

Integrated management and ecological connectivity of a priority landscape in the Ecuadorian Amazon headwaters

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

11202

Countries

Ecuador

Project Name

Integrated management and ecological connectivity of a priority landscape in the Ecuadorian Amazon headwaters

Agencies

CI

Date received by PM

8/16/2024

Review completed by PM

11/20/2024

Program Manager

Naoko Nakagawa

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

(NN Nov 18, 2024)

- 1) PM Cleared - explanation provided that agency project ID does not yet exist.
- 2) PM Cleared. Same budget line for RCP participation in CEO endorsement request document, with indication added that it covered 5 years participation in RCP.

(NN Nov 11, 2024)

- 1) GEF Agency ID is still missing. Please complete the portal entry.
- 2) Cleared on the basis that CI as GEF Agency ensures that participation in RCP for 5 years is appropriately budgeted. Explanation provided for 4 years (48 months) of project implementation duration. Budget for participation to RCP for 5 years is indicated, however, it is not visible in the submitted budget since it is not annualized.

(NN/PM September 2024)

- 1) GEF Agency project ID is missing. Please complete.
- 2) The project duration is proposed to be 48 months (4 years). Please consider adjusting it to 60 months (5 years), to harmonize with Regional Coordination Program and other relevant child projects

in the region. If the agency believes 48 months is the preferred and realistic timeline, please explain.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 11/19/2024

- 1) Clearance noted.
- 2) Clearance noted.

CI-GEF 11/14/2024

- 1) The GEF ID is 11202. CI-GEF Agency currently has no internal ID system for its projects during the development phase.
- 2) CI-GEF will ensure participation in RCP for 5 years. Budget has been revised to indicate participation to RCP for 5 years.

CI-GEF 11/07/2024

- 1) CIGEF to include directly in portal
- 2) During PPG, the project duration was adjusted to 4 years considering that the project builds on previous WWF and partner initiatives in both connectivity corridors. In this sense, strong collaboration relations with local stakeholders are already in place, facilitating project implementation and reducing the time needed for project inception.

Additionally, the project approach focuses mostly on strengthening, consolidating and mobilizing ongoing efforts towards project objectives, which requires working with existing structures and processes rather than creating new ones from scratch.

Budget for participation in the regional coordination program and events will be considered for 5 years, to ensure Ecuador continues to engage in year 5 even if the project is planned for 4 years.

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

(NN Nov 11, 2024)

PM Cleared. Portal entry updated (portal generated pdf version of CEO endorsement document page 3).

When referring to page numbers please clearly indicate in which document it is. As a general rule, the official version is the portal entry and the portal-generated pdf version of CEO endorsement document.

(NN/PM September 2024)

Only BD is chosen as Significant Objective (1).

Please amend: Biodiversity and Climate Change Mitigation and should be tagged as ?Principal Objective (2)? as they are the rationale of the Critical Forest Biome Integrated Program.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 11/14/2024

Clearance noted.

Thank you for the guidance, we took note of this.

CI-GEF 11/07/2024

Addressed. The information was included in page 268 and updated in the portal.

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

(NN Nov 12, 2024)

a1) PM Cleared.

a2) PM Cleared.

(NN/PM September 2024)

a)

a1) The link with the Regional Coordination Project (RCP) is missing in the summary. Please add one short paragraph summarizing how this child project will link with the rest of the regional program including the RCP (there is some flexibility with the 250-word limit for adding this point);

a2) Please add a short paragraph summarizing the expected results in terms of GEF core indicators.

b) Yes.

c) Yes, reference to ASL and ASL 3 included.

Agency Response
CI-GEF 11/14/2024

a1-a2) Clearance noted.

CI-GEF 11/07/2024

a1) A paragraph referring to the RCP has been included on Prodoc page 21 and in Portal section Part II. Project Justification Project Summary.

a2) A short paragraph has been added that summarizes the expected outcomes in terms of GEF core indicators (p. 24) and in Portal section Part II. Project Justification Project Summary.

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
(NN Nov 18, 2024)

a1) PM Cleared - the project target corrected to 1,038, 377 ha, which is a sum of CI 1 and CI 4 targets. It is understood that the exclusion of 400 ha indicated in the agency response refers to CI 3 rather than CI 4.

a2) PM Cleared - CI 4 is corrected so that it is consistently at 461,088 ha.

(NN Nov 12, 2024)

a1) The project objective now includes the numeric target of SLM practices across 1,043, 899 hectares of tropical montane forest landscapes. Please explain how this value is derived, since this is different from the total hectares targeted under CI1, CI3 and CI4.

a2) There is a mismatch on CI4 target under Project Objective, between the portal entry (462,088 ha) and CI ProDoc (461,088 ha). Please maintain consistency throughout.

c1) PM Cleared.

c2) PM Cleared.

c3) PM Cleared.

(NN September 2024)

a) Concise and clear. However, please also make the objective measurable. Also, how the project activities will achieve "secure water provision" as indicated in the objective, is not well explained in the project description. Please strengthen the description or adjust the objective.

b) Yes, generally.

c)

c1) Please include Components numbering in the Child Project Description Overview table and Component Balances table.

c2) Component titles for 1, 2 and 3 are extremely concise, which make it rather general and vague. No need to make them into lengthy sentences, but please expand them just a bit to capture what each project component will concretely work on. (Example: specifically mention PAs and conservation areas in Component 1, specifically mention connectivity corridors in Component 2 etc.)

c3) Component 1 aims at overcoming key management deficiencies in the selected PAs and local conservation areas. The Outputs proposed appear to be limited to financial sustainability and monitoring & surveillance, out of many other elements of PA management effectiveness. Please ensure that the METT will capture the full spectrum of management effectiveness improved through the proposed project.

d) Yes.

e) Yes, around 5%.

f) Yes, around 5%.

Agency Response
CI-GEF 11/19/2024

- a1) Clearance noted.
- a2) Clearance noted.

CI-GEF 11/14/2024

a1) The correct figure for the project target is 1,038,377 ha. There was a typo in the previous version. This value is the sum of the total hectares under CI1 plus CI4. We are not adding to the project target the 400 ha of CI4 as these hectares are contained within the connectivity corridors landscapes.

a2) The value in the portal entry has been revised to the correct value indicated in the Agency ProDoc.

c1-c3) Clearance noted.

CI-GEF 11/07/2024

a) The project's objective has been adjusted.

C1) Done, components numbering added and adjusted across project document and in the portal

C2) Components titles expanded throughout the document and in the portal

C3) Adjustment has been made in the component and outcome descriptions, as suggested (p. 55)

d) No action needed.

e) No action needed.

f) No action 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

(NN Nov 18, 2024)

a3) Already PM Cleared - thank you, the maps are now uploaded in Annex E as part of portal entry of CEO endorsement request document.

