

Strengthening restoration and conservation of the ecological corridor of Mount Nimba (Bossou) and Ziama National Park in Guinea

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

11146

Countries

Guinea

Project Name

Strengthening restoration and conservation of the ecological corridor of Mount Nimba (Bossou) and Ziama National Park in Guinea

Agencies

IUCN

Date received by PM

6/27/2024

Review completed by PM

11/18/2024

Program Manager

Jean-Marc Sinnassamy

Focal Area

Multi Focal Area

Project Type

FSP

CEO

Part I - General Project Information

1. a) Is the Project Information table correctly filled, including specifying adequate executing partners?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
Addressed.

Agency Response

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
November 8, 2024

Addressed.

August 6, 2024

Rio Markers

The basic reasoning of the CFB IP is to propose a solution to the twin crisis of biodiversity and climate (BD and CCM being the two principal objectives). These ratings can be adjusted depending on the region and the local context of the project.

- 1) Please, provide a reasoning for your selection.
- 2) Revise the proposed ratings: having four objectives being principal is not convincing and may reflect a lack of focus.

Agency Response

29th October 2024

The Rio Markers have been revised ? indicating two principal objectives including:

1. Biodiversity (BD) through improved conservation of the Mount Nimba and Bossou Biosphere Reserve (MNBR; <https://www.protectedplanet.net/3027>) and Ziama Massif Biosphere Reserve (ZMBR; <https://www.protectedplanet.net/29066>); and
2. Climate Change Mitigation (CCM) through sequestration of carbon through forest landscape restoration.

In addition, Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and Land Degradation have been marked as significant contributions as the project will improve ecosystem resilience and livelihoods, and sustainable land use respectively

2. Project Summary.

- a) Does the project summary concisely describe the problem to be addressed, the project objective and the strategies to deliver the GEBs or adaptation benefits and other key expected outcomes?
- b) Does the summary capture the essence of the project and is it within the max. of 250 words?
- c) [If a child project under a program] Does the project summary include adequate and substantive link with the parent program goal and approach?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
November 8, 2024

Addressed.

August 6, 2024

Summary

- The summary missed the elements related to transformation and integration. Please, revise.
- The summary missed the role of this project in terms of KM and learning and coordination with the RCP and the neighboring countries, especially Liberia and Sierra Leone. Please, revise.

Agency Response
29th October 2024

The project summary has been re-written as shown below. Aspects of knowledge management, coordination with the RCP and transformation have been added and are highlighted below in yellow.

In Guinea, forests provide vital ecosystem services such as fresh water, climate regulation, and resources for food and medicine, which local communities depend on for their livelihoods. However, the country faces severe challenges due to rapid deforestation and forest degradation, particularly in the Guinean Forest Biome driven by over-exploitation of forest resources from agricultural expansion, unsustainable timber extraction, charcoal production, artisanal and industrial mining, and unsustainable hunting, all exacerbated by climate change. Key underlying drivers include poverty, wealth inequality, economic development pressures, population growth, unclear land tenure, and gender inequities in resource management.

In response to these challenges, the project aligns with the GEF Guinean Forests Integrated Program, and aims to protect and restore forest ecosystem connectivity, enhance sustainable livelihoods, and conserve biodiversity in the Mount Nimba and Ziamassif Biosphere Reserves. Key actions involve developing enabling policies, sustainable finance mechanisms, and managing transboundary landscapes while fostering stakeholder collaboration.

The project will also create knowledge management products (e.g. policy briefs, land use plans, fact sheets, project progress reports, success stories, lessons learned, best practices, etc.) for dissemination among local, national, and regional stakeholders and collaborate with child projects in Sierra Leone and Liberia via the Regional Coordination Project. Transformative measures include developing gender-sensitive policies, leveraging sustainable finance opportunities, and promoting inclusive land use planning.

Ultimately, the project will generate global environment benefits including 7,000 hectares of degraded forests restored, 115,000 hectares of land under improved practices, 1.5 million tCO₂e mitigated, and benefit 10,000 people (5,000 men and 5,000 women).

3. Project Description Overview

- a) Is the project objective statement concise, clear and measurable?**
- b) [If a child project under a program] Is there a project Theory of Change that is aligned and consistent with the overall program goal and approach?**
- c) Are the components, outcomes, and outputs sound, appropriate and sufficiently clear to achieve the project objective and the core indicators per the stated Theory of Change?**
- d) Are gender dimensions, knowledge management, and M&E included within the project components and budgeted for?**
- e) Are the GEF Project Financing and Co-Financing contributions to PMC proportional?**
- f) Is the PMC equal to or below 10% (for MSP) or 5% (for FSP)? If above, is the justification acceptable?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
November 8, 2024

Addressed.

August 6, 2024

- The role of cofinancing is not clear. Please, elaborate.
- The project amount is relatively low, also with a low cofinancing ration. The additionality of GEF financed activities is not clear. Please, to be revised.

Component 1

- Several outputs and activities seem baseline activities. We do not see the role of the baseline financing, neither from other donors. Please, correct.
- We are not seeing the needed elements of transformation: How will integration and collaboration among various sectors take place? To be revised.

Component 2

- Output 2.2.2: Forest adjacent communities supported to develop improved sustainable smallholder agriculture and business enterprises: The identification of business enterprises and their empowerment is often a limiting factor in projects. Please, share with us information gathered at PPG on this subject.
- Output 2.2.3: Joint ecological and socio-economic monitoring conducted by forest-adjacent communities Forest-adjacent communities engaged in joint ecological and socio-economic monitoring: How is this activity connected to restoration or SLM activities? Are there elements to pursue these activities when the project will have closed?

Component 3

- We welcome outcomes, outputs, and activities to improve the situation in transboundary basins. However, please, explain the non-duplication of these tasks with the GEF5 Mano River Union project, as well as the future GEF IW project to implement the Strategic Action Plan.
- Moreover, this project benefited of \$500,000 from IW to work with Liberia and Sierra Leone on the transboundary landscape these three countries share. Please, develop the specificities of these activities (Liberia and Sierra Leone also have additional resources from IW for these activities).
- We are not seeing the interest to finance meetings with other countries. We would prefer to see activities to support institutional change and a work on the evolution of institutions to work together at river basin scale. Please, modify.
- **output 3.1.3:** Nature-based solutions (NbS) implemented to improve freshwater ecosystem health & mitigate or help local communities adapt to climate change impacts: to be clarified. Unclear. What are you expecting from this output? please, clarify.

Component 4: We do not see the connection with the regional coordination project. Please, develop.

- On the proportionality of the PMC: no co-financing has been selected for the PMC. As the costs associated with the project management must be covered by the GEF portion and the co-financing portion allocated to the PMC, the GEF contribution and the co-financing contribution must be

proportional, which means that the co-financing contribution to PMC should be around \$738,047 USD.

