework.

### Limited institutional, technical, and human resource capacities

26. Despite political will and efforts to implement and operationalize the Cartagena Protocol in Uzbekistan, the lack of national capacity hinders compliance with several provisions of the Protocol. There is insufficient capacity for analytical detection and identification of unauthorized LMOs. As well as no risk assessment and risk management measures are in place in the country. There is also limited knowledge about biosafety and biotechnology by students and in the university, which limits the advancement of national competence.

### Lack of information and understanding of the legal, and socio-economic and environmental impacts of LMOs

27. Countries have the right to take socio-economic considerations into account during the LMO decision-making process. The impacts of potential implications of the use of LMOs on local communities, small farmers and national food security, including the impact on the country's policies and laws on organic agriculture, need to be better understood and integrated into the overall assessment process, alongside the risk assessment. Additional considerations may be necessary for the light of geopolitics in the post-Soviet era and the potential impacts of current and future trading agreements for the import or export of LMO products.

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[7] <https://bch.cbd.int/en/countries/cn>

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## B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### Project description

This section asks for a theory of change as part of a joined-up description of the project as a whole. The project description is expected to cover the key elements of good project design in an integrated way. It is also expected to meet the GEF's policy requirements on gender, stakeholders, private sector, and knowledge management and learning (see section D). This section should be a narrative that reads like a joined-up story and not independent elements that answer the guiding questions contained in the PIF guidance document. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

28. This project aims to undertake crucial knowledge and capacity development activities in the field of LMO biosafety. The comprehensive project implementation plan will allow us to adjust interventions and allocate resources promptly to address key national needs and priorities. Such efforts would be challenging without support from the GEF.
29. In 2022, The Implementation Plan and The Capacity-building Action Plan<sup>1</sup> were adopted to support Parties to the Cartagena Protocol in their implementation and capacity-building efforts. The plans are also expected to support Parties in meeting the targets and goals of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework that are relevant to biosafety, particularly Target 17, dedicated to biosafety and biotechnology[1]<sup>15</sup>. The Capacity-Building Action Plan provides examples of capacity-building activities that can support the achievement of the goals and outcomes of the Implementation Plan. It is complementary to the CBD's long-term strategic plan for capacity development.
30. The project will establish a comprehensive and robust national regulatory framework on biosafety, aligning with the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. It seeks to build technical capacity for effectively implementing and enforcing the Protocol nationwide. Specifically, the project objectives include offering technical guidance and support for implementing the biosafety regulatory framework at the national level. This involves establishing administrative systems and institutional arrangements, such as laboratories for detecting Living Modified Organisms (LMOs) and enhancing human resource capacities.

### Theory of Change

31. IF a comprehensive biosafety policy and regulatory framework are developed and operationalized (Component 1), technical capacity for biosafety implementation is strengthened through workforce training and laboratory upgrades (Component 2), and effective knowledge management mechanisms are established (Component 3), THEN a functional, transparent, and science-based biosafety system will be achieved in Uzbekistan that complies with the international LMO agreement – The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. This will result in improved biosafety decision-making, enhanced risk assessment and monitoring capacities, increased public awareness and participation, and robust institutional arrangements, BECAUSE these strategic approaches provide the necessary legal, technical, and informational foundations, and foster multi-stakeholder engagement to support sustainable biosafety governance.
  32. The GEF-funded alternative will enable the achievement of the project goal and objectives through the following three interlinked project components: (1) Development and operationalization of the biosafety policy, regulatory and institutional framework in accordance with the Cartagena Protocol; (2) Strengthening technical capacity for implementation of the biosafety legal framework; and (3) Project management and knowledge-sharing process. These components are summarized in more detail below.
  33. Component 1 aims to develop and operationalize a biosafety policy, regulatory, and institutional framework. This includes completing a policy aligned with international agreements such as the CBD and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. Outputs
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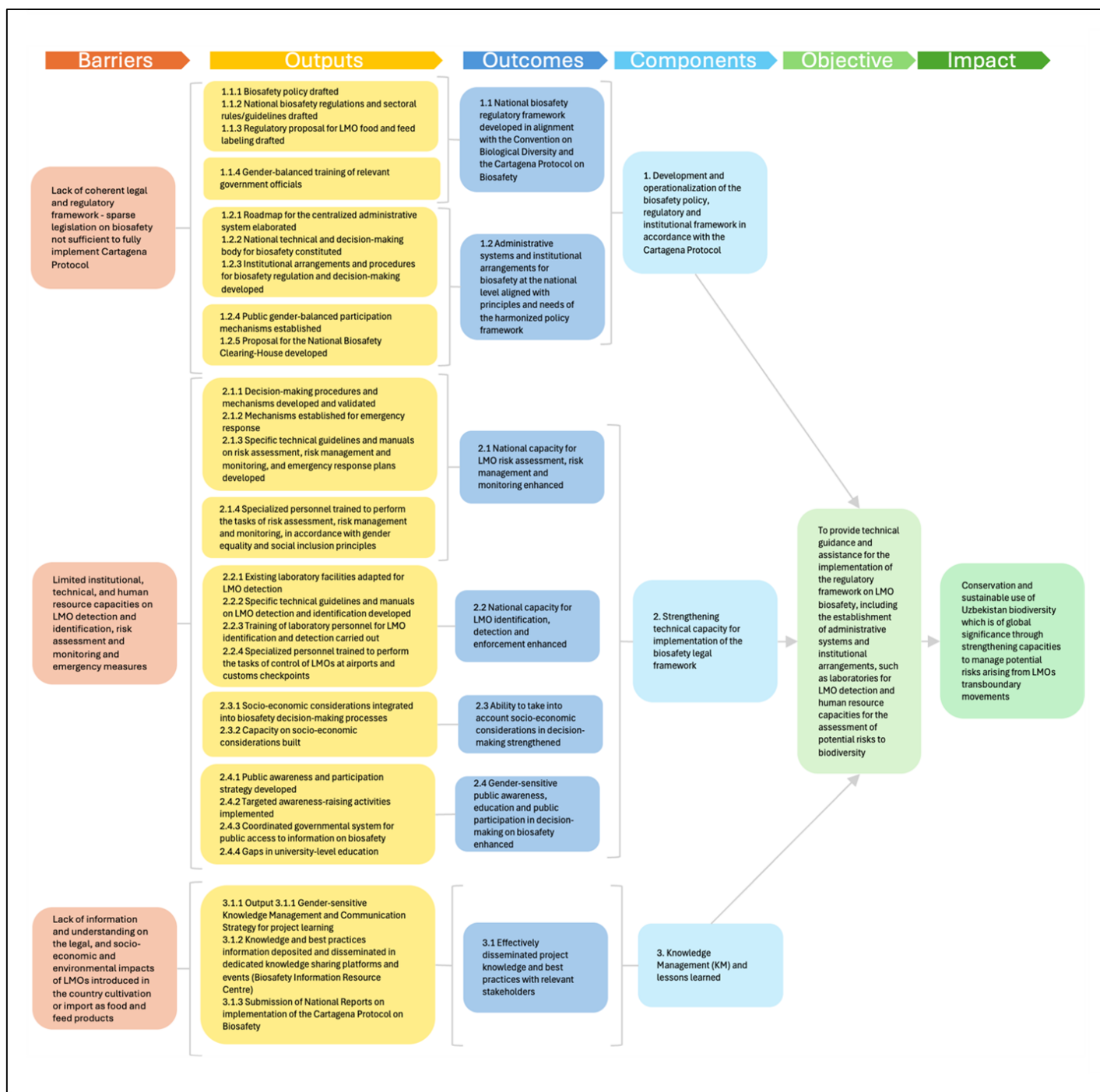
include drafting a National Policy Document on Biosafety led by the Center of Genomics and Bioinformatics, establishing a cross-sectoral process to align food safety laws, enacting national biosafety regulations, and developing sectoral guidelines for the handling and monitoring of LMOs, including socio-economic considerations and labeling. Training programs for relevant officials across ministries will ensure effective implementation of the framework.

34. Another outcome focuses on establishing national administrative systems and institutional arrangements for biosafety, as required by the Cartagena Protocol's Article 10 on decision procedures. This involves defining clear responsibilities for government agencies to handle LMO applications systematically, ensuring clarity for applicants. A centralized system will be created to manage all LMO applications, alongside the formation of national technical and decision-making bodies with diverse expertise to facilitate effective biosafety decisions. Institutional arrangements and procedures for regulation, risk assessment, management, and monitoring of LMOs will be developed and implemented, supported by specific technical guidelines and manuals for government officials. Training and technical materials from the Biosafety Clearing House will further bolster these efforts<sup>[2]</sup><sup>16</sup>. Additionally, a National Biosafety Clearing House will enhance transparency and accountability in decision-making by collecting, generating, and sharing current national biosafety information. This system will grant regulatory bodies and stakeholders' access to essential biosafety data, supporting public awareness, education, and participation efforts (Component 2), as well as facilitating knowledge sharing (Component 3).

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**Figure 1. Project's Theory of Change diagram.** The diagram presents the linkage between the identified barriers and the proposed interventions based on specific outputs. The expected outcomes are directly linked to the project components with an explicit pathway to the overall objective of this project and its future impact on biodiversity conservation.

28. Component 2 focuses on enhancing technical capacity for biosafety implementation. This includes developing and validating LMO risk assessment procedures and creating technical guidelines for risk management and monitoring, including emergency response plans. These efforts ensure transparent, science-based biosafety decision-making aligned with global standards, supported by capacity building through workshops and training for specialized personnel.
29. In the area of LMO identification, detection and enforcement, it is critical to establish the necessary infrastructure, as well as institutional, technical and human capacities. The proposed project will assist in adapting and upgrading four reference laboratories. The core functions of the laboratories and institutions and their needs for infrastructures and equipment, which will be addressed by incremental GEF investment.
30. Socio-economic considerations are crucial in Uzbekistan, where small farmers play a vital role in food security, rural economies, biodiversity, and social cohesion. Government agencies and ministries must build capacity to integrate these considerations into biosafety decision-making. Coordination with the Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Agriculture is essential

to align with existing obligations in the Russian Commonwealth and Eurasian Economic Union regarding LMO food labelling regulations. Capacity building in this area will be prioritized.

31. Finally, this component aims to enhance public awareness, education, and participation in biosafety decision-making. A strategy will be developed to promote awareness and participation through targeted activities among policymakers, government officials, researchers, farmers, NGOs, the private sector, and the public. It includes establishing the National Biosafety Clearing House to provide public access to biosafety information in digital and printed formats and strengthening biosafety education in university curricula.
32. Component 3 focuses on knowledge management and knowledge sharing. A monitoring system will ensure effective project oversight and timely activity implementation under Component 4, including regular reporting and final evaluation. This involves developing a performance framework (M&E plan) to collect data on project performance, with progress reports every six months and dissemination to the steering committee and partners. It will also include official reports and communications with the CBD Secretariat (SCBD), other Parties to the Cartagena Protocol, particularly from the region, and other stakeholders.
33. Three project components will work on different fronts to enable LMO biosafety in the country. Component 1 will work on the policy and institutional mechanisms, Component 2 on technical capacity and Component 3 on the knowledge-sharing process.
34. The detailed description of each component is provided below:
35. **Component 1 on Development and operationalization of biosafety policy, regulatory and institutional framework.** Under this component, a policy and regulatory biosafety framework is expected to be completed and aligned with the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to support the establishment of scientific sound decision-making process and regulatory enforcement.
36. **Output 1.1 on the National biosafety regulatory framework developed and aligned with CBD and Cartagena Protocol** is designed to achieve this outcome and will involve the drafting of a National Policy Document on Biosafety by the existing inter-ministerial working group led by the Center of Genomics and Bioinformatics, to guide coherent national biosafety implementation as well as the establishment of a cross-sectoral process to reconcile several laws and regulations. These should support the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, The “Strategy for Ensuring Food Security and Healthy Nutrition of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030”, “The Strategy for the Development of Agriculture of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2020-2030”, “The Concept of Environmental Protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030” and the respective laws and regulation derived from them. As well as the enactment of national biosafety regulations in line with the new draft law on food safety.
37. More specifically, GMO field releases should allow coexistence with other types of agriculture that do not allow GMO plants and products. This is the case for the Law “On Organic Products” (LRU 766) which establishes GMO-free production for organic certification in the country, aligned with international organic regulations. Such socio-economic considerations will be discussed with the relevant sector in the country and lead by the Uzbekistan Council of Farmers.
38. The development of sectoral rules or resolutions and guidelines for the transboundary movement, transit, handling, use, management and monitoring of LMOs, including socio-economic considerations and LMO labelling, with the latter applying the relevant technical regulations of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) legislation will also be considered. The Ministry of Agriculture and the Uzstandard Agency will lead the labelling policy and regulations drafting process. These will help build the foundation for a coherent policy and regulatory framework, starting from an overarching national policy that sets the parameters, to national biosafety regulations that codify the policy, and sectoral rules addressing various key aspects of implementation. In all these processes, it will be crucial to train relevant government officials across different ministries and agencies that are involved in implementing the biosafety policy, regulatory and institutional framework, through a dedicated training program. This will involve fostering awareness, understanding and familiarity with the said framework. These trainings will be led by the Center of Genomics and Bioinformatics together with MEEPCC. Where appropriate, efforts will also be made to include sub-national actors so as to help scale the project.
39. **Outcome 1.2 on Administrative systems and institutional arrangements for biosafety at the national level aligned with principle and needs of the harmonised policy framework** is the implementation of administrative systems and institutional arrangements for biosafety at the national level to comply with Cartagena Protocol Article 10 on decision procedures. Clear delineation of tasks and mandates are necessary for the various government agencies to play their appropriate roles and to handle any applications for LMOs in a systematic manner which also brings certainty for LMO applicants. A centralized administrative system will be developed and established to handle applications for all types of LMOs, and national technical and decision-making bodies for biosafety will be constituted with appropriate multi-disciplinary membership, in order to ensure the smooth functioning of biosafety decision-making. As such, appropriate institutional arrangements and procedures for biosafety regulation, risk assessment, risk management and monitoring, clear identification of LMO imports and decision-making will have to be designed and implemented. This will be augmented by the development of specific technical guidelines and manuals so that the relevant

government officials are appropriately guided. The Biosafety Clearing House has dedicated training and technical materials that will support these activities in the project<sup>20</sup>.