(NN Nov 12, 2024)

a1) PM Cleared.

a2) PM Cleared. Previous reference to hydropower projects and mining expansion are removed and revised language commensurate with the project focus is inserted from in para 9-10.

a3) PM Cleared. Annex E is uploaded as a separate attachment. In the future, please ensure that such referred Annexes are part of the portal entry of the CEO endorsement document so that CEO endorsement request document can be read as a standalone document, which is circulated for the GEF Council Member review.

a4) PM Cleared.

a5) PM Cleared - Irrelevant symbol removed from portal entry. It is unclear in the agency responses what 'info' is referred to in ProDoc page 126, however.

b) PM Cleared - a column inserted in the table of key roles of the project stakeholders - in the portal pdf version page 57.

(NN/PM September 2024, HS October 2024)

a)

a1) Please clarify what the acronym "AATB" stands for the first time it appears in the CEO endorsement request document.

a2) Out of the 3 identified drivers of forest loss and degradation, 2 key drivers are hydropower projects and mining expansion, including illegal activities at scale. Considering the proposed project is focused on PA management and SLM practices, it is not clear how it will address these 2 drivers. Please elaborate further on that aspect.

a3) "Table 1-5 and Figure 1, 2a-c, 3, 6 etc... in Annex E" are referred, however, there are no such tables under GEF template Annex E. Please include relevant tables and Annexes and ensure there are appropriately entered in the GEF portal entry.

a4) Please spell out REM, PSB, PECC the first time it appears in the portal entry.

a5) Please use the portal form to upload images that are no loading in the CEO Endorsement Request document generated in the official PDF version. The portal entry created the official version of the document that is circulated to the Council members for review and once endorsed it becomes a public document posted publicly. Accordingly please ensure that these entry errors are corrected.



agricultural frontier (Naughton-Treves, 2004; Fernández-Llamazares *et al.*, 2018).

b) Stakeholders are described in the Stakeholder section along with the relevant project Components. Please add a column in the table, to indicate the specific GEBs and project Outcomes each stakeholder will contribute.

c) N/A

Agency Response

CI-GEF 11/19/2024

a3) Clearance noted.

CI-GEF 11/14/2024

a1) Clearance noted.

a2) Clearance noted.

a3) Clearance noted. Annex E was uploaded as part of the portal entry of the CEO Endorsement document.

a4) Clearance noted.

a5) Clearance noted.

b) Clearance noted.

Clearance noted.

CI-GEF 11/07/2024

a1) Done, description on the acronym AATB is included in B. CHILD PROJECT DESCRIPTION, innovation section, and in prodoc see section A (p.25).

a2) The project rationale has been revised to emphasize its focus on addressing deforestation and forest degradation (and updated accordingly in the theory of change diagram). The project's institutional strengths are concentrated on SLM practices, forest governance, and PAs management, which remain the core focus of intervention efforts.

a3) CIGEF to check all annexes are in the portal

a4) Done, acronyms defined accordingly in section A. **PROJECT RATIONALE**.

a5a) CI checked all images and tables in Annex E to correctly upload information to the portal. This info is in the prodoc in page 126.

a5b) A column has been added associating GEBs and project outcomes to each stakeholder (p.94 ? 102 in the prodoc), in the portal see Part II. Project Justification B. CHILD PROJECT DESCRIPTION.

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
(NN Nov 19, 2024)

j1) PM Cleared. Discrepancy is now resolved.

(NN Nov 18, 2024)

h) PM Cleared. Description on the project approaches to resilience included in ToR narrative and Component 2 & 3 description.

j1) There is a minor discrepancy. In the Child Project Description Overview project components tables and narratives, it indicates Outcome 4.1 target is 15,000 stakeholders (at least 30% women) and Target 4.1.1 as 10,000 people (50% women). In the Results Framework, End of the Project

Outcome Target is indicated as at least 15,000 stakeholders (at least 40% women). Please ensure consistency or explain.

(NN Nov 12, 2024)

a1) a2) PM Cleared - hydropower and mining removed from ToC.

a3) PM Cleared - additional description on the project's promotion of SLM practices reduce the pressure on forested areas, in the narrative of ToC. However, it is unclear how exactly the causal path is improved in the ToC diagram - the ToC diagram has extremely small fonts and cumbersome to read. Please ensure all stakeholders understand it by the project launch and ensure it is reviewed at MTR.

b) PM Cleared - water functionality removed from ToC. Please ensure consistency with other documents such as ESS documents, TORs etc.

c1) PM Cleared. Reference to ASL II included in Para 14 and 15 under Project Rationale/Baseline of portal generated CEO Endorsement Request template and relevant sections in the ProDoc.

c2) PM Cleared. Appendix 1 uploaded.

d1) PM Cleared. Explanation provided in response and additional details included in the portal entry and ProDoc.

d2) PM Cleared. Further elaboration of the chosen approach included in the portal entry and ProDoc.

d3) PM Cleared - reference to water provision removed. However, please ensure maintaining consistency and the old reference to water provision etc. co-exists with other documents such as ESS documents, TORs etc. Also, it is still in the Project Summary. Please maintain consistency.

4. The project's Global Environmental Benefits (GEBs) include protecting and restoring tropical montane forests, enhancing Andean-Amazon habitat connectivity, and securing water provision. It aims to improve the effectiveness of 577,313 hectares of PAs, promote sustainable land management (SLM)

d4) PM Cleared - additional explanation on SLM practices enhancing landscape permeability/connectivity included under Component 3 description.

d5) PM Cleared - additional description on BIOFIN in Ecuador added under Outcome 3.2.

e) PM Cleared - Para 14 and 15 added under GEBs in the portal entry.

f) PM Cleared - PIR also added.

g1) PM Cleared - explanation provided in the response.

g2) Thank you for the excel budget which was legible. However, please fix the formatting of the budget table in the portal entry.

h) Not Addressed - it appears that the agency overlooked and mixed up review comment h) and

i). Please respond on the review comment (h) on resilience to future changes.

i) PM cleared - key stakeholders added to each component description.

j1) Please add sex aggregated targets for Outcome 4 indicator.

j2) PM Cleared.

l) PM Cleared - explanation provided in the response.

