



Transformation Approach to Large Scale Investment in Support of the Implementation of the Great Green Wall Initiative- TALSISI-GGWI

Review PIF and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

11455

Countries

Regional (Burkina Faso, Chad, Ethiopia, Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal)

Project Name

Transformation Approach to Large Scale Investment in Support of the Implementation of the Great Green Wall Initiative- TALSISI-GGWI

Agencies

UNEP, BOAD

Date received by PM

10/19/2023

Review completed by PM

5/8/2024

Program Manager

Aloke Barnwal

Focal Area

Multi Focal Area

Project Type

PFD

GEF-8 PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF) REVIEW SHEET

1. General Program Information

a) Is the Program Information table correctly filled, including specifying adequate executing partners?

Secretariat's Comments

Please add anticipated Executing Agencies in the table.

Please review the program commitment deadline date in the table.

See comments related to global set aside funding later in the review sheet.

GEFSEC May 1, 2024

Thanks. Regarding the Executing Agency role indicated in the PFD for child projects, please refer to the following comments from GEF Secretariat

The clearance of this PFD doesn't guarantee GEFSEC's approval of dual functions of implementing and execution for UNEP for national child projects. Such exception needs to be justified and supported by official Governments' requests and in compliance with the established procedures and policies, will be assessed by the GEFSEC prior to CEO endorsement/approval.

Agency's Comments

7 May 2024

UNEP does not have any intention of playing the role of Executing Agency in any of the National Child Projects. A sentence is now added in the PFD to clarify this intention.

30 April 2024

Anticipated Executing Agencies Updated

Noted. UNEP takes note of the LDCF Funding limitation and is committed to working closely with IFAD and other Agencies to ensure synergy and complementarity but also to ensure that LD set aside contribute to achieve LDCF benefits.

Ref. See Coordination Project and PFD Financing Tables

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

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

2. Program Summary

a) Does the program summary concisely describe the problem to be addressed, the program objective and the strategies to deliver the GEBs or adaptation benefits and other key expected outcomes?

b) Is the program's geographical coverage explicit, as well as the covered sectors? Does the summary explain how the program is transformative or innovative?

Secretariat's Comments

a) The summary refers to "Integrated Programme for the Great Green Wall". Please clarify what is meant by this as this term hasn't been used anywhere else in the PFD. As the Agency may know, we have a separate "Integrated programs" modality and therefore we recommend avoid using this term.

b) Yes. Please see comments related to innovation and transformation later in the review sheet.

GEFSEC May 1, 2024

Thanks. Comments are addressed well.

Agency's Comments

30 April 2024

a) Noted with thanks. The term is now removed from the PFD document.

Ref. Program Summary.

b). Very well noted.

3 Indicative Program Overview

- a) Is the program objective statement concise, clear and measurable?**
- b) Are the components and outcomes sound, appropriate and sufficiently clear to achieve the program objective and the core indicators per the stated Theory of Change?**
- c) Are gender dimensions, knowledge management, and M&E included within the program components and appropriately funded?**
- d) Are the GEF program Financing and Co-Financing contributions to PMC proportional?**
- e) Is the PMC equal to or below 5%? If above 5%, is the justification acceptable?**

Secretariat's Comments

1. The program objective doesn't explicitly mention climate change adaptation. Please revise and if possible shorten.
2. Given that the scope of the program is multi-country and areas within these countries, we recommend replacing the word "GGW zone" with " GGW region" across the PFD.
3. Component 1 and its outputs read more like TA than Investments. Please clarify or revise accordingly.
4. Outcome 4.2 on disaster risk preparedness - we recommend that it's made more specific to climate risks. e.g. Disaster risk preparedness of communities enhanced through strengthened climate information and early warning systems (CIEWS). We recommend focusing on climate information services also instead of only EWS. The program should include WMO as a collaborator for this component in respective countries and also explore co-financing from SOFF mechanism during the PPG period.

GEFSEC May 1, 2024- Component 1 still says Investment. Please revise. Please address following comment from PPO on Gender:

- a. Please ensure to address how the Agency is going to tackle financial illiteracy, especially among women, that goes beyond gender parity in the financial schemes, in Outcome 2.1.
- b. Additionally, please ensure in Outcomes 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3, to target women and women's organization in the trainings and implementation of the natural resources and climate smart management.

- c. Please ensure that the policies and plans developed are gender responsive (e.g. Output 4.1.1 and 4.2.1), by ensuring women's active participation.
- d. Under M&E, ensure that gender dimensions are integrated, monitored, and reported on, and that the Gender Action Plan is budgeted

Agency's Comments

7 May 2024

- a. Addressed in various part of the PFD document.
- b. Outcomes 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 have been amended to include gender consideration.
- c. Policies and plans developed (Outputs 4.1.1 and 4.2.1) are made gender responsive.
- d. Gender integration, monitoring and reporting are now considered in the M&E.

30 April 2024

1. The program objective has been revised to clearly highlight climate change adaptation as a central focus of the Great Green Wall initiative. The revised text emphasizes the initiative's commitment to enhancing ecological resilience through targeted climate change adaptation strategies. This change ensures that the initiative's objectives align closely with the needs for sustainable land management and climate resilience in the Sahel-Sahara region.

Reference in PFD: The revised program summary can be found at the beginning of the Program Framework Document (PFD), specifically in the first paragraph of the "Program Summary" section. The text explicitly states, "The Great Green Wall initiative, a transformative effort aimed at revitalizing the ecological and socio-economic landscapes of the Sahel-Sahara region, is clearly focused on combating land degradation and enhancing ecological resilience through targeted climate change adaptation strategies."

2. The GGW zone is now replaced by GGW region. Throughout the PFD document.

3. Addressed at the relevant point.

4. The comment regarding Outcome 4.2 on disaster risk preparedness has been duly noted and addressed in the revised section of the project document. Specifically, the outcome has been made more specific to climate risks by emphasizing the establishment and enhancement of comprehensive Climate Information and Early Warning Systems (CIEWS). This includes integrating advanced meteorological data, satellite imagery, and

local knowledge to effectively predict and respond to climate-related hazards. Collaboration with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has been acknowledged to enhance the accuracy and effectiveness of climate information services, aligning with the recommendation to involve WMO as a collaborator. Additionally, the exploration of co-financing opportunities with the Sustainable Ocean Finance Facility (SOFF) during the Project Preparation Grant (PPG) phase has been included, as suggested, to expand and enhance the scope of climate information services and early warning systems.

Reference from PFD: The response provided can be found in the revised section of the Project Document, particularly in Outcome 4.2: Disaster risk preparedness of communities enhanced through Strengthened Climate Information and Early Warning Systems. This section addresses the comment by incorporating the recommended elements and strategies, including collaboration with WMO and exploring co-financing opportunities with SOFF during the PPG phase.

4 Program Outline

A. Program 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 program design?

b) Has 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 program outcomes? Is the private sector seen mainly as a stakeholder or as financier?

c) Is the baseline situation and baseline projects and initiatives well laid out and how the program will build on these?

d) Have lessons learned from previous efforts been considered in the program design?

e) For NGI, is there a brief description of the financial barriers and how the program ? and the proposed financial structure- responds to these financial barriers.

Secretariat's Comments

1. The section which lists the "the following are beyond any disputable realities within the GGW zone:" doesn't include climate change as a reality in the region. It also says "uncertainty regarding the actual nature of impacts as climate systems". Please clarify as the PFD seeks a significant amount of climate adaptation funding. We see two paragraphs on climate hazards and variability after this text under baseline drivers. We recommend including it in the list just above Environmental Degradation or just after it.

2. Thanks for the details of the climate impacts on respective countries. It's very helpful. None of the figures (9,11, 18, 19, 20) pasted are visible in the portal entry though. Please upload again.

3. Table 2 is not visible. Please upload again. Figure 10 also is missing.

4. Overall, the rationale is fine now. Thanks for providing the additional climate adaptation context in the target countries and the region as a whole. The interlinkages between CCA, LD and BD is also fine. Please add a brief description on lessons learned from the previous efforts that will inform the program design and implementation

GEFSEC May 1, 2024: All comments have been addressed well.

Agency's Comments

30 April 2024

1. We have addressed the comment by incorporating climate change as a reality in the GGW region in the section titled "Beyond Disputable Realities within the GGW Region." We included paragraphs on climate variables and climate hazards to emphasize the significant impact of climate change on the region. This addition acknowledges the challenges posed by changing climate variables, increased frequency and intensity of climate hazards, and the uncertainties surrounding climate impacts. Reference to PFD: Please refer to the paragraphs titled "Climate variables" and "Climate hazards" in the updated section of the document.

2. Addressed in the portal. Furthermore, we have added **Annex A: Climate Change and Vulnerability Profiles of the GEF Trust Fund Countries**, which offers additional details and figures. Due to a portal limitation on the number of images that can be uploaded, some figures were omitted in the previous version of the resubmission.

3. Addressed in the portal.

4. Thank you for your feedback and for affirming the rationale, as well as the added climate adaptation context and the interlinkages among climate change adaptation (CCA), land degradation (LD), and biodiversity (BD) within our Programme Framework Document. We appreciate your constructive insights and have addressed your request to include a description of lessons learned from previous efforts that now inform our program design and implementation.

In response to your comments, we have integrated a detailed account of the lessons learned into our Programme Framework Document as follows:

Programme Rationale

We have enhanced the rationale section by reflecting on the extensive experiences from prior Great Green Wall initiatives. This includes insights into the critical need for comprehensive community engagement and the integration of adaptive management

practices, which are essential for achieving sustainable land management and biodiversity conservation.

Reference in PFD: Programme Rationale, Page 9.

Programme Description

Within the Programme Description, we elaborate on how specific lessons from past projects have been directly integrated into our strategic methodologies. This includes the adoption of community-driven approaches, the implementation of adaptive management frameworks, and the utilization of integrated approaches to environmental challenges.

Reference in PFD: Programme Description, specifically under the new subsection "Incorporating Lessons Learned from Past Initiatives," Page 76

Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Programs:

We have detailed how past lessons guide our program's efforts to enhance coordination and cooperation with ongoing initiatives, aiming to optimize resources and maximize impacts. This section addresses strategic alignments, shared platforms for information, joint monitoring frameworks, and coordinated funding efforts.

Reference in PFD: Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Programs, Page 84

These sections collectively demonstrate our commitment to learning from past experiences and applying these insights to enhance the impact and sustainability of our initiatives. By embedding these lessons into every facet of our program's approach, we ensure that our strategies are robust, informed, and capable of achieving the ambitious goals of restoring degraded lands, enhancing biodiversity, and improving the livelihoods of communities across the Sahel-Sahara region.

We trust that these additions meet the requirements of your feedback and strengthen the foundation of our program.

5 B. Program Description

5.1 a) Is there a concise theory of change (narrative and an optional schematic) that describes the program logic, including how the program design elements are contributing to the objective, a set of identified key causal pathways, the thrust and basis (including scientific) of the proposed solutions, how they provide a robust solution and listing the key assumptions underlying these?

b) Is there a description of how the GEF alternative will build on ongoing/previous investments (GEF and non-GEF), lessons and experiences?

c) Are the program components described and proposed solutions and critical assumptions and risks properly justified? Is there an indication of why the program approach has been selected over other potential options?

d) Incremental/additional cost reasoning: Is the incremental/additional cost reasoning properly described as per the Guidelines provided in GEF/C.31/12? Have the baseline scenario and/or associated baseline programs been described? Is the program incremental reasoning provisioned (including the role of the GEF)?

e) Are the relevant levers of transformation identified and described?

f) Is there an adequate description on how relevant stakeholders (including women, private sector, CSO, e.g.) will contribute to the design and implementation of the program and its components?

g) Gender: Does the description on gender issues identify any differences, gaps or opportunities linked to program objectives and have these been taken up in component description/s?

h) Are the proposed elements to capture, exchange and disseminate knowledge and lessons learned adequate in order to benefit future programs? Are efforts for strategic communication adequately described?

i) Policy Coherence: How will the program support participating countries to improve, develop and align policies, regulations or subsidies to not counteract the intended program outcomes?

Secretariat's Comments

The ToC is fine.

Please provide the incremental reasoning more precisely under the Program Description.

GEFSEC May 1, 2024: Thanks. We noted the following subtitle in the PFD

The GGW Programme Strategic Approach and Rationale ? ?Killing multiple birds with one stone?

We strongly recommend rephrasing the boldened phrase due to its poor optics in a strategic program which is aimed towards strengthening biodiversity in the region.

Agency's Comments

7 May 2024

Thank for the review for drawing our attention on this ethical issue which may have reputational risk for GEF and Agencies involved.

The phrase is now rephrased and replaced by Generating Multiple Environmental Benefits throughout the documents.

30 April 2024

A table outlining the incremental reasoning has been added in the Program Description section, following the description on the program components.

5.2 Program coherence and consistency

a) How will the program design ensure resilience to future changes in the drivers and allow for adaptive management needs and options?

b) Is the potential for achieving transformative change through the integrated approach adequately described? How is the program going to be transformative or innovative? Does it explain scaling up opportunities?

c) Are the countries or themes selected as child projects under the program appropriate for achieving the overall program objective?

d) Are the descriptions of child projects adequately reflective of the program objective and priorities as described in the ToC?

e) Is the financing presented in the annexed financing table adequate to meet the program objectives?