	Sub Total (\$)	4,941,876.00	14,760,946.00
Project Management Cost (PMC) ⓘ			
	GET	259,805.00	
	Sub Total(\$)	259,805.00	0.00
	Total Project Cost(\$)	5,201,681.00	14,760,946.00

Agency Response

29th October 2024

An additional US\$ 1,620,000 has been received, bringing the total co-financing to US\$ 16,280,946, which is a ratio of 1:3.13 (One dollar of GEF funding to 3.13 for co-financing).

In addition, there are discussions still ongoing with potential co-financiers including World Bank, Rio Tinto, Soci?té des Mines de Fer de Guinée (SMFG), Fauna and Flora International (FFI), UNDP and FAO. Once co-financing from these entities is realized, this will enhance the co-financing figure and will be reported during the implementation phase.

On the additionality of GEF-financed activities, texts highlighted in yellow have been added in description of project components, outcomes, and outputs in pages 14-23 of the CEO ER.

Also, tables 7 - 10 in the ProDoc on pages 60 - 70 details how this project builds on and leverages synergies with past, ongoing and planned initiatives in Guinea and wider West Africa region aimed at enhancing the overall effectiveness of conservation efforts, contributing to sustainable development and conservation goals of Guinea, and the region at large

Added the following text in the CEO ER form under the section: Transformation on page 12.

In line with the GFIP PFD, this project's transformative measures include:

- i. development of gender sensitive and socially inclusive policies to support and inform National Commission for Land and Housing Reform processes.

- ii. leveraging innovative and sustainable finance opportunities for the MNBR and ZMBR Biosphere Reserves.
- iii. development of Integrated, gender sensitive and socially inclusive village land use plans (LUPs).
- iv. strengthened gender sensitive transboundary collaboration and coordination (Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire) for conservation and management of the shared Moa-Makona/Mano and Cavally River Water Basins.
- v. establishment and strengthening of local, gender responsive multi-stakeholder platforms to ensure coordination, communication, and implementation of joint programmes; and
- vi. promotion of inclusive and gender-sensitive sustainable livelihoods of local communities around MNBR and ZMBR through the promotion of nature-based enterprises.

For Nimba and Ziamas Biosphere Reserves, the identification of SMEs was primarily based on previous interventions related to economic activities, particularly those developed by the mining company SMFG (Nimba), as well as FF, GRET (Ziamas), and the GEF 5 Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) project (Nimba and Ziamas).

In the case of Ziamas, we engaged in extensive collaboration with initiatives supported by the Centre for the Promotion of Imports from Developing Countries (CBI), particularly for promoting Ziamas coffee. Additionally, the recently developed project documents under the AFD-supported program for managing the Ziamas Massif Biosphere Reserve provided valuable references for supporting small and medium-scale green businesses. The main products involved include those from agroforestry (such as wood, palm oil, rubber, coffee, and cocoa), non-timber forest products (NTFPs), sustainable agriculture (e.g., rice-fish farming), and livestock farming (e.g., poultry and pig farming).

During a visit to the Centre Agro Pastoral Ste Ursule du Mont Ziamas training center in Sereidou, which focuses on women and disadvantaged groups, we learned about a variety of practical training opportunities in sustainable production for agriculture and livestock, as well as product transformation and marketing (e.g., bakery, sustainable palm oil processing, coffee, and fruit juices). There are particularly promising opportunities in the sustainable transformation of products from agriculture, agroforestry, and NTFPs to support green and inclusive small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Therefore, this project will primarily support initiatives developed within the AFD-funded program for managing the Ziamas Massif Biosphere Reserve, where green businesses are a key component.

The potential products for Nimba are similar to those for Ziamas but have received less attention to date. A key player in Nimba is the mining company SMFG, which, in addition to supporting small-scale

agricultural resource initiatives, aims to facilitate local development and land-use planning as necessary frameworks for future economic development, utilizing local and regional government funds generated from iron ore mining.

For Nimba, it is also vital to collaborate closely with the FAO and UNDP on their respective projects: "Integrated Management of Degraded Landscapes for Sustainable Food Systems and Livelihoods in the Guinea Forest Region and Upper Guinea" (GEF ID: 10600) and "Strengthening the Resilience of the Most Vulnerable Local Communities in the Guinea Forest Region to Climate Change" (GEF ID: 10160). Both projects explicitly aim to support green SMEs through training, microfinance, involvement of local banks, and specialized NGOs. Given the partial geographical and significant thematic overlap, strong collaboration and alignment regarding the support for green SMEs will enhance resource efficiency, outreach, economies of scale, and sustainable results

The basic idea is to integrate ecological and socio-economic monitoring as a core component of the proposed land use plans, which will form the basis for sustainable land management (SLM). Sustainable land management, in this context, refers to a combination of improving agricultural and animal husbandry production methods, promoting agroforestry, land and forest restoration, protection of water resources, biodiversity conservation, etc. Monitoring serves as a tool to track developments from a local perspective and make adjustments where necessary. This approach fosters local ownership and promotes the intended co-management of the buffer and transition zones.

Sustaining socio-economic and ecological monitoring conducted by forest-adjacent communities after the end of project will be achieved through implementing the following strategies:

- i. Exploring sustainable funding mechanisms including options for (a) community-managed funds, such as those generated from sustainable forest products or eco-tourism, to finance ongoing monitoring efforts; and ensuring that joint monitoring activities are funded by the conservation Trust Fund currently being established.
- ii. Work with local governments to integrate monitoring activities into existing governance structures, ensuring that they are recognized and supported.
- iii. Establishing partnerships with NGOs and government agencies to secure ongoing funding or support for monitoring activities.
- iv. Providing ongoing training for community members in data collection, analysis, and reporting methods to empower them to continue monitoring independently.

v. Implementing simple and low-cost technology solutions for data collection and management that can be maintained by community members, and

vi. Training of communities to use remote sensing technology for ecological monitoring, allowing them to track changes over larger areas with less effort

Description of component 3 and outcome 3.1 below shows how this project builds on and leverages the MRU and GEF IW.

Component 3 responds to the regional and transboundary landscape objectives of the Guinea Child project, in the context of the broader objectives of the regional GEF8 GFIP (Guinean Forests Integrated Programme) and the component Regional Child Project (‘Guinean Forests Regional Coordination and Learning Project’). In particular, Component 3 builds on the results of the GEF5 (IUCN/ Mano River Union (MRU)) ‘Mano River Ecosystem Conservation and International Water Resources Management (IWRM) Project’ (2016-2023: GEF ID: 4953) . This was implemented by IUCN and MRU in the Upper Guinea Forest region (Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia and Cote d’Ivoire) with the objective of strengthening the management of transboundary natural resources for sustained ecological benefits and improved livelihoods for the forest adjacent communities. The Guinea Child project will operate in the 2 MRU Water Basins and transboundary landscapes relevant to the Biosphere Reserves (MNBR and ZMBR) which are the focus of the Child project (respectively the Cavally and Moa-Makona/ Mano River Water Basins) (see below ? section 4.3 Project Map) to revitalise and implement the transboundary framework agreements and technical committees set up under the IWRM and other regional forest conservation programmes, as well as the new 3-country Nimba Mountains Master Plan (in preparation by the 3 countries