(NN/PM September 2024, VC October 2024)

a)

a1) The ToC diagram shows Land Use Change as the single direct threat, which is not consistent with the project description, which includes deforestation and forest degradation; hydropower projects; and mining expansion. Please show the identified threats and use causal chain arrow to show where the specific GEF project intervention will be.

a2) The causal chain flow leading to one of the Impacts, "Secure water provision", is unclear how the project activities will lead to the impact of securing water provision. Please articulate.

a3) It is not fully explained why adoption of SLM practices and value chain development are expected to contribute to forest conservation. Please include explanation in the logic.

b) Yes generally. However, the child project's ToC diagram shows "Water functionality" under ASL3 Conservation Targets. The terminology of "Water functionality" is not explained, and it is not found in ASL 3 targets either. Please explain.

c)

c1) In the baseline, there should be a strong reference to the GEF-7/ASL2 project in Ecuador and a presentation of the main lessons learned and how this first investment informed/influenced the design of the new project. Please elaborate on this aspect.

c2) The description in the portal entry refers to "Appendix 1 summarizing ongoing projects and investments in the project intervention area". However, we do not find such Appendix. Please clarify, include it in the description and attach/upload the relevant document, or include it as a section in the description.

d)

d1) Output 3.1.1 proposes that "WWF will sign a grant agreement with FORAGUA to channel the GEF resources to implement the conservation agreements". Please provide more information. It is unclear how the funds will flow, at what scale, what the total funding envelope is, selection criteria and beneficiary, and how it will achieve the project objectives and GEBs. In addition, the cost effectiveness of such fund pass-through is unclear, considering the CI is the implementing agency, and WWF is executing entity.

d2) Please describe why the project approach has been selected over other potential options.

d3) It is not sufficiently explained how enhancement of connectivity will secure water provisions. Please explain in the project description.

d4) It is not sufficiently explained how SLM practices will enhance connectivity. Please elaborate.

d5) For activities related to fostering financial incentives under Outcome 3.2, please review the results from the BIOFIN process in Ecuador and ensure that the proposed project activities do not duplicate.

e) Please expand on the GEB description. Currently, the GEBs are only expressed in terms of GEF Core Indicator targets. However, biodiversity benefits are not only about the hectareage of areas under effective management. For instance, please identify what kind of globally significant biodiversity will be conserved in the ecosystem of the proposed project areas, to which species the connectivity is the crucial element, their conservation status, Human-Wildlife Conflict (if any) and mitigation measures, etc. and tools/indicators to capture project contribution to conserving globally significant biodiversity.

f) Potential socioeconomic benefits are suggested. Please ensure and indicate that the project will monitor also through annual PIR, in addition to MTR and TE proposed as monitoring and reporting timing during project implementation.

g)

g1) As also in relation to the comment in d) above, the cost effectiveness of the GEF funds pass-through from CI to WWF to FORAGUA under Output 3.1.1 is unclear, with the potential layers of transaction cost.

g2) Please provide appropriate format of project budget for the GEF Secretariat to be able to review.

h) It is not clearly described. Please elaborate.

i) Please strengthen the description on roles of women. For some sex aggregated indicators, women's ratio appear very low (e.g., 30%) even though the CI 11 there are more women. Please consider higher targets or explain.

j)

j1) Some indicators do not have sex aggregated targets. Please include them.

j2) Please strengthen Component 1 by integrating the activities and actions developed in the Gender Action Plan (e.g., ensuring meaningful participation of women and women's organization in decision-making on the management and strengthening of PAs, ensuring that financial mechanisms capture and address gender inequalities in access to finance, ensuring access and support to women-led tourism initiatives, among others. Please integrate some of the indicators developed in the GAP into the Results Framework, e.g. number of NBT women-led initiatives, number of gender related KM developed, number of gender responsive SLM, etc.

k) Yes.

l) The lack of policy coherence is presented as a key challenge to promote integrated landscape planning as different sectors/ministries intervene with different even contradictory objectives. Please clarify how the project will address this issue involving and efficiently coordinating all the stakeholders involved in the territory.

m) The project is aligned with ASL 3 transformation levers. Scaling up opportunities are part of Output 4.1.4.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 11/19/2024

h) Clearance noted.

j) The discrepancy has been resolved, and the sex-disaggregated target is now the same in the Results Framework and the Project Description Overview for Target 4.1. Portal entries are updated accordingly. Target 4.1.1 remains the same as it refers to number of people reached by the

communication strategy. The project will monitor people involved under Output 4.1.2 and 4.1.3 as part of the safeguards implementation plan

CI-GEF 11/14/2024

a1-a2) Clearance noted.

a3) Clearance noted. The Agency will ensure the diagram is readable without zoom needed.

b) Clearance noted. Consistency checked.

c1) Clearance noted.

c2) Clearance noted.

d1) Clearance noted.

d2) Clearance noted.

d3) Clearance noted. Consistency checked in the Agency ProDoc and in the portal entry.

d4) Clearance noted.

d5) Clearance noted.

e) Clearance noted

f) Clearance noted.

g1) Clearance noted.

g2) The formatting of the budget table in the portal entry has been adjusted.

h) Regarding resilience to future changes, we have added additional text that provides information on how the project design ensures resilience considering the dynamic nature of environmental drivers. See paragraph in ToC change section, and specific lines under components 2 and 3.

j) Clearance noted.

j1) Sex disaggregated targets for Outcome 4 indicator has been added.

j2) Clearance noted.

l) Clearance noted.

CI-GEF 11/07/2024

a2) Same as above. Please refer to the ToC diagram. See Section B ? Theory of change in portal section II. Project Justification B. CHILD PROJECT DESCRIPTION.

a3) The ToC has been improved to further explain the causal path of forest conservation and recovery through the adoption of SLM practices and value chain development. See Section B ? Theory of change

b) Water functionality has been removed from the diagram in line with ASL 3 targets and throughout the PRODOC. See Section B ? Theory of change

C1) Two paragraphs regarding the ASL II project have been added. See portal section Part II. Project Justification. A. PROJECT RATIONALE, and in the Prodoc Section A? Baseline (p.39-40).

c2) Appendix 1 uploaded as an annex in the portal.[\[YB1\]](#) [\[AM2\]](#) [\[YB3\]](#)

d1) FORAGUA is a local financial mechanism already in place for the CCSP, and therefore a crucial stakeholder for the achievement of outputs 1.1.1 and 3.1.1, directed towards strengthening financial mechanisms for conservation and SLM practices. Through the grant agreement WWF as the lead EA of the project will **strengthen** the financial mechanism by complementing financial resources and providing technical assistance[\[AM4\]](#) [\[YB5\]](#) [\[DC6\]](#) [\[SW7\]](#) [\[DC8\]](#) for overall the financial mechanism rather than the incentives payment per se. The total funding envelope for FORAGUA is US\$ 817.800 as presented in the project Budget (Annex G). Funding will flow from CIGEF to WWF to FORAGUA.

Project descriptions for outputs 1.1.1 (pg 4) and 3.1.1 (pg 18) have been adjusted to clarify the rationale and scope of the strengthening process.

Also, consistently with the above-mentioned, FORAGUA is an important co-financer (USD \$2 million)

d1) FORAGUA is a local financial mechanism already in place for the CCSP, and therefore a crucial stakeholder for the achievement of outputs 1.1.1 and 3.1.1, directed towards strengthening financial mechanisms for conservation and SLM practices. Through the grant agreement WWF as the lead EA of the project will **strengthen** the financial mechanism by complementing financial resources and providing technical assistance for overall the financial mechanism rather than the incentives payment per se. The total funding envelope for FORAGUA is US\$ 817.800 as presented in the project Budget (Annex G). Funding will flow from CIGEF to WWF to FORAGUA.