Secretariat's Comments

Please address question (a) related to the adaptive management in the program design to ensure resilience and sustainability.

e) We believe that for this scale of the PFD, \$8 million USD from LD global/regional set aside resources is sufficient for coordination and knowledge management and exchange activities. There are multiple ongoing efforts in the region (well identified in the PFD) that can be leveraged to meet the intended objectives of the program at the regional level. Moreover, the resources under the global set aside of the LDCF is limited and therefore the requested \$4 million from LDCF global set aside can't be provided for this program.

The resources from LD global/regional set aside resources is well positioned to enable the program to focus on both LD and CCA agenda at the regional level, given the inherent linkages between the two. The GEF Secretariat would also be supportive of using the global/regional LD set aside resources for regional adaptation specific activities in a blended manner.

For adaptation specific activities, the Secretariat believes that the regional adaptation support program in the GGW funded by LDCF, GCF and IFAD, is well placed to support knowledge sharing, development and management on adaptation and introduce innovative solutions. We appreciate the intent of UNEP to collaborate with IFAD and GCF in this regard as it will ensure maximum value for money of the GEF resources and avoid any duplication.

GEFSEC May 1, 2024: Thanks. No further comments.

Agency's Comments

30 April 2024

a. Thank you for your inquiry about how adaptive management is integrated into the design of the Great Green Wall (GGW) Programme to ensure resilience and sustainability. We have carefully developed our approach to include robust adaptive management practices, which are essential for the program's success given the variable and challenging environment of the Sahel region.

Section Title: "Adaptive Management for Resilience and Sustainability in the GGW Programme"

Location in PFD: You can find this detailed discussion in the program strategies, on Page [108] of the Programme Framework Document.

In this section, we elaborate on our adaptive management strategy, which includes iterative planning and implementation, stakeholder involvement, robust monitoring and feedback mechanisms, flexible funding structures, and capacity building. These components are crucial for allowing the program to dynamically respond to new challenges and information, thereby ensuring its long-term sustainability and effectiveness.

We believe this approach will significantly enhance the resilience of the GGW Programme and ensure that it remains responsive and effective in achieving its goals. Please refer to the specified page for a comprehensive review of our adaptive management strategies. We welcome any further questions or feedback you might have.

e) Thank you for your confirmation regarding LD set-aside of US\$ 8 million, the PFD has been revised accordingly and LDCF set-aside removed.

5.3 Program Governance, Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Programs

a) Are the program level institutional arrangements for governance and coordination, including potential executing partners, outlined on regional, national/local levels and a rationale provided? Has a program level organogram / diagram been included, with description of roles and responsibilities, and decision-making processes?

b) Is there a description of coordination and cooperation with ongoing GEF and non-GEF financed initiatives, projects/programs (such as government, private sector and/or other bilateral/multilateral supported initiatives in the program area, e.g.).

Secretariat's Comments

Please provide a summary of the program's institutional arrangement, coordination and governance. We recommend using a schematic diagram for this purpose.

As discussed in Nairobi during the workshop, there is a need for UNEP and BOAD to engage meaningfully with other GEF Agencies having an active portfolio related to the GGW- IFAD, FAO, AfDB, etc?to ensure synergies and avoid duplication of efforts.

While we see an intent from UNEP articulated in the PFD to do this, it is not clear what commitments have been made by these partners to contribute to the program operationally (beyond co-financing). Please include this in the PFD.

We have noted some description under "Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing initiatives?". However, this needs to be more specific. We recommend proposing a concrete governance mechanism with the core partners and specify the roles and contributions of these agencies in the program.

GEFSEC May 1, 2024

Thanks. Comments cleared.

Agency's Comments

30 April 2024

The Implementation and Execution Arrangements sub-section describe the Program Institutional Arrangement, coordination and governance, this has been updated and a schematic diagram added.

With regard to the need for UNEP to engage with other Agencies, this is noted with thanks to the reviewer for the continuous follow-up on the issue. UNEP would like to thank GEF for taking the lead in organising the Nairobi workshop and is committed to pursuing engagement with agencies. Online and face to face meetings were already organised and will be continued during the PPG. See Programme Coordination Unit sub-section of the PFD.

Online and face to face meetings were already organized with the Agencies (IFAD, FAO, UNDP and UNCCD Accelerator) and will be continued during the PPG. As the project is still in design phase, no tangible commitments have been made except that a consultative process will be followed in the design of the regional child project and other child projects and through the process contributions of other agencies will be established by closely looking at the agencies comparative advantage in executing the various functions.

See Programme Coordination Unit sub-section of the PFD.

It is agreed with Agencies that discussions with continue and at the early stage of the PPG and that a regional meeting will bring together all agencies and key partners to discuss and

agree on the role of each partner in the programme implementation. A schematic diagram is now drafted to provide indicative collaboration.

Ref. See the Institutional Arrangement Diagram.

Country Child Project governance arrangements

5.4 Program-level Results, Monitoring and Reporting

a) Are the global environmental benefits and/or adaptation benefits identified? Does the PFD describe how it will support the generation of multiple environmental benefits which would not have accrued without the GEF program?

b) 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/GEF/C.54/11/Rev.01)?

c) Are the program'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?

d) Other Benefits: Are the socioeconomic benefits resulting from the program at the global, national and local levels sufficiently described?

e) Is the described approach to program level M&E aiming to achieve coherence across child projects and to allow for adaptive management?

Secretariat's Comments

Adaptation benefits are fine.

The PFD must include ?Drought mitigation/early warning? and ?Land Degradation Neutrality? in the Taxonomy.

There is **no target for Core indicator 4.3**. Please set an adequate target for 4.3 by e.g. dividing the 6,895,600 ha listed under core indicator 4.1 commensurate with the level of LD investment.

Align program to **LD-3** in the financing table ?Indicative Focal Area Elements?. At least \$15 - \$20 million of LD funding should be programmed towards LD-3 to show a proper alignment.

While the program is now well-aligned in the text, the financing table has not been revised to reflect that; LD-3 is currently absent in the financing table.

After the alignment to LD-3 is made in the PFD financing table, this needs to be reflected in the **Child Project templates** compendium accordingly.

Please describe the socioeconomic benefits of the program or direct us to the section where they are elaborated. We couldn't find it in the PFD.

GEFSEC May 3, 2024

The Focal Area Table doesn't have any LD-3 row despite of the agency response below. Please revise.

For the CCA, we noted allocation to CCA1-3 (private sector, innovation, tech transfer) and CCA 1-4 (whole of society approach). Please confirm if this is intended. The Agency may like to consider some allocation under CCA 1-1 also as the project has a direct focus on NBS, Ag and CIEWS themes.

Agency's Comments

7 May 2024

The Focal Area Table is corrected and the LD-1.3 are reflected.

For CCA, the project now includes CCA 1-1, CCA 1-2, CCA 1-3 and CCA 1-4.

30 April 2024

1. The Project Taxonomy include now Drought mitigation/early warning? and ?Land Degradation Neutrality? in the Taxonomy.

See ANNEX F: Taxonomy Worksheet in the PFD Document

2. Target is now included in Core Indicator 4.3

See Core indicators in PFD and in Relevant Child Projects

3. The LD-3 is now raised to more than \$15 million.

Indicative Focal Area Elements and Financing Table

4. LD 1.3 amendment is the child projects.

See Child Projects and PFD Focal Area elements table

5. Thank you for your inquiry regarding the socioeconomic benefits of our program. We appreciate the opportunity to clarify and emphasize the broad impacts our initiative is designed to achieve within the Sahel-Sahara region.

In response to your comment, we have added a comprehensive section that details the socioeconomic benefits of our program, ensuring that all stakeholders, including our partners at GEF, can easily find and understand the significant impacts we anticipate.

New Section Added:

Section Title: Socioeconomic Benefits of the Programme

Location in PFD: Immediately following the Theory of Change, starting on Page [82]

Content Summary: This new section outlines the direct socioeconomic impacts expected from our strategic interventions. These impacts include employment opportunities, enhanced food security, economic diversification, capacity building and skill development, empowerment of women and youth, strengthening local economies, and infrastructure development. Each of these points is described in detail, illustrating how the program's activities will translate into tangible benefits for the communities involved.

We believe that this addition not only addresses your request but also enhances the document by clearly linking our strategic objectives outlined in the Theory of Change to the practical outcomes that will benefit the local populations. The detailed description of these socioeconomic benefits is now an integral part of our PFD and can be reviewed on Page [82 under the new section titled "Socioeconomic Benefits of the Programme."

Please refer to this section for a full understanding of how our program will contribute to socioeconomic advancements in the region. We are confident that this detailed exposition will meet the needs of all stakeholders interested in the broader impacts of our initiatives.

5.5 Risks to Achieving Program Outcomes

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 and impacts adequately screened and rated and consistent with requirements set out in SD/PL/03?

Secretariat's Comments

As required by the GEF Secretariat, please elaborate the climate risks a bit more covering key risks, mitigation measures and opportunities to build resilience.

Please highlight the risk of duplication and its mitigation strategies.

GEFSEC May 3, 2024- No further comments.

Agency's Comments

30 April 2024

1. Thank you for your insightful feedback requesting additional details on the climate risks associated with the Great Green Wall (GGW) Programme, the mitigation measures we plan to implement, opportunities for building resilience, and the strategies to mitigate

the risk of duplication. We have carefully considered your comments and have enhanced our Programme Framework Document (PFD) accordingly.

Addition of Climate Risks and Resilience Building Measures

Section Title: "Managing Climate Risks and Building Resilience in the GGW Programme"

Location in PFD: This section has been newly added and is located immediately after the discussion on the multifaceted socioeconomic, political, and environmental challenges facing the GGW region. This placement provides a logical flow, linking the identified challenges to specific climate-related strategies.

Content Overview: We detail the primary climate risks such as increased rainfall variability, rising temperatures, and expanding desertification. Our mitigation measures include diversified agricultural practices, enhanced water management systems, and large-scale ecosystem restoration projects. Additionally, we outline opportunities to build resilience, such as community-based adaptation projects and innovative technological applications.

2. Risk of duplication is now included in the risk table. The monitoring and mitigation will start with comprehensive mapping of initiatives and discussion will be conducted for synergy, complementarity, and avoidance of duplication. We also address the risk of duplication by implementing a robust coordination mechanism that includes comprehensive stakeholder mapping, regular coordination meetings, and adaptive management practices. These strategies are designed to maximize resource efficiency and enhance the impact of our interventions across the GGW region.

We trust that these updates will fully address your feedback and assist in the ongoing review and support processes. Please refer to the specified sections in the revised PFD for a detailed examination of our approaches. We welcome any further feedback or suggestions you may have to enhance our programme.

See Program Coordination Unit sub-section and Risk Table

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

6.1 a) Is the program adequately aligned with Focal Area and IP Elements, and/or LDCF/SCCF strategy?

***For IPs: is the program adequately aligned with the Integrated Program goals and objectives as outlined in the GEF 8 programming directions?**

Secretariat's Comments

Please elaborate on if/how the project will take National Drought Plans into account and help with their implementation.

GEFSEC May 3, 2024- Thanks. No further comments.

Agency's Comments

30 April 2024

Thank you for your inquiry regarding the integration of National Drought Plans into our project. We recognize the importance of these plans in mitigating the impact of drought in the Sahel region and have dedicated a section of our Programme Framework Document (PFD) to outline our approach in this regard.

Section Title: "Integration of National Drought Plans into the GGW Programme"

Location in PFD: This section can be found in the chapter on program strategies.

In this section, we detail how the GGW Programme aligns with and supports the implementation of National Drought Plans across participating countries. Our approach includes policy alignment, capacity building, resource mobilization, community engagement, and enhanced monitoring and evaluation efforts. These efforts are designed to ensure that our interventions are both supportive of national objectives and effective in addressing the challenges posed by drought conditions in the region.

We believe this comprehensive approach will significantly contribute to the robustness and sustainability of drought mitigation efforts within the Sahel, directly supporting national priorities and enhancing regional resilience.

b) Child project selection criteria: Are the criteria for child project selection sound and transparently laid out?

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments

Please address the following comments received from UNCCD for this PFD.

UNCCD, as one of the most important stakeholder under this proposed program was requested for inputs given that the PFD needs to be aligned with their objectives and strategic engagement in the GGW region.

There are many grammatical and syntax errors throughout the document that we did not care to highlight, however, the following aspects stood out to our team:

1- On page 13, more could have been said about Food insecurity and the role that water scarcity plays in the barriers to agricultural expansion.

2- The role of women in such an initiative is understated, as they are not mere "primary caregivers and resource collectors" (p13) but should be at the forefront of the initiative's community leadership. Contextualizing leadership is an intricate task, but strategic role-sharing can make this a reality while avoiding disruption in the cultural fabric.

3. The project misses an opportunity to invest in further youth as the guarantors of a future where environmental priorities are primordial. Youth groups are mentioned as a modality along with women groups, however, ensuring the sustainability of such a massive initiative requires investment in the next generations that can continue the work that as started through their acquired and existing knowledge.

