

Promoting Sustainable land management for the achievement of Land Degradation Neutrality for Improved Equity, Sustainability, and Resilience in Rice Landscapes of Liberia

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

11720

Countries

Liberia

Project Name

Promoting Sustainable land management for the achievement of Land Degradation Neutrality for Improved Equity, Sustainability, and Resilience in Rice Landscapes of Liberia

Agencies

FAO

Date received by PM

12/2/2025

Review completed by PM

Program Manager
Jean-Marc Sinnassamy
Focal Area
Multi Focal Area
Project Type
FSP

PIF
CEO

Part I - General Project Information

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

January 30, 2026

Addressed.

December 10, 2025

Not sure.

Please confirm the classification of the Central Agricultural Research Institute as government, or correct.

Agency Response Central Agricultural Research Institute is government owned agency under the Ministry of Agriculture. However, the CARI will implement the proposed activities under outcome 2.2.4. through a sub-contract with EPA

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

December 10, 2025

Yes

Agency Response

2. Project Summary.

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

b) Does the summary capture the essence of the project and is it within the max. of 250 words?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

December 10, 2025

Yes

Agency Response

3. Project Description Overview

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

January 30, 2026

Addressed.

December 10, 2025

- There is an effort to include gender in the result framework. However, this effort could be reinforced, especially related to women empowerment especially in the following outputs: 1.1.4, 2.1.3, 3.1.1, 3.1.2.
- Please ensure that in PIRs, MTR and TE, gender-specific results, including the implementation of the gender action plan are reported on, especially lessons learned and successful gender equality integration approaches.
- Output 1.1.2: please check the formulation with on-going work from the Global Mechanism of UNCCD, as there is a new generation of LDN targets, incorporated to "integrated land-use planning systems".
- Please, note there might be an error of numbering in the result framework: for the outputs, we should read 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, etc and not 1.1, 1.2 ... Same comment for the outputs under the component 3. Please, correct.
- Please, include outcomes and outputs for the M&E



Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) ⓘ				
M&E	Technical Assistance	GET	175,250.00	605,932.00
Sub Total (\$)			4,870,494.00	35,793,308.00
Project Management Cost (PMC) ⓘ				
GET			243,525.00	7,638,661.00

- The cofinancing ratio (for technical components) is 1:7.3. while it is 1:31.3 for pmc. If there are so high financing for pmc, we may wonder if you need GEF money for pmc. please, confirm or correct.

Agency Response

- Revised. The outcome targets have been beefed up with gender sensitive target indicators under output for output 1.1.4, 2.1.3, 3.1.1 and 3.1.2.

- Noted. All reporting frameworks comprise gender specific results, including gender related knowledge management. The indicators and results are expounded in attached Gender Action Plan (Annex K)
- Noted and revised. Output 1.1.2 will utilize the [Integrated Land Use Planning \(ILUP\)](#) cycle that involves resource assessment and allocation targets on economic, social and cultural opportunities provided by land resources to maintain and enhance ecosystem services. Such include # communities rising out of poverty, # with increased access to markets which are included in our results framework.
- Numbering corrected (including in results framework and workplan)
- Component 4 contains outcomes and outputs for the M&E under output 4.1.1 (EPA M&E system for LDN) and 4.1.2 (LDN project M&E System).
- Re-checked and confirmed. The co-financing ratios for both technical components (\$35,793,308/4,870,494) and PMC (1,789,665/243,525) is 7.34.

4. Project Outline

A. Project Rationale

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

December 10, 2025

- Yes, the current situation is well described.
- There is an accurate list of stakeholders. Several of them will be involved in the steering committee. Some of them will be operators on the ground.
- The EPA will be the main executing entity.

