



# Mex30x30: Conserving Mexican biodiversity through communities and their protected areas

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

## Basic project information

**GEF ID**

11510

**Countries**

Mexico

**Project Name**

Mex30x30: Conserving Mexican biodiversity through communities and their protected areas

**Agencies**

CI

**Date received by PM**

3/29/2024

**Review completed by PM**

4/5/2024

**Program Manager**

Sarah Wyatt

**Focal Area**

Biodiversity

**Project Type**

GBFF

**PIF**

**CEO**

**1. General Project Information**

**a) Is the Project Information table correctly filled, including specifying adequate executing partners? b) Are the project tags properly selected, i.e. any tag on 'support to IPLCs' or KMGBF target is justified given the project description.**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

4/4/2024

Yes.

Agency Response

**c) Are the Rio Markers for CCM, CCA, BD and LD correctly selected with corresponding CCM, CCA, BD and LD benefits made explicit in the project objective, log-frame and/or theory of change?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

4/4/2024

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 and other key expected outcomes?**

**b) Does the summary capture the essence of the project?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

4/24/2024

Yes.

4/4/2024

Yes, but the last sentence needs to be revised for clarity.

Agency Response

CI GEF 04/24/2024

Revised.

### **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) For multi-Trust Fund projects with GEFTF financing, are the GEFTFT Project Financing and Co-Financing contributions to PMC proportional?**

**e) Is the PMC equal to or below 10% (for projects with GEF project financing less than or equal to \$2 million) or 5% (for projects above \$2 million)? If above, is the justification acceptable?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

4/24/2024

Yes.

4/4/2024

No.

a. No, this should focus on the activities of the project rather than their justification. Plain language is welcome.

c, d, e - Yes.

b. No, while generally good please address the following.

Some of the outputs and outcomes language would benefit from revisions for clarity and focus.

1.1.3 - This could benefit from being reworded. "Absorbing the increased budget" is a bit odd and unnecessary to the essence of this which is on an expanded CoP and increased capacity.

2.1 - Does it have to be limited to "donors"?

Component 3 - This component and the text describing it could use significant clarification. It is unclear the lines between PAs and ADVCS. It seems like there is a scorecard for ADVCS too which could be used as an indicator even if it is not the METT.

Indicator 3.1b - This appears to make the only measurement of success of ADVCS the benefits obtained by people. It's unclear how these will be measured and likely are not the principle goal of the ADVCS so might not be the best way to measure them.

Output 3.1.1 - It is unclear from the text what the status of the five year plans are (Completed? In process?) and who is responsible for them. The specific output might be more clear if you strike everything after derived. It may also be clearer to not repeat terms like "gender-responsive" and "inclusive".

Output 3.1.3 - This language sounds quite top down, which is likely not the case. While it appears this where actual material support to communities doing the execution work, this is not clear. The current wording of component 3 sounds training and planning heavy without actual support to do the things. (output 3.1.4 has welcome clarity)

Indicator 4.2.1 and Target (note wrong numbering and this seems to be misentered in the Portal) - These are the measure of the project as a whole rather than this outcome. Is there another indicator that could be used?

Output 4.1.1 - It is unclear why there would be a focus specifically on \*nationally led\* mechanisms. Documentation is great, but it seems like documentation of national initiatives would be of limited value to Mexico where local and regional approaches would have more potential replication. This is another output that would benefit from rewording. Knowledge synthesis on management arrangements with IPLCs is very welcome.

Output 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 - It would be great if the targets or indicators could include a measure of quality rather than the number of products. For example output 4.1.2 seems to be about a single event while the indicator references multiple events.

There reference in the body of the text to 5.1.1 but this is not in the table in the beginning.

A few potential wording edits of the components -

2. Scratch "Attracting and"

3. Focus on what this is doing - Improved management?

3. "with IPLCs" sounds a bit dismissive. Do you mean "working with" or supporting actions by IPLCs?

## Agency Response

CI GEF 04/24/2024

Please refer to the Project Description Overview table in page 4-13 for the changes.

a) Is the project objective statement concise, clear and measurable?

The objective statement has been changed to:

To help Mexico advance toward the Global Biodiversity Framework 30x30 target through long-term sustainable financing for the existing national protected areas.

1.1.3 - This could benefit from being reworded. "Absorbing the increased budget" is a bit odd and unnecessary to the essence of this which is on an expanded CoP and increased capacity.

