

Watershed approaches for climate resilience in agro-pastoral landscapes

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

10178

Countries

South Sudan

Project Name

Watershed approaches for climate resilience in agro-pastoral landscapes

Agencies

UNDP, UNIDO

Date received by PM

6/30/2021

Review completed by PM

11/7/2022

Program Manager

Jason Spensley

Focal Area

Multi Focal Area

Project Type

FSP

PIF

CEO Endorsement

Part I ? Project Information

Focal area elements

1. Does the project remain aligned with the relevant GEF focal area elements as presented in PIF (as indicated in table A)?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
GEFSEC 7Nov2022:

Cleared

GEFSEC 7Dec2021:

Please note the comment below in the coordination section.

GEFSEC 17Oct2021:

Cleared

Agency Response

UNDP/UNIDO, 26 Nov 2021: UNDP and UNIDO are both Implementing Agencies for this project as presented in the PIF and the CEO ER. The execution arrangement was proposed with Government of South Sudan as the Executing entity with execution support provided by both UNDP and UNIDO in the form of direct execution given the exceptional country context. More information on the reasons for this execution support are provided in question regarding section 5. of this response.

Project description summary

2. Is the project structure/design appropriate to achieve the expected outcomes and outputs as in Table B and described in the project document?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GEFSEC 17Oct2021:

Cleared

GEFSEC 19July2021:

We appreciate the references to two different climate scenarios based on RCP 4.5 and RCP 8.5 and their relation to differing scales of climate hazards, as well as the analysis and associated diagram of "root causes, barriers and the adaptation problem in South Sudan".

A key consideration of the logic between the climate risks and the project interventions is an assertion in the project justification section that "...a signal degree increase in temperature is estimate to increase water demand of vegetation by up to 20%.". Please substantiate this with relevant reference(s) or adjust as needed.

With regards to outputs 2.2.3 and 2.2.4, please expand on how the project will effectively ensure local community and farmer ownership and uptake of the small scale agribusiness strategies and alternative livelihood options that will be encouraged by the project. Please also expand on how the project will ensure operational and financial sustainability of the small scale businesses and livelihood options after the project support is concluded. Related, it seems the project is proposing to provide "...materials, implements and agricultural inputs coupled with training..." without cost to local end users. Please clarify and explain how local commitment and uptake will be assured and any commitment will be required to sustainable use these resources for the long term.

In the description of Outcome 2, we note the use of the term "co-opted" to describe how community based organizations will be engaged. Perhaps this was a language translation matter, but please reconsider the use of this term and the associated strategy to purposefully ensure local ownership of the strategies and approaches to be employed.

Also with regards to outputs 2.2.3 and 2.2.4, despite the challenges associated with a limited private sector and widespread presence of banking institutions, we encourage further consideration of opportunities to catalyze inclusive lending practices and/or develop fund rotation schemes with relevant partners to can begin to address the barrier of access to capital for small scale farmers to access inputs required to adapt to climate change.

With regards to the capacity building strategy within outcomes 1 and 2, please deepen the description of the context and current situation on the ground with regards to government capacities, challenges and associated risks, and how the outputs and associated activities are designed for the unique context and will effectively empower the government and other relevant actors in achieving these outcomes.

Agency Response

UNDP/UNIDO 24 August 2021: Substantiated the statement of increasing temperature impacts on water demand with relevant references.

a) Reference to statement on increased water demand: Funk, Christopher C., Gary Eilerts, Jim Verdin, Jim Rowland, and Michael Marshall. "A Climate Trend Analysis of Sudan". US Geological Survey, 2011. <https://pubs.er.usgs.gov/publication/fs20113072>, and decreased yield: Zhao, Chuang, Bing Liu, Shilong Piao, Xuhui Wang, David B. Lobell, Yao Huang, Mengtian Huang, et al. "Temperature Increase Reduces Global Yields of Major Crops in Four Independent Estimates". *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 114, no. 35 (29 August 2017): 9326-31. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1701762114>.

References have been added and text adjusted to reflect original statement more accurately (ProDoc pg. 10) and CEO-ER Pg. 9.

Revised text is: Observed warming of more than 1 degree Celsius is equivalent to another 10-20 percent reduction in rainfall for crops, and, on average, reduce yields of wheat by 6.0%, rice by 3.2%, maize by 7.4%, and soybean by 3.1%.

b) With regards to outputs 2.2.3 and 2.2.4:

i) How will the project effectively ensure local community and farmer ownership and uptake of the small-scale agribusiness strategies and alternative livelihood options that will be encouraged by the project?