The Guinea Child project will strengthen capacity of Guinean stakeholders (State and civil society) to collaborate on transboundary watershed management, working with the other national Child projects and the RCP to revitalize and operationalize transboundary agreements, local committees and local plans; to support the application of applied research on decision-making for transboundary management and to trial Nature-based solutions targeting improvements in freshwater and riparian ecosystem health and community resilience in transboundary river basin forest ecosystems. Interventions under this Component will build on the transboundary collaboration aspirations of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia outlined in the Strategic Action Programme (SAP) of Mano River Union Basins (MRU, 2023). They are also aligned with the GEF-8 Programming directions under the International Waters (IW) Thematic Area (Objective 3: Enhance water security in shared freshwater ecosystems). The Guinean Forests Regional Coordination Project (RCP), working closely with the 3 Child Country projects, will coordinate support to the revival of the Transboundary Committees established under the MRU at ministerial, national and community level, namely the MRU Ministerial Council, the National Consultative Platform for Water Users and the community-based Basin

Management Committees. Each country will convene national and community level meetings to determine transboundary issues that are priority at local and national level based on the SAP, to inform regional engagements.

Two out of the three outputs under outcome 3.1 (Strengthened gender sensitive transboundary collaboration and coordination (Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire) for enhanced conservation and management of the shared Moa-Makona/ Mano and Cavally River Water Basins), have specific activities including:

Under output 3.1.1: Local level, gender sensitive and inclusive transboundary platforms, technical committees and plans under transboundary agreements with neighboring countries revitalized and operationalized, the following activities are proposed including:

Activity 3.1.1.1: Streamlining Transboundary Committees: recruitment of committee members, review and drafting of terms of reference and operational procedures, convening initial and regular meetings, incorporating social inclusion and gender considerations.

Activity 3.1.1.2: Integrated, gender responsive training and capacity enhancement: combined workshops and training sessions for committee members, with technical assistance on transboundary management protocols, ensuring these are practical and directly applicable to their roles.

Activity 3.1.1.3: Enhanced gender responsive operational support: coordinate priority interventions based on technical committee discussions in watershed management, using and developing local capacities

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Whereas under output 3.1.2: Support provided to Guinea stakeholders (government and civil society) to use results of applied research in decision making processes for transboundary, gender sensitive and inclusive forest management and ecosystem conservation in shared Water Basins, the following activities are proposed including:

Activity 3.1.2.1: Comprehensive, gender sensitive capacity assessment and training: conduct capacity needs assessment followed by targeted training sessions, designed to address identified gaps, and incorporating gender-sensitive approaches and practical applications of research in forest ecosystem management.

Activity 3.1.2.2: Gender responsive tool development and dissemination: develop and disseminate integrated technical guidance and monitoring tools, including protocols for joint transboundary patrols and enforcement, ensuring these tools are user-friendly and widely accessible.

Meetings with other countries are included in output 4.1.3: Regional and international collaboration and gender responsive knowledge sharing events held. Regional and International collaboration and knowledge sharing events held on transboundary Water Basins and ecosystems.

Specifically, under activity 4.1.3.1: Participation in Regional and International Events: Organize gender responsive participation of Guinea Child stakeholders in regional and international conferences, workshops, and forum

On the evolution of institutions, the project focuses on supporting local governance committees established under the MRU project in Ziama and Nimba to consolidate and prepare for potential future GEF IWRM work (second phase MRU- IWRM).

The project will use tools and methodologies that demonstrate the case for NbS infrastructure over grey infrastructure in the management of transboundary freshwater resources including Moa-Makona/ Mano and Cavally River Water Basins.

Nature-based solutions will be implemented to improve freshwater ecosystem health and mitigate or help local communities adapt to climate change impacts. Under this output, a sub-set of the projects identified and developed under Land Use Plans (see above Outcome 2.2; Outputs 2.2.1 & 2.2.2), will be identified and implemented with communities as ?Nature based solutions? (NbS) pilot projects. These will specifically target the achievement of improved riparian (riverbank) or wetlands management for enhanced ecosystem health and maintenance of ecosystem services.

These approaches will result in local community benefits (including for downstream stakeholders in the same catchment) including strengthened ecosystem and community resilience to the impacts of climate change. Activities to achieve this will include the identification of key zones for ecosystem services provision and protection (e.g. water sources, lowland gallery forests, riparian zones and wetlands, other identified vulnerable/ high value biodiversity sites (for animals, plants, ecosystem services). Secondly, stakeholder consultations (Guinea and Liberia) and review of priorities and project proposals in transboundary strategies and Protected Area plans including outputs from the GEF-5 MRU IWRM project (including the 2023 IUCN RAP - National Guinea Action Plan 37); and Ziama and Nimba Biosphere Reserve Management Plans).

This will be followed by the development of collaborative community-led projects with a focus on transboundary ecosystem services, community benefits and resilience, (including attention to gender inclusivity and vulnerable groups). The Guinean Forests RCP will provide regional technical assistance and capacity-building support on NbS for the three MRU countries participating in the GFIP.

Added the following text on the description of component 4 on page 21 of the CEO ER form.

The project will foster learning through development of knowledge management products (e.g., Policy briefs, Land use plans, Fact sheets, documentaries, Project progress reports, Success stories, Lessons learned, best practices, etc.) that will be disseminated to stakeholders at local, national and regional levels via the GEF-8 Regional Coordination Project. In addition, the project will collaborate with other Child projects in Sierra Leone and Liberia and the Regional Coordination and Learning Project (RCP) on technical and capacity building initiatives, knowledge exchange and dissemination of innovations, and facilitation of transboundary forest landscape management and regional policy dialogues.

Also, other links to the RCP have been highlighted in yellow throughout the description of component 4 on pages 20-22.

This has been revised, and a total of US\$ 790,702 has been allocated to PMC from MEDD (US\$ 490,702) and IUCN (US\$ 300,000) as the Executing Agency and Executing partner respectively.

4. Project Outline

A. Project Rationale

- a) Is the current situation (including global environmental problems, key drivers of environmental degradation, climate vulnerability) clearly and adequately described from a systems perspective and adequately addressed by the project design?
- b) Have the role of stakeholders, incl. the private sector and local actors in the system been described and how they will contribute to GEBs and/or adaptation benefits and other project outcomes? Is the private sector seen mainly as a stakeholder or as financier?
- c) If this is an NGI project, is there a description of how the project and its financial structure are addressing financial barriers?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