The output has been changed to:

Output 1.1.3: The institutional capacity of CONANP is enhanced through expanding the Protected Areas Learning Community (community of practice).

2.1 - Does it have to be limited to "donors"?

Yes, component 2 is focused on donations from multilateral, bilateral, foundations, private sector and other philanthropic resources. Component 1 includes other revenue streams that will be reflected in public budget.

Indicator 3.1b - This appears to make the only measurement of success of ADVCS the benefits obtained by people. It's unclear how these will be measured and likely are not the principle goal of the ADVCS so might not be the best way to measure them.

The benefits of ADVCS are both environmental and socio-economic and the project proposes to measure both.

There are several indicators in the i-efectividad that measure environmental benefits, e.g.:

ECCP-1.12 The ecological integrity, values ??and boundaries of the core zone are known and well defined

ECUB-3.3 The surface of the ANP is conserved through the sustainable use and exploitation of natural resources

ECM-5.5 Active management of natural and cultural resources is carried out

ECUB-3.2 Sustainably produced goods and services are promoted in the ANP

We believe that measuring whether people are receiving socioeconomic benefits is important, as this will demonstrate whether choosing to establish ADVCs and adopt sustainable resource use is viable, which is necessary to secure enduring community support for conservation management. There are several indicators in the i-efectividad that measure social benefits, e.g.:

ECGPS-4.4 Local communities, Indigenous Peoples and experts participating in the creation, public consultation and implementation of the ANP management program

ECGPS-4.5 The ANP organizes activities and programs to improve benefits to local communities, ensuring that this is consistent with the values ??of the ANP

E CUB-3.1 The ANP produces economic benefits for local communities (income, employment, payments for environmental services)

ECUB-3.3 The surface of the ANP is conserved through the sustainable use and exploitation of natural resources

ECUB-3.1 The ANP produces economic benefits for local communities (income, employment, PES)

Explanation of ADVCs on first page of Project Rationale has been edited for clarity, to distinguish between ADVCs and PAs. A line has been added to Component 3 p.41-42 description to clarify that i-effectiveness is not currently applicable to ADVCs, but that project will work to adapt it.

Output 3.1.1 - It is unclear from the text what the status of the five year plans are (Completed? In process?) and who is responsible for them. The specific output might be more clear if you strike everything after derived. It may also be clearer to not repeat terms like "gender-responsive" and "inclusive".

The five-year plans as a framework of annual workplans (POA) is a process that has proven successful in the 70 PAs that FMCN currently finances (for more details, see page 87, a) of FMCN [Operations manual](#)). For the PAs included in the Project, those plans do not exist and will be developed in the first year of project implementation in coordination with CONANP and support from FMCN.

The construction of the five-year plans is a participatory process coordinated by the director of each PAs of CONANP. FMCN staff will support the PA director in this planning, which must include results, activities to achieve the proposed results, indicators with baselines and goals, and budget aligning the different initiatives that affect the PA, its Management Program, the 2040 Strategy of CONANP and the National Program of Protected Natural Areas.

The output has been changed to:

Output 3.1.1 Five-year plans, and associated Annual Operating Plans (POAs), developed through an inclusive participatory process coordinated by CONANP and supported by FMCN.

Output 3.1.3 - This language sounds quite top down, which is likely not the case. While it appears this where actual material support to communities doing the execution work, this is not clear. The current wording of component 3 sounds training and planning heavy without actual support to do the things. (output 3.1.4 has welcome clarity)

The output has been changed to:

Output 3.1.3 IPLCs and local organizations implement gender-responsive and inclusive conservation, restoration and sustainable management actions defined in POAs.

The target has been changed to:

Target 3.1.3 80% of targets reached in POAs, which include gender-responsive and management initiatives implemented by IPLCs and local organizations in PAs and ADVCS.<sup>[1]</sup>

Output 4.1.1 - It is unclear why there would be a focus specifically on \*nationally led\* mechanisms. Documentation is great, but it seems like documentation of national initiatives would be of limited value to Mexico where local and regional approaches would have more potential replication. This is another output that would benefit from rewording. Knowledge synthesis on management arrangements with IPLCs is very welcome.

MEx30x30 is unique as CONANP and FMCN, two national institutions, are leading a long-term scheme, with the support of CI GEF and GEF financing. This model has an important replication potential in other countries with high institutional capacity. Language has been added to the Output description on p.45 to highlight topics of interest, including national vs. local and regional mechanisms and IPLC management.

