



# Restoring the ecosystem integrity of the degraded Bobirwa-Tswapong ecosystem to sustain livelihoods and effectively respond to human-wildlife conflict and biodiversity management requirements

Review PIF and Make a recommendation

## Basic project information

**GEF ID**  
12291

**Countries**  
Botswana

**Project Name**  
Restoring the ecosystem integrity of the degraded Bobirwa-Tswapong ecosystem to sustain livelihoods and effectively respond to human-wildlife conflict and biodiversity management requirements

**Agencies**  
UNDP

**Date received by PM**  
3/4/2026

**Review completed by PM**

**Program Manager**  
Jean-Marc Sinnassamy

**Focal Area**  
Multi Focal Area

**Project Type**

## **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

**April 17, 2026**

Cleared.

**April 1, 2026**

- We take note of your responses. However, if you confirm the removal of CCM objectives and actions: 1) removing the CCM sector is one thing, but you also need to 2) update the text under alignment and focus on LD1, (LD2?) and BD2 objectives and remove the alignment under CCM and 3) modify the financing tables related to "indicative focal areas" (and remove CCM). For the time being, these different elements (CCM sector, result framework, alignment, and financing tables) are not coherent. Please, revise.

- The PIF Portal view, which must be circulated to Council for review, has several sections with yellow shadow - please provide a clean copy, removing the yellow shadows.

### **General information**

- The PIF is relatively long (53pp). Certain sections are all in bold characters, adding length. Please, correct.

- In the general project information, please, confirm there will be a single project executing partner (the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change)? How will Academia, CSO, and local communities be involved and empowered?

- If you maintain a CCM objective in this MFA project (which is not an obligation, as there is a full flexibility of STAR resources), you should fill in the CCM sector. Please, complete

Agency's Comments

UNDP Response, 17th April 2026

- Although certain CCM activities have been removed in the last round of revisions, the project still intends to avoid the emission of an estimated 7,926,073 tCO<sub>2</sub>e through restoration of woodlands, rehabilitation of rangelands and climate smart agriculture. We believe that the CCM 1 target is still justified and therefore also the text on alignment and financing tables.

- Yellow highlights have been removed in the portal. Bold characters have been removed except for headings.

- We confirm that the MET will be the single Executing Partner. The section on Stakeholders and their roles (para 20 ? 26) describes the various roles to be played by different stakeholder-groups.

Partnerships will be further refined and formalized during the Project Preparation Grant (PPG) phase.

UNDP Response, 30 Mar 2026

The formatting has been fixed so only the headings are bold.

We confirm that the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) will be the single Executing Agency. Academia will be contracted to update the land use and land cover maps. The possibility of engaging a local university as responsible party for the KM component of the project (indicated in the PIF under output 4.1.2.) will be considered during the PPG (taking into account HACT assessment results). At PPG stage it will also be considered to engage a CSO with comparative advantage and capacity (and low-risk HACT assessment) as responsible party for output 4.1.1 (develop and disseminate an awareness and communication strategy) and 3.1.4 (low value grants disbursed to community groups (women, youth) to facilitate their engagement with sustainable value addition to natural resources). Local communities (and their governance institutions ? VDCs, CTs) will participate in project planning and be beneficiaries of project activities. Local groups (women, youth groups) will benefit directly from output 4.1.4 and 3.1.4 (Low value grants disbursed to community groups (women, youth) to facilitate their engagement with sustainable value addition to natural resources). The section on Stakeholders and their roles (para 20 ? 26) describes the various roles to be played by different stakeholder-groups. The PIF states that Partnerships will be further refined and formalized during the PPG.

The project no longer has a CCM objective after removal of the outputs on household energy and carbon credits ? formerly 2.2.3 and 3.1.4, respectively.

## **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

**April 1, 2026**

Addressed.

**March 9, 2026**

The summary needs to be reviewed:

- The summary is concise (235 words) and includes two sections which look disjointed. The first one describes the problems. The second describes the intentions. However, the whole is not coherent.

- We are not seeing the logical reasoning leading to the proposed components (1) Institutional capacities for community based NRM and inclusive landscape governance; 2) Ecosystem Restoration and biodiversity management; 3) Resilient livelihoods and landscapes through nature-positive investments and local economic development, and 4) Knowledge Management, Learning and Awareness.

- The principal objective of the project is absent, not helping to understand it: "To restore the Bobirwa-Tswapong landscapes to sustain livelihoods, effectively respond to climate change, mitigate human-wildlife conflict, and strengthen biodiversity conservation".

- The proposed integrated landscape management approach combined with a multi-stakeholder governance is not readable in the summary, neither gender issues.

- The mix of GEF objectives (LD, BD, CCM) and Core Indicators (CI) is confusing and does not help in understanding the project.