Project descriptions for outputs 1.1.1 (pg 4) and 3.1.1 (pg 18) have been adjusted to clarify the rationale and scope of the strengthening process.

Also, consistently with the above-mentioned, FORAGUA is an important co-financer (USD \$2 million)

d2) Text further describing the approach of the project and the complementarity with past and current initiatives has been included in the section project components in section See Section B ? Theory of change, and in prodoc in pages 54 and 55.

d3) Water provision has been removed from the ToC and causal path diagram to better align with the project threats, outcomes and strategies as the project will not be able to have a direct and proved impact in this aspect.

d4)) Additional information regarding the link between SLM and ecological connectivity through landscape permeability has been included in the description on Component 3 in the section **B.**

CHILD PROJECT DESCRIPTION.

d5) Advances of the BIOFIN program in Ecuador have been reviewed and amendments in the description of outcome 3.2 has been added in the section **B. CHILD PROJECT DESCRIPTION** (in prodoc in page 77).

e) GEB section has been improved based on the observations by including critical elements of the montane forest biodiversity at the project summary section (p24) and at the section on Global Environmental Benefits in the portal section B. CHILD PROJECT DESCRIPTION (in Prodoc see page 92) Indicators at output and outcome level are proposed to generate impact in the project area and contribute to GEBs (core indicators at objective level).

f. Adjustments have been made to include the reporting of socioeconomic benefits during PIR preparation in addition to MTR and TE independent processes in the portal on Part II. Project Justification in the section related to Socio-economic Benefits (In prodoc changes are in p. 126)

g1) FORAGUA is one of the financial mechanisms to be strengthened under outputs 1.1.1 and 3.1.1, as stated in Answer d1) of section 5.1 above. The transfer of funds must be made through WWF as

the Executing Agency through a subgrant with FORAGUA ? usual practice for working with delivery partners of GEF projects. WWF will also provide technical assistance to ensure success of the financial mechanism working closely with FORAGUA and monitoring the use of the resources. We expect transaction costs to be minimal, this hasn't been an issue in other projects as no additional fees are included but rather a subgrant signed between WWF as EA and FORAGUA as delivery partner.

G2) We upload the updated budget in a word sheet since the portal do not allow to upload in this section an excel file. Nevertheless, we uploaded as an annex the budget in excel

h) Key stakeholders have been added on each component.

i) Beneficiaries estimated in Core Indicator 11 reflect the population structure in the project intervention area. This population will benefit directly and indirectly from project outcomes. The targets for output indicators reflect the % of women directly participating from those outputs. Considering the highly excluding context, at least 30% target is considered adequate for the project scope and realities in the project area and country. The EA will make efforts to increase in implementation phase as much as possible but given the baseline, the target proposed seems feasible to achieve. As described in the GMP's gender assessment section, there are several barriers on women's participation in decision-making (with less women elected candidates in the prioritized areas) and with significant gaps on land tenure (with land tenure by women ranging from 7 to 10 percent in the prioritized areas). Although the project is aiming to implement actions that support change towards increased gender equality, it is acknowledged that this type of transformative change requires time and barriers might not be completely addressed by a single project.

J1) Gender disaggregated targets have been included for indicator 3.1.2 and 4.1.1

J2) Adjustments have been made to the description of project components, outcomes and outputs, including specific mentions to the activities proposed on the Gender Mainstreaming Plan. The GMP indicators will be tracked and reported annually as part of the PIRs and will be included in the MTR and TE, so even if not all of them are included in the RF, the project will report on them in the ESMF sections of the above-mentioned reports.

l) Both corridors have thematic working groups that bring together stakeholders with common interests but are currently in early collaboration stages. Through Outcome 2.1 the project will strengthen these groups in both corridors and establish two multi-actor, multi-level coordination platforms?one for each corridor?with inclusive participation and equitable stakeholder representation. Through these platforms, a management plan will be developed for each corridor, fostering joint technical, social, and political agreements to achieve socially relevant, economically productive, and environmentally sustainable outcomes. It is expected that through these joint action plans,

stakeholders align policies and programs towards common objectives. See project description - Component 2 for more details.

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

(NN Nov 13, 2024)

a1) PM Cleared. ASL 3 included in the diagram in Figure 7.

a2) PM Cleared, WWF is indicated as EA in the ESS documents.

c) PM Cleared. Appendix 1 uploaded.

(NN/PM September 2024)

a)

a1) Please include the ASL 3 regional program in the diagram.

a2) Please clarify on the executing entity/ies. Please refer to the review comments under ESS documentation section, in which a few different executing entities are mentioned and not consistent. Please also explain why the government entity is not considered co-executing entity.

b) N/A

c) The description in the portal entry refers to "Appendix 1" summarizing ongoing projects and investments in the project intervention area. However, we do not find such Appendix. Please clarify, include it in the description and attach/upload the relevant document.

d) Yes.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 11/14/2024

- a1) Clearance noted.
- a2) Clearance noted.
- c) Clearance noted.

CI-GEF 11/07/2024

A1) A dotted line from CIGEF to the ASL 3 regional program and from the PMU to the ASL 3 regional program has been included in Figure 7.

A2) ESS documentation section has been revised and adjusted to ensure consistency. The Executing Agency is WWF. The government partner is MAATE and NCI is a subgrantee / delivery partner working closely with WWF in a key part of the project area where they have a strong presence and work experience.

- c) Appendix 1 uploaded an annex.

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
(NN Nov 18, 2024)

- a4) PM cleared - WPDA ID corrected.
- b) PM Cleared - Annex K in CI ProDoc shows results monitoring plan.

(NN Nov 13, 2024)

- a1) a2) PM Cleared - projection corrected to 20 years using EX-ACT tool with output uploaded, and CI 6.1 figure updated accordingly.
- a3) PM Cleared - CI 3.1 is added.

a4) Please use the correct indication and WDPA ID. Currently the CI table under Indicator 1.2 indicates Parque Nacional Sangay with WDPA ID 9614, rather than wider Sangay area with WDPA ID 188 as in the agency response.

Sopladora								
Parque Nacional Sangay	9614	National Park	485,989.32	486,613.00				

Indicator 3 Area of land and ecosystems under restoration

b) Please include the results monitoring plan in the CEO endorsement request or insert a reference to the section in ProDoc.

(NN/PM September 2024)

a)

a1) For CI 6: The duration of accounting should be 20 years and not 4. Please correct;

a2) For CI 6: Please provide the calculation of the expected result ensuring the methodology used is aligned with the IPCC guidelines (a recognized calculation tool such as Ex-ACT or NEXT can be used).

a3) The project objective is to conserve and restore critical tropical montane forests. The restoration objective is well highlighted in the Component 3. However, there are no expected results relevant to restoration (i.e., GEF Core Indicator 3). Please clarify and consider including CI 3 to report on results on restoration.

a4) For Core Indicator 1.2: Please explain why the area of Parque Nacional Sangay is indicated as 486,613 hectares, which is much larger than the Protected Planet database which indicates 2,719.25 square kilometers (=271,925 hectares). (<https://www.protectedplanet.net/9614>)

b) GEBs are only proposed and to be monitored in forms of GEF Core Indicators, which are bare minimum. Please also include additional outcome indicators that would capture the project's contribution to conserving globally significant biodiversity, which is currently not identified.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 11/19/2024

- a4) Clearance noted.
- b) Clearance noted.