The output has been changed to:

Output 4.1.1 Ongoing lessons learned from MEx30x30 and other long-term sustainable finance mechanisms and PA scaling experiences documented and disseminated.

The target has been changed to:

Target 4.1.1: At least 4 lessons-learned knowledge products prepared and shared (including at least one with a focus on gender and one with a focus on IPLCs).

Output 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 - It would be great if the targets or indicators could include a measure of quality rather than the number of products. For example output 4.1.2 seems to be about a single event while the indicator references multiple events.

There reference in the body of the text to 5.1.1 but this is not in the table in the beginning. A few potential wording edits of the components -

2. Scratch "Attracting and"

3. Focus on what this is doing - Improved management?

3. "with IPLCs" sounds a bit dismissive. Do you mean "working with" or supporting actions by IPLCs?

No change to Output 4.1.2 or target. The indicator refers to # of events, but the target is ?1?

The numbering was fixed for 5.1.1

Component 2 was changed to: Mobilizing funding to cover the financial gap in PAs while the public funding reaches its target.

Component 3 was changed to: Strengthening recently established PAs, and ADVCS managed by IPLCs, to conserve, restore and sustainably manage territories.

These changes are also reflected in all relevant parts of the document.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Each POA typically defines five principal Outputs to be achieved through the types of activities listed above, with at least five indicators and corresponding targets. Examples of indicators used in POAs include:

- ? Number of people who adopt better sustainable practices; number of people who participate in training;
- ? Number of citizen participation forums strengthened; number of partnerships between key stakeholders for the conservation of natural resources;
- ? Number of hectares implementing restoration processes; number of hectares under sustainable management activities such as agroforestry or sustainable livestock farming; number of hectares protected and/or maintained as biological corridors;
- ? Number of monitoring or management actions implemented for protected and endangered species.

**Project Outline**

**4. CHANGES COMPARED to PPG REQUEST**

**4.1 Are changes to the project design, including to elements put forward in the PPG request to meet GBFF selection criteria, been described and justified. And are they acceptable?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

4/5/2024

Yes.

**Agency Response**

**5 B. Project Rationale**

- a) Is the current situation (including global environmental problems, key drivers of environmental degradation, climate vulnerability) clearly and adequately described from a systems perspective and adequately addressed by the project design?**
- b) Have the role of stakeholders, incl. the private sector and local actors in the system been described and how they will contribute to GEBs and other project outcomes? Is the private sector seen mainly as a stakeholder or as financier?**
- c) If this is a blended finance project under GBFF Action Area 4, is there a description of how the project and its financial structure are addressing financial barriers?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

4/24/2024

Yes.

4/4/2024

No.

a. No, please address the following:

1. The design of the project within the current context of conservation funding is a bit confusing. It seems as though these areas will be kept separate somehow from the larger PA estate and, in particular, in relation to funding.

2. Please provide information on any site level designations project sites have, such as KBAs, Ramsar, World Heritage, etc.

3. A number of the targeted species are LC on the IUCN Red List. It would be good to highlight threatened species.

b. No, the discussion and description of the role of Indigenous peoples needs to be significantly revised. As of now, much of the language describes IPLCs as just beneficiaries, people to be involved, or generally passive beneficiaries rather than as the designers and leaders of activities. While it may just be a translation issue, a phrase like "where five indigenous groups are found" does not sound great in English and removes their agency. It could help to make IPLCs the subject of sentences rather than using passive voice.

To lay the foundation for the above, it could be good to provide some specific information about the management and decision making of the areas in the project or PAs and AVDCs in Mexico.

For FMCN, it would be good to have a short mention that it was created with support from the GEF to also provide information related to coordination with GEF initiatives. Enduring Earth has also received GEF support.

c. N/A

## Agency Response

CI GEF 04/24/2024

1. The design of the project within the current context of conservation funding is a bit confusing. It seems as though these areas will be kept separate somehow from the larger PA estate and, in particular, in relation to funding.

MEx30x30 leverages on 26 years of experience between CONANP and FMCN financing PAs.