#### Agency's Comments

UNDP Response, 30 Mar 2026

The summary has been updated as follows:

The Bobirwa-Tswapong landscape hosts iconic wildlife species and the Tswapong Hills, a World Heritage and IBA site supporting endangered species and critical ecosystem services. Unsustainable land use, overharvesting of woodlands, and climate change have reduced ecological integrity, increased biodiversity loss, weakened livelihood resilience, and intensified human-wildlife conflicts. The Government's baseline programmes (SPEDU, CBNRM Bill of 2025, and the National Environment Fund - NEF) aim to reverse degradation by facilitating sustainable utilization of natural resources to increase economic benefits, diversify livelihoods and reduce pressure on ecosystems and biodiversity. The effectiveness of these programmes is constrained by limited technical capacity, weak natural resource governance, low uptake of restoration measures, and inadequate investment in nature-based enterprises, partly due to insufficient access to knowledge and proven solutions.

The objective of the proposed project is to restore the Bobirwa-Tswapong landscapes to sustain livelihoods, mitigate human-wildlife conflict, and strengthen biodiversity conservation. The project proposes an ILM approach, underpinned by SLM, to restore degraded ecosystems, strengthen natural resource governance, and promote climate-resilient livelihoods. ILM will provide a participatory framework to balance competing land uses, reduce land-use conflicts, and sustain biodiversity and ecosystem services.

The project will place 410,000 ha under restoration (CI 3) and catalyze nature-based enterprises and value chains (CI 4.3). It will benefit 180,000 people (50% F) (CI 11), mitigate 7,926,073 tCO<sub>2</sub>e (CI 6), and advance SDGs 1,2,5,13 15; and KMGBF targets 1, 2, 3, 4, 10, 11, 22 and 23, and advance Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Targets, which aim to reach LDN by 2030.

Reference to LD, BD and CCM objectives have been removed for clarity

### 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

**April 1, 2026**

Addressed.

**March 9, 2026**

- Project Objective is clear and thematically strong; however, without a target under the Core Indicator 3, it lacks an explicitly measurable element and, if possible a time-bound element. Please, clarify and correct.

## Result framework

### Component 1

- The series of outputs would be more convincing if the additional role of the GEF was demonstrated to establish plans, committees, capacity building? There is a certain impression that the GEF works alone, out of the national and local context. Please, clarify.

### Component 2

- Please, explain the strategy, the baseline, and the role of cofinancing for the output 2. 2. 3 (Households adopt renewable and energy efficient technologies (solar, biogas, cookstoves). Several experiences of projects promoting solar energy, biogas digesters, and improved cookstoves highlight that a single project and/or a technical approach are not enough: Institutional, economic, and behavioral aspects are key for sustainable change. Please, explain the strategy and the planned partnerships.
- If some field interventions (SLM) are addressing drought, we would like to read it in the formulation of outputs and activities. Please, revise and add the word 'drought' where relevant.

### Component 3

- Is there not a risk of dispersal in proposing outputs and activities in too many directions with potential concerns of expertise, technical assistance, partnerships, and sustainability: ecotourism, insurance schemes, carbon credits, green energy, including veld products micro processing plant? Please, clarify.
- If there are no partners working on these issues in the selected landscape, it seems overpromising to start all these mechanisms and approaches from scratch. Please, justify.
- For all outputs under component 3, please explain the starting point (baseline), the role of cofinancing, and how the GEF resources will be used. For instance, for the output 3.1.2 (integrated veld products micro processing plant), with public-private partnerships.
- We can welcome the development of an insurance scheme (3.1.3) and a carbon credit scheme (3.1.4). However, please, mention the potential domestic financing sources for sustainability once the project will close.

## Agency's Comments

UNDP Response, 30 Mar 2026

A target under CI 3 has been added.

### Component 1:

The project will work with the existing systems of natural resources governance which includes the following groups that the government pays for, through its normal development and natural resources management budgets:

Local level - Community Trusts (CTs) and Village Development Committees (VDC).

VDCs were created by Presidential Directive of 1968 specifically to implement government development programmes in villages and to coordinate all village-level development matters. They operate under local government regulations (most recently updated in the 2014 Local Government Regulations and subsequent subsidiary legislation), which set out their composition, election, powers and reporting lines to the kgotla and district councils.

Community Trusts are legally constituted community-based organizations (CBOs), formed by people living in the same area (one or several villages) who share an interest in benefiting from

local natural resources. They hold user rights allocated by government (for example, wildlife quotas, tourism concessions, or use rights in a Wildlife Management Area) and are responsible for managing these rights collectively for community benefit. Each Trust operates through a constitution and a Board of Trustees that governs membership, decision-making, benefit distribution, and sanctioning of misuse, in line with Botswana law and community norms.

District Level: All line ministries are represented by technical officers working in the district. They form the Technical Advisory Committee that supports the Community Trusts, and link them to the national level structures.