CI-GEF 11/14/2024

a1-a2-a3) Clearance noted.

a4) (WDPA ID 188; 486,613 ha) is the correct one and it has been adjusted in the document accordingly.

b) Please refer to Annex K - results monitoring plan where all indicators aligned with the results framework are included, including core indicators. For biodiversity refer to core indicator 1 (objective indicator) and associated indicators for outputs and outcomes in Component 1, 2 and 3

CI-GEF 11/07/2024

a1) The Ex-ACT tool has been updated by including projections to 20 years. The new figures have been included in the PRODOC throughout all corresponding sections.

a2) Same as a1). Please refer to the updated version of the EX-ACT tool.

a3) 400 hectares under restoration were included in the Core Indicators adding core indicator 3. An explanation was also included. (See this change in prodoc in page 12 and in the core indicator excel uploaded).

a4) The area reported is correct. Please refer to: <https://www.protectedplanet.net/188>

b) Additional indicators with its related targets have been added to measure landscape permeability and connectivity in accordance with the ToC diagram and the project description section. See Annex K Projects Results monitoring plan, Annex C ? Project Results Framework and Project description summary.

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

(NN Nov 13, 2024)

- a) PM Cleared - risk description added.
- b) PM Cleared - as indicated in the response please monitor and adapt the risk rating and mitigation measures through implementation.

(NN September 2024)

- a) Please explain why the Political and Governance risk as well as Financial and Business Model risk is considered high. Currently, only mitigation measures are proposed, but the risk itself is not explained.
- b) Not clear. Please confirm.
- c) CI ESS Screening report is uploaded.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 11/14/2024

- a) Clearance noted.
- b) Clearance noted.

CI-GEF 11/07/2024

a) Risk descriptions for the Political and Governance risk as well as Financial and Business Model risk, have been included in section B - Risks to Project Implementation (Key Risks).

b) The rating provided is based on the potential risk to project outcomes, based on the context information at the moment. It does not include the estimated impact of the mitigation measures in the risk rating. Rating will be revised yearly considering changes in context and the implementation of mitigation measures (residual rating) and reported at PIRs.

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

(NN Nov 13, 2024)

PM Cleared - LD and CCM alignment added.

(NN September 2024)

a) The project is well aligned with the ASL 3 Program under GEF-8 Critical Forest Biome Integrated Program, and is also aligned with the Biodiversity focal area. However, since SLM is proposed as significant project activity, please consider articulating the alignment with Land Degradation focal area, and considering the GHG emission reduction, please articulate the alignment with Climate Change Mitigation focal area.

b) Yes.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 11/14/2024

Clearance noted.

CI-GEF 11/07/2024

a) Alignment to land degradation and climate change mitigation focal areas have been included. See section C ? Alignment with GEF-8 Programming strategies and country/regional priorities

b) No action needed.

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

(NN Nov 19, 2024)

PM Cleared - KMGBF reference corrected.

(NN Nov 18, 2024)

Thank you for including the relevant additional description.

Please make one small but important correction of the error in terminology - please refer to 'Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework', rather than 'Kunming Montreal Protocol' the revised documents refer to.

(NN Nov 13, 2024)

Reference to MEAs is added but remain very generic. At minimum, please include reference to Ecuador's NBSAPs, NDCs, LDN targets etc.

(NN September 2024)

The project's alignment to national sectoral policies and frameworks are provided under Policy Coherence section.

However, the project's alignment with such policies related to the MEAs is missing. Please include.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 11/19/2024

?Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework? is now referred to.

CI-GEF 11/14/2024

The paragraph has been added the section B. Child Project in the section on Policy Coherence section with the additional information requested.

CI-GEF 11/07/2024

A description of project contribution to MEAs has been included under the Policy Coherence section (in Portal section B. CHILD PROJECT DESCRIPTION and in Prodoc in p. 102)

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

(NN Nov 19, 2024)

PM Cleared - KMGBF reference corrected.

(NN Nov 18, 2024)

Please make one small but important correction of the error in terminology - please refer to 'Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework', rather than 'Kunming Montreal Protocol' the revised documents refer to.

(NN Nov 13, 2024)

Please indicate which ones of the specific KMGBF targets are relevant to the project and briefly explain how the project will contribute to them.

(NN/PM September 2024)

The project is aiming to generate biodiversity benefits, however, the relevant Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) targets are not identified. Please include the relevant target and explain how the project will contribute to the identified targets in Section C.

Please also explain how the project is aligned with the country strategies related to the multilateral environmental agreements such as NBSAP.

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

Explain how the proposed interventions are aligned with GEF- 8 programming strategies, including the specific in priorities, and country and regional priorities, Describe how these country strategies and plans relate to the multilateral environmental agreements, such as through NDCs, NBSAPs, etc.

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

(max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

Agency Response

CI-GEF 11/19/2024

?Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework? is now referred to.

CI-GEF 11/14/2024

The paragraph has been added on page 101 of the Agency ProDoc and in the Policy Coherence section of the Portal.

CI-GEF 11/07/2024

Project contribution to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) has been added in Section B ? Global Environmental Benefits (p. 92-93).

7 D. Policy Requirements

7.1 Are the Policy Requirement sections completed?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
(NN September 2024)

Yes.

Agency Response

7.2 Is the Gender Action Plan uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
(NN September 2024)

Gender Mainstreaming Plan is uploaded.

Agency Response

7.3 Is the stakeholder engagement plan uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
(NN Nov 19, 2024)

PM Cleared - correction in SEP document made so that the revised figure is 1,038,377 ha.

(NN Nov 18, 2024)

While it is PM Cleared, please ensure that the Project Objective in the SEP document will contain the correct and updated reference, consistent with the CEO Endorsement Request Document and agency ProDoc. It refers to 1,043, 899 ha instead of the revised figure 1,038, 377 ha.

Introduction to Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)

Introduce your Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) by providing a brief context of your project and its stakeholders, and an overview of your SEP. Include a brief description of the circumstances that may impact your stakeholders or their decision-making (e.g., conflicts, land tenure, etc.). Limit to one page, as this section is a summary, and provide details in the body of the SEP.

The project's objective is: Conserve, restore and promote the adoption of sustainable land management practices across 1,043,899 hectares of tropical montane forest landscapes along the Eastern Ecuadorian Andes, while enhancing Andean-Amazon habitat connectivity

(NN Nov 13, 2024)

PM Cleared. There is no agency response, however, the agency uploaded the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP). Please ensure that project objective and component wording will be consistent with the revised wording as in the CEO Endorsement Request document and ProDoc., by project inception and throughout project implementation. Old wording exists in the current version.