August 6, 2024

Addressed

Agency Response

5 B. Project Description

- 5.1 a) Is there a concise theory of change (narrative and an optional schematic) that describes the project logic, including how the project design elements are contributing to the objective, the identified causal pathways, the focus and basis (including scientific) of the proposed solutions, how they provide a robust approach? Are underlying key assumptions listed?
- b) [If a child project under a program] Is the Theory of change aligned with and consistent with the overall program goal and approach?
- c) Is there a description of how the GEF alternative will build on ongoing/previous investments (GEF and non-GEF), lessons and experiences in the country/region? [If a child project under a program] Does the description include how the alternative aligns with and contributes to the overall program goal and approach?
- d) Are the project components (interventions and activities) described and proposed solutions and critical assumptions and risks properly justified? Is there an indication of why the project approach has been selected over other potential options?
- e) Incremental/additional cost reasoning: Is the incremental/additional cost reasoning properly described as per the Guidelines provided in GEF/C.31/12? Has the baseline scenario and/or associated baseline projects been described? Is the project incremental reasoning provisioned (including the role of the GEF)? Are the global environmental benefits and/or adaptation benefits identified?
- f) Other Benefits: Are the socioeconomic benefits resulting from the project at the national and local levels sufficiently described?
- g) Is the financing presented in the annexed financing table adequate and demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objectives? Are items charged to the PMC reasonable according to the GEF guidelines?
- h) How does the project design ensure resilience to future changes in the drivers and adaptive management needs and options (as applicable for this FSP/MSP)?
- i) Are the relevant stakeholders (including women, private sector, CSO, e.g.) and their roles adequately described within the components?
- j) Gender: Does the gender analysis identify any gender differences, gaps or opportunities linked to

project/program objectives and activities and have these been taken up in component design and description/s?

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

l) Policy Coherence: Have any policies, regulations or subsidies been identified that could counteract the intended project outcomes and how will that be addressed?

m) Transformation and/or innovation: Is the project going to be transformative or innovative? [If a child project under an integrated program] Are the specific levers of transformation identified and described? Does it explain scaling up opportunities?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
November 8, 2024

Addressed.

August 24, 2024

Theory of Change

- Please make the connection to the ToC approved in the PFD and adjust the result framework under the levers of transformation (also approved at PFD level).

- The diagram is not readable. Please, modify.

Gender

- Gender and equity issues are not enough integrated in the result framework. Please, revise.

- Please upload the Gender Action Plan, which, if possible, should be budgeted.

- As per GEF Guidance, and as entry points, please ensure that all the plans, frameworks and policies are gender responsive (e.g. Outputs 1.1.2, 3.1.1, 3.1.3).
- The project needs to ensure that the financial mechanisms are gender responsive, tackling the lack of access of women to these financial resources, ensuring trainings and capacity building activities and actively targeting women or women-led businesses (Outputs 1.1.3, 2.2.2, 4.1.3).
- During project implementation, the PIRs, the MTE and the TE should include a review and reporting of the GAP and relevant gender dimensions of the project.

- Please ensure that no comments provided at PFD approval are relevant for this child project

Agency Response
29th October 2024

Theory of change has been revised and linked to the approved PFD (see page 13 of the CEO ER)

Readable PowerPoint version of the ToC has been included as an attachment.

Gender and equity issues have been integrated throughout the results-framework. The changes are highlighted in yellow in the results-framework on pages 43-54 in the CEO ER form)

Gender Action plan has been developed with indicative budget provided and is now included as annex J on pages 63-64 in the CEO ER)

Gender and equity issues have been integrated in all the plans and frameworks

Considering the above, the following outputs have been revised to be gender sensitive/responsive including:

Output 1.1.2 Gender-sensitive policy briefs developed for National Commission for Land and Housing Reform.

Outputs 1.1.3: Sustainable, gender sensitive conservation finance opportunities for the MNBR and ZMBR Biosphere Reserves investigated and supported

Output 2.2.2: Forest adjacent communities supported to develop gender sensitive and sustainable smallholder agriculture and business enterprises

Output 3.1.1: Local level, gender sensitive and inclusive transboundary platforms, technical committees and plans under transboundary agreements with neighbouring countries revitalized and operationalized.

Output 3.1.3: Gender inclusive, nature-based solutions (NbS) implemented to improve freshwater ecosystem health and help local communities adapt to climate change impacts.

Output 4.1.3: Regional and international collaboration and gender responsive knowledge sharing events held on transboundary Water Basins and ecosystems.

As indicated above, an indicative Gender Action plan has been developed (see annex J on pages 63-64 in the CEO ER), which shows key gender actions that will be undertaken during project implementation including among others conducting a gender analysis and hiring a Gender and Safeguard Specialist to oversee the mainstreaming of gender issues during project implementation

On output 5.1.1: Project technical and financial reports produced, the following text has been added on page 24 of the CEO ER, "The quarterly and annual project implementation reports will provide information on the status of the Gender Action plan and other relevant dimensions."

Output 5.1.3: Independent evaluations conducted. The following text has been added on page 25 of the CEO ER form, "In addition, the independent mid-term and terminal evaluations will assess the status of the implementation of the Gender Action plan and other relevant gender dimensions of the project."

These were addressed at the PIF stage.

5.2 Institutional Arrangements and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Project

- a) Are the institutional arrangements, including potential executing partners, outlined on regional, national/local levels and a rationale provided? Has an organogram and/or funds flow diagram been included?**
- b) Comment on proposed agency execution support (if agency expects to request exception). Is GEF in support of the request?**
- c) Is there a description of coordination and cooperation with ongoing GEF and non-GEF financed projects/programs (such as government and/or other bilateral/multilateral supported initiatives in the project area, e.g.).**
- d) [If a child project under an integrated program] Does the framework for coordination and collaboration demonstrate consistency with overall ambition of the program for transformative change?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

November 18, 2024

A letter of support signed by the GEF OFP is available. We support the proposed project arrangements.

November 13, 2024

We clear the request for dual execution mode - the rationale is convincing. However, the technical clearance, before the Council circulation period cannot be given without the letter of support from the government. Please, provide the letter in the next round.

November 12, 2024

We understand that the dual role of implementing/executing is mainly to ensure a fiduciary control in a recognized situation of risks: IUCN being responsible of procurements and money transfer.

However, the staff recruited jointly by IUCN and the Ministry (MEDD) will be based in institutions under the Ministry of Environment: with the Environment Management Center for Mounts Nomba-Simandou (CEGENS) and the Forestry Center of Nzerekore (CFZ).

This arrangement has been agreed between the government and IUCN. It was also discussed with major programmes and donors who work with the same institutions, including World Bank, European Union, French Agency for Development, and UNDP).

We find these arrangements acceptable and are keen to clear them. Please provide a letter of support signed by the GEF OFP.

Addressed.

November 8, 2024

- We are taking note of the explanations provided about the project implementation and understand the request for the execution role from IUCN. Cleared.

- We are seeing several lines of budget related to DSA for consultants, project team, ecoguards, communities, and government officials: please refer to the GEF guidelines (https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/GEF_Guidelines_Project_Program_Cycle_Policy_20200731.pdf): Government salaries remain listed as ineligible expenses, to which associated benefits, bonuses and emoluments are added for clarity. Please, remove these budget lines and use the cofinancing to cover them.

August 6, 2024

Institutional arrangements

- To avoid a confusion with the GEF wording, we recommending using the expression "Executing partners" (in the implementation section) rather than "implementing partners" in the diagram. Please, modify.

- Will the GEF Agency play an execution role on this child project? Please, respond to the question.

Agency Response

November 18th 2024

This is noted, with thanks. We have now submitted the signed letter of support in the roadmap with the project documents in the portal.