40. Central to the administrative decision-making system is the representativeness of all sectors from the government of Turkmenistan. Therefore, the Ministries (e.g. MEEPCC, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Industry and Constructions, Ministry of Health, etc) should nominate representatives in support of the governance scheme for GMOs in the country.
41. In addition, the collection, generation and sharing of up-to-date national biosafety information in a manner that will promote transparency and accountability of decision-making will be achieved through the establishment of a National Biosafety Clearing-House. This strengthened information management system will provide regulatory bodies and stakeholders with access to national information on biosafety. The National Biosafety Clearing-House will also contribute to Component 2 outcome on public awareness, education and public participation, as well as the Component 3 outcome on knowledge sharing. Since this is respective to the national database, this task will be executed by FAO with support from the Center of Genomics and Bioinformatics. The information sharing process to the CBD Biosafety Clearing House will be performed under Component 3 by MEEPCC the National Focal Point for the Cartagena Protocol.
42. **Component 2 on Strengthening technical capacity for implementation of the biosafety legal framework.** This component involves enhancing expertise and resources to enforce biosafety regulations effectively. This includes training programs and workshops to equip government officials, scientists, and industry professionals with the skills needed for risk assessment, monitoring, and regulatory oversight. These efforts ensure that biosafety laws are enforced rigorously, supporting safe research, development, and commercialization of GMOs in the country.
43. **Outcome 2.1 on National capacity for LMO risk assessment, risk management and monitoring enhanced.** As a first step, the procedures and mechanisms for assessing environmental and health risks of LMOs will need to be developed and validated by the national authorities responsible for different uses of LMOs, with specific technical protocols, guidelines or manuals established for risk assessment, management and monitoring, including contingency protocols for emergency response in case of accidents involving LMOs. This will allow robust, transparent and science-based analysis and decision-making in biosafety consistent with international practices and standards. Sufficient scientific and technical capacities will be built for specialized personnel to perform the tasks of risk assessment, risk management and monitoring, including through workshops and training courses. FAO will execute with support from MEEPCC the tasks related to environmental assessment, whereas food and feed assessment will be performed by The Center of Genomics and Bioinformatics and Ministry of Health.
44. The proposed project activities will also integrate climate risk assessment, supported by guidelines, manuals, and response plans to assess climate-related risks and adaptive capacity (resilience to climate change-related impacts, e.g., droughts, pests and diseases) of LMOs in agriculture, by ensuring direct involvement of climate/meteorological/agronomic experts, researchers, institutions, as well as local stakeholders – citizens, farmers, value chain actors, civil society organizations – in the decision-making process, to diminish the risk. Additional interventions in mainstreaming climate resilient practices for agriculture will be established during the socio-economic evaluation under Outcome 2.3.
45. **Outcome 2.2 on National capacity for LMO identification, detection and enforcement enhanced.** In the area of LMO identification, detection and enforcement, it is critical to establish the necessary infrastructure, as well as institutional, technical and human capacities. The proposed project will assist in adapting and upgrading four national reference laboratories. These laboratories are present within these institutes: The Center for Advanced Technologies (LMO detection), The Center of Genomics and Bioinformatics (LMO detection and risk assessment), The Committee for Sanitary and Epidemiological Welfare and Public Health and the Central Laboratory for Identification of Safety, GMOs and Conformity for Planting of Agricultural Crops, Seeds and Seedlings (Ministry of Agriculture). FAO will execute these tasks with support from these institutions, including the Center for Advanced Technologies, as the designated coordinating reference laboratory by the Resolution 275 on Cartagena Implementation, who will lead the organization of this Outcome 2.2.
46. The core functions of the laboratories and institutions and their needs for infrastructures and equipment, which will be addressed by incremental GEF investment, are as follows: (i) four laboratories to serve as central LMO biosafety laboratories fully equipped with state-of-the-art LMO detection equipment such as multiplex quantitative real-time PCR, ELISA readers, spectrophotometer for DNA quantification, gel imaging and documentation system and other tools for basic molecular biology procedures, and (ii) upgraded analytical laboratory for compositional/nutritional and agronomic and phenotypic analyses with state-of-the-art analytical equipment such as HPLC-MS, amino acid analyzer and related-analytical instruments.
47. The purpose of the LMO detection laboratories is a) development and validation of methods for DNA detection and identification and provide these services for other partner institutions in biosafety implementation; b) development of molecular characterization methods required for pre-market risk assessment and to serve as a backup service laboratory for DNA detection and identification; c) development of LMO monitoring methods required for post-release monitoring and monitoring of unauthorized LMOs; d) the laboratories will be involved in providing training in biosafety-related activities, DNA detection and

identification techniques to risk assessors and other concerned agencies and in providing technical resource persons for public awareness and outreach activities.

48. The purpose of the risk assessment laboratories is to a) develop or adapt methods for compositional and nutritional analysis to comply with food and feed and environmental safety assessment required by the country's biosafety regulations and the Cartagena Protocol; b) develop or adapt methods for the agronomic and phenotypic characterization to comply with food and feed and environmental safety assessment required by the country's biosafety regulations and the Cartagena Protocol. The adaptation of these laboratories will be developed by the Center of Genomics and Bioinformatics.
49. These laboratories will also be involved in training and outreach activities on LMO food and feed safety assessments. The laboratories workflow will be established according to existing guidelines under the Network of Laboratories for the Detection and Identification of Living Modified Organisms from the Cartagena Protocol<sup>21</sup>. The proposed project will also help to establish sampling and analytical methodologies and procedures to identify and quantify LMOs, which will assist in establishing a scientific basis for resolving legal disputes on LMO labelling and non-compliance. Manuals, tools and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for different sampling and detection techniques will be developed and made available for laboratories and regulatory authorities.
50. Training of laboratory personnel for LMO identification and detection will be carried out by the center for Advanced Technologies, including at regional laboratories, through a series of workshops and training courses. Specialized personnel will be also trained to perform the tasks of monitoring and detection of LMOs at airports and customs checkpoints. Core laboratory staff members will be trained as trainers for LMO analysis and detection as well as for operation and maintenance of detection instruments in order to create a critical mass of scientific and technical personnel who can sustain the national reference laboratories and to implement risk assessment, LMO detection and monitoring systems. The staff of customs and other regulatory authorities will also be trained to understand the accreditation process for risk assessment, LMO detection and the corresponding LMO certificates issued; to test the presence of LMOs as well as to seek laboratory confirmation and a network of control authorities will be established. Finally, exchange of experiences with other countries in the region in the development and use of easy to use, reliable and cost-effective sampling and detection techniques for LMOs will be promoted.
51. **Outcome 2.3 Ability to take into account socio-economic considerations in decision-making strengthened.** The issue of socio-economic considerations is particularly important for a country like Uzbekistan where small farmers are crucial for food security, rural economies, biodiversity, and social cohesion. Capacity will need to be built among relevant government agencies and ministries to be able to take these socio-economic considerations into account, which also need to be integrated into biosafety decision-making processes through clear procedures and guidelines. At the same time, given the obligations already existing within the CIS and the market demands by the EU, there might be a need to apply the relevant technical regulations on labelling for LMO food and food products, in close coordination with the Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Agriculture, while enhancing capacity in this area. MEEPCC and the Ministry of Agriculture will support FAO in the development of technical guidelines and the training sessions.
52. **Outcome 2.4 Gender-sensitive public awareness, education and public participation in decision-making on biosafety enhanced.** This outcome will also enhance public awareness, education and public participation in decision-making on biosafety. A public awareness and participation strategy will be designed and implemented to promote awareness, participation and communication on biosafety issues. The proposed project will implement targeted awareness-raising activities, including among policymakers to establish a political will to incorporate biosafety into national development plans and programs, as well as with all relevant stakeholders such as government officials, researchers, farmers, NGOs – including consumer fora, the private sector and the public in general. The Council of Farmers, Dehkan Farms and Landowners of Uzbekistan, representing more than 10.000 farmers, will lead this project task. At the same time, to provide public access to information on biosafety, the National Biosafety Clearing-House will be established, as outlined in Component 1. Communication materials will be produced, in local languages and Russian, and made publicly available in digital and printed formats. In addition, existing gaps in university level education for biosafety will be identified, and filled through the strengthening of curricula by the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation. In line with obligations under the Cartagena Protocol, the project will also seek to establish public participation mechanisms so as to be able to systematically collate inputs and take them into account in decision-making.
53. **Component 3: Knowledge Management (KM) and lessons learned.** There will be a strong emphasis on the effective dissemination of knowledge and best practices. In **Outcome 3.1 Effectively disseminated project knowledge and best practices with relevant stakeholders**, a gender-sensitive knowledge management (KM) strategy will be established to facilitate the sharing of lessons learned and successful practices among stakeholders, enhancing collaboration and collective learning and ensuring that messaging around project initiatives is inclusive and accessible to all community members. Knowledge and best practices information will be deposited and disseminated in dedicated knowledge sharing platforms and events, such as the CBD Biosafety Information Resource Centre. And the outcomes of this project will be shared with the CBD Secretariat (SCBD), other Parties to the Cartagena Protocol, particularly from the region, and other stakeholders. This can be done *inter alia* by submitting project reports, case studies and other relevant information to the Biosafety Information Resource Centre (BCH-BIRC) which is managed by the SCBD and provides access to electronic catalogues of biosafety-related publications and information

resources with the objective to increase accessibility to available biosafety information and resources developed by policymakers, educators, researchers and the general public.

54. In addition, The project will also assist the national technical personnel in preparing and submitting quality reports to the Cartagena Protocol, which includes the National Reports on implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (CPB-NR). These reporting obligations for Parties are important to contribute to the monitoring of measures implementing the Protocol, and to the review and assessment of the effectiveness of the Protocol. They will also provide the opportunity for Uzbekistan to share the progress, gap and challenges it faces in its national implementation.
55. Under **Component 4. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)** a project monitoring system will be put in place to ensure the effectiveness of the project management process and timely implementation of the planned activities, including regular reporting and the final evaluation. This will be carried out by IUCN through the development of a performance framework (M&E system - **Outcome 4.1 Established and operationalized comprehensive project monitoring system**), thus, defining roles, responsibilities, and frequency for collecting and compiling data to assess project performance, project progress reports every six months, and presentation and dissemination of the report to the steering committee and the executing partner every six months. In, **Outcome 4.2 Project reporting and evaluation system implemented** will ensure that mandatory reports will be delivered, such as: Project Implementation Report (PIR), Project Progress Report (PPR) and Mid-term Review (MTR) as well as the Project Terminal Evaluation (TE).