The challenge is weak capacities at all these levels. The project will indeed build technical capacities, establish ILM plans, support coordination mechanisms, building on government and communities' baselines (cofinance). It will not establish new institutions.

#### Component 2:

Output 2.2.3 has been dropped due to the realization that to be done effectively, it requires policy and institutional interventions that are beyond the scope of this project.

Drought has been added to Section on Key enablers and justification for the choice of the project strategies. (Although the extent of degradation has increased in the target ecosystem since then, rehabilitating degradation hotspots and the use of NbS measures to mitigate effects of droughts will cost-effectively restore ecosystem integrity over large parts of the landscape, increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the GEF investment).

The ToC references use of NbS to tackle impacts of drought (Complemented by the use of NbS to mitigate effects of drought, the integrated landscape approach, built on the principles of participation, negotiation, and cooperation, presents an innovative approach to natural resources management in the landscape, that will empower communities to negotiate the various competing needs for development on the landscape, thereby reducing land use conflicts while avoiding, halting and reversing degradation of natural resources).

Outcome 1.1 mentions drought (Strengthened institutional and local community capacities for design and implementation of ecosystem restoration interventions, use of NbS to tackle impacts of drought and nature-positive local economic development).

Outcome 2.1 mentions drought (Degraded agricultural land restored via NbS and SLM to mitigate effects of drought, improve productivity and the flow of agro-ecosystem services).

#### Component 3:

One output (Carbon credits) has been dropped. The remaining outputs will be delivered in partnership with SPEDU (see explanation below), which also provides cofunding.

There are partners working on these issues in the landscape: Community Trusts (CBOs), SPEDU (parastatal) and Tuli Block (Private sector).

Community Trusts: As explained above CTs hold and manage community rights over wildlife, tourism and other natural resources on behalf of residents, and are meant to channel benefits back into community development while supporting conservation (heavily supported by the new CBNRM Act) ? they are supported by Technical Advisory committees.

SPEDU: All the outputs proposed under component 3 are embedded in the 2026-2029 Environmental, Social, and Governance strategic development plan of SPEDU and the newly established Department of CBNRM. As explained under para 16 of the PIF, SPEDU

addresses restoration of biodiversity, rehabilitation of degraded ecosystems, enhancing climate resilience, and converting ecological assets into engines of sustainable tourism, carbon market participation, and long-term natural capital growth. SPEDU will be the responsible party for outcome 3, based on their committed cash cofinance of USD2.25 million (letter of commitment in Annex G).

SPEDU contribution has also been highlighted under each output in paras 39, 40 and 41.

The Tuli Block is running highly profitable tourism businesses in the area. They are members of the Bobirwa Community Trust and have expressed willingness to support the development of eco-tourism along the four dams and the restoration of the Bobirwa OECM. However, other than the decision to engage in these activities made by the Bobirwa Trust (including them), they prefer to issue letters of commitment and co-finance after the PPG consultations.

For all outputs, the project will finance consultations, planning, assessments, capacity and partnership building. SPEDU will finance all construction as relevant and appropriate e.g. of the veld products processing plant, ecotourism infrastructure.

GEF will finance the design of the insurance scheme but the actual implementation is likely to be outsourced to the private sector (by SPEDU). Domestic funding for the premiums could be sourced from a blend of national and local sources, to be investigated during the design of the scheme. Likely sources at the national level include protected area fees and concession rentals, the National Environmental Fund, the tourism levy earmarked for conservation, and the existing central budget line for HWC. Locally, Community Trusts could channel revenues from wildlife concessions into the scheme.

The design of the scheme will draw on lessons from around the world, including (a) Government of Kenya HWC Insurance Scheme, piloted with private insurers and a technical partner, formally approved by the Insurance Regulatory Authority in 2021 and piloted in six high conflict counties from 2022. (b) Livelihoods Insurance from Elephants (LIFE) ? IED led Darwin Initiative project testing insurance for crop and property damage by elephants in Kenya and Sri Lanka. (c) Compensation/relief scheme around Chitwan National Park, implemented under Nepal's Wildlife Damage Relief Guidelines 2009.

**3.2 Are gender dimensions, knowledge management, and monitoring and evaluation included within the project components and appropriately funded?**

Secretariat's Comments

**April 17, 2026**

Cleared.

**April 1, 2026**

- The word "Gender" is included in one outcome and the formulation of 9 outputs within the result framework.

- We take note that a Gender Action Plan, including Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) when appropriate will be expected with the CEO endorsement.

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

April 17, 2026

Addressed.

April 3, 2026

- Co-financing resources allocated to PMC are not proportional to GEF resources allocated to PMC - for a co-financing of \$29,943,800, the 5% should be \$1,497,190, instead of \$1,224,090, which represents 4.0%. Please amend.