12th November 2024

Noted on the DSA budget lines and GEF guidelines. Please note that we have now regrouped the eligible budget into other lines including consultancy, travel and workshops ? removing the DSA. Please note we have removed DSA government lines completely from the budget.

29th October 2024

This has been addressed by using Executing partners instead of implementing partners. See revised institutional arrangements diagram on page 26 of the CEO ER form.

Yes, IUCN will play an execution role due to the reasons provided below.

During the project preparation (PIF and PPG phases), potential Institutional arrangements were discussed extensively during project preparation. Stakeholder consultations, including with Government partners, highlighted some critical risks which could be a constraint on good project progress and the achievement of objectives during implementation. The following identified risks were taken into consideration in selecting the most appropriate institutional arrangement for this project:

- ? the high level of fiduciary and corruption risk;
- ? the limited choice and number of reliable partners on the ground with capacity to guarantee the adequate execution of the project with secure financial management and reporting;
- ? the weak institutional capacity for implementation at both national and local levels.

The main challenge to address was to select an agency that is willing and has the capacity to undertake the lead executing function. IUCN, the Guinea Government and the project design team explored various options, with the final recommendation to propose IUCN as the project executing agency. While this falls into the exception outlined in the GEF project and programme cycle policy which advocates for separate agencies to undertake the implementing and executing functions respectively, this set-up was assessed as the only one suitable for having both the project operations run efficiently and mitigating the identified risks.

The proposal to include IUCN as EA (executing agency) is also supported by the following arguments.

- ? Adequate fiduciary controls: IUCN, as a GEF partner agency, has robust and transparent fiduciary standards. It has a track record of operating complex projects in the region, including managing project grants for other GEF agencies (when IUCN was not yet accredited as a GEF Implementing Agency).
- ? Firewall: As per the GEF policy, IUCN has the capacity of establishing a firewall between the part of the institution which will play the role of Executing Agency and the one that will be in charge of the oversight function (in its role as a GEF Implementing Agency). The executing function for this project will be hosted in the IUCN Guinea country programme based in Conakry, Guinea. The

oversight function for this project (Implementing Agency role covered by the GEF agency fees) will be shared among the IUCN Headquarters and the IUCN Regional Office for Western and Central Africa (PACO) based in Dakar, Senegal. This distribution of responsibilities will ensure that there is sufficient expertise on the operational and fiduciary side for both the executing and the oversight functions.

Capacity building: IUCN and the GEF Child project will support strengthening the capacity of government institutions as well as civil society; including technical capacities for project and financial management at various levels. This has been discussed with other major programmes of donor support which also include capacity development with many of the same institutions (including World Bank, EU, AFD, UNDP). The RCP also brings regional support to capacity building under various components (with CI as the overall GEF Implementing Agency). Within these national and regional frameworks, for the Guinea Child project management, IUCN and the Government of Guinea will jointly recruit the PMU staff members (see proposed list below). The staff hired for the purpose of this project will have IUCN contracts and will be hosted or seconded to CEGENS or CFZ. The PMU staff will be based in Guinea Forestiere as part of the PMU under the overall supervision of the IUCN programme in Guinea (Head of Programme).

5.3 Core indicators

- a) Are the identified core indicators calculated using the methodology and adhering to the overarching principles included in the corresponding Guidelines (GEF/C.62/Inf.12/Rev.01)? [If a child project under a program] Is the choice of core indicators consistent with those prioritized under the parent program?**
- b) Are the project's targeted contributions to GEBs (measured through core indicators and additional listed outcome indicators) /adaptation benefits reasonable and achievable? Are the GEF Climate Change adaptation indicators and sub-indicators for LDCF and SCCF properly documented?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request November 13, 2024

We discussed out of the review and agree with the GEF BD coordinator and the IUCN's GEF coordinator that 1) It is understood that METT scores are a requirement at CEO endorsement (https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/2022-09/Results_Framework_Guidelines_2022_06_30.pdf), 2) IUCN will work with consultants and national partners to develop the METT scores for the considered protected areas, 3) the technical clearance will exceptionally be given without the METT score to allow the Council 4-week information, and 4) the METT scores are expected before the end of the 4-week period and will condition the signature of the endorsement. letter.

November 12, 2024

METT scores are expected at CEO endorsement, as they are expected at mid-term, and final evaluation, per policy. It is up to the GEF agency with whoever you recruited to finalize this scoring. Please, complete.

November 8, 2024

METT scores are requested, not IMETT. Please, correct.

August 6, 2024

Core Indicators

- Core indicator 1: METT scores are expected at CEO endorsement. Please, complete
- Please provide the WDPA ID for the two PAs mentioned under indicator 1.2, as available.
- Core Indicator 4.1: please explain better the type of land management you consider improving the benefits for Biodiversity (without certification system). The mention of "restoration and promotion of nature-based solutions and green enterprise development" is not enough.
- Core indicator 4.5: The document makes references to OECM. Please include the OECMs supported, if any, under Indicator 4.5 (you can include parts or all areas under CI 4.1 and CI 3).
- Core Indicator 6: 1.5 million tCO₂e: please, explain the assumptions made.
- Core Indicator: 11: we take note of the perfect gender balance targeted under the CI11. However, with the current result framework and formulation of the outputs and activities, we do not see how this balance can be reached. Please, provide the specific measures and actions you will implement to reach this balance.

Agency Response

November 18th 2024

This is noted with thanks. IUCN has already started the analysis work to obtain the METT scores, which will be provided at the end of the 4-week review period, as expected and agreed. We understand the signature of the endorsement letter is dependent on the provision of these scores.

12th November 2024

Investigations were conducted with government agencies and other partners involved in managing the two concerned landscapes, and it appears that METT evaluations were indeed carried out for these two protected areas in 2008 (see files submitted for both sites). However, these evaluations do not explicitly mention the METT scores, unlike the IMETT scores, which are available. In conclusion, we confirm that the METT scores are not available at this stage, as they were not included in the initial evaluations and have not been provided by any source.

29th October 2024

Below are the 2023 IMETT scores for the two biosphere reserves according to the per the EU Support Programme for the Preservation of Forest Ecosystems (PAPFor) in West Africa, 2023 report.

- i. Nimba: IMET index of 39.15% distributed as follows: Management context : (74.4%; planning: (44.7%); inputs: (6.6%); process: (19.6%); Results: (36.1%); Effects/impacts: (53.5%)

ii. Ziama: IMET index of 64.2% distributed as follows: management context : (78.2%; planning: (81.6%); inputs: (43.9%); process: (45.9%); Results: (63.7%); Effects/impacts: (67.4%)

WDPA IDs below have been included on pages 25 and 33 in the ProDoc under section 3.1.1.1 and 3.1.1.2 respectively. In the CEO ER form, the IDs have been included in the core indicator table on page 26.

i. Mount Nimba BR; <https://www.protectedplanet.net/3027>

ii. Ziama Massif BR <https://www.protectedplanet.net/29066>

Added the following to the description of core indicator 4 on page 31 of the CEO ER and page 121 of the ProDoc:

The target for Core indicator 4 will be achieved through forest restoration and enhancement activities across the projects sites, identified as priorities through integrated land use planning (LUP) and implemented as community-led activities under Component 2 (Outcome 2.1: Land Use Plans supporting Mt Nimba and Ziama Massif Biosphere Reserves benefitting nature and local communities). And secondly, (Outcome 2.2: Implementation of Land Use Plans through Forest Landscape Restoration Activities and Green Business Development), also as community-led activities and Component 3 (transboundary collaboration and coordination with other Guinea Forest stakeholders for enhanced conservation management of the Moa-Makona/ Mano and Cavally River Water Basins).

