

Connecting Landscapes for Jaguar Conservation

Review PIF and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID
12364
Countries
Ecuador
Project Name
Connecting Landscapes for Jaguar Conservation
Agencies
UNDP
Date received by PM
6/2/2026
Review completed by PM

Program Manager
Sarah Wyatt
Focal Area
Biodiversity
Project Type
MSP

GEF-8 PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF) REVIEW SHEET

1. General Project Information / Eligibility

a) Does the project meet the criteria for eligibility for GEF funding?

b) Is the General Project Information table correctly populated?

Secretariat's Comments

6/15/2026

Yes.

6/11/2026

No. In General Project Information Table as well as in the GEF Financing Table, the Agency selected "Non-Grant" - please confirm if indeed the Country selected this option, in which case the PIF must include information pertaining to the additional annexes for NGI projects.

For the focal area elements, Indicative Focal Area Element table presents two lines for the same element (BD 1-2) - please ask the Agency to merge.

Agency's Comments

Agency Response 06/12/2026

Thanks for the observation. GEF Financing Table has been corrected in GEF Portal as well as in the updated PIF.

D. INDICATIVE TRUST FUND RESOURCES REQUESTED BY AGENCY(IES), COUNTRY(IES), FOCAL AREA AND THE PROGRAMMING OF FUNDS ⓘ

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds ⓘ	Grant / Non- Grant	GEF Project Grant(\$)	Agency Fee(\$) ⓘ	Total GEF Financing(\$)
UNDP ▾	GEF Trv	Ecuador ▾	Biodivev	BD STAR Allocati▾	Grant▾	2,374,429	225,571	2,600,000.00  
Add New						Total GEF Resources(\$)	2,374,429.00	225,571.00 2,600,000.00

ANNEX A: FINANCING TABLES

GEF Financing Table

Indicative Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds

27

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	(in \$)	GEF Project Grant	Agency Fee	Total GEF Financing
					Grant/Non- Grant (For NGI Projects Only)			
UNDP	GEFTF	Ecuador	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: BD-1	Grant	2,374,429	225,571	2,600,000
Total GEF Resources						2,374,429	225,571	2,600,000

Regarding the comment on the focal area elements, Indicative Focal Area Element table presents two lines for the same element (BD 1-2). Figures have been merged and updated in GEF Portal and updated PIF.

Indicative Focal Area Elements			
Programming Directions	Trust Fund	(in \$)	
		GEF Project Financing	Co-financing
BD-1-2	GEF TF	2,374,429	28,814,518
Total Project Cost		2,374,429	28,814,518

A. INDICATIVE FOCAL/NON-FOCAL AREA ELEMENTS ⓘ			
Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing(\$)	Co-Financing(\$)
BD-1-2	GET	2,374,429.00	28,814,518.00
➕ Add New		Total (\$)	2,374,429.00
			28,814,518.00

2. Project Summary

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 results?

Secretariat's Comments
6/2/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments
3 Indicative Project Overview

- 3.1 a) Is the project objective presented as a concise statement and clear?
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?

Secretariat's Comments
6/2/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments
3.2 Are gender dimensions, knowledge management, and monitoring and evaluation included within the project components and appropriately funded?

Secretariat's Comments
6/2/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

3.3 a) Are the components adequately funded?

b) Are the GEF Project Financing and Co-Financing contributions to PMC proportional?

c) Is the PMC equal to or below 5% of the total GEF grant for FSPs or 10% for MSPs? If the requested PMC is above the caps, has an exception (e.g. for regional projects) been sufficiently substantiated?

Secretariat's Comments

6/15/2026

Yes.

6/2/2026

No. Funds allocated from co-financing to PMC are 4.65%, while from GEF Resources are 5.0% - for a co-financing of \$27,532,875, the cofinancing resources to be allocated to PMC must be \$1,376,644 to achieve 5.0% (instead of \$1,281,643). Please amend

Agency's Comments

Agency's Comments 06/12/2026

Thank you for the comment. Figures have been adjusted in PIF, so co-financing allocated for PMC is 5%.