### Baseline Scenario without GEF intervention

56. Uzbekistan ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity in 1995 and joined the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety in 2019. In the follow-up adoption of the Resolution “On implementing measures for compliance with the Cartagena Protocol of the Biodiversity Convention” (No. 275) the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, and MEEPCC are enlisted as main authorized bodies for its implementation with the Center of Genomics and Bioinformatics of the Academy of Sciences as the National Coordinating Center for its implementation in the country (a map for current institutional arrangements in place is referred to in Annex B). Despite the legislative efforts to implement the Protocol, little advance has been accomplished as there is currently no institutional biosafety system in place and Uzbekistan has not submitted any mandatory national country reports to the Biosafety Clearing House.
57. With regards to GMOs in food and feed, the “National Strategy for Ensuring Food Security and Healthy Nutrition until 2030”, adopted in February 2024 (Presidential Decree No. PD-36), defines measures to assess the risk and ban the presence of GMOs in imported and domestic food products and provides for the development, by mid-2025, of a draft regulatory act prohibiting the use of GMOs in food production. The current draft of a new “Food Safety Law”, on the other hand, establishes GMO-containing foods as products subject to compliance assessment and state registration prior to production, import or release to the market.
58. At present, the use of food products containing GMO is regulated by Sanitary regulation (No. 0366-19) which establishes the maximum residue level of GMO in food products to 0.9% (its use in infant food is prohibited) and defines the list of raw materials and products subject to testing for GMO content. Another Regulation (No. 0185-05 “Requirements for determining the safety of food products containing genetically modified sources (GMS)” requires studying the influence of products, derived from GMS on the function of reproduction in identifying possible embryotoxic, gonadotoxic and teratogenicity in experimental animals prior to approving the food products for release to the market. These regulations are conflicting as a GMO ban would not allow the adventitious presence (at any analytical level) of GMO sources in a food product. In addition, the country does not have any operational governmental laboratories with GMO accreditation and mandate to monitor food samples and detect and identify GMO presence. Finally, risk assessment and risk management for human health effects from GMOs have not been established in the country to ensure the safety of food products. Therefore, neither modality, of a GMO-ban or GMO-labeling, can be implemented in the country.
59. With regards to biodiversity and the GMO-receiving environment, the Strategy for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Republic of Uzbekistan 2019-2028, and the related Action Plan, have no mention of the Cartagena Protocol and offer no plans for the conservation or sustainable use of traditional plant varieties or breeds, except for the crop wild relatives (CWR), neither for the reduction of the pollution levels from agricultural practices, like the use of pesticides and other agrochemicals which could be part of a GMO technological package. The Concept of Environmental Protection until 2030 (Presidential Decree No.58635) provides for strengthening biological safety and moving away from chemical treatment of plants toward organic pest control measures, etc. On the other hand, in 2024, the Presidential Decree “On additional measures to accelerate reforms in the agricultural and food sector” (No. PR-227) established the Center for Projects in The Field of Agriculture and Food with the mandate to ensure the effective implementation of international recommendations and create a high value-added chain for agricultural and food products, aligning with World Trade Organization (WTO) requirements. Unless there is a clear understanding of the potential environmental and socio-economic impact of GMOs in relation to the agricultural practice for their cultivation

(i.e. pesticide and herbicide use) the country is unable to implement regulations to protect the environment from toxic agrochemicals and improve agricultural income and farmers conditions.

60. "The Concept for the Development of the Production of Organic Agricultural and Food Products" only highlights the present GMO-free regions as favorable conditions for the development of organic agriculture while the law on Organic products (No. LRU-766) prohibits the use of genetic engineering methods, genetically engineered and transgenic organisms, as well as products manufactured using genetically engineered and transgenic organisms in line with international organic production regulations. The current lack of analytical GMO laboratories, field monitoring, as well as border control testing for GMO seeds, prevents the country from fully enforcing the organic agriculture policy.
61. On the regional level, two model legislative acts of the Commonwealth of Independent States pursuant to the provisions of the Cartagena Protocol lay the basis for the coordinated development of national regulatory framework in Uzbekistan: the Model Law "On the Safety of activities related to genetically modified organisms" (Resolution No. 27-9) which deals with the organizational structure of ensuring the safety of activities related to GMOs; their use in closed systems; deliberate introduction into the environment, release to the market, import/export and liability for illegal activities of individuals and legal entities in this area and causing damage and provides for informing and consulting with the public on the issues of permitting activities related to GMOs, and the Model Law "On the distribution and use of genetically modified organisms in the export of agricultural products" (Resolution No. 44-8) which defines the specifics in relation to exported GMOs intended for use in closed systems, establishes separate rules for GMOs intended for further processing, as well as use as food or animal feed and special rules for exported GMOs and their combinations intended for release into the environment.

### **Alternative scenario with GEF intervention**

1. The GEF financing will be crucial to overcoming the identified barriers that prevent the safe handling of LMOs in the country due to the lack of a policy and legal framework, institutional and human capacity, and public awareness of the potential negative impacts of LMOs on biodiversity. In this sense, GEF financing will support the establishment of the basic policy and legal framework in the country through funding for stakeholder consultation meetings, for hiring national and international experts on gender, LMO risk assessment, laboratory personnel, biodiversity etc., as well as for capacity building courses and workshops for government officials.
2. Administrative systems and mechanisms will be launched with the support of GEF funds including the creation of a new online website for LMO data and information as well as the support for writing technical guidelines and protocols with specific techno-scientific procedures for LMO risk assessment, socio-economic analysis and LMO detection in compliance with the provisions of CBD and CP. This will also include funding for training technical and specialized personnel at laboratories and border control points. The purchase of specific equipment and start-up analytical supply materials will be available with this GEF funding scheme.
3. The full implementation of the biosafety framework in Uzbekistan will only be possible through targeted public awareness activities to promote knowledge and capacity to all stakeholders who will handle and/or will be impacted by LMOs entering the country (i.e. civil society, farmers, private sector, academia, traditional and local communities, etc). This will be performed within the scope of this project under its component 2 via capacity building activities which will also include activities to enhance the country's ability to take into consideration socio-economic impacts often neglected by countries.
4. As part of the continuous endeavors of GEF, funding will be allocated to sustain gender-responsive and proactive initiatives across all project components aimed at mitigating relevant gender disparities in agriculture, biodiversity conservation, and food safety. Capacity-building activities will specifically target women and minority communities, alongside their participation in technical and governmental consultation meetings for policy drafting and other legal documentation.

### **Gender and Socio-economic considerations**

5. LMO biosafety is inherently relevant to multiple stakeholders due to its broad implications across various sectors and interests. It impacts agricultural productivity, food security, environmental conservation, public health, and socio-economic dynamics. Stakeholders such as government bodies, research institutions, farmers, environmental groups, consumers, and the private sector have significant stakes in ensuring that GMOs are safely developed, regulated, and utilized. Uzbekistan has already assigned The Center of Genomics and Bioinformatics as the coordinator for the Cartagena Protocol implementation in the country, and MEEPCC is the national focal for CBD and Cartagena at UNEP. Under the leadership of MEEPCC, both organizations will be engaged in the implementation of this project.
6. Each stakeholder brings unique perspectives and priorities to the table, ranging from scientific rigor and regulatory compliance to ethical considerations and economic viability. Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation through its research institutions will support FAO for the execution of the tasks related to improving academic curricula in the country. Centre for Advance Technologies from the Ministry of Innovative Development will be involved in laboratory training of technicians and border control officers for LMO detection. Several public awareness activities will involve the Uzbek Council of Farmers and other NGOs. Effective management of LMO biosafety requires collaboration and dialogue among these diverse stakeholders to address concerns, ensure transparency, foster informed decision-making, and ultimately, contribute to sustainable development goals and public welfare.

These stakeholders will bring their existing knowledge to the project and learn how to apply that knowledge to assess LMO safety for the country's conditions.

7. The private sector will be engaged in targeted public awareness activities and in public participation mechanisms. The project will also engage the private sector (e.g. Atyab International) in laboratory training as an analytical center with a dedicated GMO laboratory has been identified and they can be trained to detect GMOs and perform GMO-free product certificates. They will also be involved in the multidisciplinary biosafety committee to ensure representation of the industry sector in GMO commercialization discussions in the country. For example, The Ministry of Industry and Construction Production of Turkmenistan should have a representative in the committee to reflect the needs and interest of this governmental sector within the GMO field. These activities will promote compliance of the industry sector to GMO handling procedures and notifications according to domestic laws and with the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.
8. Gender analysis for the project highlights weak gender mainstreaming in biosafety-related policy and institutions, specifically limited gender expertise in developing related procedures. The project will therefore mainstream gender considerations in all project components, going beyond efforts for gender balance and embedding a gender lens into policy support, and assessments, including risk assessments, the LMO approval process and the public consultation process. Gender-biosafety recommendations by the IUCN inform the Project gender mainstreaming approach will be applied. CBD, IUCN, GEF and national gender policies and action plans also frame the project's gender mainstreaming approach. See Project Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan.

## **Incremental cost reasoning**

9. Despite being a Party to the Cartagena Protocol and biosafety being an important priority for the government of Uzbekistan, the implementation of the Protocol is still insufficient mostly because of a lack of coordination among different ministries/ agencies with overlapping mandates when comes to the internalization and implementations of the Cartagena Protocol. This project will act as the first concrete and coordinated project for the Protocol implementation. The country has insufficient technical capacity and technical knowledge for the implementation and operationalization of the Cartagena Protocol and, as a consequence, there is still very limited number of capacitated human resources to implement it.
10. Component 1 will contribute to the mitigation of barrier 1 creating a coherent legal and regulatory framework. Policy proposals on the topic will be drafted, and national biosafety regulations produced, in connection with existing national laws. Also, a centralized administrative system on how to handle applications for LMOs in transit, destined for contained use, intentional introduction into the environment, and for direct use as food or feed, or for processing, will be established and technical and decision-making bodies for biosafety will be constituted. Risk assessment, risk management and monitoring, and clear identification of LMO imports will be put in place. And the national biosafety website will be established for better and more transparent information sharing.
11. Component 2 will contribute to the mitigation of barriers 2 by supporting the establishment of procedures and mechanisms for assessing environmental and health risks of LMOs, as well as of socio-economic impacts, risk assessment, management, and monitoring, including contingency protocols, as well as training of relevant personnel. Also, the project will adjust existing laboratory facilities for LMO detection, training of laboratory personnel for LMO identification and detection, develop a public awareness and participation strategy and create a governmental system for public access to information on biosafety in accordance with the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

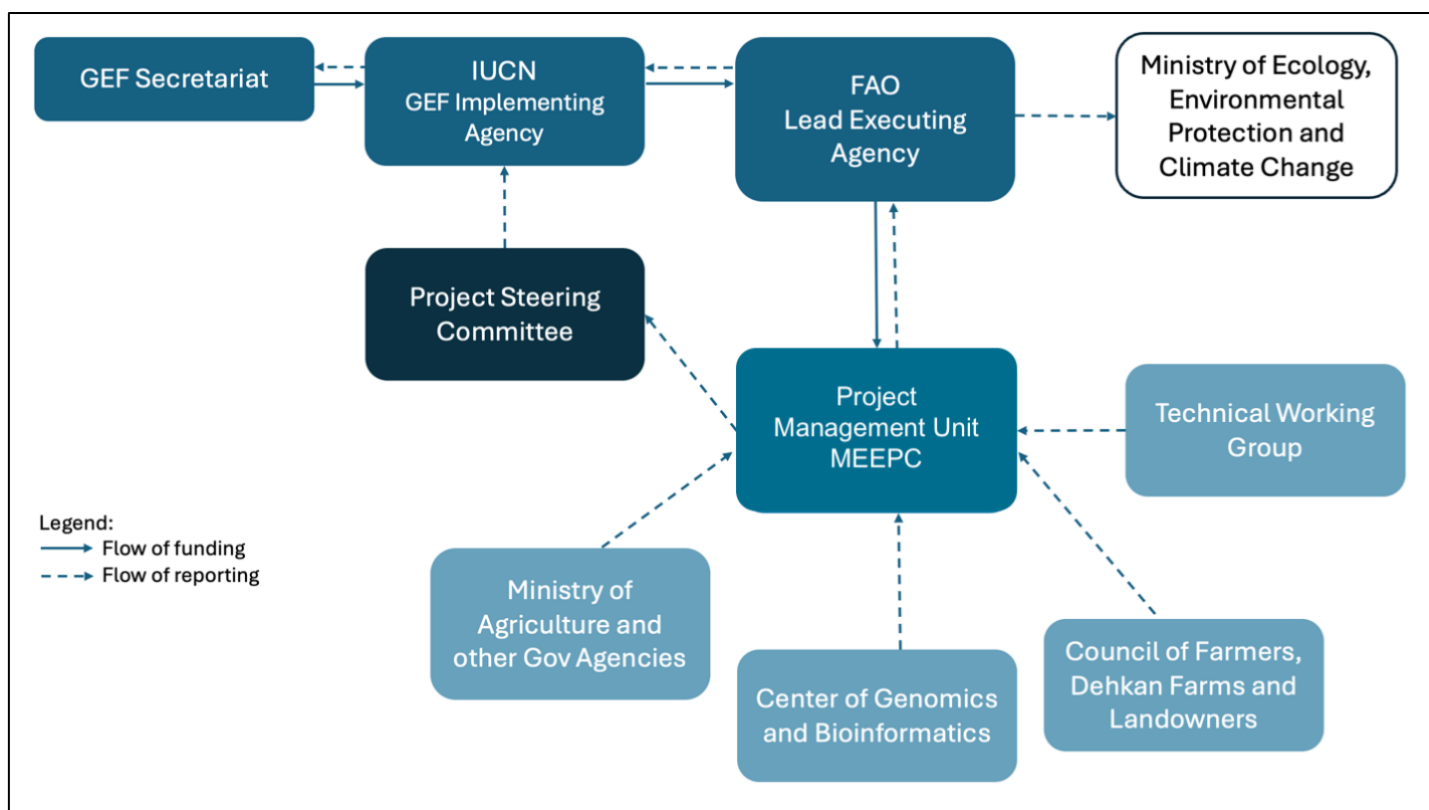
Component 3 will have incremental GEF funding to share knowledge and in component 4 for project monitor and evaluate project progress and compliance with indicators, and final external evaluation, systematization of experiences and lessons learned, preparation of outreach and dissemination materials, and project outputs and results with dedicated activities for knowledge sharing and public participation. The project will also support the national technical personnel to prepare timely and quality reports for submission to the Cartagena Protocol Biosafety Clearing House and to meet reporting obligations under the Protocol.