	Sub Total (\$)	5,983,693.00	29,943,800.00
<b>Project Management Cost (PMC)</b>			
	GET	299,184.00	1,224,090.00
	Sub Total(\$)	299,184.00	1,224,090.00
	Total Project Cost(\$)	6,282,877.00	31,167,890.00

March 9

PMC under 5%; M&E=3.05%; KM: 3.34%

Agency's Comments

UNDP Response, 17th April 2026

This has been corrected

#### 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 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 There is a description of GEF alternatives.

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

April 1, 2026

Addressed.

March 9, 2026

Yes, the ToC is clear.

Detail: the goal in the ToC is significantly different than the main project objective. This latter is closer to the project name. Please, make the elements more coherent, See below:

**Goal:** Enhanced ecological functionality of the the Bobirwa-Tswapong landscape with improved capacity of t ecosystem to simultaneously and effectively sustain livelihoods and biodiversity management with co-benefits mitigating human-wildlife conflict and impacts of climate change

Project Objective: To restore the Bobirwa-Tswapong landscapes to sustain livelihoods, effectively respond to climate change, mitigate human-wildlife conflict, and strengthen biodiversity conservation.

Agency's Comments

UNDP Response, 30 Mar 2026

The goal stated in the ToC is the overall impact expected from the project (acknowledging that the project contributes to but is not wholly responsible for the attainment). An objective statement has been added into the ToC to make a clear link between the objective and the goal.

### 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  
**April 1, 2026**

Addressed.

**March 9, 2026**

- The incremental reasoning is available (and dense!) and the proposed project seems very ambitious for a 6.2 million project. As, we cannot know at this stage the real complementarity with the proposed cofinancing partners, we invite UNDP to confirm the result framework and all these ambitious outputs. It might be reasonable to lower the expectations, especially because the sustainability of several proposed mechanisms will depend on domestic resources that are not available at this stage.

- What about reducing the number of activities based on innovative and complex mechanisms and include activities related to sustainability (through policy coherence and mobilization of domestic finance)?

Agency's Comments  
UNDP Response, 30 Mar 2026

The text has been edited to improve legibility

Three outputs have been dropped to reduce the scope of the project: former outputs:

- a) 2.1.3 (Ecosystems restored by treating degradation hotspots in the OECMs via NbS and hybrid measures) as the whole outcome 2.1 has been re-oriented to restoration of the ecosystem in parallel to the establishment of the Bobirwa and Tswapong Hills conservation areas.
- b) 2.2.3 (Households adopt renewable and energy efficient technologies (solar, biogas, cookstoves) to reduce pressure on woodlands while simultaneously improving energy security) in recognition of the fact that to do this effectively the project would have to tackle energy related policies and broader institutional issues which would be beyond the scope of the current project and budget.

3.1.4 (A carbon credit scheme designed and piloted in an inclusive and gender responsive manner, lessons documented and shared to inform national-level policy dialogue around carbon markets) for the reasons explained under former output 2.2.3

US\$ 2,250,000 SPEDU's cash cofinance for outcome 3 has been confirmed (letter of commitment in Annex G). In addition to the removal of former output 3.1.4 (carbon credit) to reduce the ambition and scope. SPEDU will provide the sustainability mechanism for interventions under outcome 3.

**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  
**April 17, 2026**

Point taken. Cleared.

**April 1, 2026**

Addressed. However, please, respond "no" in the portal to the question asked: "Does the GEF Agency expect to play an execution role on this project?"

**March 9, 2026**

- Institutional Arrangements: The proposed governance structure involving the UNDP, MET, PMU, PSC, VDCs/CTs is described narratively, but no formal organogram or funds flow diagram is included. Please, complete.

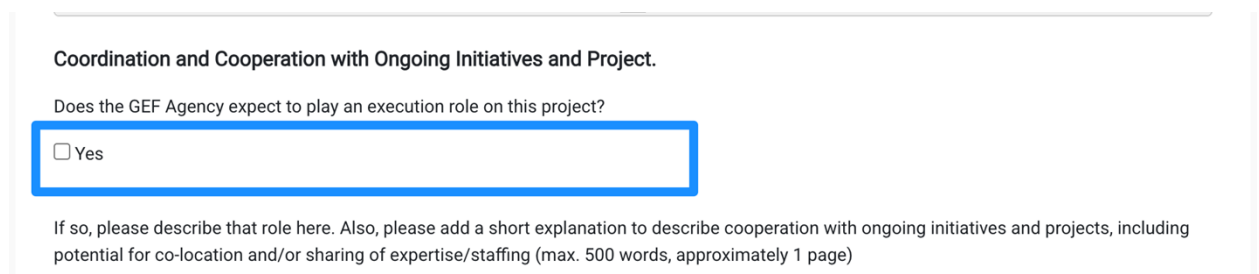
- In the PIF, please respond to the question: Does the GEF Agency expect to play an execution role on this project?