4 Project Outline

A. Project Rationale

4.1 SITUATION ANALYSIS

a) is the current situation (including global environmental problems, key contextual drivers of environmental degradation, climate vulnerability) clearly and adequately described from a systems perspective?

b) Are the key barriers and enablers identified?

Secretariat's Comments

6/2/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

4.2 JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT

a) Is there an indication of why the project approach has been selected over other potential options?

b) Does it ensure resilience to future changes in the drivers?

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

d) are the relevant stakeholders and their roles adequately described?

Secretariat's Comments

6/2/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

5 B. Project Description

5.1 THEORY OF CHANGE

a) Is there a concise theory of change that describes the project logic, including how the project design elements will contribute to the objective, the expected causal pathways, and the key assumptions underlying these?

b) Are the key outputs of each component defined (where possible)?

Secretariat's Comments

6/2/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

5.2 INCREMENTAL/ADDITIONAL COST REASONING

Is the incremental/additional cost reasoning properly described as per the Guidelines provided in GEF/C.31/12?

Secretariat's Comments

6/2/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

5.3 IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

a) Is the institutional setting, including potential executing partners, outlined and a rationale provided?

b) Comments to proposed agency execution support (if agency expects to request exception).

c) is there a description of potential coordination and cooperation with ongoing GEF-financed projects/programs and other bilateral/multilateral initiatives in the project area

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

Secretariat's Comments

6/2/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

5.4 a) Are the identified core indicators calculated using the methodology included in the corresponding Guidelines (GEF/C.54/11/Rev.01)?

b) Are the project's indicative targeted contributions to GEBs (measured through core indicators)/adaptation benefits reasonable and achievable?

Secretariat's Comments

6/2/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's CommentsNA

Agency's Comments

5.6 RISKS

a) Is there a well-articulated assessment of risk and identification of mitigation measures under each relevant risk category?

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 screened and rated at this stage and consistent with requirements set out in SD/PL/03?

Secretariat's Comments

6/2/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

5.7 Qualitative assessment

a) Does the project intend to be well integrated, durable, and transformative?

b) Is there potential for innovation and scaling-up?

c) Will the project contribute to an improved alignment of national policies (policy coherence)?

Secretariat's Comments

6/2/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

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

6.1 Is the project adequately aligned with focal area and integrated program strategies and objectives, and/or adaptation priorities?

Secretariat's Comments

6/2/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

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's Comments

6/2/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

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's Comments

6/2/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

7 D. Policy Requirements

7.1 Is the Policy Requirements section completed?

Secretariat's Comments

6/2/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

7.2 Is a list of stakeholders consulted during PIF development, including dates of these consultations, provided?

Secretariat's Comments

6/10/2026

Yes. Thank you for the revisions.

6/2/2026

No.

This project needs a careful review of terminology and approach around Indigenous Peoples. Overall, it is very important to avoid referring to Indigenous Peoples as "local communities". We need to avoid any conflation of terms and understanding of the rights that go with each.

- Indigenous and Peoples should always be capitalized

- Outcome 2.1 - The short description (in bold) only talks about "local communities" but then the long description references both Indigenous Peoples and other community groups. As written, this means that Indigenous Peoples are being described as local communities which is wrong. In the assumptions of the TOC, a similar mistake is made.

- Barrier 4 - Similar to 2.1 but the opposite where Indigenous communities is used and then described as both Indigenous and rural.

- Stakeholders - Please list both Indigenous Peoples groups and community organizations as separate stakeholders and recognize in the text the different rights they are afforded. They are similar but Indigenous Peoples have the right to FPIC.

- In general, it would probably be better to drop the word 'local' in front of community. Depending on scale of Indigenous groups, 'communities' (without local) could be used in many places for both Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous groups.

Also, please address that text has been copied twice in this section, alignment with GEF priorities, and risks.

Agency's Comments

Agency's Comments

6/9/2026

The project documentation has been revised to ensure a clear distinction between Indigenous Peoples and other rural communities throughout the PIF, SESP and Stakeholder Engagement Plan. All references that could conflate Indigenous Peoples with local communities have been reviewed and corrected. The terms 'Indigenous' and 'Peoples' have been consistently capitalized.