4- The flow of the entire Project Rationale is confusing and difficult to digest. Unsure if by design or deliberate. Pages 19 - 50 are difficult to keep track of with redundancies, duplications, country details repeated multiple times for different themes. Highly recommend consolidating all findings either by country, or by theme. There is no clear hierarchy for headers to aid the reader in navigating the 38 page section.

5- The project mentions regional coordination and transboundary collaboration, however, there is a missed opportunity to mention of how the project will leverage groundwater resources at the regional level for drought resilience purposes.

6- The project can go further on the community-based interventions. There are many existing initiatives that can be improved in quality and scaled up with interesting models and results on.

7- The theory of change states that "The successful implementation of the GGW initiative requires a regional approach that integrates national efforts under a unified framework". The GM would also argue that local coordination and mechanisms need to be included, since grassroots level implementation is where the most impact will be evidenced. This is why the GGW accelerator has streamlined the involvement of National Coalitions for the GGW in all countries to ensure all relevant actors have a seat at the table and are aware of each other's contributions.

8- The theory of change portrays communities as recipients of support rather than active stakeholders in this process. The mention of strengthened regional capacity in the first condition (IF) exacerbates this oversight, as it places this process at a strategic level that never quite engages the stakeholders at the forefront of the initiative, who have the potential to make a difference in their home environments. The outcomes and components bear the illusion of their participation without concretely establishing their roles and terms of engagement.

9- Overall observations:

- a. Missed opportunities to enhance Sahel Value Chains and engaging the local private sector

- b. Unclear on the leveraging of renewable energy as a solution apart from Mali bioethanol stoves, perhaps there is more potential here for more innovation. Leveraging solar energy for access to water is also a possibility that responds to multiple needs.
- c. No mentions of K4GGWA project funded by EU Commission currently ongoing and streamlining knowledge for the GGW Initiative
- d. Areas of potential UNCCD coordination:

- i. Component 1 - output 1.1.1 gender responsiveness trainings
- ii. Component 2 - output 2.1.2 PPPs for cross sectoral investments
- iii. Component 4 - output 4.1.1 Framework for M&E
- iv. Component 4 - output 4.1.2 Digital platform

Agency's Comments

7 D. Policy Requirements

7.1 Are the Policy Requirement sections completed?

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

7.2 Environmental and Social Safeguards

Have safeguard screening document and/or other ESS document(s) attached and been uploaded to the GEF Portal? (annex D)

Secretariat's Comments

PPO's comments:

We note that the UNEP attached the Safeguard Risk Identification Forum and the overall ESS risk of the program is classified as moderate. However, the overall ESS risk and the environment and social risk in the Key risks section in the Portal said 'high' risk in environmental and social risk and committed to conducting environmental and social assessment and analysis during the PPG by each child project and mitigation measures consider in the project design. In addition, the political and governance risk of the program is also high due to the program being in a zone with security concerns which leads to migration and displacements.

i. Please consider conducting fragile and conflict assessment and analysis in the countries and/or regional/cross border level during PPG to identify any environmental and social risks, particularly to the most vulnerable population and integrate mitigation measures as a part of project design.

ii. Please also consider revising overall ESS risk as high considering environmental and social risks in conflict situations.

Agency's Comments

7 May 2024

The Risk rating table in the PFD has been revised as follows:

- The Environment and Social Risk is already rated high. However, the recommended assessment is now included in the comments column and will be considered during PPG.
- The overall Risk which was substantial is now rated High.

8 Other Requirements

Knowledge Management

8.1 Has the agency confirmed that a project level approach to Knowledge Management and Learning has been included in the PFD?

Secretariat's Comments Yes, there is a dedicated knowledge management and learning component.

Agency's Comments

9 Annexes

Financing Tables (Annex A and Annex H)

9.1 GEF Financing Table:

a) 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):

Country STAR allocation?

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments
Non-STAR Focal Area allocation?

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments
LDCF under the principle of equitable access?

Secretariat's Comments Please see comment above regarding the LDCF global set aside resources.

Agency's Comments
SCCF A (SIDS)?

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments
SCCF B (Tech Transfer, Innovation, Private Sector)?

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments
Focal Area Set Aside?

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments
IP Set Aside

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

IP Contribution

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

For Child Project Financing information (Annex H)

b) Are the IP Matching Incentives amounts correctly calculated according to the country STAR focal areas? allocated amounts? Are the IP contributions aligned with the Program? The allocated amounts (including Agency Fee) match those in LoE?

c) Project Preparation Grant Table: Are the IP Matching Incentives amounts correctly calculated according to the country STAR focal areas? allocated amounts? The allocated amounts (including PPG Fee) match those in LoE? Is the requested PPG within the authorized limits set in Guidelines? (pop up information?) If above the limits, has an exception been sufficiently substantiated?

d) Sources of Funds Table: Are the allocated sources of funds for each and every one of the three STAR Focal Areas within the Country's STAR envelope by the time of the last review?

e) Indicative Focal Area Elements Table: (For IPs) The selected Indicative Focal Area element corresponds to the respective IP?

f) (For non-IPs) The selected Indicative Focal Area Elements are aligned with the respective Program?

g) Co-financing Table: Are the indicative expected amounts, sources and types of co-financing provided and consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines?

Secretariat's Comments

Please revise the financing table based on the comment above regarding non-availability of LDCF set aside resources for this PFD.

GEFSEC May 3, 2024- Thanks. No further comments.

Agency's Comments

9.2 Project Preparation Grant (PPG): if PPG for child projects has been requested: has the PPG table been included and properly filled out adding up to the correct PPG and PPG fee totals as per the sum of the child projects?

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

9.3 Sources of Funds for Country STAR Allocation

Does the table represent the sum of STAR allocations sources utilized for this program?

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

9.4 Indicative Focal Area Elements

For non-IP Programs

Does the table contain the sum of focal area elements and amounts as per the sum of the child projects?

Secretariat's Comments

All the CCA programming directions are tagged as CCA 1-1. Please consider other codes which include the following:

CCA 1-2- Scaling up financing for adaptation

CCA 1-3- Technology transfer, innovation and private sector engagement

CCA1-4: Whole of society approach and partnerships

We recommend adding at least one more other than CCA 1-1 (e.g. 1-3 and 1.4 which looks more relevant) in the PFD to reflect the true nature of the program.

GEFSEC May 3, 2024-

Please see comments related to Focal Area Elements in the previous comments box. Please add LD-3 and some allocation for CCA1-1.

Agency's Comments

7 May 2024

LD-3 has now been included.

For CCA, CCA 1-1, CCA 1-2, CCA 1-3 and CCA 1-4 are now tagged.

30 April 2024

Thank you for your insightful recommendations regarding our climate change adaptation (CCA) programming directions within the Great Green Wall Programme. We appreciate your suggestion to diversify the CCA codes beyond CCA 1-1 to more accurately represent the comprehensive nature of our program.

Following your guidance, we have reviewed our programme activities and agree that additional CCA codes would better reflect the scope of our efforts. We have decided to include the following CCA codes in our Programme Framework Document (PFD):

CCA 1-2 (Scaling up financing for adaptation): We are incorporating strategies that aim to increase the availability of financial resources for adaptation efforts within the region.

CCA 1-3 (Technology transfer, innovation, and private sector engagement): Our program includes significant components that focus on introducing innovative adaptation technologies and fostering private sector participation in adaptation strategies.

CCA 1-4 (Whole of society approach and partnerships): We are committed to a holistic approach that involves various stakeholders, including government agencies, local communities, and international partners, to ensure a comprehensive and collaborative adaptation effort.

These updates are reflected in the PFD, where we describe the specific activities and strategies associated with each CCA code. We believe these changes will provide a more accurate and holistic view of our adaptation initiatives, aligning with the true nature of our program and your recommendations.

We thank you once again for your guidance and look forward to your continued support as we refine our program to achieve maximum impact in combating climate challenges in the Sahel region.

9.5 Indicative Co-financing

Are the indicative amounts, sources, and types of co-financing adequate and reflect the ambition of the program? Has the subset of co-finance which are expected to be investment mobilized been identified and defined (FI/GN/01)?

Secretariat's Comments

Would the Agency be able to secure co-financing letters from all the sources listed? At CEO ER stage we wouldn't prefer a major reduction in the co-financing amount. Please confirm.

GEFSEC May 3, 2024- Thanks. No further comments.

Agency's Comments

30 April 2024

The Agency acknowledges the ambitious cofinancing level for this program. Nevertheless, all indicated cofinancing sources are provided by countries fully aware of the cofinancing's effectiveness. The Agency will collaborate with these countries and partners to establish the most realistic cofinancing level.

Annex B: Endorsements

9.6 Has the program and its respective child 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's Comments

PPO's review

- a. Ethiopia LOE: was not signed by the current OFP, was missing the footnote indicating that the designated executing entity is subject to capacity assessment by the implementing agency. The CC Sources of funds in the LOE is less than what is indicated in the Portal's Sources of fund table, while the PPG and PPG fee in Portal is more than what is endorsed by the OFP in the LOE. Please obtain a revised and corrected LOE.
- b. Chad LOE is missing the footnote indicating that the designated executing entity is subject to capacity assessment by the implementing agency and show different LD break-down which is less than in Portal's child project entry. Please obtain a revised and corrected LOE.
- c. Gambia LOE is missing the footnote indicating that the designated executing entity is subject to capacity assessment by the implementing agency and show different break-down than in Portal's Sources of fund tables. Please obtain a revised LOE.
- d. Nigeria LOE shows different break-down in Sources of funds from Portal's entry, please obtain revised LOE:
- e. Senegal LOE has different break-down in grant amount and PPG from Portal's entry. Please correct Portal entry or obtain revised LOE to make them match:
- f. Niger and Mali LOE is missing the footnote indicating that the designated executing entity is subject to capacity assessment by the implementing agency. Please obtain a confirmation email from the OFP agreeing to such condition.

Agency's Comments

7 May 2024

The revised LoEs for Senegal, Chad, Nigeria, Ethiopia, and The Gambia have been secured as per the guidance from PPO review and uploaded in their respective endorsement section.

The OFP of Niger has endorsed via email, a message referencing the content of the missing footnote and that email is attached to the submission.

For Mali, we have notified the OFP who has promised to share an email referencing the footnote. UNEP and BOAD commit to not release any PPG money until that footnote message or a revised letter is issued.

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

Secretariat's Comments Please see above

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments Please see above

Agency's Comments

Annex C: Program Locations

9.7 a) Are geo-referenced information and maps provided indicating where the program interventions will take place?

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

Annex G: NGI Relevant Annexes* (*only for non IP programs)

9.9 a) Does the program provide sufficient detail (indicative term sheet) to take a decision on

the following selection criteria: co-financing ratios, financial terms and conditions, and financial additionality? If not, please provide comments.

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

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

Secretariat's Comments NA

Agency's Comments

Additional Annexes

10 GEFSEC Decision

10.1 GEFSEC Recommendation

Is the program recommended for clearance?

Secretariat's Comments

GEFSEC May 7, 2024

Thanks. The comments are cleared at PFD stage and will be revisited at the CEO ER stage.

GEFSEC May 7, 2024

All comments are addressed except for the following two comments which were provided by UNCCD.

7- *The theory of change states that ?The successful implementation of the GGW initiative requires a regional approach that integrates national efforts under a unified framework?. The GM would also argue that local coordination and mechanisms need to be included, since grassroots level implementation is where the most impact will be evidenced. This is why the GGW accelerator has streamlined the involvement of National Coalitions for the GGW in all countries to ensure all relevant actors have a seat at the table and are aware of each other?s contributions.*

UNEP Response: UNEP would like to recall that the UNCCD accelerator has built on and collaborate with the UNEP/GEF Project ?Filling the Gap? executed by IUCN, to pursue the agenda of the National Coalition establishment in different GGW countries. In the framework of this program, the National Coalitions have been anticipated to be the national steering bodies of the child projects in each participating country. UNEP is therefore in full

agreement with the statement made by the GM and believe the PFD clearly articulates this understanding.

GEFSEC: Please address the orange highlighted part of the comment from UNCCD. Please add this in the PFD e.g. in the institutional/implementation framework.

8- *The theory of change portrays communities as recipients of support rather than active stakeholders in this process. The mention of strengthened regional capacity in the first condition (IF) exacerbates this oversight, as it places this process at a strategic level that never quite engages the stakeholders at the forefront of the initiative, who have the potential to make a difference in their home environments. The outcomes and components bear the allusion of their participation without concretely establishing their roles and terms of engagement.*

UNEP Response: The Stakeholder Engagement section in the PFD has clearly indicated the role of different stakeholders in the program. This will be strengthened through the Stakeholders Action Plan which will be developed during the PPG phase.

GEFSEC: For this comment also, please refer to the orange highlighted part of the comment. We recommend integrating this important element of local level stakeholder participation, engagement and capacity across the program design elements e.g. objectives, theory of change and institutional framework as mentioned in the previous comment. The observation by UNCCD that local communities and their groups are only considered as beneficiaries rather than active stakeholder in the implementation of the program is an important one and quite important to ensure success of this PFD.