Agency Response Noted and feedback appreciated

5 B. Project Description

- Is there a concise theory of change (narrative and an optional schematic) that describes the project logic, including how the project design elements are contributing to the objective, the identified causal pathways, the focus and basis (including scientific) of the proposed solutions, how they provide a robust approach? Are underlying key assumptions listed?
- Is there a description of how the GEF alternative will build on ongoing/previous investments (GEF and non-GEF), lessons and experiences in the country/region?
- Are the project components (interventions and activities) described and proposed solutions and critical assumptions and risks properly justified? Is there an indication of why the project approach has been selected over other potential options?
- Incremental/additional cost reasoning: Is the incremental/additional cost reasoning properly

described as per the Guidelines provided in GEF/C.31/12? Has the baseline scenario and/or associated baseline projects been described? Is the project incremental reasoning provisioned (including the role of the GEF)? Are the global environmental benefits and/or adaptation benefits identified?

- e) Other Benefits: Are the socioeconomic benefits resulting from the project at the national and local levels sufficiently described?
- f) Is the financing presented in the annexed financing table adequate and demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objectives? Are items charged to the PMC reasonable according to the GEF guidelines?
- g) How does the project design ensure resilience to future changes in the drivers and adaptive management needs and options (as applicable for this FSP/MSP)?
- h) Are the relevant stakeholders (including women, private sector, CSO, e.g.) and their roles adequately described within the components?
- i) Gender: Does the gender analysis identify any gender differences, gaps or opportunities linked to project/program objectives and activities and have these been taken up in component design and description/s?
- j) Are the proposed elements to capture and disseminate knowledge and learning outputs and strategic communication adequately described?
- k) Policy Coherence: Have any policies, regulations or subsidies been identified that could counteract the intended project outcomes and how will that be addressed?
- l) Transformation and/or innovation: Is the project going to be transformative or innovative? Does it explain scaling up opportunities?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

January 30, 2026

Addressed.

December 10, 2025

- We take note that CSO were only consulted during the project design. We wonder if there is not a lost opportunity to involve and empower CSO, including farmer organizations and local communities in project execution. Please, justify.
- FAO is well known for the use of various tools to measure socioeconomic benefits. However, we did not see how the socioeconomic benefits will be captured. Please, include and budget the use of tools to measure socioeconomic benefits and eventually resilience.
- Please, clarify how you tackle policy coherence aspects and ensure that the LDN targets will be well endorsed by other sectors.

Agency Response

- **Reinforced:** This project is designed around empowering farmer groups, private sector, and communities in ILUP/ILM, while strengthening the role of CSO to provide oversight, guidance and leadership of technical activities requiring national stakeholder inclusion and participation. In this regard, CSO, private sector, farmer organization and representative from local communities are involved in project in delivery of the following (*further outlined under stakeholder involvement in Page 31*); (1.1.1/1.1.3- CSO leadership and participation in national multistakeholder workgroup and update of LDN targets; 1.1.4 - CSO, farmer organization and community actors capacity development in ILUP/ILM, 2.1.1/2.1.2/2.1.3 - Community, farmer organizations, CSO leadership in development of Integrated landscape management plans and implementation of gender sensitive SLM practices; 3.1.1/3.1.2 - farmer organization and private sector participation in market assessment and development and beneficiary to small business grants and 4.1.2/4.1.3 - CSO, farmer groups and community engagement in project MEL and

outreach activities. However, CSOs, farmer groups and local communities are not designated as executing partners due to current country context but rather leading the implementation of project activities at both national and grassroots levels.