## **Institutional Arrangement and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Project.**

Please describe the Institutional Arrangements for the execution of this project, including financial management and procurement. If possible, please summarize the flow of funds (diagram), accountabilities for project management and financial reporting (organogram), including audit, and staffing plans. (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

1. The FAO will act as the lead executing agency and will be responsible for the day-to-day management of project results entrusted to it in full compliance with all terms and conditions of the Operational Partnership Agreement signed with IUCN. During the formulation of the project; it has become clear that there are multiple state structures and organs that have a responsibility in the implementation of the Cartagena protocol; and including a neutral broker in establishing working mechanisms and clarification of legislative framework for the institutional set-up would be beneficial for all the stakeholders involved. The OFP has also indicated limitations of capacities and strictness and burdensome nature of the procedural requirements for the state organizations renders it impossible for the project to be effectively implemented by the national organs. Upon the OFP's request and insistence, FAO has been identified to

deliver the execution functions; through the ownership and direct management of the national organs, with the goal of establishing long-term capacities in the national counterparts to be able to carry out the related functions through and after the project's implementation. In this regard, FAO has been considered as the ideal executing agency for this GEF project due to its neutrality, allowing it to broker cooperation among stakeholders and overcome the limitations faced by MEEPCC in project implementation. Building capacity within government institutions is a long-term process, and FAO's proven expertise in capacity development ensures effective support during this transition. Additionally, FAO's extensive technical knowledge of genetic engineering, biotechnology governance, and the Cartagena Protocol makes it well-equipped to handle the project's complex technical requirements, ensuring compliance with international standards. As the executing agency of the project the FAO is responsible and accountable to IUCN for the timely implementation of the agreed project results, operational oversight of implementation activities, timely reporting, and for effective use of GEF resources for the intended purposes and in line with IUCN and GEF policy requirements.



**Figure 2. Project's Organization Structure Diagram.** In the Project's Organization Structure diagram, rectangles represent institutions within the project team. Connecting lines illustrate reporting relationships, with solid lines indicating the flow of funding and dotted lines representing reporting flow. Dark blue color coding distinguishes between the funder, the implementing agency and the main executing agency, whereas the light blue color represents the governmental organizations or project-dedicated working groups.

1. The government will designate a National Project Director (NPD). Located in the MEEPC, the NPD will be responsible for coordinating the activities with all the national bodies related to the different project components. He/She will also be responsible for supervising and guiding the Project Coordinator (see below) on the government policies and priorities.
2. The Project Management Unit (PMU) will coordinate the establishment of effective management practices that address gender-specific needs and promote equal opportunities. It will be hosted by MEEPC, within its premises in Tashkent City and working under its overview. By implementing gender-responsive strategies, the project seeks to enhance decision-making processes and increase women's representation in leadership roles. Ultimately, this outcome will lead to more inclusive and effective project implementation, fostering sustainable development that benefits all members of the community. The PMU will be composed of a Senior Technical Advisor, Project Coordinator, Administrative Assistant, Communication and Knowledge Management Specialist, Monitoring and Evaluation Expert, Gender and Community Coordinators and will ensure:
  - attention to 'gender mainstreaming' to be included in the TOR of all staff, consultants and service providers;
  - gender balance of no less than 40% of either sex;
  - formalization of the gender-responsive grievance mechanism that is accessible and promoted to all beneficiaries;
  - promote clear guidelines in Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, and Abuse (PSEA).

3. The PMU will also organize the workshop for project inception and the PMU meetings every month with all core staff and consultants as relevant. In addition, it is also the responsibility of the PMU the organization of the ESMP review at least every 6 months during PMU meetings and to host annual meetings of the Project Steering Committee to approve workplans and budgets, and to share progress highlights and learning. The unit will also conduct regular monitoring and evaluation of project activities, ensuring GESI and GEBs are integrated and compile and disseminate monitoring reports, including policy-relevant findings. Following the evaluation process, findings should be compiled into comprehensive reports that not only reflect project performance but also include insights that are relevant to policy-making. Finally, the PMU will host the evaluation meetings with stakeholders to review findings and discuss knowledge uptake. Disseminating these reports to stakeholders will provide valuable information for informed decision-making.
4. MEEPCC will chair the Project Steering Committee which will be the main governing body of the project. The PSC will approve Annual Work Plans and Budgets on a yearly basis and will provide strategic guidance to the Project Management Team and to the executing agency - FAO.
5. The PSC will be comprised of representatives from MEEPCC, Ministry of Agriculture, Center of Genomics and Bioinformatics, Ministry of Science and Innovation, Uzstandard Agency, Ministry of Health, Academy of Sciences, The Council of Farmers, Dehkan Farms and Landowners and IUCN. The members of the PSC will each assure the role of a Focal Point for the project in their respective agencies. Hence, the project will have a Focal Point in each concerned institution. As Focal Points in their agency, the concerned PSC members will: (i) technically oversee activities in their sector; (ii) ensure a fluid two-way exchange of information and knowledge between their agency and the project; (iii) facilitate coordination and links between the project activities and the work plan of their agency; and (iv) facilitate the provision of co-financing to the project.
6. IUCN is accountable to the GEF for the implementation of this project. This includes the oversight of the project execution to ensure that the project is being carried out in accordance with agreed standards and provisions. IUCN is responsible for delivering GEF project cycle management services comprising project approval and start-up, project supervision and oversight, and project completion and evaluation and charged to GEF Fee. The project execution will be undertaken by FAO and national executing partners in Uzbekistan and charged to project costs.
7. IUCN responsibilities, as the GEF agency, will include:
  - Administrate funds from GEF in accordance with the rules and procedures of IUCN;
  - Oversee project implementation in accordance with the project document, work plans, budgets, agreements with co-financiers, Implementing Partner Agreement (s)and other rules and procedures of IUCN;
  - Provide technical guidance to ensure that appropriate technical quality is applied to all activities concerned;
  - Conduct at least one supervision mission per year; and
  - Report to the GEF Secretariat and Evaluation Office, through the annual Project Implementation Review, the Mid Term Review, the Terminal Evaluation and the Project Closure Report on project progress;
  - Provide financial report to the GEF Trustee.

Will the GEF Agency play an execution role on this project?

If so, please describe that role here and the justification.

No

Also, please add a short explanation to describe cooperation with ongoing initiatives and projects, including potential for co-location and/or sharing of expertise/staffing (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

The current project will cooperate with ongoing initiatives and projects in the country by leveraging existing infrastructure and expertise within Uzbekistan's network of state organizations and research institutions. Specifically, the project will coordinate with the World Bank-funded construction of testing laboratories in Bukhara and Namangan to ensure alignment of objectives and methodologies for GMO detection.

Furthermore, the project will collaborate with the MEEPCC, Ministry of Public Health, the Committee for Sanitary and Epidemiological Welfare and Public Health, and the Center for Genomics and Bioinformatics, sharing expertise and potentially co-

locating activities where feasible. This collaborative approach will maximize resource efficiency, avoid duplication of efforts, and strengthen the overall national capacity for biosafety.

The current project also recognizes the limited existing expertise in biosafety and GMO regulation within Central Asia, as evidenced by the lack of fully implemented Cartagena Protocol measures and minimal participation in international forums. While some countries, like Kazakhstan, demonstrate initiatives in biosafety related to biological weapons, a specific focus on GMOs is lacking. To address this gap, the project will prioritize knowledge sharing and capacity building throughout the region. The project will also seek international expertise and work to improve the country's legislation on GMOs, providing grants to strengthen the material and technical base of laboratories, and training qualified personnel in biosafety measures.

In particular, the project will establish a collaborative exchange with Kyrgyzstan, the only country in Central Asia currently implementing a GEF-funded Cartagena Protocol project. This exchange will facilitate the sharing of best practices, lessons learned, and technical expertise related to biosafety framework development, risk assessment, and public awareness. By leveraging Kyrgyzstan's experience, the project can accelerate progress towards establishing a robust and effective biosafety system in Uzbekistan.

## Core Indicators

### Indicator 11 People benefiting from GEF-financed investments

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
<b>Female</b>		400		
<b>Male</b>		600		
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Explain the methodological approach and underlying logic to justify target levels for Core and Sub-Indicators (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

The project will directly target approx. 1000 unique beneficiaries (1440 people calculated in the budget; 30% same official government attending the different activities) through its 37 capacity-building and training activities such as workshops, consultation meetings, training courses, awareness-raising activities, etc. These beneficiaries include governmental officials, farmers, academics, laboratory technicians, and other target public groups. They will be trained and will be sensitized on the country's new biosafety policy, LMO risk assessment, LMO identification and labeling, and LMO socio-economic considerations. The project will target at least 40% of the beneficiaries to be women.

## Key Risks

	Rating	Explanation of risk and mitigation measures
<b>CONTEXT</b>		
Climate	Moderate	<b>RISK DESCRIPTION:</b> Climate hazards are likely to intensify and gain in frequency into the future under a high emission scenario and vulnerable socioeconomic groups therein are expected to be adversely exposed and affected by increasing extreme weather events (MODERATE) <b>PLANNED MITIGATION MEASURES:</b> The proposed project activities will include actions to integrate climate risk assessment within the environmental safety evaluation, supported by guidelines, manuals, and response plans to assess

		<p>climate-related risks and adaptive capacity (resilience to climate change-related impacts, e.g., droughts, pests and diseases) of LMOs in agriculture, by ensuring direct involvement of climate/meteorological/agronomic experts, researchers, institutions, as well as local stakeholders – citizens, farmers, value chain actors, civil society organizations – in the decision-making process, to diminish the risk. Additional interventions in mainstreaming climate resilient practices for agriculture will be considered during capacity-building activities as well as the direct involvement of climate/meteorological/agronomic experts, researchers, institutions, as well as local stakeholders – citizens, farmers, value chain actors, civil society organizations – in the decision-making process (Responsible: IUCN, Executing agency – FAO and MEEPCC and center of Genomics and Bioinformatics)</p>
Environmental and Social	Low	<p>RISK DESCRIPTION: The environmental and social risk of the project is classified as low as the project activities will be implemented at the policy/national level and the potential impact on communities will be just the compliance with the new policy framework, which will be developed in accordance with the Cartagena Protocol (LOW) PLANNED MITIGATION MEASURES: The project has a strong capacity building and raises awareness strategy to assure that the communities (farmers and consumers) will be properly informed and involved in the process (Responsible: IUCN, Executing agency - FAO)</p>
Political and Governance	Moderate	<p>RISK DESCRIPTION: a) Insufficient political and institutional support due to restrictions, regulations, cost, bureaucratic processes, and negotiation of draft laws (i.e. Food Safety Law) limits the implementation of LMO risk assessment, LMO detection and identification and LMO socio-economic considerations (LOW) b) Non-coordinated and non-participative decision-making process resulting in lack of actions and/or duplication of roles and responsibilities due to potential conflicting mandates between the Center of Genomics and Bioinformatics (Academy of Sciences) and MEEPCC and the non-compliance of Resolution 275, which establishes these mandates, to CBD and Cartagena Protocol provisions (MODERATE) c) Modification in Government administration, sub-national, municipal and inter-municipal consortia level, during project implementation due to electoral or other political process (LOW) PLANNED MITIGATION MEASURES: a) Develop a positive agenda to continuously involve, inform and integrate government bodies in project implementation, including the Ministries, State agencies, research institutes, farmers associations, private sector, etc. (Responsible: IUCN, Executing agency - FAO, Center of Genomics, MEEPCC) b) The project has specific outcomes on the development of new harmonized regulations in compliance to CBD and Cartagena Protocol which, alternatively, might invalidate the current Resolution 275. In addition, the project has carried out an specific conflict analysis of the Resolution 275 and the Presidential decree and is aware of potential conflicts and will make suggestion to clarify these. The project will also continuously develop participatory and inclusive strategies; mechanisms for transparency, accountability and monitoring of decision-making processes and implementation of actions according to stakeholder interest, benefits, roles, responsibilities, experience and competencies based on the mapping of relevant stakeholders to be consulted and included in project activities (Responsible:</p>