The project seeks to introduce climate-smart technologies and innovations into existing practices among agro-pastoral communities. The comprehensive survey of local conditions and practices (activities 1.1.3 and 1.1.4) will ensure that interventions are targeted and synchronized with traditional and established livelihoods. Agribusinesses too will be assessed along with market conditions and linkages (activity 2.4.1, 2.4.4). It needs to be noted that the selection of project activities was done in consultation with stakeholders and on the basis of existing practices, businesses and markets. Details are provided in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (Annex 9 Pg. 16) and the annex to the plan (Annex 9a Pg.17 to 36). Sites were selected on the basis of access to these markets and supply chains. The project activities are therefore synchronized with on-ground conditions and existing livelihoods, we expect this will improve adoption and ownership of the project among the communities. Community ownership and uptake of activities will be further ensured through continuous hands-on training and demonstrations and building communal assets among user groups that increases the stake of their members.

ii) How will the project ensure operational and financial sustainability of the small-scale businesses and livelihood options after the project support is concluded.

We have proposed the user groups who are engaged in activities that have O&M requirements set up a membership system which ensures contributions in both cash and kind (labor, materials) towards project activities (see section on sustainability, pg. 52). Activity 2.2 (pg. 29) specifically provides for low value grants to CBOs involved in the project to encourage the collection of user fee and creating a financially sustainable mechanism to support these costs. Small scale businesses and livelihood options will be based on comprehensive viability analysis and market assessment and linkages as well as mentoring by established businesses and traders federations (outputs 2.3 and activity 2.4.4)

iii) Clarify and explain how local commitment and uptake will be assured and any commitment will be required to sustainable use these resources for the long term.

The project strategy is built on mobilization and strengthening of local institutions ? user groups and associations, and linking them with existing federations and associations as well as having them registered with local government authorities (see pg. 29). These CBOs will include existing groups and associations. Additional CBOs will be formed based on advice of local leaders and chiefs with specific attention to existing family and clan associations that ensure local commitment. The strengthening of these CBOs will include organizational strengthening (activity 2.2.1) and provision of assets to them will create long term capacities and potential for pursuing small scale businesses and livelihood options beyond the project period.

Provision of materials and inputs will be through user groups, including those of women and vulnerable sections. The materials will be circulated within members of these groups. Members of the groups will additionally receive hands-on training throughout the project's life cycle using a farmer's/pastoralist's field school approach (activities 2.2.2 to 2.2.5) and through training on livelihood diversification (activities 2.4.2 to 2.4.3). All the groups receiving support will need to be registered with the local with local authorities (see pg. 29).

c) Reconsider the use of the term ?co-opted? and the associated strategy to purposefully ensure local ownership of the strategies and approaches to be employed.

The term "co-opted" has been replaced with strengthened and integrated with the project.

d) We encourage further consideration of opportunities to catalyze inclusive lending practices and/or develop fund rotation schemes with relevant partners to begin to address the barrier of access to capital for small scale farmers to access inputs required to adapt to climate change.

We thank the reviewer for this suggestion. Indeed, we had provided for a fund rotation scheme through provision of low value grants to user groups as part of output 3.2. The

allocation towards this was 37,500 and the focus was water user groups (see budget note 35, pg.86).

We will use two approaches to provide financial services that support i) entrepreneurs and communities to sustain livelihood diversification activities centered around post-harvest processing, storage and marketing and towards investments in climate smart agriculture among farming and pastoral groups; and ii) support user groups operate, maintain and extend rural infrastructure ? particularly related to water and irrigation. An established and experienced NGO(s) who operate in Aweil will be provided grants to provide this support.

The relevant text for the first approach (Pg. 21 CEO-ER and Pg.31 ProDoc) is:

Linkages between communities and local banks and NGOs offering financial services and support to community groups will be established. At least 10 financial service providers (FSP), including commercial banks and affiliated local agents operate in the Aweil area[1]. The project will invest in supporting relevant FSPs through capacity building, financial literacy training and building baseline credit data, use of mobile payment systems.

Linkages with financial services, markets and traders will be established (activity 2.4.4) to ensure the income streams are reliable and sustained. Baselines will be developed to understand needs for credit and how credit risks will be reduced among farming and pastoral groups through adoption of climate smart/resilient practices.