- **Revised and reinforced:** Under output 4.1.2, FAO tools to measure incentives for ecosystem services and social economic benefits such as social analysis framework will assess the extent to which project outcomes effect poverty reduction, food security and LDN environmental outcomes. Other methodologies such as Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis (SEAGA) and Social and biodiversity Impact assessment (SBIA) will evaluate the extent to which LDN actions influence local livelihoods, women empowerment and equity, biodiversity abundance and diversity. FAO Market assessment and development (MA&D) framework also evaluates the extent to which project investments to improve market(ing) opportunities improve local market dynamics, community livelihoods and resilience. [These FAO tools reinforce EPAs project Management Framework MEL tools which closely align to FAO social economic indicators for tracking benefits accrued from development projects.](#)

- **Clarified and reinforced.** The proposed LDN precedes the previous Liberia LDN TSP which aligned with various country policies, framework and plans under forestry, landscape and biodiversity conservation priorities (*Page 55- Section C- Alignment with the country's development and environmental priorities*). To further cultivate sector endorsement and reinforce policy coherence, a multi stakeholder platforms are reinvigorated to undertake the following;

- ? FAO's Policy Optimization Tool (PolOpT) will be used to guide the project strategic resource allocation to various sector in support of LDN targets and FNS priorities.
- ? A sector-based stakeholder engagement and consultation process workgroups to review and update the LDN targets (output 1.1.3) and development of national land-use planning and management framework (Output 1.1.2)
- ? Development of a national LDN MEL system (Output 4.1.1) that is sector based to capture unique sectorial needs, priorities and reporting requirements
- ? Building national and community climate resilience through sector-based actions in forestry, agriculture, Land management, gender and markets. (Output 2.1.2/2.1.3/2.1.4)
- ? A knowledge management and outreach approach (output 4.1.3) that promotes sector-based analysis, synthesis and knowledge sharing at national and grassroots platforms.

These are well explained in the ProDoc sections (*Page 22-31*) and *Page (55 -56)*

5.2 Institutional Arrangements and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Project

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

January 30, 2026

Addressed.

December 10, 2025

- We made a point above the strategic interest to include CSO and local communities in project execution, including farmer organizations. Please, consider.
- No dual execution requested.

Agency Response**Clarified.** As explained in comment No.4, CSOs, farmer groups and local communities are highly involved in delivery of project activities. Please note CSO and farmer groups will deliver the following activities: CSO, private sector, farmer organization and representative from local communities are involved in project in delivery of the following (*further outlined under stakeholder involvement in Page 31*); (1.1.1/1.1.3- CSO leadership and participation in national multistakeholder workgroup and update of LDN targets; 1.1.4 - CSO, farmer organization and community actors capacity development in ILUP/ILM, 2.1.1/2.1.2/2.1.3 - Community, farmer organizations, CSO leadership in development of Integrated landscape management plans and implementation of gender sensitive SLM practices; 3.1.1/3.1.2 - farmer organization and private sector participation in market assessment and development and beneficiary to small business grants and 4.1.2/4.1.3 - SCO, farmer groups and community engagement in project MEL and outreach activities. This will be through sub-contracting arrangements with EPA to undertake these activities; leading sector-based workgroups and task forces, facilitation of capacity development actions, outreach and knowledge dissemination activities by government executing entities within this project.

5.3 Core indicators

- a) Are the identified core indicators calculated using the methodology and adhering to the overarching principles included in the corresponding Guidelines (GEF/C.62/Inf.12/Rev.01)?
- b) Are the project's targeted contributions to GEBs (measured through core indicators and additional listed outcome indicators) /adaptation benefits reasonable and achievable?

Are the GEF Climate Change adaptation indicators and sub-indicators for LDCF and SCCF properly documented?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

December 10, 2025

25,000 ha under 3.1 (restoration of agricultural lands), 100,000 ha under 4.3 for SLM, 1,080,200 tCO₂e under 6.1 (AFOLU), 60,325 beneficiaries, including 24,205 males and 36,120 females. We take note of the additional information to reach these targets.

Adaptation indicators: no more comment.