- We welcome the mention of other similar projects or in the same geography (FAO) to build on lessons and best practices during the PPG). However, it would be better to propose this project after a (rapid at least) analysis of existing Terminal Evaluation, MTR, best practices, and success stories, especially to select the most promising models (component 3). Please, complete.

- Please, extend the analysis to the GEF7 DSL IP that is closing soon with miombo projects in several neighboring countries.

Agency's Comments  
UNDP Response, 17th April 2026

Noted, however, the portal doesn't give an option "no" (please refer to a screenshot below)



**Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Project.**

Does the GEF Agency expect to play an execution role on this project?

Yes

If so, please describe that role here. Also, please add a short explanation to describe cooperation with ongoing initiatives and projects, including potential for co-location and/or sharing of expertise/staffing (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

UNDP Response, 30 Mar 2026

A draft Project Governance Structure is provided in Annex H, which will be confirmed during the PPG and reported in the CEO ER.

Para 51 explains the standard flow of funds for NIM projects --- Under the National Implementation Modality, funds will be administered by UNDP and transferred to the MET based on approved Annual Work Plans and budgets. Funds will be released in tranches in line with UNDP financial management and assurance procedures, and expenditures be reported

through standard agreed financial reporting mechanisms, subject to UNDP oversight. Any Responsible Parties will be contracted by MET and receive funds from MET based on work plans.

The GEF Agency does not expect to play an execution role in this project.

An analysis of past and planned projects was undertaken during the PIF formulation and informed the choice of the interventions. This analysis is now presented as Annex K, outlining the lessons and best practices and how these have influenced and/or been integrated into the proposed interventions.

**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

**April 17, 2026**

Addressed.

**April 1, 2026**

- We take note of the new target of 105,000 ha under the CI 3.1 (restoration of degraded agricultural lands).

- We see that there are still 305,000 ha under 4.5 (terrestrial OECM):

\* Please, confirm there is no more targets under 4.3 (SLM), as areas under SLM would be compatible with OECMs. Our preference would be to maintain a target under 4.3.

\* Under the total number of ha under the CI 4 (landscapes under improved practices, excluding protected areas), we should read 305,000 ha (if the target under 4.3 stays under 305,000. Please, note that targets under 4.3 and 4.5 should not be added to obtain the total target under the CI 4).

- In the text related to the alignment with GEF8 programming strategies (para 67), there is still a mention of 450,000 ha of degraded agricultural lands that will be put under SLM

**March 9, 2026**

Targets will be confirmed at CEO endorsement.

- We take note that there are no targets under CI1 on protected areas (to be confirmed).

- We take note of 430,000 ha under CI4.3 and that the CI 4.5 on OECM is informed.

- Core Indicator 6: Please, express the CI6 and CI 6.1 in tons CO2e.

- In such project, it is always difficult to believe that the number of beneficiaries will be 50%. Before developing a Gender Action Plan, please describe the principles and modus operandi

to reach such an ambitious target. Please complete (after having adjusted the result framework to better integrate gender responsiveness).

Agency's Comments  
UNDP Response, 30 Mar 2026

The project will not create new PAs, only OECMs.

Outcome 2.2 has been re-oriented to restoration of degraded agricultural lands, reported CI 3.1 (105,000 ha). Target for CI 4.5 has been reduced to 305,000 ha.

CI 6 has been changed based on an updated ExAct calculation.

The 50% figure for CI 11 is an aspiration. This will be confirmed or changed after the formulation of the stakeholder participatory plan and gender action plan.

**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  
**April 17, 2026**

Addressed.

**April 1, 2026**

Please find additional comments from the Quality Control:

i. Innovation dimension, Financial and Business Model. The risk described under this category relates to Botswana's centralized public procurement procedures and potential delays. This is an execution risk (Capacity or Fiduciary risk category), not an innovation risk. Consider instead focusing on innovative elements, such as the human-wildlife conflict insurance scheme, value chains, and ecotourism models.

i. Innovation dimension, Institutional and Policy: Consider addressing more innovative elements, such as the establishment of OECMs and associated framework

**March 9, 2026**

- Some elements of text in the risk table are too long. To be reduced. And please, make the mitigation measures clear (not all the explanations are needed in this table).

- The risks related to the presence of indigenous peoples are not developed both in the description and the risk analysis. To be revised, including with mitigation measures.

Agency's Comments

UNDP Response, 30 Mar 2026

The section has been edited and shortened.

Paragraph 48 recognizes the presence of indigenous groups.

Local communities, including Indigenous Peoples across the Bobirwa/Tswapong landscape, are the primary beneficiaries and central actors in implementation. All local communities will participate in project planning during the PPG phase and lead on-the-ground delivery of restoration, conservation, and livelihood activities. A gender-responsive Stakeholder Engagement Plan and Gender Action Plan, based on comprehensive analyses, will guide inclusive design and implementation, prioritizing equitable participation and access to benefits for women, youth and other marginalized groups.