The second will be aimed at water use groups who are registered with local authorities. See Pg. 23 CEO-ER and Pg. 36 of the ProDoc. The relevant text is:

Registered CBOs, including federations and associations of farmers and pastorals as well as smaller user groups and self-help groups will be supported to establish financial procedures and practices that sustain O&M costs and investments into livelihood and income generation activities. Key among these will be setting up of a fee structure for those benefiting from the use of water infrastructure, food processing equipment, implements and other rural infrastructure (ponds/checkdams) provided by the project. These groups will receive training on management, book keeping and business practices, in addition to technical training on O&M of their respective assets.

We have summarized this approach in the section on innovativeness and scaling up on Pg. 33 in the CEO-ER and Pg. 61 in the ProDoc.

South Sudan has a ranking of 185 out of 190 countries in the Doing Business Report for 2020 . Key challenges faced by businesses include access to electricity (187/190),

protecting minority investors (185/190) and access to credit (181/190). It is among the most important barriers to economic growth and private sector development. The report highlights the lack of credit data and poor legislative provisions and legal rights as key contributors to this.

Limited access to financial services can constrain investments in farming, livestock-raising and entrepreneurial activities for the proposed project. Banks, and NGOs[2] can help address this challenge by not only providing access to credit but also supporting micro-credit and self-help groups within communities with a clear framework for access to credit and other financial services and providing financial literacy trainings to communities.

The project will work with local NGOs to financially support self-help groups and community based organizations. The model envisaged is based on with self-help groups across the world, including Africa where it builds on rotating savings and credit associations and is supported by NGOs across the continent and reaches over 3.8 million people. This approach has been demonstrated to improve access to credit and asset ownership[3] .

The matching funds approach is another mechanism that could be used by the supported CBOs, specifically to support financial sustainability of groups who are responsible for O&M of rural infrastructure, such as water points or irrigation systems. This is a type of a subsidy to support investments in assets for income generation and has been used effectively in government programs across South Asia, especially India[4], where it is part of rural development policies and credit systems. In Africa, subsidized grants, often through micro-finance institutions (MFI) and NGOs have been found to be effective to target not only self-help groups, but also vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities[5].

In the proposed project we will collaborate with local NGOS to support financial services for community based organizations and self-help groups. This will facilitate investments into livelihood and income generation, including for entrepreneurs.

Matching grants, or credit, will also be provided for savings generated from collection of user fee from groups who are responsible for water infrastructure and assets such as food processing facilities.

The project will make a total allocation of 150,000 USD towards these approaches via a grant to an experienced local NGO and Low Value Grants to CBOs over the five-year period benefiting a total of 60 groups each year over the five years.

Output 2.2 makes provision for supply of materials for CSA to farmers and pastoralists attending the farmer field schools ? thereby linking training to the distribution of materials. It refers to low value grants and matching funds. We have now expanded this intervention across outputs 2.2, 2.3 and specifically output 2.4 on livelihood

diversification. Budget allocations to these activities will be from the reduction of field vehicles to one as suggested by the reviewer.

[1] South Sudan Cash Working Group: Financial Service Providers as of June 2020
https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/20200608_cwg_mapping_fsp.pdf

[2] For example < <https://fivetalents.org/proven-model>>

[3] Gugerty, Biscaye, and Anderson, ?Delivering Development??

[4] Madheswaran and Dharmadhikary, ?Empowering Rural Women through Self-Help Groups?.

[5] Klerk, ?Funding for Self-Employment of People with Disabilities. Grants, Loans, Revolving Funds or Linkage with Microfinance Programmes.?

3. If this is a non-grant instrument, has a reflow calendar been presented in Annex D?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

Co-financing

4. Are the confirmed expected amounts, sources and types of co-financing adequately documented, with supporting evidence and a description on how the breakdown of co-financing was identified and meets the definition of investment mobilized, and a description of any major changes from PIF, consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GEFSEC 7Dec2021:

Cleared

GEFSEC 4Nov2021:

Unable to locate co-financing letters from (1) Ministry of Agriculture & Food Security, (2) Ministry of Trade and Industry, (3) UNIDO and (4) UNDP. Please upload the co-financing letters in Portal.

GEFSEC 19July2021:

The table indicated UNDP has committed \$50,000 and UNIDO will contribute \$500,000, but the text below the table indicates UNDP has committed \$500,000 and UNIDO \$50,000. Please clarify.

We note the amount of co-finance has been significantly reduced from the time of PIF approval. Please explain why this is the case, the efforts that have been undertaken to avoid this, and how this will effect the project, including how activities that were foreseen to be undertaken with this co-finance will now be addressed.