Agency ResponseNoted and feedback appreciated

5.4 Risks

- a) Is there a well-articulated assessment of risk to outcomes and identification of mitigation measures under each relevant risk category? Are mitigation measures clearly identified and realistic? Is there any omission?
- b) Is the rating provided reflecting the residual risk to the likely achievement of intended outcomes after accounting for the expected implementation of mitigation measures?
- c) Are environmental and social risks, impacts and management measures adequately assessed and rated and consistent with requirements set out in SD/PL/03?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

January 30, 2026

- You change from low risk to moderate in the table (see last line of the table under "Overall Risk Rating"). However, you did not change the comment still mentioning a low risk. Please, correct the following comment to reflect a moderate risk: " Project success is envisaged considering the overall low risk to project outcomes, alignments with country sustainable land management, ecosystem restoration priorities and LDN ambitions".

December 10, 2025

- The Full ES Risk Screening checklist, as well as the ESMP, classified this project as "moderate", while the overall rating risk is low in the portal. Please, clarify and correct.

- As mentioned as PIF level by the UK Council member, housing land and property rights are often contested in court. We suggest better including this aspect in the risks with mitigation measures. In the same direction, Germany asked to address land tenure issues as a key risk and possible conflict resolution mechanisms. Please consider ensuring security of tenure in lands and territories held or used by farmers, herders and local communities, where possible (particularly Component 2), and including a budget and monitoring indicators to measure this progress.

- You rated the financial risks low and the political and governance risks as moderate. While you included some corruption risk assessments, we did not find planning and monitoring mitigation measures involving CSO, as requested by the German Council member. Please, revise.

- You mentioned the use of indigenous knowledge. However, there is no information on the existence or definition of indigenous communities. Please, complete and include appropriate mitigation measures, if needed.

- The ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARD MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK (ESMF) also mentioned about indigenous Peoples and FPIC many times. Please clarify whether Indigenous Peoples are present in the areas and revise the ESMF.

- We failed to find a comprehensive field data collection and stakeholder consultation report (Annex P-2) and a validation workshop consultation report (Annex P-3) mentioned in ESMF. Please provide these Annexes.

Agency Response

January, 30 2026

The comments section on overall risk has been updated to reflect the revised narrative on the moderate risk rating

- Clarified and corrected. The Overall rating of this project is ?Moderate?

- **Revised to add a new risk on ?Conflicting interest on housing and property ownership and land tenure rights?.** This project seeks to implement SLM activities and action that may interfere with customary community and household interests and priorities in land resource allocation and capital allocation. The communities has customary land right certificates which proof deeds of ownership. From year 2023 only about 12 communities had received customary deeds, though over 150 had begun the formalization process. However, it is possible that project activities may result to community conflicts and wrangles which interfere with project implementation and longer-term sustainability of desired project outcomes. As a mitigation measure, the project will strengthen the process for development of participatory community land use planning and management (Output 1.1.2) and output 2,1,1 (and especially support customary land formalization process), a guideline which has already been developed by Liberia Land Authority. In this project context, an inclusive and participatory stakeholder process that includes

community leaders, local governance structures, Liberia land Authority experts, country superintendent's and their coordinators and sector specialist from GOL ministries will be established to cultivate consensus and agreements on emerging land tenure and ownership issues (especially in uplands forest fringe communities and lowlands newly migrating communities to lowland catchment areas) and support community land formalization process. Within this process, established workgroups will further identify potential conflict areas and design conflict resolution mechanisms as part of the community Managed integrated land management plans. Budget and monitoring indicators have been refined in results framework and budget worksheets

- **Revised.** CSO member role to track financial, political and governance risks in reinforced in the project through deliberate efforts for inclusive participation in project governance structures i.e Project steering and implementation committees. Moreover, the revamped Land Degradation Neutrality Technical Working Group (TWG) will comprise significant representation from CSO, private sector and farmer groups and community representatives to further strengthen transparency and accountability in project financial and technical activities.

- **Clarified and revised:** The use of indigenous traditional knowledge related to identification and establishment of native tree species, acquiring, processing use of non-timber forest products, tree management (etc) is indeed a project focus. However, internal/external migration and intermarriages within local communities have eroded indigenous communities with very few fragments remaining. However, the risk matrix has been revised to add risks posed by indigenous communities and appropriate mitigation measures.