Outcome 2.1, Barrier 4, the Theory of Change assumptions, stakeholder descriptions, partnerships, expected results, risks, and other relevant sections have been revised to explicitly distinguish Indigenous Peoples from other rural communities and to recognize Indigenous Peoples as distinct rights-holders.

The stakeholder section has been updated to separately identify Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous organizations, and rural/community organizations. The text now explicitly recognizes the differentiated rights of Indigenous Peoples, including the application of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) where project activities may affect their lands, territories, resources, livelihoods, governance systems, cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, or collective rights.

References to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) have been replaced, where appropriate, with terminology that distinguishes Indigenous Peoples from other rural communities, in line with UNDP SES Standard 6 and the Secretariat's guidance.

Thank you for your observation. Paragraphs in this section were repeated by accident in the GEF portal- this has now been corrected.

For ease of reference, all adjustments have been highlighted in yellow in the PIF, Social and Environmental Screening Procedure, and Stakeholder Engagement Plan documents.

8 Annexes

Annex A: Financing Tables

8.1 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's Comments
6/2/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments
Focal Area allocation?

Secretariat's CommentsN/A

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

Secretariat's CommentsNA

Agency's Comments
SCCF A (SIDS)?

Secretariat's CommentsNA

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's CommentsNA

Agency's Comments

Focal Area Set Aside?

Secretariat's CommentsNA

Agency's Comments

8.2 Is the PPG requested within the allowable cap (per size of project)? If requested, has an exception (e.g. for regional projects) been sufficiently substantiated?

Secretariat's Comments

6/2/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

8.3 Are the indicative expected amounts, sources and types of co-financing adequately documented and consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines?

Secretariat's Comments

6/2/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

Annex B: Endorsements

8.4 Has the project been endorsed by the country's(ies) GEF OFP and has the OFP at the time of PIF submission name and position been checked against the GEF database?

Secretariat's Comments

6/2/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments

6/2/2026

Yes.

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

6/2/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

8.5 For NCI projects (which may not require LoEs), has the Agency informed the OFP(s) of the project to be submitted?

Secretariat's CommentsNA

Agency's Comments

Annex C: Project Location

8.6 Is there preliminary georeferenced information and a map of the project's intended location?

Secretariat's Comments

6/2/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

Annex D: Safeguards Screen and Rating

8.7 If there are safeguard screening documents or other ESS documents prepared, have these been uploaded to the GEF Portal?

Secretariat's Comments

6/2/2026

Yes.

6/2/2026

No. The starting language that the project "could inadvertently impact Indigenous Peoples..." makes it sound as though the project is not expected to impact Indigenous Peoples. However, the project will definitely impact them and applying safeguards will be important to make sure that those impacts are positive. Please revise.

Agency's Comments

Agency's Comments 6/09/2026

The safeguard screening language has been revised to clarify that the project is expected to work directly with Indigenous Peoples and that project activities may affect Indigenous Peoples' lands, territories, natural resources, governance systems, traditional livelihoods, cultural heritage, and traditional knowledge.

The revised text no longer presents impacts on Indigenous Peoples as inadvertent or incidental. Instead, it recognizes Indigenous Peoples as distinct rights-holders and reflects that the project will apply UNDP SES Standard 6 requirements, including FPIC where applicable, Indigenous Peoples Framework, participatory mapping, culturally appropriate engagement processes, benefit-sharing arrangements, and the integration of Indigenous governance systems and Life Plans into project implementation.

The SESP and associated safeguards instruments have been updated accordingly to ensure that project impacts are positive, equitable, culturally appropriate, and rights-based.

For ease of reference, all adjustments have been highlighted in yellow in the PIF, Social and Environmental Screening Procedure, and Stakeholder Engagement Plan documents.?

Annex E: Rio Markers

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

Secretariat's Comments

6/15/2026

Yes.

6/2/2026

No, GHG emissions reductions would need to be reported for CCM 1. Please commit to calculating them and reporting on them in the results framework. For CCA, there needs to be an explanation of how the project design has been influenced by adaptation needs and will support them.