Without an accepted definition for OECMs by the Government of Guinea, there is no meaningful way to set a target. There is a risk that setting a target may elicit a negative reaction from some stakeholders. We propose that the project will track the results of CLF, land use planning, co-management agreements, etc., and identify which areas may reasonably be considered as OECMs ? but as a post hoc assessment rather than subject to a target.

However, as per your suggestion, if all areas under core indicator I: 4.1: 115,000 ha and core indicator 3: 7,000 ha are included as OECMS, the target will be 122,000 ha

When calculating the tonnes of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions mitigated, the following assumptions were made including:

- i. Baseline Emission Level was established to determine what emissions would have occurred without the project. Details: This involved estimating current emissions from land use practices, deforestation rates, and other relevant activities.
- ii. Accounting period is 20 years (Four years for the implementation phase and 15 years for capitalization phase).
- iii. Conservation practices promoted by the project including restoration, sustainable land management, improved management of protected areas, reforestation etc, will be effective and lead to measurable reductions in GHG emissions.
- iv. The entire area under conservation practices contributes to GHG mitigation
- v. On avoided deforestation, it is assumed that the project effectively prevents deforestation or degradation that would have otherwise occurred.
- vi. Data used for calculations (e.g., land cover, biomass, emissions factors) are accurate and reliable.
- vii. On leakage, it is assumed that any potential increase in emissions in other areas due to the project is minimized or offset.
- viii. Socioeconomic conditions, such as community engagement and alternative livelihoods, are conducive to the success of the project.
- ix. Local communities will support and sustain conservation efforts, affecting the long-term viability of emissions reductions.

Gender issues have been integrated into the revised results-framework on pages 43-54 in the CEO ER form)

Also, an indicative Gender Action Plan and stakeholder engagement plan have been developed. (See annex J on pages 62-264 of the CEO ER form)

5.4 Risks

- a) **Is there a well-articulated assessment of risk to outcomes and identification of mitigation measures under each relevant risk category? Are mitigation measures clearly identified and realistic? Is there any omission?**
- b) **Is the rating provided reflecting the residual risk to the likely achievement of intended outcomes after**

accounting for the expected implementation of mitigation measures?

c) Are environmental and social risks, impacts and management measures adequately assessed and rated and consistent with requirements set out in SD/PL/03?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

November 8, 2024

Addressed.

August 6, 2024

- The narrative is very clear on the mitigation measures but does not summarize the risk assessment that led to identifying these mitigants. Consider adding text describing the nature of the risk to the project.
- Under the Overall Risk category, please provide a summary that helps understand the identified rating.

Agency Response

29th October 2024

Texts describing the nature of risk have been added and highlighted in yellow in the risk management table on pages 29-31 of the CEO ER form

The qualitative and quantitative determination of the overall risk category was conducted using a standard methodology for assessing risk: $\text{Likelihood} \times \text{Impact} = \text{Risk}$.

The project risk assessment followed a simple process including:

1. Identifying possible threats to the project-affected communities
2. Assessing likelihood of those threats materializing
3. Assessing impact to the project-affected communities

4. Determining risk and risk ratings for the project-affected communities

5. Identifying mitigation measures

For details see annex I on pages 57-62

of the CEO ER that shows the qualitative and quantitative determination of the overall risk category.

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestNA

Agency Response

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

6.1 a) Is the project adequately aligned with Focal Area objectives, and/or the LDCF/SCCF strategy?

b) [If a child project under an integrated program] Is the project adequately aligned with the program objective in the GEF-8 programming directions?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

November 8, 2024

Addressed.

August 6, 2024

- We appreciated the reference of the CFB IP and the programming strategies.

However, the text missed the explanation of the targets under the Core Indicators. Please, complete.

Agency Response

29th October 2024

Texts explaining the contribution of the child project's core indicators to the achievement of GFIP (PFD) targets are highlighted in yellow on pages 28-29 of the CEO ER form.

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestYes

Agency Response

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestYes

Agency Response

7 D. Policy Requirements

7.1 Are the Policy Requirement sections completed?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
Yes

Agency Response

7.2 Is the Gender Action Plan uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestYes

Agency Response

7.3 Is the stakeholder engagement plan uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestYes

Agency Response

7.4 Have the required applicable safeguards documents been uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
November 8, 2024

Addressed.

Environmental and Social Safeguards

- We understand that the project's overall ESS risk is classified as moderate, and IUCN attached the preliminary ESMS screening. However, the preliminary ESMS screening said that "there is a possibility that two areas might be rated as high risk: risk issues triggered in the context of the Standard on Access Restrictions and on Indigenous Peoples." At the CEO Endorsement stage, please provide more detailed information about potential risk assessment and mitigation measures and Indigenous Peoples Plan related risks on Access Restrictions and on Indigenous Peoples.

Agency Response

29th October 2024

The main risk issues identified in the screening relate to potential access restrictions. Additional risks include potential marginalization of vulnerable groups, including certain ethnic groups such as Fulani semi-nomadic herders, and women. Some potential safety and security risks linked to community workers were also identified, as well as human rights-related risks linked to working with law enforcement agencies. In fact, the project does not directly support law enforcement activities as such but does provide support in training to address social and human rights issues.

To address these risks and mitigate impacts a number of activities are foreseen during the inception phase including:

- i. the development of a Gender Analysis and Action Plan (GAP),
- ii. the elaboration of an "Access Restriction Mitigation Process Framework" followed by an "Action Plan to Mitigate Impacts from Access Restriction", and (3) set up of a "Grievance Redress Mechanism" (or at least a design document).

This process will be further supported by the application of an "Environmental and Social Management Plan" for the project and by including a gender/environmental safeguard specialist to the PMU.

8 Annexes

Annex A: Financing Tables

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

STAR allocation?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes. addressed at concept and PFD level.

Agency Response

Focal Area allocation?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestAddressed.

Agency Response

LDCF under the principle of equitable access?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestNA

Agency Response

SCCF A (SIDS)?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestNA

Agency Response

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestNA

Agency Response

Focal Area Set Aside?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestNA

Agency Response

8.2 Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

a) Is the use of PPG attached in Annex: Status of Utilization of Project Preparation Grant (PPG) properly itemized according to the guidelines?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

November 8, 2024

Addressed.

August 6, 2024

- On the utilization of the PPG: please request the agency to remove the category *PPG International Firm* and *Travel International Consultancy Firm* with the activities eligible with the PPG funds.