- No indigenous people. Minority ethnic groups are present which are referred as local communities/peoples.

- **Updated.** The two reports are provided under Annex P-1 AND P-2

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestNA

Agency Response

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

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

January 30, 2026

OK. Support requested from portal IT support to correct the tables (LD4 and not LD1).

December 10, 2025

- The text related the alignment with focal area strategies refers to the LD1, 2, and 4 objectives, while the focal area table mentions the LD1.1 objective. Please correct and make the information consistent between the text and the table. Because of the focus on LDN, we recommend selecting the LD4 objective for the sake of simplicity.

Agency Response**Corrected/Clarified:** The project primary focus is LDFA-4, with secondary alignments to LDFA-1 and LDFA-2. However, we were unable to edit in the CEO endorsement to LD4 Objective

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

December 10, 2025

Yes

Agency Response

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestYes

Agency Response

7 D. Policy Requirements

7.1 Are the Policy Requirement sections completed?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

See below.

Agency Response

7.2 Is the Gender Action Plan uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

January 30, 2026

Addressed.

December 10, 2025

- The Gender Action Plan is announced in annex K, p172, but does not seem available. Please, make the GAP available.

Agency Response**Clarified:** Gender Action plan (Annex K) at Page 160. The GAP is also uploaded to the portal

7.3 Is the stakeholder engagement plan uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestYes.

Agency Response

7.4 Have the required applicable safeguards documents been uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestYes.

Agency Response

8 Annexes

Annex A: Financing Tables

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

STAR allocation?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

January 30, 2026

Support from IT portal team requested for the change.

December 10, 2025

Check the financing tables.

- The "Sources of funds" table reflects the amounts and focal areas mentioned in the LoE.
Cleared.

- However, in the table "focal area elements", you should only report on LD4, as the project is developed on LD4. Please revise.

Agency Response

Focal Area allocation?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestYes

Agency Response

LDCF under the principle of equitable access?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestNA

Agency Response

SCCF A (SIDS)?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestNA

Agency Response

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestNA

Agency Response

Focal Area Set Aside?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

8.2 Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

February 10, 2026

Addressed.

January 30, 2026

Not fully.

- The "consultants" item is too vague. Please provide different lines to understand the different items and the use of the PPG for pre-feasibility studies, feasibility studies, basic costing, technical and scientific design parameters, financial plan, assessment of incremental cost, strategy papers, and/or Gender and Environmental and Social Safeguards...

December 10, 2025

No. Please refer to the guidelines to check which items can be mentioned in the PPG table:

- PPG coordination, general operating expenses are not eligible.

- Please, divide the first item "development of project document with experts" to understand the different items.

- For instance, what Sustainable Land Management, Biodiversity, livelihoods, value chains mean in the PPG context?

Agency Response

January 30, 2026

Thank you for the further clarification. The table has been revised to include additional narrative details.

The PPG table have been revised accordingly

8.3 Source of Funds

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

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

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

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

February 10, 2026

Addressed.

January 30, 2026

Not fully.

- Letters have not been uploaded in the cofinancing table in front of each line.
- Point cleared for the amount of USD 29 million. Cofinancing now in-kind and recurrent expenditures.

December 10, 2025

- Please, in the cofinancing table in the portal, load the letters in front of each cofinancing line.
- Cofinancing of EPA of US\$ 13,431,969 (2 million +11,431,969) = Please note that the letter defines this cofinancing as "in-kind". Please, revise the classification to in-kind and recurrent expenditures.
- Cofinancing from Ministry of Agriculture: 30 million (29 +1 million): based on the letter, this cofinancing project has started in 2021 and is planned until 2029: it is only 50% percent of the 29 million that should be counted in cofinancing (2026-2029). Please, correct.
- Moreover, this cofinancing is also defined as "in-kind" in the letter: please, correct the classification.

