

Nicaragua Mesoamerica Forest IP Project: Protection and conservation of forests of global importance located in the BOSAWAS Biosphere Reserve and the Indio Maíz Biological Reserve

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

11279

Countries

Nicaragua

Project Name

Nicaragua Mesoamerica Forest IP Project: Protection and conservation of forests of global importance located in the BOSAWAS Biosphere Reserve and the Indio Maíz Biological Reserve

Agencies

FAO

Date received by PM

7/30/2024

Review completed by PM

11/5/2024

Program Manager

Pascal Martinez

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

August 7, 2024:

The GEF Agency Project ID is missing. Please complete.

October 31, 2024:

Indeed, we checked and it is not possible to add the GEF ID at this stage. Cleared.

Agency Response

29 October 2024

a) Please note that for Child Projects is not possible for the agency to modify that portal entry. Could you help us with that? The GEF Agency ID is: 744364

Part I: Project Information

Name of Parent Program

Mesoamerica Critical Forest Biome Integrated Program

GEF ID

11279

Project Type

FSP

Type of Trust Fund

GET

Project Title

Nicaragua Mesoamerica Forest IP Project: Protection and conservation of forests of global importance located in the BOSAWAS Biosphere Reserve and the Indio Maiz Biological Reserve

Countries

Nicaragua,

Agency(ies)

FAO,

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

August 7, 2024:

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

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

August 7, 2024:

a) and b) Even if we have a certain flexibility, the summary is too long (4 times the indicated limit).

Please summarize keeping the most important information: targeted geographies, environmental problems, drivers and barriers, the project objective and approach (including components) and the expected results (GEF core indicators).

c) No, the link with the regional Program is missing. Please add one short paragraph summarizing how this child project will link with the rest of the regional program including the Regional Coordination Project and the other relevant countries (Honduras and Costa Rica sharing the same forest).

October 31, 2024:

a), b) and c) Thank you for the new summary. Cleared.

Agency Response

29 October 2024

a) and b)

The number of word in the summary was reduced, while retaining the key information of the project.

It briefly highlights the following: "The project 'Protection and Conservation of Globally Important Forests in the BOSAWAS Biosphere Reserve and the Indio Maíz Biological Reserve' aims to address deforestation and forest degradation in Nicaragua. Aligned with the Mesoamerican Critical Forest Biome Program and funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the project focuses on enhancing governance, improving forest management, and promoting conservation-friendly livelihoods, particularly for indigenous communities. It also emphasizes capacity building, policy strengthening, and financial mechanisms to support restoration efforts in protected areas.

Key results include the improved management of 997,337 hectares of protected areas, the restoration of 25,000 hectares of forest land, and the implementation of sustainable practices across 42,500 hectares. The project aims to mitigate 3.5 million metric tons of CO2 emissions and benefit over 8,000 people, while promoting regional cooperation for long-term forest conservation and biodiversity protection."

c) A paragraph was added to the project summary that includes the connection to the regional project.

Additionally, two paragraphs were included in the project description, specifically in the Contributions to the Integrated Program of Critical Forest Biomes of Mesoamerica and, the description of component 4 and its expected results was expanded in line with GEFSEC comments below

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

August 7, 2024:

a) Yes, cleared.

b) The ToC is not really presented. Please see below and address the comments on the ToC.

c)

c.1. The outcome 2.2 is the restoration of forest areas within the Protected Areas. Nevertheless, the corresponding core indicator 3.2 is not reported. Please clarify and reflect the restoration of forests in the relevant core indicator.

c.2. The outcome 2.3 is a strengthened integrated management approach to water resources. Please justify this outcome in component 2 clarifying how it contributes to conserve and restore Critical Forest Biomes.

c.3. The difference between the output 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 is unclear: both will strengthen of monitoring systems for the management of PAs. Please clarify and reformulate these outputs so that they appear clearly different.

c.4. As formulated, the output 4.1.1 (improving the capacity of sub-national governments to conserve, manage and monitor CFBs) doesn't seem to contribute to the outcome 4.1 (regional and transnational cooperation and coordination). Wouldn't this output better fit under component 1? Please clarify including in the formulation of the output.

c.5. The component 4 includes 2 distinct elements: regional cooperation and knowledge management. Nevertheless this component only includes 1 outcome on regional and transnational cooperation and coordination. For a better clarity, we suggest to add one specific output on knowledge management.

d) In the Project Description Overview, the consideration of the gender dimension appears mainly as indicators of the outcomes and is very limited in the outputs while some, notably related to governance and decision making are very relevant. As per GEF guidance, please ensure that the outputs and activities developed in the gender action plan are also integrated into the project components, outcomes, and outputs. Please consider the following entry points to integrate gender considerations: i) gender responsive regulations, instruments and plans - Outputs 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.1.4; ii) ensuring women's meaningful participation in decision-making platforms - Outputs 1.1.5, 1.2.1, 2.3.1; iii) ensuring that financial mechanisms and pilot programming actively target women and women-led enterprises - Outputs. 3.1.1 and 3.1.3. Also, please ensure that the GAP is budgeted and 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.

e) Yes, cleared.

f) Yes, the PMC equal to 5% for FSP. Cleared.

October 31, 2024:

- b) Thank you for the additional information. Cleared.
- c) Thank you for the amendments and clarification. Cleared.
- d) Thank you for the consideration. Cleared.

Agency Response
29 October 2024

a) No response required

b) The recommendations were incorporated, and a Theory of Change for the project has been developed, which is aligned and consistent with its overall objective and approach.