GEFSEC May 4, 2024

While some major comments have been addressed by UNEP, there are still some additional technical comments including from PPO and UNCCD. Please resubmit the project by addressing these comments.

GEFSEC April 24, 2024

Please see additional comments now provided in the review sheet. Please address and resubmit the project for further consideration.

PREVIOUS COMMENTS

Please see below a summary of GEF Secretariat's comments on the PFD based on which it is sent back to Agency.

We appreciate the efforts to design a regional program covering 9 GGW countries which includes 8 LDCs. The program, if designed more strategically and with greater engagement of relevant partners, presents an opportunity to build on past investments in

the region to support sustainable natural resource management, biodiversity conservation and adaptation of communities to the impacts of the climate change. The approach to support interventions using a multi-trust fund PFD was also well noted.

The Secretariat reviewed the PFD and found various significant gaps in the PFD. Notable gaps are described below:

- **Climate Change Adaptation:**

The PFD proposes to use a significant amount of LDCF resources but lacks in prioritizing climate change adaptation as an intended and direct benefit from the program. It provides very limited information on climate change adaptation issues that the program will address, and the design of activities doesn't have a clear adaptation outcome.

In the recent years, particularly after the GEF-8 adaptation strategy approval, there have been significant efforts by the GEF Secretariat and GEF STAP to strengthen the climate adaptation rationale in LDCF and SCCF projects. A series of capacity building workshops and discussions with countries and GEF Agencies have been conducted in this regard providing information on good practice and basic requirements. In this PFD, these were largely absent.

The PFD lacked description of the climate hazards and impacts (current and future) supported by science. In fact, in some text the PFD indicated that the climate impacts are uncertain, and it is a potentially just a factor to consider while addressing environmental degradation. The focus was clearly lacking, and the people aspects were largely missing across the PFD despite clear evidence from multiple assessments and past interventions that climate is significantly affecting lives, livelihoods and infrastructure in the region.

The PFD largely focuses on conservation, protection and management of resources which may not naturally lead to adaptation to climate change in the absence of 1) clear articulation of science-based climate vulnerabilities of the target region, 2) activities to integrate climate data and risks in project interventions (policies, technologies, etc.), and 3) inclusion of specific climate adaptation solutions that address urgent adaptation needs of vulnerable communities. It also lacks details of alignment with LDCF's three strategic priorities for GEF 8.

The PFD doesn't provide a clear articulation of how land degradation, biodiversity loss and climate change are interlinked in the region and lacks a robust integrated approach to tackle these coherently. This is fundamental for an MTF of this scale which isn't evident in the PFD design.

Finally, there is a fundamental concern that the proposal is not aligned with the ongoing major initiative between the GEF and GCF on GGW. The LDCF has provided support in June 2022 for a regional platform development with IFAD that is coordinated with GCF, and follow-up national projects have been envisaged and are under development. It is not

feasible for the LDCF to support a new initiative that does not build on, and align with, the GEF-GCF major initiative and with full partnership of agencies already engaged.

In the current form, the PFD is not eligible for LDCF funding.

- **Land Degradation**

The PFD does not reflect the importance of the program in GEF's engagement with and support to the UNCCD, it does not build on the legacy and achievements of the GEF in supporting the GGWI, and it fails to outline a programmatic approach and added value. Most importantly, the engagement of the program with the UNCCD at a strategic level and the program's contribution to the UNCCD agenda are not carved out and described.

There is no clear rationale provided of why the project is designed as a multi-trust fund project combining GEF and LDCF resources and the important strategic considerations of such an approach. This is considered a missed opportunity as indeed there would be promising opportunities for such an approach, with several environmental issues in the Sahel and Sahara that could benefit from such a joint approach in addressing them in the context of climate change mitigation and adaptation and climate extremes such as drought, etc.

Limited justification for using regional LD set-asides has been provided. The regional child project should be designed in a way that all key partners are involved, and their role and responsibilities clearly described. Further, the requested amounts should reflect clearly budgeted groups of activities that explain what the funding will be used for.

The core indicators are inconsistent, questionable, and not in line with the overall focal area alignment of the program. The focal area alignments are inconsistent, several objectives are listed in the financing tables, which the program is not designed to address (such as BD objectives), and other objectives are missing that the program does address (e.g., LD-3). Therefore, there are inconsistencies with core indicators as well.

The program does not sufficiently elaborate on / consider drought mitigation and adaptation and does not tag the program to it in the taxonomy.

- **Institutional coordination and framework**

The PFD misses the opportunity to develop a coherent program building on the legacy of investments provided by the GEF and its partners in the GGW region. GEF was the pioneer to support GGW which evolved as one of the most important regions globally to deliver global environmental and climate adaptation benefits. As significant efforts are already in place by various institutions engaged in the region towards the sustainability of the region, any new effort in the region is expected to be innovative, value-added and well-coordinated to ensure the best value for money of scarce GEF resources. The PFD

lacks this and appears to be a conventional project/program with incremental benefits only.

A notable gap was in the institutional partnership for this program which centered around only UNEP and BOAD, missing out other strategic partners in the region particularly IFAD, World Bank, AFDB and GCF. The GGW adaptation project of IFAD funded by the LDCF mentioned above isn't referred in the PFD. In the co-financing table, a range of sources have been identified but many of those are not structurally included in the program design.

Conclusion and next steps

- As the program requires strengthening its technical design and institutional framework and partnerships, we strongly recommend that UNEP collaborates with key institutions and engage GEF Secretariat, particularly the adaptation team upstream to revise the program design.
- We also recommend UNEP to adopt a more inclusive project development process to design a transformative project by taking into full consideration the recent investments made by the GEF as well as the GEF-GCF collaboration in the region.

GEFSEC March 1, 2023

Based on the consultations held in Nairobi with UNEP, other GEF Agencies, CSOs and the private sector, the GEF Secretariat requests the UNEP to revise the PFD on the various technical and strategic aspects. A summary of comments is provided below.

- **Climate change adaptation:** The PFD lacks the climate adaptation rationale to justify the LDCF funding for the program. It articulates uncertainty about climate change impacts in the region, lacks linkage with the child projects and a clear articulation of transformative adaptation objective. The proposal needs to address these issues along with other comments and inputs provided by participants during the Nairobi workshop. Adaptation core indicators are also required in the PFD. The TOC also needs to be revised to sufficiently integrate climate adaptation aspects along with BD, LD and CCM to chart a pathway for transformation. In this context, we recommend strong alignment with strategic entry points and transformation levers such as supporting the region on scaling up investments, providing concrete approaches to ensure delivery of the program through a whole of society approach and fostering innovation. In the Theory of change, we recommend that the pathway adopt a more comprehensive approach drawing on from the focus areas of national child projects. For example, going beyond only NRM solution to include climate resilient production, climate resilient infrastructure (e.g. water), resilient fisheries, and other areas which are in the child projects. The discussions led to identification of interesting and relevant areas which is worth considering. For example, climate security, which is quite relevant for this region given that there are a number of

countries which have fragile and conflict affected regions where the program may operate. Please note that LDCF can't be used for deployment of renewable energy technology solutions.

- **Land degradation:** The PFD needs to clearly articulate the LD related GEBs and provide details on how the program is linked with the LD FA programming objectives, especially those related to addressing drought (LD-3). Please also clarify the contributions of the program to the implementation of national drought plans and incorporate activities that promote proactive drought management in the participating countries, in line with their national drought plans as applicable. The program should also include the topic of drought mitigation and adaptation into its rationale, components, outcomes, and outputs. Currently, drought is mentioned as a risk factor, however, the program is also expected to mitigate the risk to the extent possible. Please also align the program and national child projects with the LD-3 objective on DLDD, as appropriate. So far, none of the projects includes an alignment with LD-3 in the financing tables. Please also include the keywords "drought mitigation and adaptation in the taxonomy. Please revise the core indicator targets for indicator 4.3 (SLM targets in production landscapes). The program has a substantial LD STAR funding and is therefore expected to create commensurate GEBs under this sub-indicator.

- **Biodiversity:** The PFD needs to ensure alignment with the BD FA strategy especially ensuring aligning with GBFF targets and including relevant core indicators.

- In addition to alignment with the respective FAs, the PFD also needs to strengthen the **justification of the multi-trust fund approach of the program.**

- **Child projects:** For the LDCF projects, please provide a climate rationale which could be added in the PFD framework. The child projects description can follow the GEF PFD template. For LDCF projects we would require adaptation core indicators, not the GEF TF ones. For MTF, both are required.

- **Ensuring coherence and collaboration with GCF.** The GGW has been identified as a priority region for major initiatives between GEF and the GCF. Regarding this, in the GEF-7, the Council already approved a regional LDCF project to support adaptation which will be jointly implemented with the GCF's IGRENFIN program by IFAD, along with a number of country projects. The project should directly contribute to the GEF-GCF long term vision for complementarity and coherence (LTV). For this, the PFD should clearly include a concrete approach to collaborate with GCF, and how this new initiative can add value to the ongoing initiatives.

- **Complementing GEF's and other partners investments in the GGW region.** As discussed in the consultation meetings, there is more than 10 billion USD investment in the GGW region supporting sustainable transformation of the GGW and are aligned with the broader GEF objectives of supporting climate resilience, sustainable land management, conservation, strengthening institutional capacity and facilitating

coordination among the countries. These investments include a number of aspects which are proposed in the PFD. A number of GEF Agencies have also been prominently engaged in supporting GGW, including AfDB, FAO, IFAD, and UNDP, some with GEF support. As indicated during the workshop, UNEP needs to ascertain from other GEF Agencies what it takes for them to be engaged in the proposed initiative (and that needs a more clear value proposition of the proposal and room for engagement by other Agencies). Therefore, the PFD needs to outline a mechanism which will complement these initiatives, create avenues to involve these partners in the program, integrate their investments directly and carve out the added value of this new program. The proposed program needs to build on this to avoid duplication and deliver best value for money of the scarce GEF resources. Finally, meaningful partnership and collaboration with other GEF agencies and partners are a must, to be presented in the proposal. Please substantiate the rationale and value addition of this proposal for the GEF and why it is strategic for the GEF to invest in this proposal with UNEP at this juncture in a very crowded field (having engagement of other GEF agencies is of critical importance).

- **Innovation and sustainability:** The PFD lacks a clear narrative on how it would promote innovation at the program level and ensure sustainability in the long term. There are some elements on private sector engagement and institutional innovation. However, we expect a more coherent narrative integrated in the program design components.

- **Global set aside:** As indicated in our discussion, there are very limited resources available from the LDCF and LD set aside. Depending on how the revised program structure is proposed, especially around engagement of more partners in the program, the GEF Secretariat will review the strategic value to allocate global set aside resources for this PFD.

Agency's Comments

08 May 2024

GEFSEC: Please address the orange highlighted part of the comment from UNCCD. Please add this in the PFD e.g. in the institutional/implementation framework.

UNEP Response: A paragraph is now included in the Execution Arrangement section to clarify the role of local communities and engagement.

GEFSEC: For this comment also, please refer to the orange highlighted part of the comment. We recommend integrating this important element of local level stakeholder participation, engagement and capacity across the program design elements e.g. objectives, theory of change and institutional framework as mentioned in the previous comment. The observation by UNCCD that local communities and their groups are only considered as beneficiaries rather than active stakeholder in the implementation of the program is an important one and quite important to ensure success of this PFD.

UNEP Response: We value the comment and guidance provided. Very well appreciated. However, it has to be recognised that effort has been made in the PFD to ensure consideration of the issues raised. For example, the page 125 a paragraph was dedicated to that. Nevertheless, various sections in the PFD including the objective, have been amended to add the issues raised.

7 May 2024

UNEP responses below included in bold just after the referenced UNCCD comments for ease of reference:

UNCCD Comments on GEF- 8 PFD:

Transformation Approach to Large Scale Investment in Support of the Implementation of the Great Green Wall Initiative-TALSISI-GGWI

There are many grammatical and syntax errors throughout the document that we did not care to highlight, however, the following aspects stood out to our team:

UNEP Response: Noted with thanks. Efforts have been done to edit the document and correct the errors.

1- On page 13, more could have been said about Food insecurity and the role that water scarcity plays in the barriers to agricultural expansion.

UNEP Response: Thank you for your comment, food insecurity and water scarcity are discussed throughout the Programme Rationale, and will be strengthened and expanded during PPG. These are important elements covered under ?Overview of challenges faced by populations living within the GGW region, and appears in the ?Regional Problem Tree?. Further to respond directly to the comment, a section ?Water scarcity as barrier to agricultural expansion in Sahel? has been added under section ?Desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD) with the GGW region?.

2- The role of women in such an initiative is understated, as they are not mere ?primary caregivers and resource collectors? (p13) but should be at the forefront of the initiative?s community leadership. Contextualizing leadership is an intricate task, but strategic role-sharing can make this a reality while avoiding disruption in the cultural fabric.