Agency Response

January 30, 2026

- The cofinancing letters have been uploaded in front of each line.
- Done. Letters uploaded
- Done. The classifications have been revised as in-kind and recurrent expenditures.
- The total value of RETRAP projects is \$59 million from 2021-2026. The 29 million cofinancing advanced from year 2026-2029, which roughly estimates 50% of the total costs, aligns with the proposed LDN project activities such as access to climate smart aquacultural assets and services and promoting and diversifying rural markets, among others.

Annex B: Endorsements

**8.5 a) If ? and only if - this is a global or regional project for which not all country-based interventions were known at PIF stage and, therefore, not all LOEs provided:
Has the project been endorsed by the GEF OFP/s of all GEF eligible participating countries and has the OFP name and position been checked against the GEF database at the time of submission?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request Addressed at PIF level.

Agency Response

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestAddressed at PIF level.

Agency Response

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestAddressed at PIF level.

Agency Response

Annex C: Project Results Framework

8.6 a) Have the GEF core indicators been included?

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

c) Are all relevant indicators sex disaggregated?

d) Is the Project Results Framework included in the Project Document pasted in the Template?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestYes.

Agency Response

Annex E: Project map and coordinates

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestYes

Agency Response

Annex G: GEF Budget template

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

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

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

January 30, 2026

- Thanks for the efforts.The purchase of field bikes is approved, as well as the maintenance budget for motorbikes (the purchase of the motorbikes is covered by another project).

December 10, 2025

- Please, explain the need for international consultants for (communication, KM, and outreach), (Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning).

- Please, explain and justify the positions of SLM/LDN county/districts coordinators - we would expect these positions financed by the government.

- Why both national and international consultants for communication, KM, and partnerships?

- We take note of the high number of consultants proposed in this budget and the absence of CSO and local communities. We wonder if this decision does not threaten the sustainability of the approach and the ownership at local level. Please, justify or modify.

- Based on the ToR, the National Project Coordinator budget should be covered by pmc (and not across components and pmc). Please revise (either the budget and/or the ToR).

National Project Coordinator	Monthly	52	2,500	13,250	13,250	13,250	13,250		77,000	130,000	EPA
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- Same comment for the SLM/LDN County/District Coordinators.

- Why a final report from FAO budgeted at 7,000 USD? This item may be better covered by Agency fees.

- Is there a need and a space for both "2 spot checks" per year + 1 audit per year?

- Office supplies (2,500\$) should be budgeted under pmc

- Same comment for "assorted printing" (\$25,404).

- There were no exchanges or discussions on the need for vehicles. The preferred option is to use vehicles from the executing or cofinancing partners, or use resources from the cofinancing. Without a reasoning including the identification of needs, the description of the existing fleet, the exploration of other sources of financing, including core funds from the GEF agency, we cannot agree on this item. Please, justify or remove.

- This comment is applicable to the \$32,000 for maintenance. Please, justify or remove.

Purchase of two Land Cruiser 79 Series Double Cabin Pick Up	Lumpsum	1	34,000	8,500	8,500	8,500	8,500			34,000	EPA
Purchase of field bikes to implement component 1,2,3 & 4 for 5 counties	Lumpsum	15	5,000	18,750	18,750	18,750	18,750			75,000	EPA
6100 Sub-total non-expendable procurement				27,250	27,250	27,250	92,250	-	-	174,000	
5028 GOE budget											
Office expenses (electricity, water, phone, fuel, etc)	lumpsum	1	40,425	-	-	-	-		40,425	40,425	EPA
Maintenance Motorbikes and vehicles	Per Year	4	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000			32,000	EPA