Furthermore, a new risk with mitigation measures has been added to Table 5: Social risks: Indigenous people could be marginalized and excluded from the project processes inadvertently.

#### **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

**April 1, 2026**

Addressed.

**March 9, 2026**

- As explained above, the durability of several proposed mechanisms is not anticipated in this concept. to be revised

- Policy Coherence: Alignment with national policies is well documented, but the PIF does not explicitly identify any potentially counterproductive policies, subsidies, or regulations (e.g., existing livestock or grazing incentives that may conflict with restoration), and mitigation approaches described. Please, complete.

Agency's Comments

UNDP Response, 30 Mar 2026

As explained above, SPEDU and the new CBNRM Department will contribute greatly to sustaining results post project. Furthermore, a new output is proposed to strengthen sustainability strategies (4.1.4: A project exit strategy designed detailing strategies for sustaining relevant and appropriate project interventions post project).

The role of incentives provided by the Tribal Grazing Land and Agriculture Policies has been highlighted under Policy Coherence Section by inserting the following sentence (Incentives provided through the Tribal Grazing Land and the Agriculture Policies often undermine biodiversity conservation objectives by prioritizing commercial beef production over wildlife habitats, reducing incentives for CBNRM, and leading to conflicts between commercial farmers and community groups).

The governance risk has also been amended to reflect those incentives as a risk to project achievements as follows: **Governance:** The Tribal Grazing Land Policy and some agricultural initiatives incentivises expansion of cattle ranching, often resulting in high stocking densities around water points, causing rangeland degradation, ecosystem fragmentation, and livestock encroachment into designated Wildlife Management Areas intended as migratory corridors and buffers for protected areas. Consequently, these incentives can undermine biodiversity conservation objectives by prioritizing commercial beef production over wildlife habitats, reducing incentives for CBNRM, and leading to conflicts where boreholes saturate conservation zones, threatening species and long-term ecosystem services.

Mitigation: the new CBNRM Act of 2025 signals government commitment to prioritizing natural resources-led economic development, building on local communities. Adoption of ILM, built on the principles of participation, negotiation, and cooperation, presents an innovative approach to natural resources management in the landscape, that will empower communities to negotiate the various competing needs for development on the landscape, thereby reducing land use conflicts while avoiding, halting and reversing degradation of natural resources. Furthermore, the project will strengthen the capacities of the VDCs and CTs (skills, constitutions, registration), under outcome 1.1, to plan and manage community mobilization and design and implementation of initiatives, which will mitigate the risk.

#### 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 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

**April 1, 2026**

Addressed.

**March 9, 2026**

- The project could be more accurate in regards of how it fits the LDN targets. Please, develop.

Agency's Comments  
UNDP Response, 30 Mar 2026

The project summary mentions Advancing Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Targets, which aim to reach LDN by 2030.

Inability to meet LDN targets has been added to the Business-as-Usual (without the project) Section.

LDN has been added to the incremental cost reasoning -- 410 ha of degraded ecosystem, including degraded agricultural lands under restoration to advance targets on KMGBF targets and LDN.

**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  
**April 1, 2026**

Addressed.

**March 9, 2026**

- KMGBF targets are listed.
- The "how" is missing. Please, complete.

Agency's Comments  
UNDP Response, 30 Mar 2026

Para 27 (Theory of change) explains that the project will put in place, in a gender responsive and inclusive manner, foundational conditions (technical skills, information and empowered local natural resources governance institutions) to empower stakeholders, including communities, to use ILM and NbS to tackle environmental degradation in the landscape. Everything the project does will contribute to advancing the country's commitments to KMGBF, LDN and SDG targets.

Para 33 explains that by restoring degraded wildlife and agricultural land, the project will advance achievement of the country's targets on KMGBF and LDN.

#### **7 D. Policy Requirements**

**7.1 Is the Policy Requirements section completed?**

Secretariat's Comments  
**April 17, 2026**

Addressed.

**April 1, 2026**

We take note of the adjustments in cofinancing. New questions arise:

i. Makoro Group of Companies: Is this correctly classified as Recipient Country Government? It appears to be Private Sector. Please confirm and update the Sources of Cofinancing accordingly.

ii. Botswana International University of Science and Technology: Academic institutions are usually categorized as Other under Sources of Cofinancing, rather than Recipient Country Government. Please review and update.

### **March 9, 2026**

Yes.

- However, please respond to the comments above on gender and on the risks.

- Except the mining company listed in cofinancing, who are the other potential private partners?

#### Agency's Comments

UNDP Response, 30 Mar 2026

This has been addressed, see above

The mining company has been dropped from the list of co-financiers.