The current conservation finance landscape for PAs in Mexico is:

-Mexico has 226 federal PA and 579 areas dedicated to conservation (ADVC);

-A proportion of PA have federal funding, and 70 PAs have complementary funds

-The 70 PAs that have complementary funds include 15 with sinking funds for five years and 55 that are financed in the long -term with the annual return of a US\$165 million endowment fund housed by FMCN known as the Fund for Protected Areas or FANP

In MEx30x30:

-Component 3 will increase the FANP endowment from US\$165 to US\$177 million, including new financing for 6 PAs and the annual return (the expected annual return is

US\$100,000 per PA per year -5% of the endowment, following [FMCN Investment and Expenses Policy](#); this is the optimum funding per year per PA observed by FMCN after 26 years operating GEF endowment funds to finance PAs)

-Component 2 will create a transition fund of sinking contributions that will cover the US\$87 financial gap that currently CONANP estimates to have while CONANP closes that gap in the next ten years, then the transition fund will no longer exist.

2. Please provide information on any site level designations project sites have, such as KBAs, Ramsar, World Heritage, etc

The table included in Section A p.25 summarizes the categorization and characteristics of PAs and ADVCS in MEX30x30, including their IUCN category, size, and designations. In these areas, there are four Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA), four Important Bird Areas (IBA), two Zero Extinction Sites (AZE), five Priority Terrestrial Regions (PTR), and four Priority Hydrological Regions (PHR).

3. A number of the targeted species are LC on the IUCN Red List. It would be good to highlight threatened species.

The threatened species considered in the UICN Red List for each of the PA and ADVCS are:

ANP	Endangered (EN)	Critical (CR)	Vulnerable (VU)	TOTAL
CADRN 043 Nayarit	44	7	68	119
Papigochic	3	1	5	9
Bajos del Norte	5	4	2	11
Sierra Tecuani	59	12	73	144
Balam-K?	21	3	38	62
Chimalapas	106	20	91	217

We now highlight examples of threatened species according to IUCN Red list in each PA in a table in p. 106.

b. No, the discussion and description of the role of Indigenous peoples needs to be significantly revised. As of now, much of the language describes IPLCs as just beneficiaries, people to be involved, or generally passive beneficiaries rather than as the designers and leaders of activities. While it may just be a translation issue, a phrase like "where five indigenous groups are found" does not sound great in English and removes their agency. It could help to make IPLCs the subject of sentences rather than using passive voice.

To lay the foundation for the above, it could be good to provide some specific information about the management and decision making of the areas in the project or PAs and AVDCs in Mexico.

The discussion and description of the role of Indigenous Peoples was revised in the following places:

-Component 3 description on p.41

-Policy requirements section on p. 69

- Section A. Project Stakeholders on p. 28

Information about the management and decision-making in the PAs and ADVCs was added to Section A. Project Sites on p. 21-22

IPLCs inhabit, use, and protect ecosystems in and around all the PAs and ADVCs. Therefore, the project will aid in empowering and strengthening their organizational capacity to conserve and sustainably manage areas and territories under their stewardship and governance.

For the MEx30x30 project, IPLCs play a crucial role in leading activities such as orienting Annual Operating Plans (POAs) for the PAs and developing POAs for ADVCs, as well as strengthening their capacities to implement sustainable land management, conservation, and restoration practices and activities to protect these biodiversity hotspots. IPLC members will also establish brigades to support emergency response in and around the focal PAs and ADVCs, ensuring the sustainability of these areas in the long term.

The project will ensure that PA Advisory Councils or similar participatory bodies will facilitate platforms to engage IPLCs and raise their concerns, opinions, and proposals in developing the PA POAs and implementing priority actions, creating community-based brigades and accessing capacity-building initiatives, job opportunities, and community-driven development projects for sustainable and equitable outcomes, particularly for women and indigenous peoples.

## **6 B. Project Description**

- 6.1 a) Is there a concise theory of change (a narrative and a diagram) that describes the project logic, including how the project design elements are contributing to the objective, the identified causal pathways, the focus and basis (including scientific) of the proposed solutions, how they provide a robust approach? Are underlying key assumptions listed?**
- b) Is there a description of how the GEF alternative will build on previous and ongoing investments (GEF and non-GEF), lessons and experiences in the country/region?**
- c) Are the project components (interventions and activities) described, proposed solutions, critical assumptions, and risks properly justified? Is there an indication of why the project approach has been selected over other options?**
- d) 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 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)?**
- h) Are the relevant stakeholders (including women, IPLCs, private sector, CSOs) 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 descriptions?**
- j) Are the proposed elements to capture and disseminate knowledge and learning outputs and strategic communications adequately described?**
- k) Policy Coherence: Have any policies, regulations, or subsidies been identified that could counteract the intended project outcomes? How will that be addressed?**

**l) Transformation and/or innovation: Is the project going to be transformative or innovative? Are the specific levers of transformation identified and described? Does it explain scaling up opportunities?**

**m) For blended finance project only, is the financial structure adequately explained?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

4/24/2024

Yes.