(NN September/GT October 2024)

No, please upload with appropriate file name.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 11/19/2024

This is noted and the figure is now updated in the SEP from 1,043,899 ha to 1,038,337 ha. Please see the new SEP uploaded on Annex F.

CI-GEF 11/14/2024

Clearance noted. The Agency has updated the SEP to ensure consistency. We will also review and update this in the implementation phase for all ESMF related documents

7.4 Have the required applicable safeguards documents been uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

(NN Nov 13, 2024)

- 1) Explanation provided and safeguard personnel is included in the budget - PM Cleared. Please ensure timely development of ESF and ESMP.
- 2) Addressed - PM Cleared.
- 3) Please insert GEF Project ID in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan.
- 4) Addressed - PM Cleared.

(NN September/IM October 2024)

CI ESS Screening Report is uploaded.

- 1) We note that the project's overall ESS risk is classified as moderate, and CI attached the Second Screening document, Stakeholder engagement plan, grievance mechanism, and gender action plan. However, there is no Environmental and Social Management Framework attached. Please provide at least Environmental and Social Management Framework with clear budget, timeline, and responsibilities to address identified environmental and social risks at the CEO Endorsement stage. A detailed Environmental and Social Management Plan can be developed during the early stage of the project implementation.
- 2) In the screening document, GEF project amount does not match with the actual amount endorsed by GEF OFP. Please revise as appropriate.
- 3) Please insert the GEF Project ID in the ESS form.
- 4) The ESS document states, in the Basic Project Profile, two Executing Agencies, Ministerio del Ambiente, Agua y Transición Ecológica, and WWF Ecuador. However, under Section F, it indicates two co-executing agencies, WWF Ecuador and Nature and Culture International (NCI). This is also inconsistent with the GEF CEO endorsement request document General Information page, which indicates WWF Ecuador as the only Executing Entity. Please explain, revise and maintain consistency.

General Child Project Information

Child Project Title

Integrated management and ecological connectivity of a priority landscape

Region

Ecuador

GEF I

1120

Country(ies)

Ecuador

Type

FSP

GEF Agency(ies)

CI

GEF /

Project Executing Entity(s)

WWF Ecuador

Proje

CSO

GEF Focal Area (s)

Subn

ESS document:

A. Basic Project Profile

Countries: Ecuador	GEF Project ID:
Project Title: Integrated management and ecological connectivity of a priority landscape in the Ecuadorian Amazon headwaters	
Program: Amazon, Congo and Critical Forest Biomes (Integrated Program)	
Executing Agency (EA): Ministerio del Ambiente, Agua y Transición Ecológica (Government), World Wildlife Fund Ecuador (NGO)	
GEF Focal Area: Biodiversity	
GEF Project Amount: USD\$5,169,833	
CI-GEF Project Manager: Daniela Carrion	
ESS Analysis Performed by: Ian Kissoon, Senior Director of ESMF, CI-GCF/GEF Agencies	
Date of Analysis: August 13, 2024	

General Child Project Information

Child Project Title

Integrated management and ecological connectivity of a priority landscape

Region

Ecuador

GEF /

1120

Country(ies)

Ecuador

Type

FSP

GEF Agency(ies)

CI

GEF /

Project Executing Entity(s)

WWF Ecuador

Proje

CSO

GEF Focal Area (s)

Subn

F. Executing Agency (EA)'s Institutional Capacity to Implement ESMF:

The project will be implemented through two co-executing agencies, WWF Ecuador that have more than 10 years of experience in the landscape and strong relationships and partnerships with indigenous peoples, communities, local governments, academia and public and private sector promoting inclusive conservation. The organizations follow an environmental and social safeguards framework and social policies throughout their projects and interventions and have vast experience working with stakeholders and indigenous peoples and local communities. The meetings and

5



workshops will be led by WWF team, including a policy and safeguards specialist and landscapes officer. The staff has experience and expertise on the technical matters of the landscape and are gender and safeguards specialists capable of leading the stakeholder engagement, ESMF, assessments etc.

Nature and Culture International (NCI) is an organization distinguished by its local experience and deep understanding of territorial dynamics, enabling it to mobilize and empower local actors and communities in the sustainable management of the Sangay-Podocarpus Connectivity Corridor (CCSP). In its processes, NCI rigorously integrates environmental and social safeguards, ensuring that its actions not only protect the environment but also respect and promote the rights and well-being of local communities. Its conservation approach aligns with the needs and aspirations of the communities, ensuring that conservation initiatives enhance the quality of life and sustainable development.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 11/14/2024

- 1) Clearance noted. Timely development of ESF and ESMP will be ensured during project inception.
- 2) Clearance noted.
- 3) The GEF Project ID has been inserted in the SEP.
- 4) Clearance noted.

CI-GEF 11/07/2024

The project was initially screened at the PIF stage and only one ESS Standard was triggered at that stage based on the available information at that time. A second screening took place at the end of the PPG phase and at which time, more information about the project activities were established. Based on the updated information, several more standards were triggered including ESS2, ESS3, ESS8 and ESS9. ESS9 requires the development of an ESF since the project plans to establish a financing mechanism for the management of PAs and local conservation areas. Given that this determination took place at the end of the PPG phase, the plan is to have the ESF developed during the early stages of the Implementation phase and to embed the ESF in the design of the financial mechanism.

Similarly, for ESS2 (Protection of Natural Habitats and Biodiversity Conservation), the project is required to develop an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) to ensure that the project activities such as restoration of degraded areas do not cause harm to neighboring PAs and conservation areas including people, and where negative impacts are unavoidable that mitigation measures are designed, implemented, and monitored in consultation with key stakeholders.

Given that, the specific areas where restoration activities will take place and the specific restoration methods are not yet established the plan is to defer the development of this mitigation measure for the Implementation phase when the sites are identified and restoration methods determined. Only then can an appropriate and relevant mitigation plan be developed.

The project budgeted for a Gender and Safeguards Specialist that will be responsible for the implementation of all safeguard's requirements as well as budget for the development and implementation of the ESMF plans.

2) Adjusted. See Annex F

3) GEF Project ID inserted. See Annex F

4) Adjusted Section F to match GEF CEO endorsement request in which only one single executing Agency is included: WWF Ecuador.

The Ministry of Environment and NCI are both key delivery partners but will not play an execution role.

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
(NN September 2024)

Yes.

Agency Response

Focal Area allocation?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
(NN September 2024)

Yes.

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
(NN Nov 18, 2024)

PM Cleared - PPG utilization table updated.

(NN Nov 13, 2024)

There is no updates in the Annex D Status of utilization of PPG. Please unpack/itemize the category under Professional Services.