		IUCN, FAO, Center of Genomics, MEEPCC) c) The project will work with government administration in all competent sectors and with local organizations, to promote a governance system for the articulation, communication and participative decision-making about the project and related programs and policies (Responsible: IUCN, Steering Committee, Executing agency - FAO, Center of Genomics, MEEPCC)
INNOVATION		
Institutional and Policy	Low	<p><b>RISK DESCRIPTION:</b> - Insufficient political and institutional support due to restrictions, regulations, cost, bureaucratic processes, and negotiation of draft laws (i.e. biosafety laws and regulations) limits the implementation of GMO governance in the country - Non-coordinated and non-participative decision-making process resulting in undefinition and duplication of roles and responsibilities due to potential conflicting interests of environmental and agricultural agencies - Modification in Government administration, sub-national, municipal and inter-municipal consortia level, during project implementation due to electoral or other political process</p> <p><b>PLANNED MITIGATION MEASURES:</b> - Develop a positive agenda to continuously involve, inform and integrate government bodies in project implementation, including the Ministries, State agencies, research institutes, farmers associations, private sector, etc - The project has specific outcomes on the development of new harmonized regulations in compliance with CBD and Cartagena which will support the country's domestic legislation and policies. The project will also continuously develop participatory and inclusive strategies; mechanisms for transparency, accountability and monitoring of decision-making processes and implementation of actions according to stakeholder interest, benefits, roles, responsibilities, experience and competencies based on the mapping of relevant stakeholders to be consulted and included in project activities - The project will work with government administration in all competent sectors and with local organizations, to promote a governance system for the articulation, communication and participative decision-making about the project and related programs and policies.</p> <p><b>RESPONSIBLE:</b> FAO and MEEPCC</p>
Technological	Low	<p><b>RISK DESCRIPTION:</b> - Technical limitations and adoption barriers impacting the successful implementation of GMO risk assessment, detection and identification, socio-economic considerations, etc. This encompasses factors such as: - Technology Performance: Potential for lower-than-expected performance of technologies related GMO risk assessment, detection and identification, socio-economic considerations, etc. - Affordability and Accessibility: Financial constraints and limited access to credit may hinder the ability of stakeholders and the government to invest in these technologies. - Technical Capacity: A lack of local expertise and technical support for installation, operation, and maintenance could lead to equipment malfunctions and decreased efficiency. - Adoption Barriers: Cultural factors, traditional practices, and a lack of awareness or trust in new technologies may impede stakeholders willingness to adopt these practices.</p> <p><b>PLANNED MITIGATION MEASURES:</b> - Rigorous Technology Assessment: Thoroughly assess the suitability, cost-effectiveness, and environmental benefits of proposed</p>

		<p>technologies in the specific context of GMO governance. - Technical Assistance and Training: Provide stakeholders and local technicians with comprehensive training programs on the installation, operation, maintenance, and troubleshooting of GMO technologies. - Incentive Programs and Financial Support: Explore and implement financial incentive mechanisms, such as subsidies, low-interest loans, and payment for ecosystem services schemes, to encourage technology adoption. - Community Engagement and Knowledge Sharing: Engage with local communities to address cultural barriers and promote knowledge sharing among stakeholders. - Public-Private Partnerships: Foster collaboration between public research institutions and private sector companies to develop and adapt technologies that are tailored to the needs of the Uzbekistan society and economically viable. - Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation: Continuous monitoring and evaluations to improve existing technologies and add new and more advanced RESPONSIBLE: FAO, MEEPCC and Ministry of Education and its organizations.</p>
Financial and Business Model	Low	<p>RISK DESCRIPTION: Uncertain environmental benefits arising from new governance model for GMOs in the country. This encompasses risks such as: - 'Greenwashing': Financial products marketed as 'GMO-free' may not deliver substantial biodiversity conservation targets or food safety targets, potentially misdirecting investments and undermining confidence. - Short-Term Focus: Business models that prioritize short-term profits may incentivize practices that compromise long-term sustainability, such as GMO-packages with large amounts of agrochemicals in crop production. - Uneven Distribution of Benefits: Financial incentives and market opportunities may disproportionately benefit larger-scale operations, potentially marginalizing smallholder farmers and exacerbating existing inequalities. - Market Volatility: Fluctuations in market prices for non-GMO products may undermine the financial viability of sustainable practices, discouraging farmer adoption. PLANNED MITIGATION MEASURES: - Transparency and Verification: Establish transparent and verifiable standards for GMO and non-GMO products, ensuring that financial incentives and market access are linked to demonstrable environmental improvements. - Long-Term Sustainability Focus: Develop financial instruments and business models that prioritize long-term sustainability, considering factors such as soil health, biodiversity, and water resource management. - Smallholder Support and Empowerment: Design financial programs and market interventions that specifically target and empower smallholder farmers, ensuring equitable access to resources and opportunities. Risk Mitigation Strategies: Develop strategies to mitigate market volatility, such as diversified product portfolios, value-added processing, and access to insurance schemes. RESPONSIBLE: FAO and MEEPCC.</p>
EXECUTION		
Capacity	Low	<p>RISK DESCRIPTION: a) Insufficient institutional support: government agencies and relevant stakeholders may not effectively support the project implementation during the execution period and lack of interest of institutional actors for inter-sectoral and inter-institutional coordination, based on the landscape approach (LOW) b) Lack of project sustainability and continuity due to interrupting in resource factors (LOW) PLANNED MITIGATION</p>

		<p>MEASURES: a) The project will build upon the stakeholder engagement plan elaborated at the preparation phase, continuously implementing designed actions and strategies to guarantee the participation and commitment of main partners in project activities execution. The three key partners (MEEPCC, Center of Genomics and Center for Advanced Technologies) have official mandate to coordinate the coalesce the range of public and private stakeholders that the project is aimed to join. In addition, the project will create a governance system and institutional arrangements with the participation of structured actors capable of supporting the implementation of the project, such as research institutes, state agencies and the farmer's sector. The project will support capacity building of governmental officials and target stakeholders (Responsible: IUCN, MEEPCC, Center of Genomics and Bioinformatics, Center for Advanced Technologies, and Ministry of Health) b) The project will seek to promote synergies with the Biosafety Unit at CBD Secretariat (the responsible Unit for the work of the Cartagena Protocol), alternatively with other Parties to the Protocol, to strengthen initiatives and local organization's roles and capacities to continuously mobilize financial and human resources for long term sustainability of activities related to this LMO biosafety Strengthening governmental organizations is the main project exit strategy and long-term sustainability. Also, the project will seek to develop instruments for financial sustainability, such as target public awareness and private sector participation, communications with SCBD to promote interest and continuous investments and financing in biosafety projects in the country (Responsible: IUCN, EA - FAO and MEEPCC)</p>
Fiduciary	Low	<p>RISK DESCRIPTION: Lack of capacity of executing partners to efficiently manage project finance and resources (LOW) PLANNED MITIGATION MEASURES: Carry out audits and spot checks during the project period which is included in the execution budget (Responsible: FAO)</p>
Stakeholder	Low	<p>RISK DESCRIPTION: Low adherence rates to project activities by project stakeholders, beneficiaries, and partners. PLANNED MITIGATION MEASURES: The engagement and participation of the project stakeholders in project design were immense during the PPG phase (3 missions to the country and several online consultations and bilateral communications with the government and key stakeholders and partners. Therefore, the engagement strategies of the stakeholders are already in place. Stakeholders participated not only in the design of the project but also in shaping the implementation arrangements, demonstrating their commitment to the project activities from the outset. The project will build upon the stakeholder engagement plan elaborated during the preparation phase, continuously implementing designed actions and strategies to guarantee the participation and commitment main partners in project execution. The Communication and Knowledge Management Plan previews activities related to inform and mobilize partners and beneficiaries for participation in project activities, as well as to share project results and impacts, generating project belonging between main stakeholders. Key partners will support to ensure stakeholder engagement.(Responsible: IUCN and executing partner - FAO)</p>

Other		
Overall Risk Rating	Low	Based on the risk assessment, the overall risk rating for the project is LOW. With the exception of 'Policy and Governance" and "Climate", all the other categories are assessed as low. There were numerous consultations (formal and informal) for the preparation of this project, allowing for a proper assessment of the risks and proposing actions to mitigate them.

### C. ALIGNMENT WITH GEF-8 PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES AND COUNTRY/REGIONAL PRIORITIES

Explain how the proposed interventions are aligned with GEF- 8 programming strategies and country and regional priorities, including how these country strategies and plans relate to the multilateral environmental agreements.

For projects aiming to generate biodiversity benefits (regardless of what the source of the resources is - i.e., BD, CC or LD), please identify which of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework the project contributes to and explain how.

Confirm if any country policies that might contradict with intended outcomes of the project have been identified, and how the project will address this. (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

#### Alignment with the GEF-8 Food Systems Integrated Program and Biodiversity Focal Area

1. The project is set to make a significant contribution to the GEF-8 Food Systems Integrated Program through activities and expected outcomes that will align the country's agrifood policies compliant with the Cartagena Protocol. According to GEF-8 Programming Directions, the implementation of the FS IP will be in accordance with the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety<sup>[1]</sup><sup>17</sup>.
2. The project will also make significant impact to the GEF Biodiversity Focal Area in achieving its goal of globally significant biodiversity conserved, sustainably used, and restored. To achieve this goal, the strategy will support three main objectives, being one of the effective implementations of the Cartagena and Nagoya protocols.
3. It is directly relevant to the strategic focal area "Objective 2. To effectively implement the Cartagena and Nagoya protocols (Goals A, B and C of the GBF)" as it will set the legal instruments and institutional arrangements to operationalize the provisions of the Protocol.

#### Contribution to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)

4. The implementation of the GBF will be supported by relevant decisions adopted by the COP/MOP in particular the Implementation Plan for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Capacity-building Action Plan for the Cartagena Protocol as set out in decision 15/4<sup>[2]</sup><sup>18</sup>.
5. The project contributes directly to TARGET 17 and TARGET 14 by establishing a decision-making process and institutional arrangements for LMO approvals in the country which will be focused on an environmental risk assessment procedure taking into consideration key scientific requirements to achieve the country's biodiversity protection goals. Also, TARGET 15 by ensuring compliance from the private sector on the decision procedure for importing and releasing LMOs in the country. As well as TARGET 22 due to specific outputs on public awareness and participation in the decision procedures for LMO approvals. And TARGET 23 which is translated into the project's Gender Action Plan.
6. Indirectly, the project will also contribute to TARGET 6 by developing environmental risk assessment guidelines for testing, among others, the invasiveness potential of LMO plants which are to be released in the environment. It will also indirectly contribute to TARGET 7 as socio-economic considerations, such as the use of pesticides and herbicides together with the LMO cultivation practices will be considered in the project through the development of socio-economic guidelines and protocols for safety assessment with scientific requirements for the description of the technological package associated with the LMO cultivation in the country on a case-by-case basis.

7. Finally, the project will largely contribute to TARGET 20 by outcomes on capacity-building and public awareness activities on the topics of biosafety and biodiversity protection.

#### **Alignment with National Priorities**

8. Uzbekistan ratified the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019. On May 11<sup>th</sup> 2020, The Cabinet Of Ministers issued the decision “On Measures To Implement The Provisions Of The Cartagena Protocol On Biosafety Of The Convention On Biological Diversity” and established several institutional arrangements in the country. Later that year, The Resolution of the President No. PP-4899 “On Comprehensive Measures To Develop Biotechnologies And Improve The Country’s Biological Safety System” demanded that the Ministry of Innovative Development (Sh.U. Turdikulova) should submit to the Cabinet of Ministers a draft government decision on the phased introduction of labeling of agricultural and food products containing GMOs.
9. The proposed project is aligned with these two main legal instruments, however, during the PPG phase, it has been verified that some of the work in these resolutions is not in compliance with CBD or the Cartagena Protocol and, therefore, brings confusion with regards to the official country communications with the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) and also the Cartagena Protocol Unit and the CBD Secretariat. This has raised political conflict on the mandates between the Center of Genomics and Bioinformatics and MEEPCC. The project will contribute to clarifying the roles of the different agencies and ministries as well as to harmonize the legal landscape to the language of the Protocol.
10. The government’s broad vision for environmental conservation in the development policy framework was approved by the Law “On Nature Protection (No. 754-XII)” of December 9<sup>th</sup>, 1992 and the “Concept of Environmental Protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan Until 2030 (No. PD-5863)” adopted by Presidential decree of October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019. These priorities are being formulated with the current revision of the country’s National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. The project will contribute to the current targets on measures to integrate biodiversity issues into EIA (Target 4), a state programme for conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity (target 8) and the National Target 10 with activities on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and maintenance ecosystem services.
11. The project is also consistent with the Law “On organic products (No. LRU-766)” of 25<sup>th</sup> April 2022, which excludes the use of LMOs and products. In particular, the development of LMO detection capacities under the project would assist greatly in implementing the organic agriculture policy, while meeting obligations established under Resolution 4899 on LMO agricultural products, food and feed labeling. The project is already taking into consideration the draft Regulation 'On approval of the Regulations on the organization and procedure for scientific expertise of the safety of genetically modified organisms and their products (No. ID-55064)' publicly discussed in January 2022.
12. Finally, at the regional level, the project also aligns with the Model Law “On the Safety of activities related to Genetically Modified Organisms (Resolution No. 27-9)” which complies with the country’s biodiversity protection goals and the Cartagena Protocol.