ANNEX D: STATUS OF UTILIZATION OF PROJECT PREPARATION GRANT (PPG) ①

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

Project Preparation Activities Implemented	GET/LDCF/SCCF Amount (\$)		Amount Committed
	Budgeted Amount	Amount Spent To date	
PPG International Firm	92,500.00	37,000.00	55,500.00
Travel international Consultancy Firm	17,500.00		17,500.00
Inception et Validation workshop	22,000.00		22,000.00
Travel/Missions	14,000.00	452.00	13,548.00
Translation	4,000.00		4,000.00
Total	150,000.00	37,452.00	112,548.00

Agency Response

29th October 2024

This has been addressed

8.3 Source of Funds

Does the sources of funds table match with the amounts in the OFP's LOE?

Note: the table only captures sources of funds from the country's STAR allocation

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestAddressed at PFD level.

Agency Response

8.4 Confirmed co-financing for the project, by name and type: Are the amounts, sources, and types of co-financing adequately documented and consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines?

e.g. Have letters of co-finance been submitted, correctly classified as investment mobilized or in-kind/recurring expenditures? If investment mobilized: is there an explanation below the table to describe the nature of co-finance? If letters are not in English, is a translation provided?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

November 8, 2024

Addressed.

August 6, 2024

- Both co-financing letters from MEDD CFZ and MEDD CEGENS are provided in French. According to paragraph 7 of the GEF Guidelines on Co-financing (see [GEF Cofinancing Guidelines](#)),

it is required to submit English translations of these letters. While a formal translation is not necessary, the agency should provide an acceptable English version in their capacity.

- There is a discrepancy in the breakdown of the in-kind co-financing amount stated in the MESRI letter. The letter reflects a total of USD 298,812; however, the sum of the 11 project budget items equals USD 334,720.53. Please confirm and reconcile the correct co-financing amount. Additionally, the breakdown table is currently only provided in French. Kindly attach an English translation of the table.

Agency Response

29th October 2024

Cofinancing letters from MEDD CFZ and MEDD CEGENS are now in English.

The correct amount of USD 334,720.53 has been reflected in the cofinancing.

Annex B: Endorsements

8.5 a) If ? and only if - this is a global or regional project for which not all country-based interventions were known at PIF stage and, therefore, not all LOEs provided:

Has the project been endorsed by the GEF OFP/s of all GEF eligible participating countries and has the OFP name and position been checked against the GEF database at the time of submission?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestNA

Agency Response

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestAddressed at PFD level

Agency Response

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestNA

Agency Response

Annex C: Project Results Framework

8.6 a) Have the GEF core indicators been included?

b) Have SMART indicators been used; are means of verification well thought out; do the targets correspond/are appropriate in view of total project financing (too high? Too low?)

- c) Are all relevant indicators sex disaggregated?
- d) Is the Project Results Framework included in the Project Document pasted in the Template?
- e) [If a regional/global coordination child project under an integrated program] Does the results framework reflect the program-wide result framework, inclusive of results from child projects and specific to the regional/global coordination child project? [If a country child project under an integrated program] Is the child project result framework inclusive of program-wide metrics monitored across child project by the Regional/Global Child project?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes

Agency Response

Annex E: Project map and coordinates

8.7 Have geographic coordinates of project locations been entered in the dedicated table? Are relevant illustrative maps included?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes

Agency Response

Annex F: Environmental and Social Safeguards Documentation and Rating

8.8 Have the relevant safeguard documents been uploaded to the GEF Portal? Has the safeguards rating been provided and filled out in the ER field below the risk table?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes

Agency Response

Annex G: GEF Budget template

8.9 a) Is the GEF budget template attached and appropriately filled out incl. items such as the executing partner for each budget line?

b) Are the activities / expenditures reasonably and accurately charged to the three identified sources (Components, M&E and PMC)?

c) Are TORs for key project staff funded by GEF grant and/or co-finance attached?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

November 19, 2024

The budget is readable in the CEO Endorsement Request Portal view.

November 19, 2024

Quality Control: Colleagues from PO found out a problem with the budget table in the CEO Endorsement Request Portal view (which is the document that is circulated to Council ? see the attached document): it has 64 pages, and it is no possible to understand the information included there. Please ask the Agency to present the budget table in the CEO Endorsement Request Portal

view in a comprehensible manner by (i) presenting the information per component (not per output); and (ii) including a brief project description in a reasonable manner, so one can understand what the activity entails.


November 18, 2024

Addressed.



November 13, 2024

All points are cleared. However, please, note there are multiple versions of the budget in the portal: include only one version and check the budget annex in the project document for consistency. Thanks.

ANNEX G: BUDGET TABLE

Please upload the budget table here. 

Title

GEF ID 11146 Guinea_budget 121124	
GEF ID 11146 Guinea Child Project Budget_oct 2024	

November 8, 2024

- We take note of the explanation provided for the vehicles (2 cars and 10 motorcycles) and find it acceptable. The request is cleared.
- IUCN is the implementing agency and the main Executing partner, as IUCN will manage the budget and the different contracts/agreements. MEDD is not mentioned in the budget. Please, correct your response below.
- All points are addressed. Thanks for simplifying the number of project related positions.

August 6, 2024

- The total for component 1 in Annex G =\$410,623 USD ? there is a \$1 USD difference from what is provided in the Child Description Overview. Please request the agency to correct where necessary. The same comment applies to component 4 where there is a \$1 USD difference.

Child Project Components	Component Type	Child Project Outcomes	Child Project Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing(\$)	Co-Financing(\$)
Component 1:	Technical Assistance	1.1: Improved management and	output 1.1.1: Inter-ministerial	GET	410,624.00	3,328,478.

Expenditure Category	Detailed Description	Outcome 1.1		
		Output 1.1.1	Output 1.1.2	Output 1.1.3
Grand Total		41,913	54,955	313,755

Budget

- We should see only one entity/institution in the last column: please, confirm who will execute the budget: IUCN or MEDD?
- Please, check the GEF policy on the purchase of vehicles. We would prefer if you would be able to find other sources of financing to purchase vehicles, especially from the GEF agency or cofinancing partners. First, please identify the number of existing vehicles of the main executing partner (MEDD) and the number of vehicles that should be acquired in the next 3 years. Second, identify the number of existing vehicles from other executing partners and/or cofinancing partners and the number of vehicles that should be purchased over the next 3-4 years. If there is still a need, then, we may consider the use of GEF resources for the proposed two 4x4 vehicles.
- Please, explain the rationale to use GEF resources for 10 motorbikes. GEF resources should be additional to baseline and cofinancing to generate Global Environment Benefits. Very often, these items are baseline expenses and should be covered by cofinancing.

Staff:

- We do not agree with the duplication of project positions. You need to revise the definition of staff positions and/or find other sources of financing (cofinancing?):
 - We do not see the need and the rationale for 1 national project coordinator + 1 deputy project coordinator. One of these positions, at least, should be financed by cofinancing.
 - Finance, Administrative, and Procurement Officer and a Technical Assistant Deputy Finance Officer?
 - We do not understand why consumables are assigned to technical components? Please, move this item to Project Management Costs? 9,600\$

Agency Response
November 19th 2024

The budget formatting issue has now been addressed and a revised version resubmitted based on the guidance provided.