The project's Theory of Change focuses on addressing the degradation of critical forest biomes in the BOSAWAS Biosphere Reserve and the Indio Ma'z Biological Reserve by identifying four main barriers: limited capacity to manage Protected Areas, lack of resources for restoration, limited technical capacity and incentives, and few opportunities for learning and knowledge exchange. To overcome these barriers, transformational levers are proposed to generate changes such as expanded forest protection, valuation of natural capital, promotion of sustainable production, and effective regional cooperation.

The project is organized into four components: strengthening governance for primary forest protection, conserving and restoring forest landscapes, sustainable investments for livelihoods, and regional cooperation. The expected outcomes include protecting and managing 997,337 hectares, restoring 25,000 hectares, and mitigating more than 3.5 million tons of CO₂e, benefiting 8,491 people. Success will depend on political will, recognition of the value of biomes, public-private financing, and ongoing regional cooperation, while minimizing the impacts of climate change.

c.1) Noted. GEF Core Indicator 3.2 is now reported under outcome 2.2, in all relevant sections, and it has been removed as target for component 3. An explanation is included in Core Indicator section.

c.2) Noted, paragraph 38 has been added in the Description of the Project to include information on the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) approach. It will be addressed in the project's intervention areas as an innovative aspect, as it not only focuses on integrated water management but also considers the

essential synergies between water resources and forest ecosystems, promoting the conservation and restoration of critical forest biomes (CFB) in an integrated and sustainable manner.

Please note that the description of all components has been expanded.

For Component 2, water resource management is addressed with a focus on forest conservation and facilitating awareness and involvement of local populations. Proposed actions include assessing the conservation status of ecosystems in watershed units and identifying potential water sources. Water governance will be strengthened with a watershed-based approach, involving local actors (CAPS and UMAS). IWRM will be implemented using CFB conservation and regeneration as the main criteria.

c.3) The difference is that 2.4.1 is directed at the institutional monitoring and data system located in the MARENA offices in the protected areas and in the offices of the Regional Governments of the North Caribbean Coast in Bilwi and the South Caribbean Coast in Bluefields, and 2.4.2 is directed at strengthening community monitoring systems located in indigenous territories. The wording of outputs 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 was adjusted to reflect this difference in all relevant sections.

c.4) Noted. Please see below (Comment c.5) for the proposed changes to component 4.

c.5) Point taken. The following changes were made under component 4:

Outcome 4.1 was reformulated as: Improved knowledge management based on decision-making.

Indicator: A fully functional and operational knowledge and information management system for good environmental practices in the Indio Ma'z Biological Reserve (IMBR) and BOSAWAS Biosphere Reserve (BBR), providing information to decision-making processes.

The corresponding outputs are:

4.1.1. Environmental education and awareness programs at the local, regional, and national levels for the protection and conservation of Critical Forest Biomes (CFB) executed and translated into local indigenous languages.

4.1.2. Good environmental practices in Protected Areas systematized and replicated, ensuring the application of traditional and ancestral knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants.

Outcome 4.2 was reformulated as: Greater regional and transnational cooperation and coordination activated.

Indicator: Number of residents (Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendant women and youth) participating in environmental education/awareness actions in the BBR and IMBR through regional cooperation initiatives.

The corresponding outputs are:

4.2.1. Strategy to improve the capacity of sub-national governments to conserve, manage, and monitor CFBs implemented with contributions received at the regional level.

4.2.2. Participation in the Integrated Program Mesoamerica Knowledge Platform.

4.2.3. South-South cooperation for knowledge exchange, innovative solutions, and harmonized planning strengthened.

d) Point taken. While we tend to address the gender dimensions through the Gender Action Plan, we have incorporated the points suggested by the reviewers into the logframe.

Below are the changes proposed in the description of each of the suggested outputs:

i) For gender-sensitive regulations, instruments, and plans outputs 1.1.2, 1.1.3, and 1.1.4 highlight the importance of ensuring that management regulations, instruments, and plans are gender-sensitive. Specifically:

- o output 1.1.2 emphasizes that regulatory instruments must integrate the needs of all groups, especially women and vulnerable communities, in decision-making and land-use planning.
- o Output 1.1.3 aligns with the Gender Action Plan, suggesting that management plans should include regulations that strengthen governance and sustainable management in Indigenous and Afro-descendant territories
- o Output 1.1.4 proposes strengthening gender leadership knowledge and capacity by incorporating gender-sensitive approaches to promote inclusive and sustainable territorial management

ii) To ensure meaningful participation of women in decision-making platforms, outputs 1.1.5 and 1.2.1 align with the Gender Action Plan by strengthening the leadership and participation capacities of Indigenous and Afro-descendant women and youth in the governance and management of Protected Areas (PAs). Both outputs promote equitable inclusion in decision-making processes and ensure that dialogue platforms are accessible and safe for these groups. Additionally, output 2.3.1 establishes that Watershed Committees and CAPS should be formed with gender balance.

iii) To ensure that financial mechanisms and pilot programs actively target women and women-led businesses now, output 3.1.1 proposes that the innovative economic model includes incentives to finance investment plans addressing environmental issues presented by women, youth, and women-led businesses and Output 3.1.3 prioritizes investment plans led by women and youth in the environmental sector.

Inclusion of a review and reporting of the GAP at PIRs, MTE and TE stage has been included in project description. The GAP is budgeted.

e),f) no response needed

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 7, 2024:

- a) On the barriers, the description in the Portal entry only identify them and refers to Annex B ?Baseline scenario and the problem to be addressed? for more detailed information on the barriers. Please note that the Portal entry is the main GEF project document and should include all the important information. Also, there is no such Annex B in the Portal entry. Please elaborate further on the barriers and clarify where we can find the information when referring to a separate document (in that case the Prodoc).
- b) On stakeholders engagement, the description refers to Annex J ?Stakeholder Engagement Plan? to see detailed information. Please ensure the role of the stakeholders in the project is clearly and fully described (it can be in the description of the outputs and activities). Also, please clarify where we can find the information when referring to a separate document (in that case the Prodoc).
- c) N/A

October 31, 2024:

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

Agency Response

29 October 2024

- a)** A detailed description of the barriers was included in Section A and a cause/effect graph added in section B.