UNEP Response: Thank you for the response, this is the intent of the project, and the referenced sentence is followed up with the revised sentence ?Their empowerment, including in fulfilling community leadership, emerges as a potential avenue for impactful interventions.? Further, in response to PPO comment, gender dimension has been strengthened throughout the PFD document. During the PPG, comprehensive gender analysis will be conducted, and Gender Action Plans will be developed both at program level and Child Project level.

3- The project misses an opportunity to invest in further youth as the guarantors of a future where environmental priorities are primordial. Youth groups are mentioned as a modality along with women groups, however, ensuring the sustainability of such a massive initiative requires investment in the next generations that can continue the work that as started through their acquired and existing knowledge.

UNEP Response: The agency takes note of the comment. A paragraph on youth group has been inserted in the ?Stakeholders Engagement? section. However, we would like to mention that UNCCD commented on an earlier version of the document. A word search will demonstrate the consideration of youths in the programme. Nevertheless, the agency will give due consideration to the youths? concerns and will ensure that the Stakeholders Action Plan will provide important considerations to youth issues in the region. The partnership with the private sector envisaged in the program will be instrumental in youths? consideration in the program both at regional level and at child projects level. Important to mention that the Agency and GEF have supported Great Green Wall Youths Caravan in the first 2 editions, 2022 and 2023. This is a youth sensitization and advocacy campaign on the GGW Initiative and encouraging youth to find employment in the region on sustainability issues. These Caravans have yielded projects ideas which will be implemented through child projects and will serve at regional level for resources mobilization for specific youths-oriented actions.

4- The flow of the entire Project Rationale is confusing and difficult to digest. Unsure if by design or deliberate. Pages 19 ? 50 are difficult to keep track of with redundancies, duplications, country details repeated multiple times for different themes. Highly recommend consolidating all findings either by country, or by theme. There is no clear hierarchy for headers to aid the reader in navigating the 38 page section.

UNEP Response: The last version of the document has improved the presentation.

5- The project mentions regional coordination and transboundary collaboration, however, there is a missed opportunity to mention of how the project will leverage groundwater resources at the regional level for drought resilience purposes.

UNEP Response: We took note of the observation. However, the issue of ground water is not yet at the core work of the GGW. The region has huge potential and the need for ground water to support restoration efforts and livelihood development is

crucial in the Sahel. The Program will during the PPG properly consider ground water in the GGW initiative. The Panafrican Agency of the GGW and some national agencies are already taken active part in the Global Water Forum process.

6- The project can go further on the community-based interventions. There are many existing initiatives that can be improved in quality and scaled up with interesting models and results on.

UNEP Response: Agree. Each country has conducted a baseline assessment and the identification of good practices. These baseline assessments are currently being compiled to have Regional synthesis including of those good practices which will be promoted during the program implementation.

7- The theory of change states that "The successful implementation of the GGW initiative requires a regional approach that integrates national efforts under a unified framework". The GM would also argue that local coordination and mechanisms need to be included, since grassroots level implementation is where the most impact will be evidenced. This is why the GGW accelerator has streamlined the involvement of National Coalitions for the GGW in all countries to ensure all relevant actors have a seat at the table and are aware of each other's contributions.

UNEP Response: UNEP would like to recall that the UNCCD accelerator has built on and collaborate with the UNEP/GEF Project "Filling the Gap" executed by IUCN, to pursue the agenda of the National Coalition establishment in different GGW countries. In the framework of this program, the National Coalitions have been anticipated to be the national steering bodies of the child projects in each participating country. UNEP is therefore in full agreement with the statement made by the GM and believe the PFD clearly articulates this understanding.

8- The theory of change portrays communities as recipients of support rather than active stakeholders in this process. The mention of strengthened regional capacity in the first condition (IF) exacerbates this oversight, as it places this process at a strategic level that never quite engages the stakeholders at the forefront of the initiative, who have the potential to make a difference in their home environments. The outcomes and components bear the illusion of their participation without concretely establishing their roles and terms of engagement.

UNEP Response: The Stakeholder Engagement section in the PFD has clearly indicated the role of different stakeholders in the program. This will be strengthened through the Stakeholders Action Plan which will be developed during the PPG phase.

9- Overall observations:

a. Missed opportunities to enhance Sahel Value Chains and engaging the local private sector ?

UNEP Response: Thank you for the comment, the agency will expand during PPG on enhancing the Sahel Value Chains and built on the text already captured in the PFD. As emphasized in the current version of the PFD, the full engagement of the private sector of the Program is built around the Value Chains at local level where in each participating country private sectors have been identified (e.g. SOMIVAP in Mali, Agricultural Cooperatives in Niger, etc.) with collaboration with international private sector like FAGRIB and Partners from USA.

b. Unclear on the leveraging of renewable energy as a solution apart from Mali bioethanol stoves, perhaps there is more potential here for more innovation. Leveraging solar energy for access to water is also a possibility that responds to multiple needs.

UNEP Response: Climate Change Mitigation Resources were very limited in the program. Therefore, there is eligibility issue of renewable energy in the programme.

c. No mentions of K4GGWA project funded by EU Commission currently ongoing and streamlining knowledge for the GGW Initiative ? K4GGWA is very well mentioned in the Program. Collaboration is even anticipated during the implementation .

UNEP Response: Noted with thanks. This is an oversight. The project is now included in the initiative to coordinate and learn from.

d. Areas of potential UNCCD coordination:

UNEP Response: Noted. Discussions are ongoing for concrete collaboration with UNCCD which will be included in the final project document design during the PPG.

i. **Component 1 - output 1.1.1 gender responsiveness trainings**

ii. **Component 2 - output 2.1.2 PPPs for cross sectoral investments**

iii. **Component 4 - output 4.1.1 Framewrok for M&E**

iv. **Component 4 - output 4.1.2 Digital platform**

30 April 2024

Comments addressed above in the respective sections.

18 April 2024:

GEF Comments in Grey and UNEP Responses are highlighted in yellow and green:

Please see below a summary of GEF Secretariat's comments on the PFD based on which it is sent back to Agency.

We appreciate the efforts to design a regional program covering 9 GGW countries which includes 8 LDCs. The program, if designed more strategically and with greater engagement of relevant partners, presents an opportunity to build on past investments in the region to support sustainable natural resource management, biodiversity conservation and adaptation of communities to the impacts of the climate change. The approach to support interventions using a multi-trust fund PFD was also well noted.

The Secretariat reviewed the PFD and found various significant gaps in the PFD. Notable gaps are described below:

- **Climate Change Adaptation:**

The PFD proposes to use a significant amount of LDCF resources but lacks in prioritizing climate change adaptation as an intended and direct benefit from the program. It provides very limited information on climate change adaptation issues that the program will address, and the design of activities doesn't have a clear adaptation outcome.

In the recent years, particularly after the GEF-8 adaptation strategy approval, there have been significant efforts by the GEF Secretariat and GEF STAP to strengthen the climate adaptation rationale in LDCF and SCCF projects. A series of capacity building workshops and discussions with countries and GEF Agencies have been conducted in this regard providing information on good practice and basic requirements. In this PFD, these were largely absent.

The PFD lacked description of the climate hazards and impacts (current and future) supported by science. In fact, in some text the PFD indicated that the climate impacts are uncertain, and it is a potentially just a factor to consider while addressing environmental degradation. The focus was clearly lacking, and the people aspects were largely missing across the PFD despite clear evidence from multiple assessments and past interventions that climate is significantly affecting lives, livelihoods and infrastructure in the region.

The PFD largely focuses on conservation, protection and management of resources which may not naturally lead to adaptation to climate change in the absence of 1) clear articulation of science-based climate vulnerabilities of the target region, 2) activities to integrate climate data and risks in project interventions (policies, technologies, etc.), and 3) inclusion of specific climate adaptation solutions that address urgent adaptation needs of vulnerable communities. It also lacks details of alignment with LDCF's three strategic priorities for GEF 8.

The updated climate rationale significantly addresses the above comments by emphasizing the direct and urgent need for climate change adaptation in Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania. It outlines a comprehensive framework that prioritizes climate adaptation as both an intended and direct benefit of the program. Here's how it addresses the key points raised by the GEF:

Prioritizing Climate Change Adaptation: The rationale explicitly focuses on climate-driven challenges and the necessity of adaptation strategies to combat these issues. It acknowledges the environmental, socio-economic, and health impacts of climate variability and change, thereby placing climate change adaptation at the core of the program's objectives.

Incorporating Climate Hazards and Science-based Vulnerabilities: Detailed descriptions of temperature rises, erratic rainfall, increased climate extremes, desertification, and their socio-economic ramifications provide a clear, science-based understanding of current and future climate hazards. The rationale uses data and projections to highlight the vulnerabilities specific to the region, aligning with the need for evidence-based adaptation planning.

Focus on Adaptation Outcomes and Community Benefits: By outlining specific vulnerabilities related to agriculture, water scarcity, health risks, and infrastructure, the rationale ensures that the design of activities directly aims at achieving adaptation outcomes. It stresses the importance of securing livelihoods, enhancing food security, and improving resilience to climate impacts, thereby focusing on the benefits to people and communities in the Sahel.

Integration of Climate Data and Risks: The strategy for addressing climate change incorporates the use of climate science predictions and regional climate models. This approach ensures that climate data and risks are integrated into project interventions, including policy development, technology adaptation, and the implementation of climate-resilient practices.

Specific Climate Adaptation Solutions: The rationale introduces targeted adaptation measures, such as sustainable land and water management practices, climate-resilient agriculture, and infrastructure improvements. These solutions are tailored to address the urgent adaptation needs of vulnerable communities, directly responding to the articulated climate vulnerabilities.

Alignment with LDCF Strategic Priorities: The rationale demonstrates alignment with the LDCF's strategic priorities for GEF-8 by emphasizing innovative financing mechanisms, regional cooperation, and capacity building. It advocates for a holistic and integrated approach to adaptation, addressing land degradation, biodiversity conservation, and socio-economic challenges through a climate lens.

Addressing Environmental Degradation with a Climate Adaptation Focus: While the program addresses environmental degradation, it clearly articulates how these efforts are inherently linked to adaptation objectives. It emphasizes that managing resources effectively is crucial for adapting to climate change, thus integrating conservation efforts with adaptation strategies.

Moreover, the rationale aligns well with the GEF-8 Programming Directions by proposing a comprehensive adaptation strategy that integrates environmental restoration, socio-economic revitalization, capacity building, innovative financing, and regional cooperation. This strategic approach is designed to chart a pathway for transformation, addressing the strategic entry points and leveraging transformation levers such as scaling up investments, adopting a whole-of-society approach, and fostering innovation.

For the GEF TF-funded Child Projects, an extensive section has been included that details environmental and climate change profile of the projects (see the section, **?Environmental and climate change profiles of Countries funded through the GEF TF?**).

The PFD doesn't provide a clear articulation of how land degradation, biodiversity loss and climate change are interlinked in the region and lacks a robust integrated approach to

tackle these coherently. This is fundamental for an MTF of this scale which isn't evident in the PFD design.

The PFD addresses the comment about the lack of a clear articulation of how land degradation, biodiversity loss, and climate change are interlinked in the Sahel region, and the absence of a robust integrated approach to tackle these issues coherently. The document explicitly acknowledges the intricate interplay between land degradation, biodiversity loss, and climate change, exacerbating environmental and socioeconomic challenges in the Sahel. It details how rising temperatures and changing precipitation patterns contribute to prolonged droughts and desertification, triggering soil degradation, disrupting ecosystems, leading to loss of biodiversity, and amplifying the vulnerability of local communities. The PFD proposes holistic strategies that integrate sustainable land management, conservation efforts, and climate-resilient practices to safeguard both biodiversity and human well-being in the Sahel environment, addressing the nexus of these issues.

Finally, there is a fundamental concern that the proposal is not aligned with the ongoing major initiative between the GEF and GCF on GGW. The LDCF has provided support in June 2022 for a regional platform development with IFAD that is coordinated with GCF, and follow-up national projects have been envisaged and are under development. It is not feasible for the LDCF to support a new initiative that does not build on, and align with, the GEF-GCF major initiative and with full partnership of agencies already engaged.

In the current form, the PFD is not eligible for LDCF funding.

- **Land Degradation**

The PFD does not reflect the importance of the program in GEF's engagement with and support to the UNCCD, it does not build on the legacy and achievements of the GEF in supporting the GGWI, and it fails to outline a programmatic approach and added value. Most importantly, the engagement of the program with the UNCCD at a strategic level and the program's contribution to the UNCCD agenda are not carved out and described.

A section 'The GEF and the LDN Agenda' has been introduced to profile better the GEF engagement in the LDN agenda with examples of projects that the GEF has funded in contribution to the LDN agenda. Also, the countries' LDN targets have been highlighted, and how the Program is posed to contribute to the countries' LDN commitments, including the GEF's strategic engagement with the UNCCD.

There is no clear rationale provided of why the project is designed as a multi-trust fund project combining GEF and LDCF resources and the important strategic considerations of such an approach. This is considered a missed opportunity as indeed there would be promising opportunities for such an approach, with several environmental issues in the Sahel and Sahara that could benefit from such a joint approach in addressing them in the context of climate change mitigation and adaptation and climate extremes such as drought, etc.