#### **Lessons learned from past projects**

13. FAO has recently implemented a GEF-7 project on “Implementation of the National Biosafety Mechanism in the Kyrgyz Republic in accordance with the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety”. In addition, some of the hired consultants have worked in previous GEF rounds projects on biosafety in Eswatini, Sri Lanka, and other regional and global biosafety projects together with UNEP.
14. One key lesson is the importance of comprehensive risk assessment frameworks. Effective biosafety projects have underscored the necessity of robust risk assessment methodologies that account for the potential environmental, health, and socio-economic impacts of biotechnological applications. For instance, understanding the long-term consequences of introducing GMOs into ecosystems has been crucial in shaping regulatory frameworks worldwide.
15. Additionally, transparency and public engagement emerge as pivotal lessons. Projects that have succeeded in gaining public trust and acceptance have often prioritized transparent communication and engagement with stakeholders. This includes involving communities, farmers, and consumers in decision-making processes regarding biotechnological developments and their implications. Failure to address public concerns has historically led to delays, opposition, and sometimes, the discontinuation of projects.
16. Many past biosafety initiatives have highlighted the need for building institutional and technical capacities in developing countries to effectively implement and regulate biosafety measures. This includes training local scientists, policymakers, and regulators in advanced biotechnological techniques, risk assessment methodologies, and compliance with international biosafety protocols.
17. In conclusion, learning from past projects on biosafety emphasizes the importance of robust risk assessment, transparency, capacity-building, and adaptable regulatory frameworks. These lessons provide a foundation for developing future strategies that promote responsible biotechnological innovation while safeguarding human health, biodiversity, and environmental integrity.

[2] Decision Adopted By The Conference Of The Parties To The Convention On Biological Diversity 15/4. Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Available at: [<https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-04-en.pdf>]. Accessed on 10/07/2024.

## D. POLICY REQUIREMENTS

### **Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment:**

We confirm that gender dimensions relevant to the project have been addressed during Project Preparation as per GEF Policy and are clearly articulated in the Project Description (Section B).

Yes

1) Does the project expect to include any gender-responsive-measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women's empowerment?

Yes

If the project expects to include any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women empowerment, please indicate in which results area(s) the project is expected to contribute to gender equality:

Closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources;

Yes

Improving women's participation and decision-making; and/or

Yes

Generating socio-economic benefits or services for women.

Yes

2) Does the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators?

Yes

### **Stakeholder Engagement**

We confirm that key stakeholders were consulted during Project Preparation as required per GEF policy, their relevant roles to project outcomes has been clearly articulated in the Project Description (Section B) and that a Stakeholder Engagement Plan has been developed before CEO endorsement.

Yes

### **Select what role civil society will play in the project:**

Consulted only;

Member of Advisory Body; Contractor; Yes

Co-financier;

Member of project steering committee or equivalent decision-making body;

Executor or co-executor;

Other (Please explain)

### **Private Sector**

Will there be private sector engagement in the project?

Yes

And if so, has its role been described and justified in the section B project description?

Yes

### Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) Risks

We confirm that we have provided information regarding Environmental and Social risks associated with the proposed project or program, including risk screenings/ assessments and, if applicable, management plans or other measures to address identified risks and impacts (this information should be presented in Annex E).

Please provide overall Project/Program Risk Classification

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
	Low		

### E. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

#### Knowledge management

We confirm that an approach to Knowledge Management and Learning has been clearly described during Project Preparation in the Project Description and that these activities have been budgeted.

Yes

#### Benefits

Describe the socioeconomic benefits to be delivered by the project at the national and local levels, as appropriate and these benefits translate in supporting the achievement of global environmental benefits (GEF Trust Fund) or adaptation benefits (LDCF, SCCF). This section identifies the direct beneficiaries from the project.

1. Socio-economic benefits contribute significantly to the 'healthy planet, healthy people' GEF-8 paradigm. For project direct beneficiaries include enhanced capacities in biosafety regulation and risk management, with a strong emphasis on gender-equitable participation and how to apply a gender lens in socio-economic assessments. However, as this is primarily a normative project, the indirect socio-economic benefits are significant and potentially include:
  - a. Enhanced food security and nutrition as a result of LMOs
  - b. Reduced public health risks as a result of effective regulation based on understanding of gender roles and risk exposure/vulnerability
  - c. Reduced biodiversity risks from LMOs escaping into the food production environment, therefore protecting rural livelihoods
  - d. Enhanced and gender-equitable rural livelihoods from informed use and access to LMOs
  - e. Enhanced public and student empowerment from establishment of public consultation mechanism education and university curriculum on biosafety.

## ANNEX A: FINANCING TABLES

### GEF Financing Table

#### Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional / Global	Focal Area	Programm ing of Funds	Grant / Non- Grant	GEF Project Grant(\$)	Agency Fee(\$)	Total GEF Financing (\$)
IUCN	GET	Uzbekist an	Biodiversit y	BD STAR Allocation : BD-2	Grant	1,784,863.0 0	160,637 .00	1,945,500.00
<b>Total GEF Resources (\$)</b>						<b>1,784,863.0 0</b>	<b>160,637 .00</b>	<b>1,945,500.00</b>

### Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

Is Project Preparation Grant requested?

true

PPG Amount (\$)

50000

PPG Agency Fee (\$)

4500

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional / Global	Focal Area	Programm ing of Funds	PPG(\$)	Agency Fee(\$)	Total PPG Funding(\$)
IUCN	GET	Uzbekist an	Biodivers ity	BD STAR Allocation: BD-2	50,000.00	4,500.00	54,500.00
<b>Total PPG Amount (\$)</b>					<b>50,000.00</b>	<b>4,500.00</b>	<b>54,500.00</b>

Please provide justification

### Sources of Funds for Country Star Allocation

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Sources of Funds	Total(\$)
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IUCN	GET	Uzbekistan	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	2,000,000.00
<b>Total GEF Resources (\$)</b>					<b>2,000,000.00</b>

### Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing(\$)	Co-financing(\$)
BD-2-2	GET	1,784,863.00	7,000,000.00
<b>Total Project Cost (\$)</b>		<b>1,784,863.00</b>	<b>7,000,000.00</b>

### Confirmed Co-financing for the project, by name and type

Please include evidence for each co-financing source for this project in the tab of the portal

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change of the Republic of Uzbekistan	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	7,000,000.00
<b>Total Co-financing (\$)</b>				<b>7,000,000.00</b>

Please describe the investment mobilized portion of the co-financing

N/A

### ANNEX B: ENDORSEMENTS

#### GEF Agency(ies) Certification

GEF Agency Type	Date	Project Contact Person	Phone	Email
GEF Agency Coordinator	8/20/2025	Janie Rioux		janie.roux@iucn.org

#### Record of Endorsement of GEF Operational Focal Point (s) on Behalf of the Government(s):

Name of GEF OFP	Position	Ministry	Date (Month, day, year)
Jakhongir Talipov	GEF Operational Focal Point	Ministry of Ecology,	7/7/2025

Environment Protection and Climate Change, Republic of Uzbekistan

## ANNEX C: PROJECT RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Please indicate the page number in the Project Document where the project results and M&E frameworks can be found. Please also paste below the Project Results Framework from the Agency document.

### Annex C: Results Framework

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification	Assumptions	Responsible for data collection
<p><b>Objective and indicator targets:</b> To provide technical guidance and assistance for the implementation of the regulatory framework on LMO biosafety, including the establishment of administrative systems and institutional arrangements, such as laboratories for LMO detection and human resource capacities for the assessment of potential risks to biodiversity.</p>							
<p><b>Component 1: Development and operationalization of the biosafety policy, regulatory and institutional framework in accordance with the Cartagena Protocol</b></p>							
<p><u>Outcome 1.1:</u> National regulatory framework developed in alignment with the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety</p>	<p>Number of national regulations and sectoral rules integrating and operationalizing gender-sensitive biosafety developed in compliance to CBD and Cartagena Protocol</p>	<p>0 regulations and rules integrate and operationalise gender-sensitive biosafety developed</p>	<p>At least 3 regulations and rules developed</p>	<p>At least 5 regulations and rules developed</p>	<p>Biosafety Clearing House - Uzbekistan Country Profile and National Database of Legislation of The Republic of Uzbekistan</p>	<p>There is political will to complete the process and no political instability</p>	<p>FAO (support from Center of Genomics and Bioinformatics)</p>
<p><u>Output 1.1.1</u> Biosafety policy developed to enable the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol in the country</p>	<p>Number of National Policy Document on Biosafety developed</p>	<p>0 National Policy Document on Biosafety developed</p>	<p>1 draft document developed</p>	<p>1 final document developed</p>	<p>National Database of Legislation of The Republic of Uzbekistan</p>	<p>There is adequate engagement from the government and no political instability</p>	<p>FAO (support from Center of Genomics and Bioinformatics)</p>
<p><u>Output 1.1.2</u> National biosafety regulations and sectoral rules/guidelines drafted in connection with the ongoing policy process in the country, taking into</p>	<p>Number of national biosafety regulations and sectoral rules/guidelines developed</p>	<p>0 biosafety regulations and sectoral rules/guidelines developed</p>	<p>At least 1 sectorial regulations (LMOs for cultivation, LMOs for food/feed import and LMOs for contained use) integrating and operationalizing the biosafety</p>	<p>At least 3 sectorial regulations (LMOs for cultivation, LMOs for food/feed import and LMOs for contained use) integrating and operationalizing the biosafety</p>	<p>National Database of Legislation of The Republic of Uzbekistan</p>	<p>There is political will to complete the process and no political instability</p>	<p>FAO (support from Center of Genomics and Bioinformatics)</p>

consideration gender aspects, including cross-reference policies within the agriculture sector, such as seed policies, organic law among others			policy framework developed	policy framework developed			
<u>Output 1.1.3</u>  Regulatory proposal for LMO food and feed labeling drafted in a gender-sensitive and participatory manner, to enable adequate consideration of public choice and in alignment with the national needs	Number of proposed regulations for full implementation of LMO food and feed labelling developed	0 proposals	1 draft a regulation developed for LMO labeling implementation and one technical guideline (jointly under Component 2) on detection and identification	1 final document developed for one regulation for LMO labeling implementation and one technical guideline on detection and identification	National Database of Legislation of The Republic of Uzbekistan	There is political will to complete the process and no political instability	FAO (support from Ministry of Agriculture, Uzstandard Agency)
	Number of governmental officials validating the proposal (with at least 40% women)	0 governmental officials validating the proposal (with at least 40% women)	20 governmental officials validating the proposal (with at least 40% women)	40 governmental officials validating the proposal (with at least 40% women)	Attendance lists and training reports	There is adequate engagement from the government officials	FAO (support from Ministry of Agriculture, Uzstandard Agency)
	Number of stakeholders consulted on the labeling proposal	0 stakeholders consulted on the labeling proposal	100 stakeholders consulted on the labeling proposal	200 stakeholders consulted on the labeling proposal	Attendance lists and training reports	There is adequate stakeholder engagement	FAO (support from Ministry of Agriculture, Uzstandard Agency)
<u>Output 1.1.4</u>  Gender-balanced training of relevant government officials involved in implementing the biosafety policy and regulatory framework carried out in accordance with gender equality and policy coherence	Number of government officials trained in biosafety implementation framework	0 government officials trained	20 government officials trained with at least 40% women	40 government officials trained with at least 40% women	Biosafety Clearing House Capacity Development Initiative, attendance lists and training reports	There is adequate engagement from the government officials	FAO (support from Center of Genomics and Bioinformatics)
<u>Outcome 1.2</u>  Administrative systems and institutional arrangements for biosafety at the national level aligned with principles and needs of the harmonised policy framework	Number of gender-responsive biosafety systems in place and aligned with the Cartagena Protocol	0 gender-responsive administrative system in place	At least 1 normative or institutional rules drafted to operationalize the biosafety system in the country	At least 1 normative and institutional rule adopted to operationalize the biosafety system in the country	National Database of Legislation of The Republic of Uzbekistan and Biosafety Clearing House – Uzbekistan Country Profile	There is no political instability and there is adequate engagement of relevant agencies	FAO (support from Center of Genomics and Bioinformatics and MEEPCC)
<u>Output 1.2.1</u>  Centralized administrative system to handle applications for LMOs destined for contained use, intentional introduction into the environment, and for direct use	Number of normatives developed to regulate administrative processes, procedures and activities	0 normatives developed	At least 1 normative drafted in line with output 1.1.2	At least 1 normative adopted in line with output 1.1.2	National Database of Legislation of The Republic of Uzbekistan and Biosafety Clearing House – Uzbekistan Country Profile	There is no political instability and there is adequate engagement of relevant agencies	FAO (support from Center of Genomics and Bioinformatics)