The document "Analysis of the causal chain" (in Spanish) is attached separately to be uploaded to the portal, as an integral part of the project document. The attached document expands on the following four key barriers:

1. Limited capacity to manage Protected Areas (PA): Lack of updated management plans, weak organization of actors and inadequate monitoring of biodiversity.
2. Insufficient flow of resources : Lack of financing, equipment and human resources for forest restoration and community participation in the management of PAs.
3. Insufficient incentives and technical capacity : Lack of incentives for conservation and development of sustainable livelihoods, coupled with difficulties in accessing financing for communities.
4. Limited opportunities for knowledge exchange : Limited awareness and coordination around good practices for conservation and sustainable management of forest landscapes.

- b)** The role of stakeholders is added to each of the outputs and additional information can be found in Stakeholder Engagement Plan that has been uploaded in the portal.

In general: The participation of the Stakeholders in the management and implementation of the project "Protection and Conservation of Forests of Global Importance Located in the BOSAWAS Biosphere Reserve and the Indio Ma'z Biological Reserve" is of vital importance, for which an Engagement Plan was designed that guarantees the participation of all actors in the different stages of the project from formulation, implementation and closures. The Stakeholder Engagement Plan includes: i) a detailed description of the different engagement processes with stakeholders, ii) the governance arrangements, iii) the communication plans and mechanisms that have been established to support the implementation of the project. It will be reviewed and approved in the project initiation workshop, thus ensuring the inclusion and participation of all interested parties, including Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants, academia, private companies and state institutions.

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

August 8, 2024:

a) No, as mentioned above the ToC is not really presented.

a.1. The narrative is about the project objective and general approach and the baseline. Please elaborate a narrative that describes the project logic, including how the project design elements are contributing to the objective and the different identified causal pathways.

a.2. The diagram is a table without any link between the elements. Please provide a diagram which looks like a ToC including the casual pathways.

b) Yes, cleared.

c) Partially. The description presents cooperation with cooperation with 2 ongoing initiatives (under the section on Institutional Arrangement) and mentions alignment with important key initiatives such

as the Regional Environmental Strategy 2021-2025/ CCAD/SICA, AFOLU 2040, IberoMAB, the 5 Great Forests of Mesoamerica initiative... Nevertheless it is unclear how the project builds on or articulate with these initiatives, as well as on lessons and experiences in the country/region. Please elaborate further on that aspect.

d)

d.1. The project elements are mainly listed but not described. Please describe the project components, outcomes, outputs and activities.

d.2. In particular in the component 3, the innovative investments are very vague: "innovative economic models", "economic instruments for environmental incentives", "Diversified livelihoods"... In the detailed description of the component, please clarify what these innovative investments can be with examples and justify how they have been identified (based on lessons learnt, successful experience elsewhere...).

e) The incremental/additional cost reasoning is not described. Please elaborate on that aspect.

f) The socioeconomic benefits resulting from the project are not described. Please elaborate on that aspect.

g)

g.1. The travel expense of "Mobilization expenses to strengthen governance and management of protected areas (R.1.1)" looks high for a national project (\$253,050). Please clarify what this expense entails.

g.2. The "Expenses for workshops and meetings to strengthen governance and management of protected areas" looks also high (\$991,000). Please clarify, including with the indication of the number and price of the workshops.

g.3. Please clarify the acronyms in the expense "GTI Offices (3 AWB, 4 RACCN, 1 RACCS)".

g.4. we note the acquisition of Pickup Trucks using a high amount of resources (\$182,200). As per GEF guidelines, the use of GEF funds to purchase vehicles is strongly discouraged. Such costs are normally expected to be borne by the co-financed portion of PMCs. Any request to use GEF funding to purchase project vehicles must be justified by the exceptional specific circumstances of the project. The GEF Secretariat will assess such request and decide whether to approve it, based on following criteria: type of project, operating environment, contribution to achievement of project results, and share of costs covered by co-financing, among others. Please clarify (including how many vehicles in total) so that the GEF Secretariat can assess the request.

g.5. Under the category "5028 GOE budget", the sum of the elements doesn't match with the total for some expenses (for Telecommunication Services and Minor Maintenance of Office and Equipment). Please check and correct.

g.6. There is a difference between the total amount for M&E and PMC between the budget provided in Annex G and in the Project Description table. Please review and correct where necessary.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) ⓘ					
M&E	Technical Assistance	M&E 1. M&E system evaluates project impact and guides adaptive management <i>Result Indicator:</i> <i>Number of project implementation monitoring reports prepared</i> <i>Target: 2 (Mid-Term Review and Terminal Evaluation)</i>	M&E 1.1. M&E plan implemented considering gender and Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants perspectives and indicators	GET	277,150.00 1,001,683.00
Sub Total (\$)				11,100,419.00	33,102,340.00
Project Management Cost (PMC) ⓘ					
GET				555,021.00	1,655,117.00
Sub Total(\$)				555,021.00	1,655,117.00
Total Project Cost(\$)				11,655,440.00	34,757,457.00

Please explain any aspects of the budget as needed here

	Total	C.1	C.2	C.3	C.4	M&E	PMC	Executing partner
FAO Cost Categories	GEF	Total	Total	Total	Total			
TOTAL	11,655,440	2,331,088	2,097,979	5,827,720	566,482	302,150	547,021	

h) The description doesn't clearly explain how the project design ensure resilience to future changes in the drivers and include adaptive management. Please briefly elaborate on this aspect.