In the PFD, a section, 'The GGW Program Strategic Approach and Rationale' 'Killing multiple birds with one stone' has been introduced to emphasise further the rationale for having a multi-trust fund Program

Limited justification for using regional LD set-asides has been provided. The regional child project should be designed in a way that all key partners are involved, and their role and responsibilities clearly described. Further, the requested amounts should reflect clearly budgeted groups of activities that explain what the funding will be used for.

The justification of the LD set aside is now included in the Program summary and in Section C of the Program alignment with GEF 8 Strategy. As noted in the PFD, the development of the Program has involved meetings in Accra, Bamako, Lome and Nairobi, bringing together different stakeholders ranging from policy makers, academia, civil society organisations, development partners, the private sector etc. Their potential roles have been identified, and during PPG, these will be clarified and commitments obtained.

The core indicators are inconsistent, questionable, and not in line with the overall focal area alignment of the program. The focal area alignments are inconsistent, several objectives are listed in the financing tables, which the program is not designed to address (such as BD objectives), and other objectives are missing that the program does address (e.g., LD-3). Therefore, there are inconsistencies with core indicators as well.

The core indicators for each child project were scrutinized and adjusted to be as consistent, realistic and achievable as much as is possible at the concept stage of project development. As can be seen throughout the revision of the project, alignment of focal areas within the program has been emphasized and all relevant focal areas, including LD-3 are now represented by the core indicator (please refer to the core indicator table). Countries expressed interests as priorities in BD focal area related activities such as creation of Protected Areas for biodiversity conservation such as (e.g. The Gambia, Niger), therefore, BD objectives have been retained in the PFD as well as respective country PIFs. Our response is consistent with a comment later in this review stating, **Biodiversity:** The PFD needs to ensure alignment with the BD FA strategy especially ensuring aligning with GBFF targets and including relevant core indicators.?

The program does not sufficiently elaborate on / consider drought mitigation and adaptation and does not tag the program to it in the taxonomy.

The current version of the PFD has substantively included information on climate change adaptation, particularly for Mali, Mauritania and Burkina Faso which have been funded through LDCF. Please refer to specifically to the sections **Desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD) within the GGW region?** and **Climate change and vulnerability profiles of the GEF Trust Fund Countries?** in the PFD. Also, please note that **Drought Mitigation and Adaptation have been tagged in Annex F.**

- **Institutional coordination and framework**

The PFD misses the opportunity to develop a coherent program building on the legacy of investments provided by the GEF and its partners in the GGW region. GEF was the pioneer to support GGW which evolved as one of the most important regions globally to deliver global environmental and climate adaptation benefits. As significant efforts are already in place by various institutions engaged in the region towards the sustainability of the region, any new effort in the region is expected to be innovative, value-added and well-coordinated to ensure the best value for money of scarce GEF resources. The PFD lacks this and appears to be a conventional project/program with incremental benefits only.

A notable gap was in the institutional partnership for this program which centered around only UNEP and BOAD, missing out other strategic partners in the region particularly IFAD, World Bank, AFDB and GCF. The GGW adaptation project of IFAD funded by the LDCF mentioned above isn't referred in the PFD. In the co-financing table, a range of sources have been identified but many of those are not structurally included in the program design.

The design of the project has been reorganized and integrated existing experiences and how the approach will be innovative, value-added and well-coordinated, this is specifically mentioned in the project summary and in Component 4 description. As noted, the Program

development has benefitted from the experiences and inputs from a wide range of strategic partners who have attended consultation meetings that were held in Accra, Bamako, Lome and Nairobi. The consultations have been inclusive and transparent enough to different stakeholders, including the UNCCD through the Accelerator Program. During full development, transparent and inclusive consultations will continue. Below the Theory of Change, the PFD has information to this effect, highlighting the inclusiveness of the design process of the Program.

The functional platform (The Great Green Wall Accelerator Multipurpose Platform (GGWAMP) that is proposed in the Program will be an important mechanism for continued engagement with strategic partners during the implementation of the Program. The portfolios of strategic partners such as IFAD, World Bank, AfDB and GCF have been duly acknowledged, and have provided useful insights and lessons that the full development of the Program will draw on.

That BOAD and UNEP be the Implementing Agencies profiled in the PFD has largely been upstream country consultations and considerations of the Agencies to serve as Implementing Partner in the Program. In this particular case, UNEP and BOAD were prioritized as Implementing Agencies for the Program. In this regard, the absence of other strategic partners as Implementing Agencies has hardly any contribution to the approach which has been shown to be transparent and inclusive.

Conclusion and next steps

- As the program requires strengthening its technical design and institutional framework and partnerships, we strongly recommend that UNEP collaborates with key institutions and engage GEF Secretariat, particularly the adaptation team upstream to revise the program design.
- We also recommend UNEP to adopt a more inclusive project development process to design a transformative project by taking into full consideration the recent investments made by the GEF as well as the GEF-GCF collaboration in the region.

GEFSEC March 1, 2023

Based on the consultations held in Nairobi with UNEP, other GEF Agencies, CSOs and the private sector, the GEF Secretariat requests the UNEP to revise the PFD on the various technical and strategic aspects. A summary of comments is provided below.

- **Climate change adaptation:** The PFD lacks the climate adaptation rationale to justify the LDCF funding for the program. It articulates uncertainty about climate change impacts in the region, lacks linkage with the child projects and a clear articulation of transformative adaptation objective. The proposal needs to address these issues along with other comments and inputs provided by participants during the Nairobi workshop. Adaptation core indicators are also required in the PFD.

The updated PFD addresses the concerns raised by the GEF concerning information on climate change and its impacts in the region, the climate adaptation rationale, linkage with child projects, articulation of transformative adaptation objectives, and the integration of climate adaptation with biodiversity (BD), land degradation (LD), and climate change mitigation (CCM). **Sections A and B of the PFD have been fully revised to address the concerns, both at regional and national levels.** Further details on this are provided below. The adaptation core indicators have been provided.

The TOC also needs to be revised to sufficiently integrate climate adaptation aspects along with BD, LD and CCM to chart a pathway for transformation. In this context, we recommend strong alignment with strategic entry points and transformation levers such as supporting the region on scaling up investments, providing concrete approaches to ensure delivery of the program through a whole of society approach and fostering innovation. In the Theory of change, we recommend that the pathway adopt a more comprehensive approach drawing on from the focus areas of national child projects. For example, going beyond only NRM solution to include climate resilient production, climate resilient infrastructure (e.g. water), resilient fisheries, and other areas which are in the child projects. The discussions led to the identification of interesting and relevant areas which is worth considering. For example, climate security, which is quite relevant for this region given that there are a number of countries which have fragile and conflict affected regions where the program may operate.

A revised regional TOC is now provided (see Figure 24 in the PFD). The revised TOC fully integrates climate adaptation aspects and supports a programmatic approach to addressing the interlinked challenges of climate change, land degradation and biodiversity loss. It is accompanied by a fully revised narrative for Section B (Program Description), including a description of the four revised components and eight outcomes (including the baseline scenario and program approach for each outcome), as well as the proposed outputs.

The TOC builds on a regional problem tree (Figure 2), which fully integrates climate change challenges (climate variables and hazards), highlights the root causes of land degradation across the target region and associated impacts on the GGW population's food, water and livelihood security, and presents expected impact pathways for the proposed regional program. A detailed narrative accompanies the regional problem tree, outlining the key baseline and climate drivers and challenges, as well as their ecological and socio-economic impacts. The regional solutions matrix (Figure 22) identifies solutions to the challenges derived from the regional problem tree, focusing on those impact pathways that are most feasible to disrupt through this program.

Linkage with Child Projects: The revised regional TOC has been developed through a process that ensures alignment both with (i) the regional problem tree and the solutions matrix, as well as with (ii) the nine child projects. To ensure the latter, all components and outcomes from the child projects were mapped, common themes across them identified, and those common themes combined into four revised components and outcomes that capture all the child project outcomes. Common barriers across the nine child projects were identified and condensed into six regional barriers. Each proposed outcome was matched with appropriate barriers, to illustrate the barrier removal strategy for the programme. Finally, outputs under each component were developed, ensuring in the process that they capture all the themes covered by the child projects (as well as being aligned with the regional problem tree and solutions matrix). Finally, the document outlines how each child project aligns with and contributes to the program-level components for successful delivery of the overall program. It supports this with details from the concepts for each child project and emphasizes a process that moves from country-specific cases to general trends, ensuring the integration of regional priorities.

Integration of Climate Adaptation with BD, LD, and CCM: The document highlights how the program's components are aligned with the focal areas of biodiversity, land degradation, and climate change mitigation. Specifically, it mentions climate adaptation projects focusing on resilient agricultural practices, water resource management, and biodiversity conservation, demonstrating alignment with GEF-8 programming strategies and country/regional priorities .

Transformative Approach: The PFD articulates a transformative approach leveraging participation and inclusiveness, scientific and technical foundations, institutional anchorage, and innovations to address the multifaceted challenges of the GGW zone. It presents a unified call to action against climate change, land degradation, and socio-economic vulnerability, proposing holistic routes towards resilience and sustainable development.

Specifically, to catalyze the transformation, the revised Component 2 has been designed to support the GGW region in scaling up investment in climate change adaptation as well as sustainable land and natural resource management. Under this component, the program will support initiatives and mechanisms to mobilize funds from diverse sources to support resilience-building initiatives. This approach will include attracting private sector investment, accessing international climate finance mechanisms, and harnessing innovative financial instruments such as green bonds and impact investing. By aligning investment strategies with climate adaptation priorities, the Program will unlock resources for projects that enhance agricultural productivity, promote reforestation, and build community resilience to climate shocks. Additionally, it involves strengthening financial institutions' capacity to assess and manage climate risks, thereby increasing investor confidence and fostering sustainable development.

This enhanced focus on innovative financing mechanisms for climate adaptation and resilience is aligned with the strategic priorities of the LDCF and the objectives of the Great Green Wall initiative. It addresses the urgent need for scalable and sustainable financial solutions to support the Great Green Wall region's efforts to adapt to the impacts of climate change through transformative adaptation measures, mitigate the impacts of climate change, and achieve long-term environmental and socio-economic sustainability while ensuring the well-being and livelihoods of its communities.

Overall, the PFD has been significantly revised to incorporate a clear climate adaptation rationale, strengthen the linkages with child projects, articulate a transformative adaptation objective, integrate climate adaptation with biodiversity, land degradation, and climate change mitigation, and include adaptation core indicators.

Additionally, the Theory of Change (TOC) has been revised to integrate climate adaptation aspects thoroughly, addressing the feedback provided during the Nairobi workshop and aligning closely with strategic entry points, transformation levers, and a comprehensive approach suggested by GEF.

Please note that LDCF can't be used for deployment of renewable energy technology solutions.

This is very well noted with thanks. The reference to the use of LDCF funding for renewable energy (mitigation) is now removed.

- **Land degradation:** The PFD needs to clearly articulate the LD related GEBs and provide details on how the program is linked with the LD FA programming objectives, especially those related to addressing drought (LD-3). Please also clarify the contributions of the program to the implementation of national drought plans and incorporate activities that promote proactive drought management in the participating countries, in line with their national drought plans as applicable. The program should also include the topic of drought mitigation and adaptation into its rationale, components, outcomes, and outputs. Currently, drought is mentioned as a risk factor, however, the program is also expected to mitigate the risk to the extent possible. Please also align the program and national child projects with the LD-3 objective on DLDD, as appropriate. So far, none of the projects includes an alignment with LD-3 in the financing tables. Please also include the keywords ?drought mitigation and adaptation in the taxonomy. Please revise the core indicator

targets for indicator 4.3 (SLM targets in production landscapes). The program has a substantial LD STAR funding and is therefore expected to create commensurate GEBs under this sub-indicator.

A table is presented in Section to indicated the linkage of the program with GEF Focal Areas. More specifically:

Land Degradation: a section on ?Desertification, Land Degradation, and Drought (DLDD) Within the GGW Region? has been added in the PFD.

- **Biodiversity:** The PFD needs to ensure alignment with the BD FA strategy especially ensuring aligning with GBFF targets and including relevant core indicators.

In response, information has been added in form of a table, ?Table showing the Program Contribution to the Global Biodiversity Framework? with additional information. Additional information will be provided at PPG.

- In addition to alignment with the respective FAs, the PFD also needs to strengthen the **justification of the multi-trust fund approach of the program.**

- **Child projects:** For the LDCF projects, please provide a climate rationale which could be added in the PFD framework. The child projects description can follow the GEF PFD template. For LDCF projects we would require adaptation core indicators, not the GEF TF ones. For MTF, both are required.

In response to the guidance provided, the Project Identification Forms (PIFs) for Mali and Burkina Faso have been revised to fully align with the expectations for LDCF projects, particularly concerning the articulation of a clear climate rationale and the incorporation of adaptation core indicators. These adjustments have been made to conform with the GEF Project Framework Document (PFD) template, which is specifically designed to capture the necessary components for projects seeking support under the LDCF. Below is a summary of how these aspects have been addressed:

Climate Rationale: Comprehensive Climate Vulnerability Analysis: Each PIF now includes a detailed assessment of the climate vulnerabilities specific to the country and the target regions within. This analysis draws upon the latest climate models, historical climate data, and projected climate change impacts to establish a robust rationale for adaptation interventions.