(NN September 2024)

Annex D presents status of utilization of PPG.

Please unpack/itemize the category under Professional Services - i.e., 1. ProDoc Development Consultancy and 2. NCI Consulting Team. Please clarify what PPG activities were implemented under these categories.

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

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

Project Preparation Activities Implemented	GETF/LDCF/SCCF Amount (\$)		
	Budgeted Amount	Amount Spent To date	Amount Committed
Personnel- Project Design and Coordination	13,775.00		13,775.00
Professional Services: 1. ProDoc Development Consultancy 2. NCI Consulting Team	121,800.00	49,025.00	72,775.00
Travel-Meetings and Events: Results Framework and Theory of Change Workshop; Executing Arrangements and Safeguards Plans Workshop	14,425.00	3,026.00	11,399.00

Agency Response

CI-GEF 11/19/2024

Clearance noted.

CI-GEF 11/14/2024

Annex D Status of utilization of PPG had been updated.

CI-GEF 11/07/2024

Annex D has been updated accordingly.

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
(NN September 2024)

Yes.

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
(NN Nov 13, 2024)

1) PM Cleared. Please ensure exploring grant co-financing opportunities and capture such in PIRs during implementation.

2) PM Cleared - English translation uploaded.

(NN September 2024/OP October 2024)

The variety of co-financing sources are welcome.

The letters are uploaded and match the Annex A Financing Tables figures.

1) However, they are all in-kind type of co-financing. Please revisit and identify if any of the co-financing might fall under Investment Mobilized category.

2) Unlike other letters, the co-financing letter from the Provincial Decentralized Autonomous Government of Zamora Chinchipe is submitted only in Spanish. Please resubmit the co-financing letter with English translation.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 11/14/2024

1) Clearance noted. The request will be ensured during implementation phase.

2) Clearance noted.

CI-GEF 11/07/2024

- 1) Co-financing is all in-kind, during implementation we will explore grant co-financing opportunities.
- 2) English version of the letter uploaded in the portal.

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 RequestN/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

(NN Nov 13, 2024)

PM Cleared. OFP-signed LoE uploaded.

(NN September 2024)

Only the EOI template was signed by OFP on 17 Feb 2023 for PFD is uploaded under this child project.

Please also upload the OFP endorsement letter under this child project.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 11/14/2024

Clearance noted.

CI-GEF 11/07/2024

OFP endorsement letter has been uploaded.

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

(NN Nov 13, 2024)

PM Cleared on the basis that CI confirmed the WWF Ecuador's capacity to execute following the GEF fiduciary standards.

(NN September 2024)

EOI template indicates Non-STAR USD 8 million, and indicative STAR USD 4 million.

Please also upload the OFP endorsement letter under this child project (it is uploaded under PFD 11198, however, please upload under child project as well for ease of reference).

The template utilized for this project removed the footnote that conditions the selection of the executing partner to the following: "Subject to the capacity assessment carried out by the GEF Implementing Agency, as appropriate". Agencies were informed in March 2023 that LoEs "with modifications cannot be accepted and will be returned". While the removal of the footnote seems to be trivial, it is not: this footnote reduces the chances of having an executing partner that does not meet the fiduciary and procurement standards required to safely execute the project. Please get an email from the OFP accepting this footnote to be part of the LoE (this is an alternative to request a new LoE).

Agency Response

CI-GEF 11/14/2024

Clearance noted.

CI-GEF 11/07/2024

LOE was sent with MAATE signature together with the child project approved by GEF in June 2023. While we recognize that the footnote is missing in the version submitted, CIGEF has already conducted due diligence to WWF-Ecuador as the lead EA and confirmed they have the capacity to execute following GEF fiduciary standards.

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

(NN Nov 19, 2024)

b2) PM cleared on an exceptional basis that the agency will ensure that the METT baseline scores are completed, and the project-targeted METT score increase at Mid-term Review and End of Project are defined within the first 6 months of the project. Please ensure the METT scores are also captured in the GEF Core Indicator 1.2.

c) PM Cleared - discrepancy is now resolved.

(NN Nov 18, 2024)

b2) The uploaded METT are not in the GEF formats (<https://www.thegef.org/documents/gef-7-and-gef-8-biodiversity-protected-area-tracking-tool>). The set of PAs do not match with the right PAs indicated under CI 1.2. Please provide the METT worksheets that are commensurate with the project activities.

c) While the language on Output 4.1.4 is well noted, please ensure consistency or explain the targets of Outcome Indicator 4.1 and 4.1.1 for which 30% and 50% women targets are indicated in the Project Overview, while 30%, 40% and 50% women targets are indicated in the Results Framework.

(NN Nov 13, 2024)

b1) PM Cleared - EX ACT sheet uploaded using 20 years capitalization phase.

b2) Please upload the filled in METT worksheet in the portal as requested in the first review.

c) Please include sex aggregated target for Outcome 4 indicators, not only for 4.1.1.

(NN September 2024, OP October 2024)

a) Yes.

b) Yes partially.

b1) Please find earlier comments on GHG emissions avoided (CI 6) and update/revise accordingly.

b2) Please include the missing METT scores under Core Indicator 1.2. It is mandatory at CEO endorsement. Please also upload METT worksheet filled in (baseline, targets at MTR and TE).

c) Under Component 4, for the indicator of at least 15,000 stakeholders, and Target 4.1.1. 10,000 people, please include the sex disaggregated target.

d) Yes.

e) Yes, Output/Indicator/Target 4.1.4 includes number of knowledge contribution products delivered through ASL IP and other regional and national initiatives.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 11/19/2024

b2) Considering the METT is expected to be completed in a participatory process with government, national and local stakeholders, the EA will complete this in the first six months of implementation as baseline and then update the tool at MTR and TE as required by GEF in the formats provided. The latter has been included in the relevant section of the document, specifically on portal section B. Child Project description, in the Component 1 description and in the Outcome 1.1.4 part. Information as well included in the prodoc.

c) The discrepancy has been resolved, and the sex-disaggregated target is now the same in the Results Framework and the Project Description Overview for Target 4.1. Portal entries are updated accordingly.

CI-GEF 11/14/2024

b1) Clearance noted.

b2) The METT worksheets have been uploaded in the portal.

c) As Outcome 4.1.1 is the only one measuring the number of persons, it is the only one that can be disaggregated by sex. We have added language to better reflect the actions proposed in the Gender Mainstreaming Plan, to the indicator and target under the Output 4.1.4.

CI-GEF 11/07/2024

a) No action needed

b) No action needed

b1) Resolved. Please see updated EX-ACT tool and corresponding section within the PRODOC.

b2) METT scores added in the RF ? Annex C ? Component 1 ? Outcome 1.1

c) Resolved ? See RF ? Annex C ? Component 4 ? Target 4.1.1

d) No action needed

e) No action needed

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

(NN Nov 13, 2023)

PM Cleared - maps uploaded in the portal entry.