i) No because the components are not described. Please make sure the relevant stakeholders (including women, private sector, CSO, e.g.) and their roles adequately are described within the components.

j) Partially as mentioned above. Please complete where relevant in the component description.

k) Yes, knowledge management, learning and strategic communication are key elements of the project design, especially under component 4. As mentioned above, to make it clearer, we suggest to create specific outcome/outputs on knowledge management and communication under the component 4.

l)

l.1. While this project includes some elements that might enhance policy coherence for environmental benefits, there can be increased attention to enhancing and facilitating policy alignment through this

project. Where possible, please consider the influence and potential involvement of different ministries and sectors in the project components to support the overall project objective.

l.2. In component 1 (paragraph 41), please consider including further information or examples on the "conditions" that will be facilitated for the protection and conservation of primary forests. Does this mean the intersectoral dialogues that are mentioned in the next sentence? The inclusion of different sectors and ministries in these dialogues will be crucial to ensure policy and priority alignment. Also, what will be the outcomes of these dialogues? Could it result in the formation of a sustainable interministerial working group or committee that can support forest conservation and management in the long term as well?

l.3. In component 1 (paragraph 42), please elaborate on who will be included in the inter-institutional and intersectoral coordination spaces. Some questions to consider are: Will these spaces be comprised of governmental representatives, or non-governmental, or a combination of both? In addition, will the governmental participants be included from environmental sectors only or other related sectors as well? Including other relevant sectors (e.g., Ministry of Planning, Finance, Tourism, etc.) will be beneficial in enhancing policy coherence for environmental benefits.

m) Yes, cleared.

October 31, 2024:

a), c), d), e), f) Thank you for the consideration and additional information. Cleared.

g) g.1, g.2, g.4, g.5, and g.6. Thank you for the clarification, justification (meetings and vehicles) and corrections. Cleared.

g.3. We don't find the cell A91 and the budget table in the Portal entry don't explicit the acronyms. Please add a foot note below the budget table clarifying what these acronyms stand for.

h), i), j), k) and l. Thank you for the clarification and additional information. Cleared.

November 6, 2024:

g) Thank you for the clarification. Nevertheless there is a difference between the total amount for Component 4 between the budget provided in Annex G and in the Project Description table. The total amount of the components in the budget table does not add up to the total amount of the project budget. Please review and correct where necessary.

a) Changes in the Project Narrative:

a.1) The project narrative has been organized and structured to highlight the importance of conservation and sustainable development in a context of environmental and social challenges, an extended project component description has been included.

In the description of alternative scenarios with GEF interventions: the wording was adjusted. It now reads:
?Considering the general objective of the project, the key actions of the project are designed based on the following premise: an integrated strategy in the Caribbean region of Nicaragua will result in the effective management of protected areas, better governance of forests and lands with the participation of Indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples, complemented with public and private investments through coordination with government institutions to overcome the barriers identified and to address the direct causes of deforestation from different levels, including specific investments to promote sustainable value chains both in the agricultural and livestock sector, that prevent deforestation and promote conservation in areas of connectivity between forest landscapes of the two prioritized protected areas (Bosawas Natural Reserve and Indio Ma?z Biological Reserve).?

Table of Barriers to Overcome: The table was relocated after the adjusted diagram of the ToC and wording of the financing barrier in that table are improved.

a.2) In the description of the theory of change: the figure of the relationship between causes and effects linked to the degradation and loss of critical forest biomes in the BOSAWAS Biosphere Reserve and the Indio Ma?z Biological Reserve is added as well as a new ToC image.

b) No response required

c) Noted. Table 2. ?COOPERATION WITH ONGOING PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES? now includes a column describing how the program will articulate with these initiatives. Specifically, the initiatives have been linked to the different components and products to demonstrate synergies between them, for example:

– The project "Transforming food systems and reducing deforestation" in the Autonomous Region of the South Caribbean Coast and the department of R?o San Juan seeks to develop policies and incentives to promote sustainable production practices and gender-sensitive value chains. The experience and lessons learned in FOLUR will serve as a basis for creating innovative financial mechanism models that will be developed in component 3 of the project.

- In the case of this same component, specifically output 3.1.3, the project Transforming food systems and reducing deforestation in the landscapes of protected areas and biological corridors of the Autonomous Region of the South Caribbean Coast and the department of R?o San Juan, is linked to the product as it implements best land use practices (soil use) and restoration activities near the project's areas of influence.

d1) The description of the project components has been improved to include outcomes, products and activities. These changes were made in the section on components and expected results.

d2) output 3.1.1 now includes a description of possible innovative investments with an example of the accumulated experience in Nicaragua on tax incentives with the business sector to promote conservation and an Innovative Financial Model for Environmental Protection and Sustainability focused on Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, with incentives to finance investment plans actively target by women, youth, and women-led businesses. MARENA, together with regional and indigenous governments, will lead its design and governance. The model will include incentives for positive ecosystem externalities, tax disincentives for harmful activities, payment schemes for ecosystem services, tradable credits, and environmental certifications. Nicaragua will contribute its experience in tax incentives to encourage investment in environmental protection and restoration.

e) The Rationale for incremental costs has been added in project description and can be summarized as follows: The incremental costs of the project are justified by the need for additional resources for the implementation of an integrated approach in the Caribbean Region of Nicaragua that will result in effective management of protected areas and improved governance of protected areas with the participation of Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendant peoples.