Alignment with National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Priorities: The climate rationale in each PIF is directly aligned with the countries' National Adaptation Plans and other relevant national climate strategies. This ensures that the proposed projects are grounded in national priorities for climate adaptation and resilience building.

Identification of Adaptation Needs: The PIFs explicitly identify the key adaptation needs of vulnerable communities, ecosystems, and sectors within each country. This includes addressing water scarcity, agricultural productivity under changing climate conditions, and resilience to climate-induced disasters.

Adaptation Core Indicators: Following the guidance, adaptation core indicators have been provided for the Mali and Burkina Faso child projects.

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework: Each PIF includes a detailed Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework that integrates these adaptation core indicators. The M&E

framework outlines the baseline data, targets, and methods for assessing progress, ensuring a robust approach to tracking the effectiveness of the adaptation measures.

Integration of PFD Template and Adaptation Indicators: Use of GEF PFD Template: By adopting the GEF PFD template for the LDCF projects, we have ensured that all necessary sections, including project rationale, objectives, components, expected outcomes, and indicators, are appropriately structured to highlight the focus on climate adaptation.

Inclusion of Adaptation Indicators in PFD: The PFD now explicitly incorporates the adaptation core indicators, aligning with the requirements for LDCF-funded initiatives. This inclusion provides a clear framework for articulating the adaptation benefits of the proposed activities.

In summary, the revisions made to the PIFs for Mali and Burkina Faso address the feedback by providing a solid climate rationale grounded in comprehensive vulnerability assessments and national priorities. Furthermore, the inclusion of adaptation core indicators within the GEF PFD template ensures that the projects are equipped to measure and report on the specific impacts of their adaptation efforts. These adjustments underscore our commitment to aligning with LDCF guidelines and maximizing the effectiveness of climate adaptation interventions in the Sahel region.

- **Ensuring coherence and collaboration with GCF.** The GGW has been identified as a priority region for major initiatives between GEF and the GCF. Regarding this, in the GEF-7, the Council already approved a regional LDCF project to support adaptation which will be jointly implemented with the GCF's IGRENFIN program by IFAD, along with a number of country projects. The project should directly contribute to the GEF-GCF long term vision for complementarity and coherence (LTV). For this, the PFD should clearly include a concrete approach to collaborate with GCF, and how this new initiative can add value to the ongoing initiatives.

The PFD has addressed the comment regarding ensuring coherence and collaboration with the Green Climate Fund (GCF) by incorporating several key elements that demonstrate a concrete approach to collaborate with GCF and how the new initiative adds value to ongoing initiatives:

Program Description Section: The PFD explicitly mentions the coordination and cooperation with ongoing initiatives and programs, including those supported by the GCF. This section outlines how the program will complement and synergize with existing efforts, thereby avoiding duplication and ensuring coherence with broader regional strategies.

Innovative Financing for Climate Adaptation Component: The program includes a specific component dedicated to innovative financing for climate resilience (Component 2), which aligns with GCF objectives. This component highlights the establishment of scalable and innovative financing models for climate resilience, including enhanced access to finance for smallholder farmers and the establishment of public-private partnerships. This approach is in line with GCF's emphasis on leveraging private sector investments and innovative financing mechanisms to support climate adaptation and resilience.

Collaboration with IFAD-GCF Programs: The PFD mentions specific IFAD-GCF Programs, such as the Inclusive Green Financing Initiative and the Africa Integrated Climate Risk Management Programme, which are relevant to the Sahel region. The program aims to build on these investments, particularly in areas of climate-resilient agriculture and risk management, thereby ensuring complementarity and coherence with

GCF-funded initiatives. During the review process of the PFD, in the addition to the linkage with the ongoing GCF portfolio in the countries, there was discussion with IFAD and agreement is reached to further discuss concrete collaboration approach building on the existing mechanisms established by the GGW initiative. The mechanism to be developed based on the ongoing framework of regional collaboration through the Residential Seminar, the Regional Steering Committee and the Committee of experts and this mechanism will be institutionalized. The Panfricann Agency of the GGW and UNEP Coordination of the GGW are currently working to organize a Regional workshop with all stakeholders including donors to agree on the collaboration mechanism to be institutionalized by the GGW statutory bodies.

Engagement with Regional and National Coalitions: The program emphasizes strengthening regional and national coalitions to support stakeholder mobilization, advocacy, and communication for the Great Green Wall Initiative. This includes aligning efforts with GCF-supported projects and programs to enhance regional recovery and resilience-building processes that address underlying disaster and climate change risks.

By integrating these elements, the PFD clearly outlines a comprehensive approach to collaborate with GCF and demonstrates how the new initiative can add value to ongoing GCF-supported initiatives. This alignment is critical for maximizing the impact of climate adaptation efforts in the Sahel region and ensuring the efficient use of resources across complementary initiatives.

- **Complementing GEF's and other partners investments in the GGW region.** As discussed in the consultation meetings, there is more than 10 billion USD investment in the GGW region supporting sustainable transformation of the GGW and are aligned with the broader GEF objectives of supporting climate resilience, sustainable land management, conservation, strengthening institutional capacity and facilitating coordination among the countries. These investments include a number of aspects which are proposed in the PFD. A number of GEF Agencies have also been prominently engaged in supporting GGW, including AfDB, FAO, IFAD, and UNDP, some with GEF support. As indicated during the workshop, UNEP needs to ascertain from other GEF Agencies what it takes for them to be engaged in the proposed initiative (and that needs a more clear value proposition of the proposal and room for engagement by other Agencies). Therefore, the PFD needs to outline a mechanism which will complement these initiatives, create avenues to involve these partners in the program, integrate their investments directly and carve out the added value of this new program. The proposed program needs to build on this to avoid duplication and deliver best value for money of the scarce GEF resources. Finally, meaningful partnership and collaboration with other GEF agencies and partners are a must, to be presented in the proposal. Please substantiate the rationale and value addition of this proposal for the GEF and why it is strategic for the GEF to invest in this proposal with UNEP at this juncture in a very crowded field (having engagement of other GEF agencies is of critical importance).

A mapping of ongoing initiatives funded by GCF, GEF and other donors in the countries participating in this program has been conducted and included in the PFD. This has allowed us to identify close to US\$ 3 billion of investment in the participating countries. The mechanism for collaboration and coordination with the donors agencies and other key GGW stakeholders has been anticipated and this will be finetuned during the PPG with participation of all stakeholders and institutionalized in the GGW program.

- **Innovation and sustainability:** The PFD lacks a clear narrative on how it would promote innovation at the program level and ensure sustainability in the long term. There are some elements on private sector engagement and institutional innovation. However, we expect a more coherent narrative integrated in the program design components.

The PFD now articulates a coherent narrative regarding innovation, a number of elements which we cover below:

Technological innovation for enhanced efficiency and climate forecasting: The programme is at the forefront of integrating technological innovations to significantly boost efficiency, effectiveness, and informed decision-making processes. A key component of this technological advancement is the utilization of geospatial tools and climate forecasting models, which serve as pivotal resources in enhancing our understanding and responsiveness to climate variability and change across the Sahel region.

Collaborative research and innovation: Promoting joint research initiatives that explore innovative solutions to climate adaptation and sustainable development. Collaborative research can leverage diverse expertise within the region, leading to the development of context-specific technologies and practices that can be scaled across borders.

Innovation and learning will create new socioeconomic opportunities that will improve livelihoods of communities, reduce poverty levels, reduce conflicts linked to resource scarcity thereby removing the poverty barrier to integrated natural resources management. The climate adaptation projects in Mali, Burkina, and Mauritania are prime examples of such innovative approaches, focusing on sustainable land management, biodiversity conservation, and climate-resilient agriculture.

Innovating Financing for Broadened Impact: The programme introduces innovative financing models including Climate Adaptation Funds, Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), green bonds, and Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES). These models aim to secure sustainable funding streams for climate resilience projects, ensuring scalability and longevity. This financial innovation not only attracts new investments but also encourages a move away from sole reliance on traditional funding sources.

Fostering Cross-Sectoral Integration: By promoting holistic solutions that span agriculture, water management, biodiversity conservation, and climate finance, the program ensures efforts are synergistic and reinforce each other, leading to more comprehensive and impactful outcomes.

Coordinated Approach with Institutional Partnerships: The collaboration between the Great Green Wall Agencies, BOAD, other GEF Agencies and UNEP showcases the program's strategic use of institutional partnerships to achieve broader goals, pooling resources, expertise, and influence to drive substantial change both locally and regionally.

Knowledge Sharing and Policy Advocacy: The program acts as a conduit for sharing best practices and innovative solutions, enriching the dialogue around climate resilience, informing policy decisions, and fostering a collaborative learning environment among all stakeholders.

Technological Innovation for Enhanced Efficiency: By embracing digital solutions for monitoring, evaluation, and project management, the project improves operational efficiency and effectiveness, enabling agile responses and informed decision-making.

Climate Forecasting Models for Proactive Adaptation Planning: Advanced climate forecasting models are utilized to predict climate trends, extreme weather events, and their potential impacts on ecosystems and human livelihoods. These models are instrumental in developing proactive adaptation measures, guiding the timing and nature of agricultural activities, and informing water resource management decisions. By anticipating future climatic conditions, the project equips communities and stakeholders with the knowledge

needed to adapt their practices accordingly, reducing vulnerabilities and enhancing resilience to climate change.

Integration of Digital Solutions for Project Management: The project embraces digital platforms for project management, monitoring, and evaluation (M&E), streamlining workflows and fostering transparency. Customized software and mobile applications facilitate real-time data collection and reporting from the field, enabling quick adjustments to project activities as needed. These digital solutions not only improve the efficiency of project implementation but also ensure that stakeholders are kept informed about progress and outcomes, fostering a culture of accountability and continuous improvement.

Capacity Building in Technological Applications: Recognizing the critical importance of technological literacy, the project includes comprehensive capacity-building initiatives for local stakeholders in the use of geospatial tools, climate forecasting models, and digital project management platforms. Training sessions, workshops, and hands-on demonstrations are designed to empower local communities, government agencies, and partner organizations with the skills necessary to leverage these technologies for environmental management and climate adaptation efforts.

By integrating these technological innovations into its core components, the project sets a new standard for climate resilience efforts in the Sahel region. It exemplifies how cutting-edge technology can be harnessed to make informed decisions, predict future scenarios, and effectively manage the challenges posed by climate change, paving the way for a more resilient and sustainable future. The regional platform will further assimilate key findings and innovative approaches from the climate adaptation projects, facilitating access to this information for stakeholders across the GGW zone.

One of the innovations of the programme is the engagement of the private sector in the GGW initiative by enforcing the 2021 Council of Ministers decision which established a Forum on GGW Natural Products. The programme will support the institutionalization of the forum and make it a periodic event which will enhance the private sector engagement in the GGW. Some strategic stakeholders like parliamentarians, women associations and organized group will be also included both in regional and national level.

- **Global set aside:** As indicated in our discussion, there are very limited resources available from the LDCF and LD set aside. Depending on how the revised program structure is proposed, especially around engagement of more partners in the program, the GEF Secretariat will review the strategic value to allocate global set aside resources for this PFD.

In response to the feedback on the allocation of global set aside resources from the LDCF and LD set aside, we have carefully revised the program structure to underscore its strategic value and alignment with GEF's priorities. Key revisions and enhancements include:

Expanded Partnership Engagement: We have strategically broadened the engagement of partners across various sectors, including international NGOs, the private sector, academic institutions, and local communities. This diversified partnership approach is designed to leverage a wide range of expertise, resources, and networks, significantly amplifying the program's impact and sustainability. By demonstrating a clear pathway for these partnerships to contribute to the program's objectives, we aim to highlight the added value and strategic importance of the program, warranting support from global set aside resources.

Integration of Innovative Financing Mechanisms: The program now incorporates a more detailed framework for innovative financing, including mechanisms such as Green Bonds, Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES), and Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). These mechanisms are critical for mobilizing additional financial resources and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the program's initiatives. The inclusion of innovative financing demonstrates the program's commitment to leveraging financial innovation for climate resilience, enhancing its strategic value.

Enhanced Focus on Technological Innovation: The program structure emphasizes the role of technological innovation in driving environmental management and climate resilience. By incorporating advanced geospatial analysis, remote sensing technology, and digital data management platforms, the program sets a precedent for leveraging technology in large-scale environmental initiatives. This focus on technology not only enhances the program's effectiveness but also positions it as a pioneering initiative worthy of support from global set aside resources.

Clear Articulation of Strategic Outcomes: The revised program structure outlines specific, measurable outcomes that directly contribute to global environmental benefits, including biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and land degradation neutrality. By aligning these outcomes with the GEF's strategic objectives, the program presents a compelling case for the strategic allocation of global set aside resources.