(NN/PM September 2024)

Georefernces are provided.

However, there is no relevant illustrative map of the project intervention area in the Portal entry. Please provide a map in Annex E of the Portal entry clearly including the project intervention area, as well as the PAs (C.f. Table 5) and corridors mentioned in the project description.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 11/14/2024

Clearance noted.

CI-GEF 11/07/2024

Maps were uploaded in the portal section

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

(NN Nov 13, 2024)

PM Cleared - files uploaded are labelled with ESS Screening.

(NN September 2024)

The file uploaded under the file name "08162024 Annex F Screening Form Ecuador ASLIII GEF8" is actually Stakeholder Engagement Plan. Please ensure files are uploaded with the corresponding file names.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 11/14/2024

Clearance noted.

CI-GEF 11/07/2024

Uploaded the ESS documents with the correct file names.

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

(NN Nov 21, 2024)

b) TORs are appended to the agency ProDoc.

c) Other operations cost charged to PMC.

(HS Nov 20, 2024)

b) Project Manager / Technical Lead and the Operations Director are part of the staff that are charged to PMC as well as the Components. However, TORs were not found in the Project Document and CEO Endorsement Request? please include the TORs as an integral part of the Project Document and CEO Endorsement Request.

Expenditure Category	Detailed Description	Component (USDq.)								Total (USDq.)	Responsible Entity
		Component 1	Component 2	Component 3		Component 4	Component 5	Sub-Total	PMC		
		Outcome 1.1	Outcome 2.1	Outcome 3.1	Outcome 3.2	Outcome 4.1 KM	Outcome 5.1 M&E				
Personnel and Professional Services	Personnel - Project Manager/Technical Lead	91,571	28,917	28,917	28,917	38,556	12,049	228,928	12,049	240,977	World Wildlife Fund (WWF)-Ecuador
Personnel and Professional Services	Personnel - Policy and Governance Specialist	-	142,328	-	-	15,814	-	158,142	-	158,142	World Wildlife Fund (WWF)-Ecuador
Personnel and Professional Services	Personnel - Sustainable Production Specialist	-	-	91,571	91,571	-	-	183,142	-	183,142	World Wildlife Fund (WWF)-Ecuador
Personnel and Professional Services	Personnel - Financial and Administrative Assistant	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	136,554	136,554	World Wildlife Fund (WWF)-Ecuador
Personnel and Professional Services	Personnel - Knowledge Management Officer	8,233	24,700	4,117	4,117	41,167	-	82,334	-	82,334	World Wildlife Fund (WWF)-Ecuador
Personnel and Professional Services	Personnel - Safeguards & Gender Specialist	-	39,159	19,579	19,579	-	-	78,317	-	78,317	World Wildlife Fund (WWF)-Ecuador
Personnel and Professional Services	Personnel - Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist	-	-	-	-	-	88,358	88,358	-	88,358	World Wildlife Fund (WWF)-Ecuador
Personnel and Professional Services	Personnel - Operations Director	8,386	8,386	8,386	5,125	-	-	30,283	16,306	46,589	World Wildlife Fund (WWF)-Ecuador

c) Other operation costs should be charged to PMC, not to project components

Other Operating Cost	Telephone Service for technical personnel activities	4,800	4,800	2,400	2,400	4,800	-	19,200	-	19,200	World Wildlife Fund (WWF)-Ecuador
	Printing, postage, office supplies, and bank fees to carryout technical activities	26,276	24,113	43,208	21,537	18,918	-	134,052	-	134,052	World Wildlife Fund (WWF)-Ecuador
	Total Other Operating Costs	31,076	28,913	45,608	23,937	23,718	-	153,252	-	153,252	World Wildlife Fund (WWF)-Ecuador

(NN Nov 18, 2024)

a) b) PM Cleared - budget table formatting fixed.

(NN Nov 13, 2024)

a) Please fix the formatting of the budget table in the portal entry.

b) Excel file budget appears reasonable. However, please fix the formatting of the budget table in the portal entry.

c) Cleared - Project Manager/Technical Lead and Operations Director TORs (two positions) are uploaded as one Word document.

(NN/PM September 2024)

a) The budget table does not show what kind of expenses are indicated and we cannot review the eligibility. Please provide a budget table showing the kind of expenses in a column. Please also

upload in the document tab of the Portal the budget in Excel format so that we can check the calculations.

b) We will review once the budget in appropriate format is resubmitted.

c) The uploaded ToRs are blank Word document when opened. Please check and upload them again.

Agency Response

CI GEF - November 21, 2024:

b) The TORs have been added to the CEO Endorsement document.

c) The budget has been updated per GEF request, please see the uploaded annex in the portal.

CI-GEF 11/19/2024

a) - b) Clearance noted.

CI-GEF 11/14/2024

a) The budget table formatting in the portal entry has been fixed.

b) Clearance noted on the Excel file budget. The budget table formatting in the portal entry has been fixed.

c) Clearance noted.

CI-GEF 11/07/2024

a) Annex G has been updated accordingly. However, the portal does not allow the budget to be uploaded in a word file.

b) Annex G has been updated accordingly in a word document since the portal in section Annex G do not let to upload an excel file. Nevertheless, find the same budget in an excel file uploaded as annex.

c) ToRs have been uploaded on the porta

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

(HS Nov 21, 2024)

Please address the comments on Annex G: GEF Budget template items 8.9 b) and c) and resubmit.

(NN Nov 19, 2024)

PM recommends technical clearance.

(NN Nov 18, 2024)

Please address the remaining few comments and resubmit.

(NN Nov 13, 2024)

Please address the remaining review comments and resubmit.

(NN/PM September 2024)

Not yet at this time.

Please address the review comments above and resubmit.

Please ensure changes made are clearly highlighted or clearly identified to facilitate review.

Please ensure that all referred Annexes, Tables, Figures etc. are appropriately included in the GEF portal entry of CEO endorsement request document.

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Consistency: Please ensure consistency of the revised Project Objective wording and component titles in the relevant documents such as ESS screening documents, stakeholder engagement plans and TORs etc., as previous versions of wording are still found (e.g., reference to mammal populations, water supply etc. in project objective, etc.) outside of CEO Endorsement Request document and ProDoc.

Safeguards: Please ensure the timely development of ESF and ESMP.

Co-financing: Please ensure exploring grant co-financing opportunities during implementation and capture such in PIRs.

METT: Please ensure that the METT baseline scores are completed and the project-targeted METT score increase at Mid-term Review and End of Project are defined within the first 6 months of the project. Please ensure the METT scores are also captured in the GEF Core Indicator 1.2.

9.3 Review Dates

	CEO Approval	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review	9/25/2024	11/7/2024
Additional Review (as necessary)	11/13/2024	
Additional Review (as necessary)	11/18/2024	

	CEO Approval	Response to Secretariat comments
Additional Review (as necessary)	11/19/2024	
Additional Review (as necessary)	11/20/2024	