For example, component 3 includes specific investments to promote value chains (agriculture and livestock) that prevent deforestation and promote conservation in areas of connectivity between forest landscapes of the two prioritized protected areas (RBB and RBIM). This source of financing comes from the allocation of the General Budget of the Republic for the financing of the National Campaign "Verde que te quiero Verde" (Green that I love you Green) , which aims to plant 4 million trees, including fruit and ornamental trees, as well as promote environmental education.

f) The socio-economic benefits resulting from the project were included in relevant section. Specifically, the project not only seeks to preserve the natural environment, but also to strengthen the social and economic fabric of the communities involved, ensuring long-term benefits for all stakeholders.

g.1 The amount corresponding to Mobilization expenses to strengthen the governance and management of protected areas (R.1.1) is explained by the fact that communities in the project's impact area face access difficulties, both by land and water, which impacts the costs of mobilization and permanence. Since many of these communities are located on river banks, access is mainly by water and staff are required to remain on site for long periods.

A comprehensive mobilization plan has been designed to address multiple project topics during each visit, optimizing resources. Mobilization costs include the rental of water transport, lubricants, fuel, food and lodging for technical staff and consultants. In addition, these costs cover visits related to the development of territorial governance instruments, the updating of management plans for the Bosaw's Biosphere Reserve and the Indio Ma'z Biological Reserve, and awareness campaigns on protected areas.

A mechanism for monitoring and evaluating territorial governance in the region is also envisaged, for which recurrent visits to the territories are necessary.

See more details in the file uploaded in the relevant Budget annex.

g.2 The document included a table describing the number of activities to be carried out, including workshops, meetings, FPIC and training in the project's intervention areas.

The processes of strengthening the governance and management of protected areas require multiple meetings, training and workshops to update the management plan of the BBR and validate governance instruments with the participation of all actors, including processes of Prior, Free and Informed Consultation with indigenous territories.

It is essential to create spaces for the exchange of experiences that encourage the participation of women and young people in decision-making, ensuring the inclusion of women. It is proposed to develop enabling actions, such as recreational spaces for children, which include food and care.

The principle of prior consultation is based on the autonomy recognized in the Nicaraguan Constitution, ensuring the rights of indigenous peoples. 194 activities have been planned to strengthen the governance and management of protected areas.

See further details in the file uploaded in the relevant Budget annex

g.3 Acronyms included in the Budget in cell A91 have been clarified

- GTI: Indigenous Territorial Government (acronym in spanish)
- 3 territories in Alto Wangki and Bocay (AWB)
- 4 territories in the Autonomous Region of the North Caribbean Coast (RACCN)
- 1 territory in the Autonomous Region of the South Caribbean Coast (RACCS)

g4) The "Protection and Conservation of Forests of Global Importance" project will be developed in the Bosawas Biosphere Reserve (RBB) and the Indio Ma'z Biological Reserve (RBIM), covering a total of 997,337 ha on the North and South Caribbean Coast, where accessibility conditions are limited.

To ensure effective implementation of the project, four vehicles will be acquired to allow timely mobilization of technical equipment for monitoring, restoration, environmental education and technical assistance activities. These vehicles will facilitate access to local communities and strengthen governance in the areas of intervention.

Purchasing our own vehicles will reduce long-term operating costs, since renting in these regions is expensive, and the difference between buying and renting is considerable, since, in the national market, renting a single pick-up vehicle has an average cost of \$75 per day, plus insurance costs, which is more expensive for rentals.

Additionally, the communities within the Bosawas Biosphere Reserve (RBB) and the Indio Ma'z Biological Reserve (RBIM) are located in areas of difficult access, which implies the need for several vehicles to make the necessary visits. Since this is a five-year project, the recurring expenses associated with renting would generate an unsustainable financial burden in the long term.

In this sense, the purchase of the vehicles will not only optimize project resources, but will also guarantee greater autonomy and continuity in the execution of planned activities, minimizing the risk of interruptions in project activities.

Vehicles will be selected and equipped to meet the specific needs of the terrain, ensuring that the team has the appropriate means to meet the challenges of the area.

See further details in the file uploaded in the relevant Budget annex.

g.5 budget was reviewed and the data in cells E102 and E104 was corrected, please refer to the budget

g.6 The amounts indicated in M&E and PMC were reviewed and corrected in accordance with what was provided for the project, please see budget

h) A more extensive description of project components has been added. Specific paragraphs (19,20) have been added in the description of the drivers to explain how the project design ensures resilience to future changes in the drivers.

Moreover, a risk and adaptation measure was added to the RISKS MATRIX Table (technical design of projects).

I) Component description has been extended and the role of the relevant stakeholders was described in each of the component outputs. The Stakeholder Engagement Plan provides further details and analysis.

j) Further details have been added in the project description, including specific gender considerations addressed from the perspective of the Gender Action Plan and, taking up the points suggested by the reviewers, as detailed in the response of the Project Description Overview (d).

Please note that a gender diagnostic that will analyze gender gaps will be carried out in the first year of the project, as explained in the Gender analysis and Action Plan.

k) Point taken. We have defined two outputs as suggested and reallocated the outputs as follows:

Outcome 4.1 Improved knowledge management based on decision-making:

- 4.1.1. Environmental education and awareness programs at the local, regional and national level for the protection and conservation of CFB executed, and translated into local indigenous languages
- 4.1.2. Systematized and replicated good environmental practices in Protected Areas, guaranteeing the application of traditional and ancestral knowledge of the Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants.