The private sector will play a dual role as both beneficiary of capacity development and delivery partner, particularly under Outcome 3.1. SPEDU will spearhead partnerships to develop ecotourism, veld-product value chains and other nature-based enterprises, working with other key government entities, including the Local Enterprise Authority (LEA) and Botswana Innovation Hub (BIH) as relevant, as well as community institutions, and local private sector actors to be identified during the PPG and reported in the CEOR.

Tuli Block is a likely private sector partner to the Bobirwa restoration work and establishment of eco-tourism. They are currently members of the Bobirwa Community Trust and offering technical support in restoration work, albeit at a low level. This opportunity will be pursued during PPG and formal partnership established and reported in the CEO ER.

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

Secretariat's Comments Yes

#### Agency's Comments

**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  
**April 17, 2026**

Explanations given in the item 1.

**April 1, 2026**

With the response you made under the item 1 and the simplification of the project (no more CCM objectives and results), we should only read BD1.1 and LD1 in the "indicative Focal Area elements" table. Please, remove the mention of CCM1.1.

**March 9, 2026**

Yes

Agency's Comments  
**Focal Area allocation?**

Secretariat's CommentsYes

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 CommentsYes

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

**April 1, 2026**

Addressed.

**March 9, 2026**

- Morupule Coal Mine is the country's largest coal mining operation and may present reputational risks. Please, clarify if you have explored any eventual reputational risks from this partnership and explain the rationale and benefit of this partnership.

Agency's Comments

UNDP Response, 30 Mar 2026

Morupule Coal Mine has been dropped from the list of co-financiers.

**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 CommentsYes

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's CommentsYes

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  
**April 1, 2026**

Addressed.

**March 9, 2026**

- The footnote is missing.

Agency's Comments  
UNDP Response, 30 Mar 2026

An updated LoE with the footnote included has been attached.

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

Secretariat's Comments NA

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 Yes. Maps and coordinates are available

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  
**April 17, 2026**

Responses were omitted, but received by email. There is a revised SESP and a new Stakeholder consultation report logged in the document Tab.

Addressed.

Responses from UNDP:

1. The stakeholder participation report referred to is attached as Annex L. The list of stakeholders consulted is in Annex J.

2. Stakeholder consultations at the community level during the PIF stage included meetings with CBOs, local governments, staff from ministries, and some representatives of the private sector. The focus of these consultations was to validate and expand the baseline information and inform the design of the project.
3. A detailed stakeholder analysis will be conducted during the PPG, including the identification of vulnerable/marginalized groups and indigenous communities. The stakeholder analysis will include a vulnerability assessment, and livelihoods/natural resources use analysis. Also at PPG stage, and based on the results of further stakeholder analysis, a comprehensive **Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)** will be developed including specific engagement and consultation strategies for each stakeholder group.
4. Further SES analysis will be conducted during the PPG phase on the base of the SES risks preliminary identified in the SESP attached to the PIF (Annex D). Specific mitigation measures as required will be integrated in the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF).
5. Indigenous communities will be consulted and engaged in a culturally responsible manner and **FPIC** will be obtained for project activities that could affect their lands, resources and rights.
6. An in-depth assessment of HWC, including consultations with local communities and indigenous groups, will be conducted during the PPG phase.
7. An expanded Process Framework will be developed for the overall integrated land-use plan under Output 1.1.2 during the PPG phase following Standard 5 guidelines. This framework will establish the procedures/mechanism through which potentially affected communities will be engaged to assess the extent of resource use in the designated areas, the extent of impacts on livelihoods and to co-design appropriate mitigation measures.
8. Stakeholder consultations will be conducted during the PPG phase and will specifically identify Indigenous Peoples and local communities? governance structures, as well as traditional/local knowledge relevant to the project activities. These consultations will inform the project design and will form the basis for the comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement Plan and Process Framework, to be developed during the PPG.
9. Indicators related to integration of traditional and local governance, traditional and local knowledge, and capacity building for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities will be integrated into the M&E framework of the project

**April 3, quality control:**

We note that UNDP has attached Environmental and Social Safeguard Screening document. An overall ESS risk is classified as Moderate.

- 1) The PIF mentioned Annex A stakeholder participation report and Detailed Stakeholder Consultation Report included as Annex 3 (PIF, page 44); however, we cannot locate the reports. If they are available, please provide Annex A stakeholder participation report and Detailed Stakeholder Consultation Report included as Annex 3; if not, please, correct the text and remove these mentions.
- 2) Please clarify how you consulted with Indigenous Peoples and local communities, small scale farmers and other vulnerable populations about project concept (PIF), particularly related to Component 1, 2 and 3, and how the results of the consultations were integrated into the project concept (PIF).