4/5/204

No.

a. No, please include assumptions. The assumptions should be internal to the logic of the project rather than external (government change) and tested through the project. Assumptions can be about how specific activities lead to expected results.

b. Please address the following:

Component 3

- The endowment fund is a bit confusing. Is the idea to create a segregated fund within FMCN forever? Would that over complicate management?

- IPLC organizations, institutions, and governance structures would, ideally, be the ones executing the activities on the ground. However, the language as written is unclear in this area.

- Would there potentially be IPLC-specific trainings similar to the approach mentioned for women?

Output 3.1.4 - It is unclear what the expansion entails. Supporting this mechanism is logical but is there some reason that there is a need to focus on only targeted conserved areas? It's unclear the justification for segregation of funds. The long term financial sustainability of the fund is also important to build out through these resources and/or the PFP.

Does financial support include targeted expertise such as forest fire fighting strategy?

- For the MPA, it's unclear how the activities/implementation of the PA won't have a negative socioeconomic impact on fisher people. It might be helpful to talk about the management approach to clarify this.

e. No, it would be good to have a short discussion of expected socioeconomic benefits of the project.

The rest - yes or N/A

## Agency Response

CI GEF 04/24/2024

No, please include assumptions. The assumptions should be internal to the logic of the project rather than external (government change) and tested through the project. Assumptions can be about how specific activities lead to expected results.

Assumptions in the Theory of Change diagram have been revised to reflect the internal logic of the project.

b. Please address the following: Component 3

- The endowment fund is a bit confusing. Is the idea to create a segregated fund within FMCN forever? Would that over complicate management?

The endowment fund already exists and is the Protected Areas Fund (FANP in its Spanish acronym) has 26 years operating inside FMCN and will be expanded to the new 6 PAs.

Initially started in 1997 with USD16.48 million in GEF funding, FANP is a public-private partnership between FMCN, CONANP and 21 additional donors. Its total endowment has increased to US\$165 million, supporting 70 PAs (55 with endowment funds).

Through the project, a separate account will be created to support the additional PAs and ADVCS included in that component. There will be a separate account for the project as it has been done for previous donors (KFW, GEF), but it will follow the same rules and procedures that have proven to be a success in 26 years (see FANP section in the [Operational Manual](#), page 153). In this way, FANP acts as an umbrella mechanism inside FMCN, with several different accounts for different projects (refer to page 52-53 for the detailed explanation of FANP).

- IPLC organizations, institutions, and governance structures would, ideally, be the ones executing the activities on the ground. However, the language as written is unclear in this area.

We concur that the language is unclear around how IPLCs will execute activities. The following text was added to the description of Component 3:

?Advisory Councils or similar participatory bodies will be used as platforms to engage stakeholders in developing the Annual Operating Plans (POAs for its Spanish acronym) for the PAs and ADVCS (Output 3.1.1), with implementation of specific activities by IPLCs and local organizations (Output 3.1.3). Training will be provided to IPLCs in PAs and ADVCS (Output 2.1.2) to support implementation.?

- Would there potentially be IPLC-specific trainings similar to the approach mentioned for women?

Yes. MEx30x30's commitment to inclusivity extends to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs). The Project recognizes the unique needs and perspectives of IPLCs and will incorporate them into the capacity-building efforts. Like the approach outlined for

women, training will ensure that IPLCs have the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to participate actively and benefit from the project activities, promoting a genuinely inclusive approach that respects and uplifts all stakeholders' diversity. Communication channels and spaces relevant to IPLCs will be used, and communication materials will be tailor-made and translated into Indigenous languages, using inclusive vocabulary, choosing locations and times that are convenient for IPLCs, and, where relevant, IPLCs-only training sessions will be conducted. The Project will also guarantee inclusive Annual Operating Plans (POA) for the conservation, restoration, and sustainable development of PAs and ADVCS in which IPLCs will be meaningfully engaged and ensure the dissemination and operation of the grievance redress mechanism is culturally appropriate and accessible for IPLCs, as included in the Indigenous Peoples' Plan prepared by the project (page 191).