Outcome 4.2 Greater regional and transnational cooperation and coordination activated:

- 4.2.1. Strategy to improve the capacity of sub-national governments to conserve, manage and monitor CFBs implemented with the contributions received from the regional level.
- 4.2.2. Participation in the Integrated Program Mesoamerica Knowledge Platform
- 4.2.3 South-South Cooperation for knowledge exchange, innovative solutions and harmonized planning strengthened

II) Stakeholder engagement has been described in each project component, and this include potential involvement of differen ministries and sector. A specific paragraph was included describing the active participation of institutional actors at national, regional and territorial levels that can support the overall objective of the project.

I2 ? In the description of component 1 of the "conditions" that will be provided for the protection and conservation of primary forests is expanded. Specifically, supporting the development and implementation of the instruments required to strengthen the governance of the core zones of protected areas, being, firstly, the updating, validation and dissemination of statutes, regulations and ordinances for the implementation of indigenous territorial plans in territories that have their communal property titles; secondly, the joint management plans for the Bosawas Biosphere Reserve and the Indio Ma?z Biological Reserve, through which the zoning and regulations of the reserves will be updated for both their core zones and buffer zones; Third, the update of the Strategy and Development Plan for the Caribbean Coast and Alto Wangki and Bocay, where the

main elements of the instruments generated in the indigenous territories and for the reserves will be integrated; and fourth, the instruments developed at the level of indigenous territories, the reserve area and the Caribbean Coast will allow their actions to be incorporated into the implementation process of the NATIONAL POLICY TO PREVENT DEFORESTATION AND FOREST DEGRADATION, PRESIDENTIAL DECREE No. 06-2023, approved on June 9, 2023, Published in La Gaceta, Official Gazette No. 104 of June 13, 2023.

The expected results of the intersectoral dialogues that will be supported by the project are also included, which are summarized as follows:

In the project area, being an Autonomous Region of the Caribbean Coast in Nicaragua, the mechanisms for dialogue, consensus and agreement regarding the environmental management of protected areas and biodiversity must be developed at the communal and territorial level with the leadership of the Indigenous Territorial Governments, at the municipal level with the leadership of the Mayors, at the regional level with the leadership of the Autonomous Regional Governments of the North Caribbean Coast and South Caribbean Coast, and at the national level with the leadership of MARENA through the mechanisms established by the sectoral laws on forests, biodiversity and protected areas.

The results of the intersectoral dialogues are generated at these four levels based on what is approved in the planning and management instruments of each level and with the objective that from and between each level, financial, technical and scientific assistance for the conservation and management of forests is reviewed and managed; the status of the Projects and Programs that are executed or completed by non-governmental organizations and agencies within the Reserves is known and reviewed; proposals are generated in the elaboration of policies, norms and regulations to be applied in the Reserve; the actions necessary for the State institutions, non-governmental organizations, projects and donors to act in a coordinated manner and on the basis of the management plans and technical norms that are dictated for the area of the Reserve are managed.

We explained that the project will strengthen the Joint Management Committees for both the Bosawas Biosphere Reserve and the Indio Maiz Biological Reserve as the working mechanisms that will support the conservation and management of forests in the long term.

I3) A paragraph is included in the description of Component 1 describing the key stakeholders in the inter-institutional coordination spaces

m) No response required

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

August 9, 2024:

a) Yes, cleared.

b) N/A

c) Only 2 initiatives are identified. Aren't they others relevant such as the Strategy for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (ENDE- REDD+)? 2018 to 2040? Please confirm or complete.

d) Yes, cleared.

October 31, 2024:

c) Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

Agency Response

29 October 2024

a) and b). No response required

c) The FOLUR project "Transforming food systems and reducing deforestation in protected area landscapes and biological corridors of the Autonomous Region of the South Caribbean Coast and the department of R?o San Juan" was included in TABLE COOPERATION WITH ONGOING PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES. The Strategy for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (ENDE- REDD+) had been included as part of the initiatives with which the projects is aligned, please refer to section C.

d) no response required

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

August 9, 2024:

a)

a.1. In the project rationale, the text mentions the restoration of 25,000 hectares of land and ecosystems. This not consistent with the core indicator 3.1 that only refers to restoration of agriculture lands (not ecosystems). Please clarify.

a.2. In the rationale section, the description mentions the "ecosystem restoration initiatives implemented by the Indigenous Peoples and Afro-Descendants communities". Please include this restoration in the core indicator 3.

a.3. Please upload the EX-ACT tool so that we can check the assumptions and areas considered in the calculation of GHG mitigation expected result.

a.4. We note that the core indicator 6.1 includes indirect mitigation. Please clarify what activities will generate indirect mitigation and how.

b) Yes, cleared.

October 31, 2024:

a)

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

a.3. Thank you for providing the EXACT Tool. Please consider the following comments:

- The expected result in the EX-ACT tool doesn't match with the core indicator 6.1 in the core indicator table. Please correct the core indicator 6.1 to match with the EX-ACT tool.

- In many places in the project description (including in the Project Description Overview table), the target for the GHG emission mitigation is said to be 3,502,927.92 metric tons of CO₂e after 5 years. As per GEF guidance, a period of 20 years needs to be considered for the calculation. Please correct the target of 3,502,927.92 everywhere it appears to match with the result in the EX-ACT Tool based on a 20-years period.

a.4 Please provide the calculation for the expected indirect mitigation. It seems very complicated to calculate expected indirect benefits from activities like education programs and raising awareness... If the calculation is not based on a solid and recognized methodology, we suggest removing the expected indirect mitigation.

November 5, 2024:

a.3 and a.4. Thank you for the clarification and correction. Cleared.