Agency Response

Revised. The international KM and outreach specialist has been removed. However, due to existing capacity gaps in Liberia for design of robust MEL frameworks, we have retained the MEL position but reduced the number of days from 70 days to 50 days. Retained MEL position is justified by the need for a specialized MEL specialist to support design of project MEL framework and management of MEL databases, data synthesis and AR/ MTR/ TR reporting to GEF

- **Clarified/revised:** The project will not hire any positions for positions of SLM/LDN county/districts coordinators. They will utilize the existing government hired and salaried personnel to undertake project coordination and supervision of field activities. Proposed field stipend proposed (i.e \$30/day), which allows for lunch/travel to and from project sites and is adjusted to GoL daily subsistence rates (lunch and transport incidental). Some of SLM/LDN actions to be supervised include;

- ? Coordinate community and farmer groups organization to implement project activities in eh grassroots output 1.1.2 and 2.1.1/2.1.2 and 2.1.3
- ? Organize community/farmer groups to design community specific land use management plans, including the visioning exercises
- ? Support coordination and supervision of LDN actions by communities i.e landscape restoration and rehabilitation actions in upland/lowland villages
- ? Support/coordinate field/monthly/quarterly reporting /feedback/learning events

- **Clarified.** The international KM and partnership specialist position has been removed. The project will adhere to a competent national selection process to recruit competent national consultants that are qualified and skilled to undertake the KM and partnership needs of the project

-**Justified/Clarified:** CSO, farmer groups and households will lead implementation of field activities, importantly for budget-heavy LDN actions under output 2 & 3, which promotes local ownership and sustainability. These include direct implementation of SLM/LDN action in tree planting, establishment of nurseries and rice-rotation systems, training and Mel activities. The workforce by government executing entities will play a major role to coordinate/supervise these activities (given the geographical spread and need to synchronize SLM-LDN actions), while also aligning them to local government development actions. Secondly, CSO, farmer groups, private sector and ethnic minority groups will be competitively contracted to directly implement some the LDN actions, through partnership agreements with the lead executing agency, EPA.

- **Revised:** The TORs for the national coordinator have been revised to reflect engagement leadership/coordination of project management activities, with budget placed under PMC.

- **Clarified:** SLM/LDN County/District Coordinators daily subsistence allowances are placed under component 1 and 2 only.

- Clarified. Terminal Report, Spot-checks and Audits represent a FAO requirement and standard mandatory costs related to the monitoring of each project and applicable to the whole FAO wide portfolio and have always been covered by the project funds respectively under M&E and PMC. Spot-checks and Audits are assurance costs linked to the engagement of external partners to mitigate the Operational Partners' risks and keep monitored their performance. Such services are delivered through Independent External Consulting Firms engaged and monitored by FAO. 2 mandatory spot-checks and one audit per year are required for all Partners found to have an overall Moderate Risk Capacity Assessment.

- Revised- Office supplies deleted from expendable procurement

- Revised: Assorted printing deleted from expendable procurement

- Revised: Purchase of vehicle removed from budget and amounts relocated to contacts

- Clarified: The district coordinator offices have motorcycles purchased though previous development/sector projects, some which are operational within project areas. However, most of the motorcycles fleet is non-operational due to budget constraints to fuel the motorcycles and implement field activities. A maintenance costs is proposed to support field operations and activity implementation. The maintenance costs have been reduced to \$20,000 from \$32,000

Annex H: NGI Relevant Annexes

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

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

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestNA

Agency Response

Additional Annexes

9. GEFSEC DECISION

9.1.GEFSEC Recommendation

Is the project recommended for approval

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

February 10, 2026

All points are addressed. The project is recommended for approval.

January 30, 2026

Please, address the pending items above. Upon receipt of a submission addressing the pending comments, The project will be recommended for approval.

December 10, 2025

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

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

9.3 Review Dates

First Review

Additional Review (as necessary)

Additional Review (as necessary)

Additional Review (as necessary)

Additional Review (as necessary)

CEO Approval Response to Secretariat comments

1/9/2026

1/30/2026

2/10/2026