Output 3.1.4 - It is unclear what the expansion entails. Supporting this mechanism is logical but is there some reason that there is a need to focus on only targeted conserved areas? It's unclear the justification for segregation of funds. The long term financial sustainability of the fund is also important to build out through these resources and/or the PFP.

Does financial support include targeted expertise such as forest fire fighting strategy?

This component is co-financed by other projects that have endowment Funds. Each year, a proportion of the interests of the co-financed endowment funds are devoted and separated for the emergency fund (near US\$200k per year). This financial model ensures long-term sustainability. This Emergency Fund is already working for 70 PAs and will be expanded into the PAs supported by component 3.

Activities such as forest fire fighting strategy and other actions that can be planned, are usually part of POAs, and this emergency fund complements those activities with actions that cannot be planned and require immediate response such as control and fighting of fires that exceed the combat capacity provided for in the POA; rescue tasks in case of floods or fires.

- For the MPA, it's unclear how the activities/implementation of the PA won't have a negative socioeconomic impact on fisher people. It might be helpful to talk about the management approach to clarify this.

The project was screened for potential negative socioeconomic impacts on people/communities and two concrete actions have been taken by the project: (1) An ESMP was prepared in which the potential impacts and corresponding mitigation measures were identified (2) An Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP) was prepared so as to avoid negative impacts on indigenous peoples, ensure their full and effective participation in decision making related to the project, and to provide indigenous peoples with culturally appropriate social and economic benefits that have been negotiated with them.

Furthermore, MEx30x30 will not introduce new restrictions but promote conservation, restoration, and sustainable management of marine resources while enhancing sustainable livelihoods. The Project activities and implementation strategies within the POAs will be carefully crafted to balance conservation objectives and socio-economic considerations, particularly regarding fishing communities. Furthermore, the project has a safeguards system in place to monitor any risks that could not be identified at this stage and the management approach includes robust monitoring and adaptive management mechanisms. If any negative impacts are detected, adaptive management strategies can be swiftly implemented to mitigate them while achieving conservation goals.

It is crucial to note that restrictions have existed since the MPA establishment. The management approach within the MPA is multi-faceted. It involves a combination of zoning regulations, stakeholder engagement, and adaptive management strategies. Zoning regulations delineate different areas within the MPA for various activities, including fully protected zones, where fishing is prohibited, and sustainable use zones, where carefully managed fishing activities are allowed. It ensures fishing communities can still access and utilize

marine resources while safeguarding critical habitats and biodiversity, minimizing negative socio-economic impacts, and maximizing conservation outcomes.

e. No, it would be good to have a short discussion of expected socioeconomic benefits of the project.

Noted, now we added more information in page 24, including that ?POA activities includes actions that improve socioeconomic wellbeing increased income from sustainable use and productive restoration supported, increased employment trough monitoring and fire brigades, increase governance and social cohesion through training?.

## **6.2 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 initiatives (e.g., government, other bilateral/multilateral ).**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

4/5/2024

Yes.

## Agency Response

### **6.3 GEF Core indicators and GBFF indicators**

**a) Are the identified GBFF and relevant GEF 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 GBFF indicators, relevant GEF core indicators, and additional listed outcome indicators) reasonable and achievable?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

4/24/2024

Yes.

4/5/2024

No.

a. The carbon calculations need to be revised based on the GEF guidance. Please include the WDPA IDs for the sites that have them.

b. Yes.

Please include baseline METT scores and WDPA IDs when submitting the first PIR.

### Agency Response

CI GEF 04/24/2024

The updated attached documents follow the corresponding Guidelines (GEF/C.62/Inf.12/Rev.01) for Carbon sequestered or emissions avoided in the sector of Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use, that includes:

1. Time length 20 years
2. Using as default IPCC data
3. Using Ex-Ante Carbon Balance Tool

The only additional step after the use of ex-ante tool draws in the impact evaluation conducted by GEF (Hansen et al, 2015) in Mexico, that indicates that the avoided deforestation is near 23 % on average in PAs in Mexico.