Agency Response

4 November 2024

a.3. Noted, Core Indicator 6.1 has been changed to reflect EX-ACT calculations, considering 5 years of project implementation and 15 years of capitalization for a total of 20 years, the project is expected to mitigate - 16,374,265 metric tons of CO₂e.

a.4. The expected indirect mitigations (-3,727,244 tCO₂-e) do not refer to component 4 and activities of education programs and raising awareness. Indirect mitigations refer to the output of component 1 in the following areas: 1.1.2. Regulatory and management instruments for the administration of Indigenous and Afro-descendant territories and Protected Areas developed, updated and implemented. 1.1.3 IMBR management plan implemented and BBR management plan updated and implemented. 1.1.4. Territorial development plans and annual environmental operational plans of the Indigenous Peoples and Afro-Descendants updated. These outputs refer to forest management activities and territorial planning and will be monitored throughout project implementation activities and will be capitalized mostly in the 15 years after project implementation. Component 2 and 3 contributes to mitigate both direct and indirect mitigation in the Protected Areas of Bosawas and Indo Maiz.

Explication has been added in Core Indicator section

29 October 2024

a1) Clarifications were made and forest restoration is reflected in the relevant key indicator by:

- The explanation in the description of the Core indicator to which output 2.2 contributes (Core Indicator 3.2 Area of forests and forest land under restoration).
- The change from Core Indicator 3.1 to 3.2 in the Core indicators table

a2) Ecosystem restoration initiatives implemented by Indigenous Peoples and Afro-Descendants are already included in indicator 3, which refers to the number of hectares restored within the protected areas of the BNR and IMBR. 25,000 hectares, of which 15,000 hectares are in the BNR and 10,000 hectares in the IMBR

a3) EX-ACT tool was uploaded, please check calculation sheet, which has been validated by FAO Ex-ACT experts

a4) An explanatory paragraph was included, in the Core indicator section, on the activities contemplated by the project to guarantee indirect mitigation and are within the components of the project.

The project includes activities to ensure indirect mitigation in the project intervention areas, for example, Component 1 includes activities such as: i) Implement environmental education programs for the local

community and visitors, emphasizing the importance of forest and resource conservation. Awareness can foster pro-environmental attitudes. ii) Involve local communities in decision-making and natural resource management. Their traditional knowledge can be valuable and their participation fosters a sense of belonging and responsibility. iii) Establish clear rules on access to the protected area, limiting activities that may damage the ecosystem, such as agricultural activities, mining or uncontrolled urban expansion.

Activities included in Component 2 include: i) Establishing monitoring programs with indigenous communities to assess forest health and detect illegal activities, such as logging or poaching. Involving the local community in these activities can be particularly effective. ii) Conducting research on forest flora and fauna to identify endangered species and create specific conservation plans. Detailed knowledge of biodiversity can guide management decisions.

Component 3 includes i) Promotion of sustainable ecotourism, which not only generates income for the community, but also encourages forest conservation by involving visitors in protection and restoration activities. ii) Promotion of alternative economic activities, such as sustainable agriculture or the production of non-timber forest products (fruits, resins, etc.), which reduce dependence on logging.

b) No response required

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

August 9, 2024:

Yes, and we take note of the Climat Risk Screening uploaded in the Portal. Cleared.

Agency Response

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 RequestN/A

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

August 9, 2024:

a) The description focus on the alignment with the country initiative and priorities but there is no presentation on how the project aligns with the GEF Focal Areas. Please briefly elaborate on this alignment too.

b) Yes, cleared.

October 31, 2024:

a) Thank you for the additional information. Cleared.

Agency Response

29 October 2024

a) A paragraph was added in section C: Alignment with the GEF 8 Focal Areas.

The Project is aligned with the GEF 8 multifocal area and in particular with the Integrated Program on Amazonia, Congo and Critical Forest Biomes in its goal of "maintaining the integrity of tropical forests of global importance" and its objective of "Conserving the last primary tropical forests."

b) No response required

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 Request

August 9, 2024:

Yes, cleared.

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 Request

August 9, 2024:

The GBF targets the project will contribute to are listed but the description doesn't explain how. Please clarify how the project will contribute to the identified targets.

October 31, 2024:

Thank you for the additional information. In addition, what about the target 1 (participatory and integrated land use planning), target 2 (forest restoration), target 10 (enhance biodiversity and sustainability in agriculture), and target 23 (gender equality)? Please consider these targets too.

November 5, 2024:

Thank you for the additional information. Cleared.

Agency Response

4 November 2024

Noted, target 1, 2 ,10 and 23 have been added in section C.

29 October 2024

The explanation of the project's alignment with the objectives of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework has been adjusted and expanded in section C.

7 D. Policy Requirements

7.1 Are the Policy Requirement sections completed?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

August 9, 2024:

Under the gender section, the following options are not tagged with a "Yes": Closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources; and Improving women's participation and decision-making. Shouldn't it be the case considering the Gender Analysis and Action Plan? Please clarify.

October 31, 2024:

Thank you for the consideration. Cleared.

Agency Response

29 October 2024

Noted, they are now marked

7.2 Is the Gender Action Plan uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
August 9, 2024:

Yes but it is accessible through the Agency Prodoc. To facilitate access please upload the Gender Action Plan in the document tab of the Portal.

October 31, 2024:

Thank you for uploading the GAP. Cleared.

Agency Response
29 October 2024

Noted, this has now been uploaded

7.3 Is the stakeholder engagement plan uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
August 9, 2024:

Yes but it is accessible through the Agency Prodoc. To facilitate access please upload the Stakeholder Engagement Plan in the document tab of the Portal.

October 31, 2024:

Thank you for uploading the SEP. Cleared.