Commitment to Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning: An enhanced monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) framework is integral to the revised program structure. This framework ensures that lessons learned and best practices are systematically captured and shared, contributing to the global knowledge base on environmental management and climate resilience. The MEL framework underscores the program's strategic value by highlighting its contribution to global learning and innovation in environmental governance.

By addressing these key areas in the revised program structure, we aim to underscore the program's strategic value and alignment with the objectives of the GEF Secretariat. We believe that the engagement of a diverse range of partners, coupled with a strong focus on innovative financing, technological innovation, strategic outcomes, and a robust MEL framework, makes a compelling case for the allocation of global set aside resources to support the Great Green Wall initiative.

14/12/2023

Secretariat's Comments

Please see below a summary of GEF Secretariat's comments on the PFD based on which it is sent back to Agency.

We appreciate the efforts to design a regional program covering 9 GGW countries which includes 8 LDCs. The program, if designed more strategically and with greater engagement of relevant partners, presents an opportunity to build on past investments in the region to support sustainable natural resource management, biodiversity conservation

and adaptation of communities to the impacts of the climate change. The approach to support interventions using a multi-trust fund PFD was also well noted.

The Secretariat reviewed the PFD and found various significant gaps in the PFD. Notable gaps are described below:

- Climate Change Adaptation:

The PFD proposes to use a significant amount of LDCF resources but lacks in prioritizing climate change adaptation as an intended and direct benefit from the program. It provides very limited information on climate change adaptation issues that the program will address, and the design of activities doesn't have a clear adaptation outcome.

Response 1: The comment is well noted and appreciated. The current version includes an identification of climate change adaptation, and a related outcome (outcome 1.2). We would also like to note that outcome 1.1 aims at building and strengthening adaptation through SLM activities to improve land productivity, land cover and soil organic carbon. Related information has been provided, e.g. maps on p. 8 - The impact of climate change on crop yields in countries participating in the program, Reference: IFAD (2019) Climate Adaptation in Rural Development (CARD) Assessment Tool. This highlights the potential adaptation challenges in the agriculture sector in the participating countries during the 2030 ? 2050 period under a no irrigation scenario.

In the recent years, particularly after the GEF-8 adaptation strategy approval, there have been significant efforts by the GEF Secretariat and GEF STAP to strengthen the climate adaptation rationale in LDCF and SCCF projects. A series of capacity building workshops and discussions with countries and GEF Agencies have been conducted in this regard providing information on good practice and basic requirements. In this PFD, these were largely absent.

Response 2: Building on response 1, this comment is well noted and we have provided information on the adaptation rationale based on the STAP guidance of May 2022 (see page 9 in the revised PFD). The revised version also includes LDCF elements and the profile the countries participating in the Program with LDCF resources ? see p. 29-30, and a table on p. 30 has been added showing how the Program brings together funding priorities of the GEFTF and LDCF to achieve GEBs, socioeconomic wellbeing and LDCF priorities in LDCs of the GGWI.

The PFD lacked description of the climate hazards and impacts (current and future) supported by science. In fact, in some text the PFD indicated that the climate impacts are uncertain, and it is a potentially just a factor to consider while addressing environmental degradation. The focus was clearly lacking, and the people aspects were largely missing across the PFD despite clear evidence from multiple assessments and past interventions that climate is significantly affecting lives, livelihoods and infrastructure in the region.

The PFD largely focuses on conservation, protection and management of resources which may not naturally lead to adaptation to climate change in the absence of 1) clear articulation of science-based climate vulnerabilities of the target region, 2) activities to integrate climate data and risks in project interventions (policies, technologies, etc.), and 3) inclusion of specific climate adaptation solutions that address urgent adaptation needs of vulnerable communities. It also lacks details of alignment with LDCF's three strategic priorities for GEF 8.

The comment is well received, and the revised version outlines the Program's consistence with the LDCF's thematic priority areas and levers of transformation.

The PFD doesn't provide a clear articulation of how land degradation, biodiversity loss and climate change are interlinked in the region and lacks a robust integrated approach to tackle these coherently. This is fundamental for an MTF of this scale which isn't evident in the PFD design.

The comment is well noted, and we have provided details on the interlinkages between land degradation, biodiversity loss and climate change in the GGW region, and how the Program is designed to address these simultaneously (e.g. see p 23 of the PFD and many other parts of the project document).

Finally, there is a fundamental concern that the proposal is not aligned with the ongoing major initiative between the GEF and GCF on GGW. The LDCF has provided support in June 2022 for a regional platform development with IFAD that is coordinated with GCF, and follow-up national projects have been envisaged and are under development. It is not feasible for the LDCF to support a new initiative that does not build on, and align with, the GEF-GCF major initiative and with full partnership of agencies already engaged.

Many thanks for your comment. In response, we have compiled a list of regional interventions involving multiple financial institutions, development actors and other stakeholders. Annex I includes a table showcasing the link between the PFD, Child Projects, Regional Coordination Project and Other partner initiatives in the region.

In the current form, the PFD is not eligible for LDCF funding.

The revised version highlights the eligibility of the Program for LDCF funding, including demonstrating how the Program is linked to LDCF funding priorities, but also how the design of the Program is an opportunity for address LD, BD, CC adaptation challenges within the GGW region in line with the integrated approach promoted by the GEF CEO and Council.

- Land Degradation

The PFD does not reflect the importance of the program in GEF's engagement with and support to the UNCCD, it does not build on the legacy and achievements of the GEF in

supporting the GGWI, and it fails to outline a programmatic approach and added value. Most importantly, the engagement of the program with the UNCCD at a strategic level and the program's contribution to the UNCCD agenda are not carved out and described.

The comment is well received, and in response, additional information has been provided to highlight the GEF's engagement in the GGW region and the partners, including the UNCCD. However, it is important to recall that the GGW Initiative goes beyond combatting land degradation, drought, and desertification. It promotes an ambitious integrated ecosystem restoration effort that combines critical climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity, socioeconomic and capacity building benefits. Please refer to the link [FR-PIPD.pdf \(grandemurailleverte.org\)](#) Chap 3 page 43.

There is no clear rationale provided of why the project is designed as a multi-trust fund project combining GEF and LDCF resources and the important strategic considerations of such an approach. This is considered a missed opportunity as indeed there would be promising opportunities for such an approach, with several environmental issues in the Sahel and Sahara that could benefit from such a joint approach in addressing them in the context of climate change mitigation and adaptation and climate extremes such as drought, etc.

The comment is well taken, and in response we have built on the rationale of the Program as multi-trust fund across the revised document.

Limited justification for using regional LD set-asides has been provided. The regional child project should be designed in a way that all key partners are involved, and their role and responsibilities clearly described. Further, the requested amounts should reflect clearly budgeted groups of activities that explain what the funding will be used for.

The regional Child project has been designed to address 3 fundamental issues of the program: 1. Support national child projects in providing tools, guidance and methodologies to address common thematic issues including identification and dissemination of good practices; development of tools to be used at national level; 2. Support participation of all the stakeholders in the Program and facilitating capacity development of these stakeholders to be fully engaged in the programme; 3. Ensure coordination of national child project, reporting and exchanges to ensure synergy and complementarity. The use of regional set aside to support the coordination project is in line with the GEF 7 and 8 approach and well justified because: i) despite the lack of an incentive mechanism as opposed to IPs, countries have demonstrated their commitment through STAR allocations; ii) the management of the program is designed as those of IPs, justifying the need for set aside.

In addition to the above mentioned non-technical rationale, the Regional Set aside will support innovative approaches in the GGW. These include creation of an interconnected monitoring platform to ensure that investments are tracked and information shared in real time from any part of the world. This will help to address the problem of monitoring of

investment and achievements that was highlighted in the UNCCD report on the status of the GGW implementation.

The core indicators are inconsistent, questionable, and not in line with the overall focal area alignment of the program. The focal area alignments are inconsistent, several objectives are listed in the financing tables, which the program is not designed to address (such as BD objectives), and other objectives are missing that the program does address (e.g., LD-3). Therefore, there are inconsistencies with core indicators as well.

Many thanks for calling our attention to these points. Recalling the integrated nature of the GGW initiative, we have included the missing objectives. We believe however that biodiversity objectives are important to the countries as they conduct baseline assessments that define their priority areas and projects to respond to their integrated approach of the GGW. Taken note that the GGW is not only premised on land degradation, we hope that the merit of an integrated approach is well justified.

The program does not sufficiently elaborate on / consider drought mitigation and adaptation and does not tag the program to it in the taxonomy.

The comment has been well received and addressed in the revised PFD version; drought mitigation and adaptation are now tagged in the Program Taxonomy.

- Institutional coordination and framework

The PFD misses the opportunity to develop a coherent program building on the legacy of investments provided by the GEF and its partners in the GGW region. GEF was the pioneer to support GGW which evolved as one of the most important regions globally to deliver global environmental and climate adaptation benefits. As significant efforts are already in place by various institutions engaged in the region towards the sustainability of the region, any new effort in the region is expected to be innovative, value-added and well-coordinated to ensure the best value for money of scarce GEF resources. The PFD lacks this and appears to be a conventional project/program with incremental benefits only.

The comment is well received and appreciated. In response, information has been provided and the baseline has been amended to include these important efforts.

A notable gap was in the institutional partnership for this program which centered around only UNEP and BOAD, missing out other strategic partners in the region particularly IFAD, World Bank, AFDB and GCF. The GGW adaptation project of IFAD funded by the LDCF mentioned above isn't referred in the PFD. In the co-financing table, a range of sources have been identified but many of those are not structurally included in the program design.

The comment is well received. As mentioned, the table in Annex I outlines the linkages between the program, the child projects and other partner initiatives. Efforts have been made to highlight the strategic partnerships of this Program with the portfolio of projects implemented by other partners, notably IFAD, the World Bank, AfDB and GCF. This is clearly spelt out in the PFD. The IFAD-implemented LDCF project has been included on the list of projects and programs with which the proposed Program has linkages. Additionally, notes have been added to the cofinancing table to highlight how the proposed Program will synergize and strengthen complementarities with the cofinancing programs and projects.

With regards to the participation of other agencies in the program, the Agency would like to highlight the efforts made:

1. The GEF Africa coordination in the Secretariat, in collaboration with the Agency (UNEP) have made multiple efforts to ensure that during the five consultations meetings conducted during the programme design all agencies had been invited. AfDB has participated in 4 out of the 5 regional workshops, IFAD participated remotely to the meeting in Niger and Bamako: physically in Accra and Lome. UNDP participated in two regional workshops and FAO has never responded.
2. During the GEF Regional Workshop in Accra, a special session on the GEF 8 GGW program was organized to discuss GEF 8 with West, Central and North Africa OFP and other partners including the GGW National Agencies/Focal Points. Most of the GEF agencies attended the special session. During that session, GGW countries presented their national project ideas and approached UNEP to be Implementing Agency. Djibouti and Senegal indicated that they would like to work with both UNEP and UNDP. None of the agencies objected to the request from countries and the meeting reminded countries to choose their preferred agency freely.

UNEP is fully committed to continue engaging other agencies and partners in the program, to increase collaboration efforts during the PPG phase, and as part of the Regional Coordination project. The African Union Steering Committee will also be used as the avenue for collaboration with all stakeholders. Furthermore, as the institutional audit of the GGWI is underway with support of AfDB and other partners, UNEP will build on key findings and recommendation to support the institutional coordination framework.

Conclusion and next steps

- As the program requires strengthening its technical design and institutional framework and partnerships, we strongly recommend that UNEP collaborates with key institutions and engage GEF Secretariat, particularly the adaptation team upstream to revise the program design.

- We also recommend UNEP to adopt a more inclusive project development process to design a transformative project by taking into full consideration the recent investments made by the GEF as well as the GEF-GCF collaboration in the region.

Agency's Comments

UNEP takes note of the guidance and recommendations and will continue to increase efforts to engage all relevant partners to develop a robust program. UNEP would like to inform the Secretariat that the GGW partners have highlighted the inclusive approach that has characterized the program design so far and we hope that we can have the chance to take it to the next level.

10.2 Additional Comments to be considered by the Agency(ies) during the child project development.

Secretariat's Comments

During the child project development, UNEP is recommended to work closely with core GEF partners e.g. IFAD, GCF, AfDB, UNDP, FAO and others to ensure that there is clear collaboration and various efforts deliver results for the region in a way that is more than the sum of parts. We specifically recommend working closely with IFAD which is implementing the GEF 7 Adaptation RSP and has a strong knowledge management component. There are some interventions proposed in this PFD which may potentially overlap with the knowledge platform and other technical support e.g. 11 country KM specialists which are provisioned under the LDCF-IFAD-GCF project.

Please also engage with UNCCD Secretariat during the PPG phase to align the program with their priorities. GEF would be willing to engage in conversations with them and other strategic partners during the PPG phase.

Agency's Comments

10.3 Review Dates

	PIF Review	Agency Response
First Review	11/17/2023	12/14/2023
Additional Review (as necessary)	3/1/2024	4/18/2024
Additional Review (as necessary)	4/24/2024	4/30/2024

	PIF Review	Agency Response
Additional Review (as necessary)	5/1/2024	5/7/2024
Additional Review (as necessary)	5/4/2024	5/8/2024