November 18th 2024

This is noted and older versions of the budget have been removed in the portal. An updated Prodoc has been resubmitted to ensure alignment across documents.

12th November 2024

Please note that the indeed MEDD is not mentioned in the budget since IUCN is the implementing agency and the main Executing partner, as IUCN will manage the budget and the different contracts/agreements. We apologise that the answer we gave below was unclear and did not indicate appropriately.

29th October 2024

This has been addressed

IUCN is the Executing Agency (EA) and MEDD is the Executing Partner

Based on recent consultations with the Director General of CEGENS, below is the updated status of the use of Government vehicles and motorcycles.

Currently, there are: (a) two (02) pickup trucks - one for patrols and DGA monitoring tours and the other is assigned to the DG for its various trips; (b) 28 motorcycles donated by the World Bank for environmental monitoring activities. These motorcycles are assigned to the sector team leaders and a few curators. Thus, the current pool of motorcycles is insufficient.

While there are prospects for procuring or financing 12 motorcycles through the AfDB and one vehicle promised by the State, albeit without a solid guarantee, these resources will not meet all the agency's needs, especially when considering the requirements of the Child Project. This analysis

indicates that relying on government support for the project's logistics will be challenging in this context.

Furthermore, the project locations are at two sites that are far apart, and the poor condition of the roads makes it necessary to have a vehicle and five motorcycles at each site.

This has been addressed as indicated below:

1. **National Project Coordinator:** He/she is responsible for the overall management of the project, strategic planning, coordination of the different components and liaison with national and international partners. He/she supervises activities, guides actions according to national priorities in terms of biodiversity and sustainable development, monitors results and ensures compliance with national policies to achieve objectives within the set deadlines. For this position, an ideal profile would combine solid experience in environmental project management, leadership, as well as in-depth knowledge of national and international policies on biodiversity and sustainable development.
2. **Finance and Administrative Officer:** He/she guarantees rigorous and transparent financial management of the project. He/she is responsible for developing budgets, monitoring expenses, and preparing financial reports in accordance with GEF and IUCN requirements. In addition to financial management, he/she ensures the proper administration of human resources, equipment and documents. This position is essential to ensure efficiency in the use of resources and facilitate the logistical and contractual management of the project. The ideal profile for this position would include solid experience in financial and administrative management in projects with international organizations, preferably knowledge of GEF and IUCN procedures, with mastery of budget management tools, accounting standards, as well as excellent organizational and priority management skills.
3. **Biodiversity and Environmental Management Expert:** He/she is a key position to provide technical expertise on biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of natural resources.

He/she designs and implements conservation strategies adapted to local contexts, supports partners in ecological restoration initiatives and ensures compliance with the project's environmental standards. Its expertise is essential to guarantee solid and relevant scientific results in terms of environmental protection. The ideal profile for this position would include advanced training in environmental science, ecology or natural resource management, with practical experience implementing conservation and restoration strategies. In-depth knowledge of local and international environmental standards, as well as an ability to work with local communities and diverse stakeholders, is also required.

4. **Gender and Safeguards Officer:** He/she ensures the integration of gender issues in all stages of the project, ensuring the active participation of women and marginalized groups. He/she is responsible for developing economic activities to improve the living conditions of communities, by implementing inclusive strategies that particularly benefit households headed by women. This role is crucial for promoting women's economic empowerment, reducing gender inequalities and strengthening household resilience in the face of economic and environmental challenges. The profile of the Gender and Household Economics expert requires a degree in social sciences or development economics, with 5 years of experience in gender mainstreaming and community economic development. The expert must have expertise in inclusive economic strategies, particularly for the empowerment of women, and skills in monitoring and evaluation. Fluency in French and good communication and collaboration skills with local partners are essential.

5. **Monitoring and Evaluation Officer:** He/she plays a crucial role in monitoring the progress of the project, evaluating its impact and proposing necessary adjustments to improve performance. He/she finetunes and implements an effective monitoring and evaluation system, analyses performance data and qualitative feedback and produces regular reports to guide strategic decisions. This position is also responsible for knowledge management, ensuring lessons learned are documented and shared. The ideal profile for this position would include expertise in project management, monitoring and evaluation, with strong experience in data analysis and report writing.

6. **Drivers:** These play an important role in the smooth running of activities in the field. They are responsible for the safety and efficiency of team travel, ensuring that experts, partners and project members can reach intervention sites safely and on time. This position is essential to facilitate field missions, ensure smooth logistics and contribute to the coordination of actions on the various project intervention sites.

Implementation partners (Government agencies, NGOs, Communities, National regional and international councils/service providers): Support the implementation of certain aspects of activities through conventions/contracts established with IUCN. These partners ensure the success of the project by providing complementary expertise, diversified resources and in-depth knowledge of local and global contexts. Their collaboration ensures that project actions are aligned with national and international priorities, while integrating local needs and realities. These partners also make it possible to mobilize additional resources, ensure effective implementation of activities on

the ground, and strengthen the capacities of local actors to guarantee the sustainability and long-term impact of the project.

Consumables (US\$ 9,600) has been moved to the Project Management Costs.

Annex H: NGI Relevant Annexes

8.10 a) Does the project provide sufficient detail (indicative term sheet) to assess the following criteria: co-financing ratios, financial terms and conditions, and financial additionality? If not, please provide comments.

b) Does the project provide a detailed reflow table to assess the project capacity of generating reflows? If not, please provide comments.

c) Is the Agency eligible to administer concessional finance? If not, please provide comments.

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestNA

Agency Response

Additional Annexes

9. GEFSEC DECISION

9.1.GEFSEC Recommendation

Is the project recommended for approval

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

November 19, 2024

The budget is readable in the CEO endorsement document for circulation. The project is recommended for approval and next steps.

November 19, 2024

Please see the concern about the budget format highlighted above. The budget table in the CEO Endorsement Request Portal view is not useable.

November 18. 2024

All points are addressed. The project is recommended for clearance and next steps.

November 13, 2024

All points are addressed, but the letter of support for dual execution mode from the government is missing and there are two versions of the budget. Once received a revised project package, the project will be recommended for technical clearance, quality control, and Council consultation.

Please, remind that the METT scores will be expected before the end of the 4-week webposting period.

November 12, 2024

Not all points have been addressed. The project cannot be recommended yet.

November 8, 2024

Thanks for the improvements. The project cannot be recommended yet. Please, address remaining comments.

August 6, 2024

The project cannot be recommended yet. Please, address the comments above.

9.2 Additional Comments to be considered by the Agency during the inception and implementation phase

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

9.3 Review Dates

	CEO Approval	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review	8/6/2024	
Additional Review (as necessary)	11/8/2024	
Additional Review (as necessary)	11/12/2024	
Additional Review (as necessary)	11/13/2024	
Additional Review (as necessary)	11/18/2024	