Agency's Comments

Agency's Comments 06/12/2026

The project's Climate Change Mitigation (CCM) contribution will be measured through quantification of greenhouse gas emission reductions associated with avoided deforestation, reduced habitat degradation, and maintenance of forest carbon stocks within priority jaguar conservation landscapes. Because jaguars require large, intact, and connected forest landscapes, conservation interventions designed to maintain ecological integrity simultaneously conserve high-carbon tropical forest ecosystems and reduce emissions associated with forest loss and fragmentation. Project design therefore integrates biodiversity conservation and climate mitigation objectives through the protection of core jaguar habitats and priority biological corridors. These interventions are expected to reduce habitat fragmentation and prevent forest conversion in areas facing increasing land-use pressure. By reducing deforestation and maintaining large, connected areas of intact forest, the project will contribute to climate mitigation through the avoidance of greenhouse gas emissions that would otherwise result from land conversion and forest degradation. The project will therefore incorporate the quantification of mitigation benefits within the results framework during PPG Phase, measuring avoided emissions and carbon stock conservation associated with habitat protection, connectivity conservation, and fragmentation reduction across targeted jaguar landscapes. GHG mitigation will be estimated using recognized ex-ante carbon accounting methodologies to quantify avoided emissions and carbon benefits associated with forest conservation interventions.

Regarding adaptation, climate change is expected to alter habitat suitability, prey distribution, hydrological regimes, and ecosystem integrity across jaguar landscapes, increasing the vulnerability of jaguar populations and associated ecological communities. In response to these projected impacts, the project has been specifically designed to maintain and restore ecological connectivity across priority jaguar landscapes, with particular emphasis on altitudinal and landscape-scale connectivity. Maintaining connectivity constitutes a critical adaptation strategy because it enables jaguars and their prey species to move across heterogeneous landscapes in response to shifting climatic conditions, facilitating natural range adjustments and access to future climate refugia. This is particularly relevant in the Andean-Amazon interface, where elevational gradients provide pathways for species adaptation under changing temperature and precipitation regimes. The project will therefore strengthen ecosystem resilience to climate change by maintaining functional connectivity, reducing habitat fragmentation, and preserving ecological processes necessary for long-term species persistence under future climate scenarios. To measure adaptation outcomes, the project will incorporate indicators assessing changes in landscape connectivity and evaluate reductions in long-term extinction risk for focal jaguar populations through Population Viability Analysis (PVA), allowing quantification of resilience gains associated with improved connectivity under projected environmental change.

This approach has been added and detailed in the PIF (par.83)

Annex F: Taxonomy Worksheet

8.9 Is the project properly tagged with the appropriate keywords?

Secretariat's Comments
6/2/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

Annex G: NGI Relevant Annexes

8.10 Does the project 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. Does the project provide a detailed reflow table to assess the project capacity of generating reflows? If not, please provide comments. Is the Partner Agency eligible to administer concessional finance? If not, please provide comments.

Secretariat's CommentsNA

Agency's Comments

9 GEFSEC Decision

9.1 Is the PIF and PPG (if requested) recommended for technical clearance?

Secretariat's Comments
6/15/2026

Yes.

6/12/2026

No, please revise and resubmit.

6/2/2026

Not at this time.

Given the broader GEF Sec review blackout, I'm sending the project back to address the issues on terminology on Indigenous Peoples before sending for operations and policy review.

Agency's Comments
Agency's Comments 6/9/2026

The terminology, stakeholder descriptions, safeguards language, and risk assessments related to Indigenous Peoples have been comprehensively revised in response to the Secretariat's comments. The PIF, SESP, and Stakeholder Engagement Plan now consistently distinguish Indigenous Peoples from other rural communities, recognize Indigenous Peoples as distinct rights-holders. All modifications have been reflected across these documents.

Agency's Comments 6/12/2026

Comments have been addressed in the latest resubmission.

9.2 Additional Comments to be considered by the Agency at the time of CEO Endorsement/
Approval

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments
Review Dates

	PIF Review	Agency Response
First Review		6/9/2026
Additional Review (as necessary)		6/13/2026
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		