The target for Greenhouse gas emissions mitigated was calculated following the assumptions:

1. Data from Hansen (2013) was obtained, which provides information on forest change patterns worldwide. Using this tool, deforestation was estimated for the period 2012 to 2022 in each of the selected ANP and ADVC for this analysis.
2. Land use and vegetation were estimated for each polygon based on the Comprehensive Monitoring System for Biodiversity and Degradation in Protected Natural Areas PNUD (2018).
3. The scenario for land use and vegetation was calculated for 20 years was estimated for each of the PA. To make this estimate, the set of models from the Integrated Valuation of Ecosystem Services and Tradeoffs (InVEST) software was used, based on the average observed deforestation rate.
4. On the other hand, using the ex-ante carbon balance tool (EX-ACT) from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), an estimate of the carbon reservoirs generated by each of the ecosystems present in the selected ANP was obtained.
5. It was assumed that the expected deforestation would convert forests and rainforest to agriculture in the absence of the project.
6. It was assumed that support for protected areas in Mexico can protect up to 23% of the trend deforestation, derived from the GEF impact evaluation study for protected areas in Mexico (Hansen et al., 2015).

The expected avoided emissions from deforestation is 5.7M TCO<sub>2</sub>e

	tCO <sub>2</sub> e	tCO <sub>2</sub> e	tCO <sub>2</sub> e
	5 years	5-15 years	total 20 years

Temperate continental forest	869,278	2,607,833	3,477,110
Tropical rainforest	3,894	11,683	15,577
Tropical dry forest	554,538	1,663,613	2,218,150
Mangrove forests	5,329	15,987	21,316
Total	1,433,038	4,299,115	5,732,153

#### 6.4 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  
4/5/2024

Yes.

#### Agency Response

##### **Additional comments from GEFSEC 04/05/2024**

1. The risk table, the social and environmental risk should match the safeguards finding (moderate).
2. The role of IPLCs is described (very much in the passive beneficiaries role rather than the leading activities). It potentially could help to provide information early on what planning and management looks like for these areas. That can then provide a foundation to demonstrate/justify the project's approach.?

##### **CI GEF 04/24/2024**

1. The social and environmental risk was changed from 'low' to 'moderate' in the table.
2. This point is well taken. We have added the following text to Section A. Project Stakeholders on p. 28 to further clarify the role of IPLCs in planning and management:

In the case of the Chimalapas cluster, IPLCs own the land and are committed to protecting and sustainably managing these biodiversity hotspots. As a result, the IPLCs submitted and received federal certification from the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT) to designate those areas as Voluntary Conservation Areas (ADVCs).

**7 C. Alignment with Programming Strategies, Country/Regional Priorities**

**7.1 a) Is the project adequately aligned with the GBFF Action Areas and, for MTF projects, with Focal Area objectives?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
4/5/2024

No, please focus on the GBFF AAs and KMGBF targets.

Agency Response  
CI-GEF 04/24/2024

The GEF-8-related language has been removed, so the main thrust of the section is the table with GBFF AAs and GBF targets. We need to know from CI GEF Agency if we need something else.

**7.2 Is the project aligned with the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, National Biodiversity Finance Plans, and/or similar instruments to identify national and/or regional priorities. For MTF projects, is the project aligned with other relevant country and regional priorities, policies, strategies and plans (including those related to the MEAs and relevant sectors)?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
4/5/2024

Yes.

Agency Response

**7.3 Does the project clearly identify which of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework the project contributes to and how it contributes to the identified target(s)?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
4/5/2024

Yes. However, would one of the sustainable use targets be relevant?

Agency Response We agree that, due to the specific context of Mexico's PAs, sustainable use in PAs is key. However, during PPG preparation GEF suggested to focus in the targets that are now indicated.

## **8 D. Policy Requirements**

### **8.1 Are the Policy Requirement sections completed?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

4/5/2024

Yes.

Agency Response

### **8.2 Is the Gender Action Plan uploaded?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

4/5/2024

Yes.

Agency Response

### **8.3 Is the stakeholder engagement plan uploaded?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

4/5/2024

Yes.

Agency Response

### **8.4 IPLCs:**

- a) Has the amount of GBFF project financing to support actions by IPLCs been sufficiently justified and have changes compared to PPG request stage, if any, been adequately justified?**
- b) If applicable, does Section C 'Project Description' describe the IPLCs who will benefit from the project and detail their role in the project? Have appropriate project tags related to IPLCs been selected?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

4/24/2024

Yes.