- 3) Please ensure identifying and engaging wide range of stakeholders (including Indigenous Peoples) using target project areas including seasonal and temporary users of the areas during PPG. Please also ensure conducting thorough consultations with key stakeholders and developing robust mitigation measures including alternative livelihoods for key stakeholders including Indigenous Peoples and local communities based on consultations during PPG.
- 4) Please also ensure integrating mitigation measures and environmental and social action plans as a part of project activities (particularly Component 1, 2 and 3) with clear budget and timeline during PPG.
- 5) Please ensure the project obtained free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) from Indigenous Peoples about project design during PPG and throughout project implementation and monitoring.
- 6) All human-wildlife conflicts (HWC) prevention/mitigation measures are different based on its context. Before designing specific mitigation measures, please ensure an assessment of a human-wildlife conflict situation based on the best-available scientific and social contexts during PPG. It is also critical to have in-depth consultations with Indigenous Peoples and local communities in the areas about approaches that project will take to avoid unintended consequences. Please refer to existing guidance, such as the *IUCN SSC guidelines on human-wildlife conflict and coexistence* (2023), available [here](https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2023-009-En.pdf), <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2023-009-En.pdf>.
- 7) Please consider Indigenous Peoples and local communities as partners of the project particularly Component 1, 2, and 3.
- 8) Please consider integrating Indigenous Peoples and local communities? governance, traditional and local knowledge, capacity building as a part of the project activities, particularly in Component 1, 2 and 3.
- 9) Please consider incorporating monitoring indicators related to integration of traditional and local governance, traditional and local knowledge and capacity building for Indigenous Peoples and local communities in the project during PPG.

**March 9, 2026**

Yes

Agency's Comments

**Annex E: Rio Markers**

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

Secretariat's Comments

**April 17, 2026**

Addressed.

**April 1, 2026**

1- CCM: Depending on the adjustment in the project result framework, the rating for CCM may change.

2- CCA (0): The project explicitly addresses drought resilience through rangeland restoration and use of drought-resistant species, and frames restoration as a response to worsening climate variability. Consider revising to 1 (Significant).

**March 9, 2026**

CCM, BD, and LD are all significant objectives. Please, confirm.

Agency's Comments  
UNDP Response, 30 Mar 2026

BD and LD are the main objectives, with CCM as a secondary objective.

**Annex F: Taxonomy Worksheet**

**8.9 Is the project properly tagged with the appropriate keywords?**

Secretariat's Comments 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 Comments NA

Agency's Comments

**9 GEFSEC Decision**

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

Secretariat's Comments  
**April 18, 2026**

All points in this review and those transmitted by email have been addressed. The PIF is recommended for clearance and eventual inclusion the Work Program. See item 9.2 for the most recent response on gender and the work requested at PPG to develop the result framework and design the Gender Action Plan, and ultimately document the gender-specific

results reflecting the ambition of the GAP in the Annual PIRs, project MTR and TE. April 17, 2026

#### **April 17, 2026**

All points are addressed. The PIF is forwarded to PO for quality control and clearance.

#### **April 3, 2026**

The PIF is in enough good shape for the quality control by PO colleagues. Please, address the remaining comments and those from the quality control. For the sake of time, we are sending back the review. Please, note that comments on gender and CSO may come later.

#### **March 9, 2026**

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

#### Agency's Comments

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

#### Secretariat's Comments

- Please, confirm targets under the selected core indicators.
  
- Please, confirm the cofinancing partners, amount, and nature. Please, check any reputation risk.
  
- Please, confirm the risk analysis and mitigation measures.
  
- A Gender Action Plan is expected at CEO endorsement.
  
- The Stakeholder Engagement Plan must be developed and uploaded.
  
- ESMF and Process Framework must be completed and uploaded.
  
- Lessons from prior investments (GEF and non-GEF) should be elaborated with specific references.
  
- TORs for key project staff should be attached.

UNDP elaborated its response about the comments on gender. Upon Verona's recommendation, we include this response in this 9.2 section, while former observations about the Gender Action Plan were made and cleared above:

Agency response: A detailed gender analysis will be conducted during the PPG. This will inform a Gender Action Plan, and also also the articulation of project outputs and activities. The project results framework will include sex-disaggregated indicators and the M&E framework will ensure that sex-disaggregated data is collected to inform how the project is making progress towards achieving targets on gender equality and women's empowerment. The GAP outputs and activities will be budgeted for and relevant indicators and targets incorporated throughout the project strategy to ensure that the project implementation strategy advanced principles of GEWE (**gender equality and the empowerment of women**)

**and girls**). Annual PIRs, the project MTR and TE will also report on gender-specific results, including progress towards delivering on the ambition of the GAP.

Agency's Comments  
UNDP Response, 30 Mar 2026

These will be addressed at CEO endorsement stage

**Review Dates**

	<b>PIF Review</b>	<b>Agency Response</b>
<b>First Review</b>	<b>3/9/2026</b>	<b>3/20/2026</b>
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>4/3/2026</b>	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>4/17/2026</b>	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>4/18/2026</b>	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>		