as food or feed, or for processing elaborated in a participatory and gender sensitive manner (and with cross-sectorial approach)							
<u>Output 1.2.2</u> National technical and decision-making body for biosafety constituted with appropriate multi-disciplinary membership and attention to gender and diversity issues	Number of national technical and decision-making bodies operating	0 technical and decision-making bodies operating	1 technical and decision-making bodies established with governance provisions for at least 40% women/ youth/ ethnic minorities' representatives	1 technical and decision-making bodies fully operational, comprising at least 40% women/ youth/ ethnic minorities' representatives	National Database of Legislation of The Republic of Uzbekistan and Biosafety Clearing House – Uzbekistan Country Profile	There are representative members with relevant expertise	FAO (support from Center of Genomics and Bioinformatics)
<u>Output 1.2.3</u> Institutional arrangements and procedures for biosafety regulation, risk assessment, risk management and monitoring, clear identification of LMO imports and decision-making developed.	Number of institutional regulations adopted	0 institutional regulations adopted	At least 1 institutional regulation developed to enable competent authorities to participate in the biosafety framework	At least 1 institutional regulation adopted to enable competent authorities to participate in the biosafety framework	National Database of Legislation of The Republic of Uzbekistan and  Center of Genomics and bioinformatics regulation database	There is no political instability and institutional will to perform biosafety tasks	FAO (support from MEEPCC)
	Number of government officials trained in procedures (with at least 40% women)	0 government officials trained in procedures (with at least 40% women)	20 government officials trained in procedures (with at least 40% women)	40 government officials trained in procedures (with at least 40% women)	Attendance lists and training reports	There is adequate engagement from the government officials	FAO (support from MEEPCC)
<u>Output 1.2.4</u>  National Biosafety Clearing-House developed to facilitate the exchange of scientific, technical, environmental and legal information on LMOs at the national level	Number of national biosafety websites developed	0 national biosafety website developed	1 website (beta version) developed and tested	1 national biosafety website launched	Biosafety Clearing House Capacity Development Initiative and project annual reports	There are no technical impediments and political will to publish LMO data	FAO (support from Center of Genomics and Bioinformatics)
<b>Component 2: Strengthening technical capacity for implementation of the biosafety legal framework</b>							
<u>Outcome 2.1</u>  National capacity for LMO risk assessment, risk management and monitoring enhanced	Number of risk assessment procedures and mechanisms developed	0 risk assessment procedures and mechanisms developed	1 technical procedures and mechanisms drafted for LMO risk assessment, risk management and monitoring	1 technical procedures and mechanisms adopted for LMO risk assessment, risk management and monitoring	Biosafety Clearing House – Uzbekistan Country Profile	There is political will to complete the process and personnel with relevant expertise	FAO (support from MEEPCC, Center of Genomics and Bioinformatics, Ministry of Health)
	Number of risk assessment, risk management and monitoring institutional mechanisms developed	0 institutional mechanisms and contingency protocols functioning	1 institutional mechanism and contingency protocol developed	1 institutional mechanism and contingency protocol adopted	Biosafety Clearing House – Uzbekistan Country Profile	There is political will to complete the process and adequate personnel with relevant expertise	FAO (support from MEEPCC, Center of Genomics and Bioinformatics, Ministry of Health)
<u>Output 2.1.1</u> Decision-making procedures and mechanisms for assessing environmental and health risks of LMOs	Number of regulations for assessing environmental and health risks of LMOs developed and validated	0 regulations developed and validated for assessing environmental and health risks of LMOs	1 regulation for standard operating procedures developed for assessing environmental	1 regulation for standard operating procedures validated for assessing environmental	Biosafety Clearing House – Uzbekistan Country Profile	There is political will to complete the process and adequate personnel with relevant expertise	FAO (support from MEEPCC, Center of Genomics and Bioinformatics, Ministry of Health)

developed and validated by the national authorities responsible for different uses of LMOs			and health risks of LMOs	and health risks of LMOs			
<u>Output 2.1.2</u> Mechanisms established for emergency response in case of accidents involving LMOs	Number of technical guidelines adopted with standard operating procedures for contingency protocols and emergency responses in the country	0 technical guidelines adopted	1 technical guideline developed	1 technical guideline adopted	Biosafety Clearing House – Uzbekistan Country Profile	There is political will to complete the process and personnel with relevant expertise	FAO (support from MEEPCC)
<u>Output 2.1.3</u> Specific technical guidelines and manuals on risk assessment, risk management and monitoring, and emergency response plans with due consideration for gender dimensions developed	Number of technical guidelines adopted on risk assessment, risk management and monitoring, and emergency response plans specific for the country and in line with Cartagena Protocol provisions	0 technical guidelines adopted	1 technical guideline developed	1 technical guideline adopted	Biosafety Clearing House – Uzbekistan Country Profile	There is political will to complete the process and national personnel with relevant expertise to develop these guidelines	FAO (support from MEEPCC, Center of Genomics and Bioinformatics, Ministry of Health)
<u>Output 2.1.4</u> Specialized personnel trained to perform the tasks of risk assessment, risk management and monitoring, in accordance with gender equality and social inclusion principles	Number of government officials trained in risk assessment and monitoring (with at least 40% women)	0 government officials trained (with at least 40% women)	80 government officials trained with at least 40% women	160 government officials trained with at least 40% women	Attendance lists and training reports	There is adequate engagement from the government officials	FAO (support from MEEPCC, Center of Genomics and Bioinformatics)
<u>Outcome 2.2</u> National capacity for LMO identification, detection and enforcement enhanced -	Number of analytical test samples performed for LMO detection per year	0 LMO detection tests performed	At least 50 samples tested	At least 100 samples tested	Biosafety Clearing House – Uzbekistan Country Profile	There is political will to complete the process and personnel with relevant expertise	FAO (support from Centre for Advanced Technologies)
<u>Output 2.2.1</u> Existing laboratory facilities adapted for LMO detection, with adequate human resources and infrastructure to carry out analyses	Number of national reference laboratories adapted for LMO analysis	0 national reference laboratories adapted for LMO analysis	2 national reference laboratories adapted for LMO analysis	4 national reference laboratories adapted for LMO analysis	Laboratory's inventory reports, project annual reports and Biosafety Clearing House – Network of Laboratories for the Detection and Identification of LMOs	There is political will to complete the process and personnel with relevant expertise	FAO (support from Academy of Sciences, Center for Advanced Technologies, Ministry of Health)
<u>Output 2.2.2</u> Specific technical guidelines and manuals on LMO detection and identification developed	Number of technical guidelines on LMO detection and identification adopted	0 technical guidelines on LMO detection and identification adopted	1 technical guideline on LMO detection and identification developed	1 technical guideline on LMO detection and identification adopted	Biosafety Clearing House – Uzbekistan Country Profile	There is political will to complete the process and national personnel with relevant expertise to	FAO (support from Academy of Sciences, Ministry of Health)

						develop these guidelines	
<u>Output 2.2.3</u> Training of laboratory personnel for LMO identification and detection carried out, including at regional laboratories in accordance with gender equality and social inclusion principles	Number of laboratory personnel trained to perform LMO analysis for identification and detection purposes	0 laboratory personnel trained	20 laboratory personnel trained with at least 40% women	40 laboratory personnel trained with at least 40% women	Attendance lists and training reports	There is adequate engagement from the government officials	FAO (support from Centre for Advanced Technologies)
<u>Output 2.2.4</u> Specialized personnel trained to perform the tasks of control of LMOs at airports and customs checkpoints	Number of customs officers trained at border control points	0 customs officers trained	20 officers trained with at least 40% women	40 officers trained with at least 40% women	Attendance lists and training reports	There is adequate engagement from the government officials	FAO (support from Centre for Advanced Technologies)
<u>Outcome 2.3</u> Ability to take into account socio-economic considerations in decision-making strengthened	Number of gender-responsive socio-economic requirements adopted within biosafety framework	0 socio-economic requirements adopted within biosafety framework	At least 1 socio-economic requirement developed within biosafety framework	At least 1 gender-responsive socio-economic requirement adopted within biosafety framework	Biosafety Clearing House Capacity Development Initiative and project annual reports	There is adequate engagement from the government officials	FAO (support from MEEPCC, Ministry of Agriculture)
	Number of technical guidelines for socio-economic assessment adopted	0 technical guidelines for socio-economic assessment adopted -	1 technical guidelines for socio-economic assessment developed	1 technical guidelines for socio-economic assessment adopted	Biosafety Clearing House - Uzbekistan Country Profile	There is political will to complete the process and personnel with relevant expertise	FAO (support from MEEPCC, Ministry of Agriculture)
<u>Output 2.3.1</u> Socio-economic considerations, including gender-related considerations, integrated into biosafety decision-making processes through clear guidelines	Number of technical guidance adopted	0 technical guidelines adopted	1 technical guidelines for socio-economic assessment developed	1 technical guidelines for socio-economic assessment adopted	Biosafety Clearing House - Uzbekistan Country Profile	There is political will to complete the process and personnel with relevant expertise	FAO (support from MEEPCC, Ministry of Agriculture)
<u>Output 2.3.2</u> Capacity on socio-economic considerations built among relevant government agencies and ministries in accordance with gender equality and social inclusion principles	Number of government officials trained in socio-economic considerations (with at least 40% women)	0 government officials trained (with at least 40% women)	40 government officials trained with at least 40% women	80 government officials trained with at least 40% women	Attendance lists and training reports	There is adequate engagement from the government officials	FAO (support from MEEPCC, Ministry of Agriculture)
<u>Outcome 2.4</u> Gender-sensitive public awareness, education and public participation in decision-making	Number of gender-inclusive public awareness activities carried out on biosafety	0 public awareness activities carried out on biosafety	7 public awareness activities carried out on biosafety	15 gender-inclusive public awareness activities carried out on biosafety	Biosafety Clearing House Capacity Development Initiative and project annual reports	There is political will to develop and implement a public awareness and participation strategy	FAO (support from MEEPCC, Ministry of Agriculture, Council of Farmers)

on biosafety enhanced	Number of academic institutions with biosafety curricula functioning	0 academic institutions with biosafety curricula developed	1 academic institution with biosafety curricula developed	1 academic institution with biosafety curricula functioning	Academic / university databases and website and project annual reports	There is adequate engagement from academic institutions	FAO (support from Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation)
<u>Output 2.4.1</u> Public awareness and participation strategy developed in accordance with obligations under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and other relevant laws and awareness raising activities on gender and biodiversity conducted for the staff, local communities and policymakers	Number of strategy/policy document on public awareness and participation for biosafety adopted	0 strategy/policy document on public awareness and participation for biosafety adopted	1 strategy/policy document on public awareness and participation for biosafety developed	1 strategy/policy document on public awareness and participation for biosafety adopted	National Database of Legislation of The Republic of Uzbekistan	There is adequate engagement from the government and no political instability	FAO (support from MEEPCC, Ministry of Agriculture, Council of Farmers)
<u>Output 2.4.2</u> Targeted awareness-raising activities implemented in accordance with gender equality and social inclusion principles	Number of participants from target groups aware about biosafety matters (with at least 40% women)	0 participants from target groups aware about biosafety matters (with at least 40% women)	360 participants from target groups aware about biosafety matters (with at least 40% women)	720 participants from target groups aware about biosafety matters (with at least 40% women)	Attendance lists and activities reports	There is adequate engagement from target groups	FAO (support from MEEPCC, Ministry of Agriculture, Council of Farmers)
<u>Output 2.4.3</u> Coordinated governmental system for public access to information on biosafety, including through the use of the National Biosafety Clearing-House	Number of public participation mechanisms adopted	0 public participation mechanisms adopted	1 public participation mechanisms developed in National Policy Document (Output 1.1.1) and sectoral rules/guidelines (Output 1.1.2)	1 public participation mechanisms adopted in National Policy Document (Output 1.1.1) and sectoral rules/guidelines (Output 1.1.2)	National Database of Legislation of The Republic of Uzbekistan and Biosafety Clearing House	There is political will to establish public participation mechanisms	FAO (support from Center of Genomics and Bioinformatics)
<u>Output 2.4.4</u> Gaps in university-level education for biosafety identified and curricula strengthened to include biosafety issues	Number of biosafety curricula adopted in academic institutions	0 biosafety curricula adopted in academic institutions	1 biosafety curricula developed in academic institutions	1 biosafety curricula adopted in academic institutions	Academic / university databases and website and project annual reports	There is adequate engagement from academic institutions	FAO (support from MEEPCC, Ministry of Education and Science, relevant academic institutions)