Please provide a brief description of the nature and focus of the finance for the 7 sources of co-finance that will be provided by the Recipient Country Government, and particularly the five sources that are listed as "In-kind" co-financing.

Agency Response

UNDP/UNIDO 24 August 2021:

- Reduction in co-finance amounts.

There has been a reduction in the co-finance from USD 29,500,000 to USD 23,577,632 (totally 5,922,368). This is on account of some projects that were earmarked for co-finance having been completed.

This includes the following baseline investments: (Strengthening the Livelihoods Resilience of Pastoral and Agro Pastoral Communities in South Sudan's cross-border areas with Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda - 2017 to 2020; Enhanced Local Value Addition and Strengthening Value Chains, 2015-2019; and Upgrading the Fishery Sector in Upper Nile State, South Sudan , 2013-2019 that are involving the national counterparts of this project, namely MoAFS, MEF and MWRI.

Efforts that were made by project partners during the PPG to compensate for this by raising additional co-finance from project partners which yielded an additional in-cash finance of 500,000 USD from UNDP, 50,000 USD from UNIDO and an additional in-kind finance of USD 950,000 USD from UNIDO and USD 6,000,000 from partners (MOEF: 3,000,000, MOTI: 3,000,000). Unfortunately this could not fully compensate for the reduction of public investments co-finance from MoAFS: 5,663,157, from Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries: 1,790,132 and from UNIDO: 4,969,079.

- How the activities that were foreseen to be undertaken will be addressed:

The impacts of this will not adversely affect the project because: investments that were expected from co-finance are still available to this project in terms of enhanced capacities of government agencies and the private sector in Aweil, which includes

infrastructural investments during these projects which will be leveraged. Furthermore, the expertise developed and lessons learned during the fishery project will inform and guide the proposed activities on pond fisheries in this project. The GIZ supported Food Security and Agricultural Development project that was implemented by MAFS has provided important insights in the design of this proposal and lessons learned will continued to be applied during the implementation of this project.

- Nature and focus for the seven sources of co-financing, in particular the in-kind co-financing.

The details of in-kind co-financing have been added to the CEO-ER pg. 4. Text follows:

In-kind co-finance has been committed by the following agencies:

Ministry of Trade and Industry (MoTI) has committed to co-financing 3,000,000 towards a) Enhancing the existing industrial policy framework (IPF); b) conducting feasibility studies for industries; and c) capacity building and institutional development. The co-financing will also support revival of relevant industries and provide office space, infrastructure and equipment.

The Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation (MoWRI) has promised co-finance a total of 6,209,211 for which 4,967,369 will be towards supporting technical and economic feasibility studies and design studies envisaged under component 1 and 1,241,842 for construction of irrigation facilities under component 3.

The Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MEF) is providing in-kind co-finance for USD 3,000,000 to support a) project management, office space and community consultations ; b) training, awareness raising and community mobilization; and c) infrastructure and equipment such as automatic weather stations for early warning systems.

Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MOAFS) has committed 5,000,000 towards a) project management, office space, community consultations; b) training and community mobilization ; c) extension facilities and infrastructure for office, equipment, irrigation facilities and demonstration sites; and d) infrastructure and equipment.

UNIDO will provide in-kind co-finance for 950,000 towards: i) strengthening small businesses linkages to markets for financing solutions such as through micro-finance entities, and demand driven training centres and community networks.

UNDP/UNIDO, 26 Nov 2021:
Co-financing letters uploaded to Portal ? Part I, C. Sources of Co-financing for the Project by Name and by Type

GEF Resource Availability

5. Is the financing presented in Table D adequate and does the project demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objectives?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GEFSEC 7Nov2022:

Cleared

GEFSEC 7Dec2021:

Please note the comment in the Coordination section below.

GEFSEC 4Nov2021:

As UNDP is both implementing agency and executing entity for its GEF component, as shown in table D below, an official government request for execution support is required

GEFSEC 19July2021:

Please note the comments below with regards to question 7 on core indicators regarding the scale of impact for the financing requested and seek to identify opportunities to increase specific impact targets.

We strongly encourage reducing the number of 4X4 vehicles to a maximum of one.