Agency Response
29 October 2024

Noted, this has now been uploaded

7.4 Have the required applicable safeguards documents been uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
August 9, 2024:

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

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

August 7, 2024:

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

Focal Area allocation?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

August 7, 2024:

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

LDCF under the principle of equitable access?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestN/A

Agency Response

SCCF A (SIDS)?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestN/A

Agency Response

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestN/A

Agency Response
Focal Area Set Aside?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestN/A

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

August 7, 2024:

The sum of the Amount Spent To date and the Amount Committed doesn't match with the total Amount Budgeted. Please correct.

October 31, 2024:

Thank you for the correction. Cleared.

Agency Response
29 October 2024

Status of Utilization of Project Preparation Grant has been reviewed and updated.

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 Request

August 7, 2024:

Yes, cleared.

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

August 9, 2024:

1. The co-financing letter from INAFOR is uploaded in the Portal but the link to this letter is missing in the co-financing table. Please add the link.
2. In the co-financing letter from the Indignous Terriotrial Government of Alto Wangki y Bokay, the translation in English mentions \$400,000 in-kind. This is not consistent with the original letter and the amounts reported in the co-financing table. Please correct the translation.
3. In the co-financing letter from MARENA, the translation in English mentions \$6,045,480 in-kind. This is not consistent with the original letter and the amounts reported in the co-financing table. Please correct the translation.
4. The co-financing from MHCP amounting to USD 13,617,810, indicated as Investment Mobilized, lacks specific details on the financial instruments and a breakdown of the budget items, apart from a general reference to CCRIF Sovereign Catastrophe Risk Insurance Policies. Please explain the financial instruments and their intended usage. For the co-financing of USD 9,721,310 from the same letter, please clarify whether the ?capital transfers? will be provided in the form of grants instead of in-kind contributions. A breakdown table outlining expense plans and financial instruments would be beneficial.
5. The co-financing calculation report from GRACCN, attached to the co-financing letter, contains several inconsistencies. For instance, it states that the monthly cost of office supplies is USD 6,915.14, which for five years totals USD 34,575.72 instead of the correct amount of USD 414,908.4 (calculated as USD 6,915.14 per month x 12 months x 5 years). Also, the stated monthly amount for office supplies appears unusually high, potentially due to a typo. Please review and correct these figures where necessary.

October 31, 2024:

- 1, 2, 3 and 5. Thank you for the clarification and correction. Cleared.
4. The new uploaded letter and the link in the table are wrong: INAFOR co-financing letter is provided instead of the MHCP letter. Please provide the co-financing letter from MHCP and enure the financial numbers and their nature in this letter match with the co-financing table in the Portal entry.

November 5, 2024:

4. Thank you for the adjustment. Cleared.

Agency Response
4 November 2024

4. noted and apologies, MHCP is now uploaded in the correct letter section, matching numbers and their nature in the portal.

29 October 2024

1. INAFOR letter has been now uploaded

2. English translation is consistent with original letter. In the first page of the letter, it is stated that the amount is \$400,000 in kind and recurrent expenditures. Only on the second page of the letter is the amount divided between In-kind (\$250,000) and Investment Mobilized (\$150,000) as reported in the portal.

3. English translation is consistent with original letter. In the first page of the letter, it is stated that the amount is \$6,045,480 in kind and recurrent expenditures and that it contemplates also a portion of investment mobilized. Only on the second page of the letter is the amount divided between In-kind (\$5,479,408) and Investment Mobilized (\$566,072) as reported in the portal.

A brief paragraph in the co-financing letters explanation was included on the modalities for the concept of recurring expenses and in-kind use that the Ministry will use for counterparty.

4. The explanation of the General Budget of the Republic, which is another of the financial instruments to be used, is expanded, through the allocations to the 17 municipalities that are in the areas of interest of the project. Of the total amount assigned annually, 5% of this is destined for the environment, as established in the Law . No. 850, further details on the co-financing letter are included in the description.

5. The co-financing letters were issued by the Regional Government of the North Caribbean Coast, in the format and terms presented, and were signed by its highest authorities. The authorities confirmed that the in-kind contribution to the project is 748,898 USD.

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 Request

N/A

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 Request

August 7, 2024:

Yes, the endorsement letter was uploaded at PFD. Cleared.

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 Request

August 7, 2024:

Yes, the endorsement letter was approved at PFD. Cleared.

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

August 9, 2024:

Yes, cleared.

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

August 29, 2024:

The Location Names are numerical whereas they should actually name the concerned location. Please provide actual names as available or just mention 'Site #' as used further below in the project submission.

October 31, 2024:

Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

Agency Response

29 October 2024

Noted, locations name and Geo Names ID have now been added

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

August 7, 2024:

Yes, cleared.

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

August 9, 2024:

a) and b) Yes, cleared.

c) Yes, in the Annex L of the Prodoc. Cleared.

Agency Response

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 Request N/A

Agency Response

Additional Annexes

9. GEFSEC DECISION

9.1. GEFSEC Recommendation

Is the project recommended for approval

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

August 29, 2024:

Not yet. Please address the comments raised above and consider the following:

1. In addressing the comments, please clearly indicate in the review sheet where the amendments/additions have been made and highlight them in yellow to facilitate the review.
2. In addition, the Annex I "Responses to project reviews" is missing (this annex includes a table on the changes from the Concept Note which is not relevant here). Please complete this annex providing responses to Council and STAP comments at PFD stage that are relevant at country level.

October 31, 2024:

Not yet. Please address the few remaining comments.

November 6, 2024:

Not yet. Please address the comment on the budget.

November 6, 2024:

The remaining comment has been addressed. The CEO endorsement is now recommended.

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	8/29/2024	10/29/2024
Additional Review (as necessary)	10/31/2024	11/4/2024
Additional Review (as necessary)	11/6/2024	11/7/2024
Additional Review (as necessary)	11/7/2024	
Additional Review (as necessary)		