#### ANNEX D: STATUS OF UTILIZATION OF PROJECT PREPARATION GRANT (PPG)

Provide detailed funding amount of the PPG activities financing status in the table below:

Project Preparation Activities Implemented	GETF/LDCF/SCCF Amount (\$)		
	Budgeted Amount	Amount Spent To date	Amount Committed

develop full project documents, including Project budget, work plan (GEF Project Design Expert and Gender expert).	35,000.00	35,000.00	
National consultants to liaise with government, Stakeholder consultations, identification of national activities, gather data and information, and gender expert (National consultant on Gender, National legal consultant, National Lab expert, Administrative Assistant and translator)	15,000.00	7,994.00	7,006.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>50,000.00</b>	<b>42,994.00</b>	<b>7,006.00</b>

## ANNEX E: PROJECT MAP AND COORDINATES

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Tashkent	41.26465	69.21627	

Location Description:

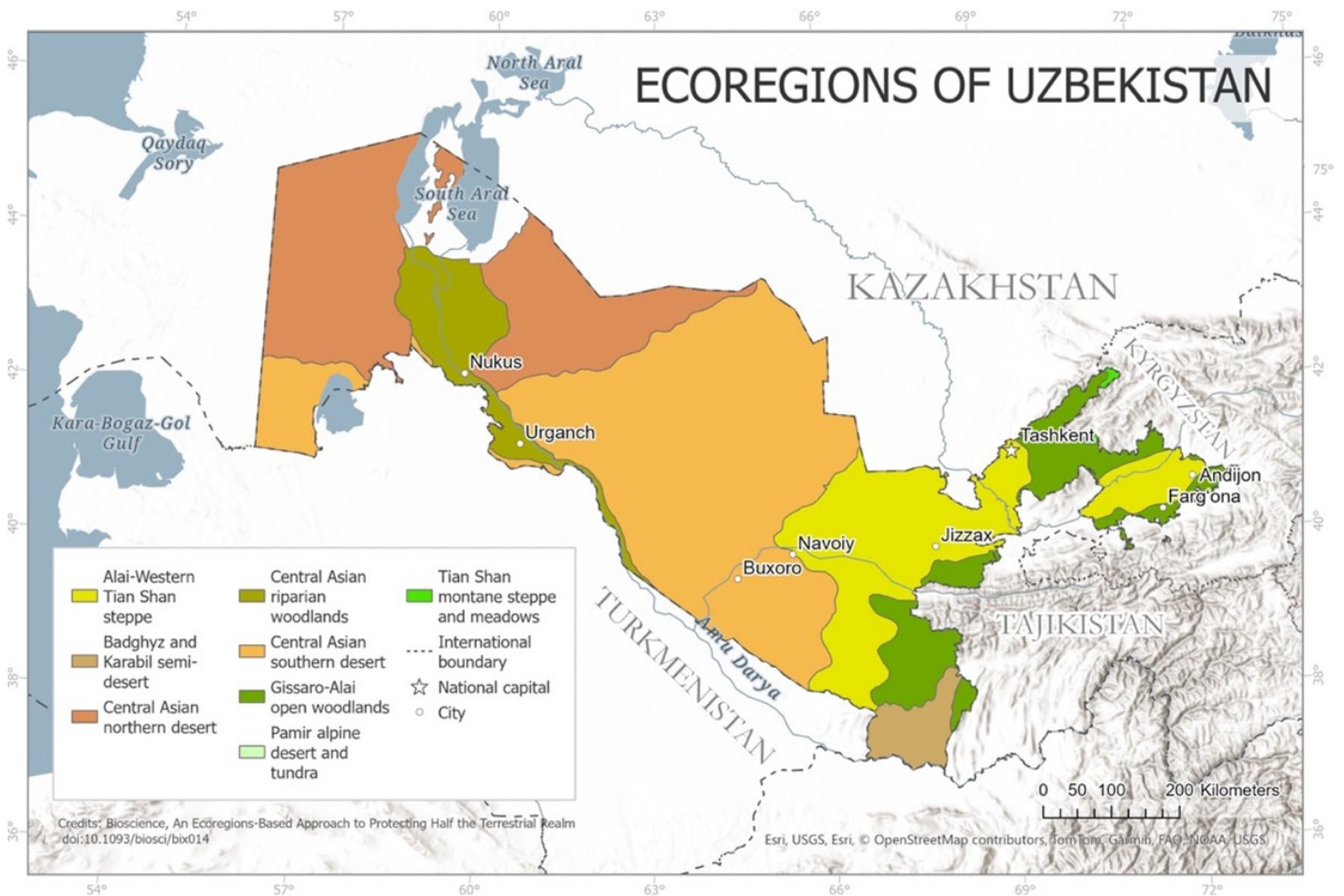
Activity Description:

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

This project will not have any field interventions. However, the following map shows the different ecoregions in the country. According to the "Guidance On Risk Assessment Of Living Modified Organisms" developed through the joint efforts of the "Open-ended Online Forum" and the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group<sup>[1]<sup>19</sup></sup>, the risks associated with living modified organisms or products thereof should be considered in the context of the risks posed by the non-modified recipients or parental organisms **in the likely potential receiving environment**.

As risk assessment are carried out on a case-by-case basis, the required information may vary in nature and level of detail from case to case, depending on the LMO concerned, its intended use **and the likely potential receiving environment**. UNEP's definition of a "potential receiving environment" is as it follows: **the range of environments (ecosystem or habitat, including other organisms) which are likely to come in contact with a released organism due to the conditions of the release or the specific ecological behavior of the organism**<sup>[2]<sup>20</sup></sup>.

Therefore, the below map shows the different ecoregions in Uzbekistan where future LMOs should be tested for their environmental safety prior to commercialization in the country.



**Figure legend: Ecoregions of Uzbekistan.** This map illustrates the diverse ecoregions found within Uzbekistan, highlighting the varying ecological landscapes across the country. Ecoregions are categorized based on distinct environmental factors such as climate, vegetation, and topography, providing a comprehensive overview of Uzbekistan's natural diversity.

Disclaimer: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on these map(s) do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of FAO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers and boundaries. Dashed lines on maps represent approximate border lines for which there may not yet be full agreement.

[1] CBD. Guidance on Risk Assessment of Living Modified Organisms. Available at: [https://bch.cbd.int/protocol/guidance\\_risk\\_assessment](https://bch.cbd.int/protocol/guidance_risk_assessment). Accessed on: 11/07/2024.

[2] Adapted from UNEP, 1995, International Technical Guidelines for Safety in Biotechnology. Available at: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/222403?ln=ru&v=pdf>. Accessed on: 11/07/2024.

## ANNEX F: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS SCREEN AND RATING

Attach agency safeguard screening/assessment report(s), including ratings of risk types and overall project/program risk classification as well as any management plans or measures to address identified risks and impacts.

Title

GEF8\_MSP\_Uzbekistan\_Cartagena Protocol\_ESS Risk Screening

## ANNEX G: BUDGET TABLE

Please explain any aspects of the budget as needed here

### Annex G GEF Project Budget Template

Cost Categories	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	Component 4 (M&E)	PMC	Total	Responsible Entity
	Total	Total	Total	Total			
<b>Consultants</b>							
Expert on Cartagena Protocol and biosafety policy	8,500	17,000	8,500	0		34,000	FAO
Expert on risk assessment, risk management and emergency response	0	32,000	0	0		32,000	FAO
Expert on LMO detection and identification		32,000		0		32,000	FAO
Expert on socioeconomic considerations	0	20,000	0	0		20,000	FAO
<b>Sub-total international Consultants</b>	<b>8,500</b>	<b>101,000</b>	<b>8,500</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>118,000</b>	
Senior Technical Advisor	20,900	41,800	20,900	0	17,200	100,800	FAO
Project Assistant	0	0	0	0	57,600	57,600	FAO
Admin and Finance Assistant	0	0	0	0	86,400	86,400	FAO
Policy Expert	37,500	0	0	0		37,500	FAO
RA&RM Expert	0	30,000	0	0		30,000	FAO
Detection and Identification Expert (Laboratory)	0	30,000	0	0		30,000	FAO
M&E Expert	0	0	0	36,000		36,000	FAO
National Gender Expert	0	22,500	0	0		22,500	FAO
National Communications Expert	4,500	12,000	6,000	0		22,500	FAO
<b>Sub-total national Consultants</b>	<b>62,900</b>	<b>136,300</b>	<b>26,900</b>	<b>36,000</b>	<b>161,200</b>	<b>423,300</b>	
<b>Sub-total consultants</b>	<b>71,400</b>	<b>237,300</b>	<b>35,400</b>	<b>36,000</b>	<b>161,200</b>	<b>541,300</b>	
<b>Contracts</b>							
Website development	20,000	0	0	0		20,000	FAO
Development of risk assessment training material	0	18,000	0	0		18,000	FAO
Development of detection and identification training material	0	18,000	0	0		18,000	FAO
Development of socio-economics training material	0	18,000	0	0		18,000	FAO
Development of communications and awareness-raising on labelling	0	20,000	0	0		20,000	FAO
Development of communications and awareness-raising for farmers	0	30,000		0		30,000	FAO

Development of communications and awareness-raising materials	0	40,000	0	0		40,000	FAO
Socio-economic analysis		45,000				45,000	
Translation/interpretation services	10,000	10,000	30,000	0		50,000	FAO
Audits for Operational Partners	0	0	0	6,000		6,000	IUCN
Mid-term review	0	0	0	10,000		10,000	IUCN
Final Evaluation	0	0	0	20,000		20,000	IUCN
Terminal report	0	0	0	5,000		5,000	IUCN
<b>Sub-total Contracts</b>	<b>30,000</b>	<b>199,000</b>	<b>30,000</b>	<b>41,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>300,000</b>	
<b>Travel</b>							
International travel	25,000	50,000	25,000	-		100,000	FAO
National travel	13,750	27,500	13,750	-		55,000	FAO
Travel for training/workshops and meetings	25,000	50,000	25,000	-		100,000	FAO
<b>Sub-total travel</b>	<b>63,750</b>	<b>127,500</b>	<b>63,750</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>255,000</b>	
<b>Expendable procurement</b>							
Consumables for the lab (plastics, pipettes, glass ware, disposable lab coats, gloves, masks, etc)	0	115,000	0	0		115,000	FAO
Reagents (basic molecular biology reagents, cleaning reagents, GMO reference materials, etc)	0	101,000	0	0		101,000	FAO
<b>Sub-total expendable procurement</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>216,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>216,000</b>	
<b>Non-expendable procurement</b>							
Laboratory equipments (PCR machine, centrifuge, shaker, espectophotometer)	0	170,000	0	0		170,000	FAO
Desktop/laptop computer	0	0	15,000	0		15,000	FAO
Printer and photocopier	0	0	4,000	0		4,000	FAO
<b>Sub-total non-expendable procurement</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>170,000</b>	<b>19,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>189,000</b>	
<b>Sub total of Training budget</b>							
Inception workshop	4,000	3,000	8,000	0		15,000	FAO
Annual gender session (3x for 40 participants)	22,500	0	0	0		22,500	FAO
Final validation workshop for the National Policy Document on Biosafety	0	0	15,000	0		15,000	FAO
Training session on biosafety policy and regulation (2x for 60 participants)	24,000	0	0	0		24,000	FAO

Workshop to finalise procedural guidelines with relevant implementation agencies	12,000	0	0	0		12,000	FAO
Meeting to launch biosafety website	8,000	0	0	0		8,000	FAO
Training session on risk assessment of LMOs (2x for 40 participants)	0	20,000	0	0		20,000	FAO
Follow up workshops in risk assessment (2x for 40 participants)	0	16,000	0	0		16,000	FAO
Practical training course on detection and identification of LMOs (1x for 20 participants)	0	7,500	0	0		7,500	FAO
Specialized workshop on border control (1x for 40 participants)	0	8,000	0	0		8,000	FAO
Awareness-raising sessions with target groups (3x for 40 participants)	0	22,500	0	0		22,500	FAO
Gender workshop (1x for 30 participants)	0	6,500	0	0		6,500	FAO
Training courses on socio-economic considerations (2x for 40 participants)	0	16,000	0	0		16,000	FAO
National workshops for development of policies and guidelines (5)	37,500	0	0	0		37,500	FAO
Consultation workshops on labelling (2)	0	16,000	0	0		16,000	FAO
Final workshop	3,750	7,500	3,750	0		15,000	FAO
<b>Sub total of Training budget</b>	<b>111,750</b>	<b>123,000</b>	<b>26,750</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>261,500</b>	
<b>General Operating Costs</b>							
Misc. expenses (translation costs, car rentals, fuel costs, customs clearance, etc.)		21,063			1,000	22,063	FAO
<b>Sub total of GEO budget</b>	0	21,063	0	0	1,000	22,063	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>276,900</b>	<b>1,093,863</b>	<b>174,900</b>	<b>77,000</b>	<b>162,200</b>	<b>1,784,863</b>	