4/5/2024

No, please see above. With the description, the first and second tag are not adequately justified.

## Agency Response

CI GEF 04/24/2024

Text in the Policy Requirements section on p. 69 was changed to better characterize the support to IPLCs:

Component 3's allocation will: 1) engage IPLCs and other stakeholders in an inclusive participatory process to develop Annual Operating Plans for the project's focal PAs and ADVCs; 2) provide training and capacity-building to IPLCs in sustainable land management, conservation and restoration practices; and 3) support IPLCs and local organizations to implement the Annual Operating Plans.

In the case of the Chimalapas cluster, IPLCs own the land and are committed to protecting and sustainably managing these biodiversity hotspots. As a result, the IPLCs submitted and received federal certification from the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT) to designate those areas as Voluntary Conservation Areas (ADVCs).

As this ADVC cluster is social ownership, IPLCs will design and operate the corresponding POA to implement conservation, restoration, and sustainable management practices according to their needs and interests. The decision-making process is typically collective and democratic, involving the participation of all community members with land rights. Decisions are usually taken in the General Assembly, the highest decision-making body, composed of all adult members of the community. These assemblies are typically held regularly, often monthly or quarterly, and serve as a forum for discussing and deciding essential matters. In many ejidos and communities, decisions are reached through consensus rather than a majority vote. This means that all members are encouraged to express their opinions and concerns, and efforts are being made to find acceptable solutions. Before making decisions, members of the ejido or community engage in thorough discussions and debates to ensure that all viewpoints are considered. This process can be time-consuming but is essential for reaching agreements that reflect the interests of the entire community.

## 9 Annexes

### Annex A: Financing Tables

**9.1 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?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

4/5/2024

Yes.

Agency Response

## 9.2 Source of Funds

If using GEFTF resources, 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

4/5/2024

Yes.

## Agency Response

**9.3 Confirmed co-financing for the project, by name and type:**

**Noting GBFF does not require but encourages co-financing, 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

4/24/2024

Yes.

4/5/2024

No, please include the CONANP co-financing letter.

Please document cofinancing as it is leveraged during the life of the project.

Agency Response  
Noted on the clearance and recommendation on documenting cofinancing.

### **Annex C: Project Results Framework**

**9.4 a) Have the GBFF indicators and relevant GEF core indicators been included?**

**b) Have SMART indicators been used; are means of verification well thought out; are the targets appropriate for the 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 Request

4/5/2024

Yes.

Agency Response

**Annex D: Status of utilization of PPG**

**9.5 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

4/5/2024

Yes.

Agency Response

**Annex E: Project map and coordinates**

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

4/5/2024

Yes.

Agency Response

**Annex F: Environmental and Social Safeguards Documentation and Rating**

**9.7 Have the relevant safeguard documents been uploaded to the GEF Portal? Has the safeguards rating been provided and filled out in the ER field below the risk table?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

4/24/2024

Yes.

4/5/2024

No, we note that CI attached the preliminary and updated Environmental and Social Safeguards Screening report, Indigenous Peoples Plan, and Stakeholder Engagement Plan, and the overall ESS risk of the project is classified as moderate. This is one of the good

practices of the environmental and social risk management. The only minor comment is that the environmental and social section of the Key Risks table in the Portal said low risk. 1) Please make these risks consistent and revise.

#### Agency Response

**CI GEF 04/24/2024**

Risk table in the portal updated to Moderate

#### **Annex G: GEF Budget template**

**9.8 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

4/24/2024

Yes.

4/5/2024

No, other operating costs should be charged 100% to PMC, but not to project components.

#### Agency Response

**CI GEF 04/24/2024**

Operating costs are shared across components as well as PMC and utilized to primarily deliver the technical outputs of the project. We believe this is consistent with best practices in resource allocation based on personnel level of effort and direct use in the various technical aspects of the project.

#### **Annex H: Blended Finance Relevant Annexes**

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestN/A

Agency Response  
Additional Annexes  
**10. GEFSEC DECISION**

**10.1 GEFSEC Recommendation**  
**Is the project recommended for approval?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
4/24/2024

Yes.

4/5/2024

No, the project is well-designed but needs some refinement.

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

**10.3 Review Dates**

**CEO  
Approval**

**Response to Secretariat  
comments**

<b>First Review</b>
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>