Agency Response

UNDP/UNIDO 24 August 2021: UNDP will use its vehicle park to support the project transportation needs in the capital city, Juba. However, the availability of a vehicle is crucial for the project's ability to intervene in the target area, around Aweil and government and UNDP resources are insufficient to cover direct project-related transportation costs as co-financing there. As a result, the number of vehicles has been reduced to one as suggested by the reviewer. The savings thus spared have been reallocated towards output 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 to increase access to finance and address financial sustainability concerns.

UNDP/UNIDO, 26 Nov 2021: The implementation arrangement was proposed at PIF stage after discussing the specific context of South Sudan with the PM (security, fiduciary risks, capacities). An official government request for execution support is part of the submission and uploaded in the portal (?Officialcorrespondences_MoE_DIM confirmation letter? dated 8 May 2019). At present, national implementation arrangements are still not possible in South Sudan and the arrangement proposed at PIF stage remain valid and pertinent. In the Audit Checklist prepared for this project (attached to the submission), the reasons for this arrangement are presented together

with the measures put in place to ensure a full separation of oversight versus execution support for the project. UNDP and UNIDO are available to discuss with the PM and GPU's Manager to ensure that a feasible execution arrangement, agreeable to the GEF Secretariat, is found for the project.

Project Preparation Grant

6. Is the status and utilization of the PPG reported in Annex C in the document?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GEFSEC 19July2021:

Yes

Agency Response

Core indicators

7. Are there changes/adjustments made in the core indicator targets indicated in Table E? Do they remain realistic?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GEFSEC 3Dec2021:

Cleared.

GEFSEC 4Nov2021:

Please complete Core Indicators table by providing targets at CEO Endorsement stage for GEF Core Indicators 4 and 11. They should be aligned with the targets found in Project Results Framework in the project proposal (page 62).

GEFSEC 19July2021:

The total number of beneficiaries of 75,000 seems low, as does 15,000 hectares as a target for core indicator 4.3 of the GEF Trust Fund on Sustainable Land Management and the total number of people trained (CCA core indicator 4). Please consider and seek to identify opportunities to increase the scale of impact with regards to these indicator targets. With regards to the number of hectares, please explain how this has been calculated.

Agency Response

UNDP/UNIDO 24 August 2021: South Sudan is a sparsely populated country. The number of direct beneficiaries for the project is 75,000 which corresponds to 18.3% of the population of the total population of Aweil East (336,473) and Aweil Centre (74,120) <https://data.humdata.org/dataset/south-sudan-administrative-levels-0-2-2020-population-estimates>. An increase in this figure would be unrealistic.

Increasing the area under the catchments would lead to a dilution of the desired impact of restoration activities. The present allocation for the catchment and land restoration (including afforestation and rangeland restoration) is USD1,421,000 which amounts to just under 95 dollars per hectare. As a comparison, in India, the allocation per hectare for watershed restoration in government schemes in 2013 was about Rs 12,000 (USD 160) for plains and Rs 15,000 (USD 2000) for hilly areas < <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/more-funds-for-watershed-programmes-40488>>.

The area under the catchment areas was computed using a watershed delineation model in GRASS GIS that estimates catchment boundaries based on elevation data. The methods used for generating these catchments are provided in the Feasibility Study (Pg. 113) and the scripts and data-sets have been provided on the [PPG GitLab repository](#).

The actual area under the three catchments is 5242 (Aroyo1), 5210 (Aroyo2) and 5511(Akuem) hectares respectively with about 200ha estimated to be under the Wardit region which comprises of high value irrigated agriculture. Please see pg. 22 of ProDoc and Pg.17 of CEO-ER for administrative details.

UNDP/UNIDO, 26 Nov 2021: Targets at CEO Endorsement stage for GEF Core Indicators 4 and 11 have been filled in the portal.

Part II ? Project Justification

1. Is there a sufficient elaboration on how the global environmental/adaptation problems, including the root causes and barriers, are going to be addressed?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GEFSEC 28Oct2021:

Cleared

GEFSEC 17Oct2021:

We appreciate the responses provided. Please also respond to these specific comments and make relevant changes in the CER.

- As requested by STAP, please provide a more substantial clear theory of change for the project, with a diagram and descriptive text, that complements Figure 1 on the root causes, barriers and adaptation problem.

- We have not located an explicit description of how this project will contribute to recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Please clarify this information with a concise explanation.

- As requested by STAP, please expand explanation of the systems thinking approach in the design of this project, and ensure this is conveyed in the Theory of Change as has been requested elsewhere in this review.

GEFSEC 19 July 2021:

Given the unique and challenging context for project implementation in South Sudan, please include more substantive consideration and references to specific learning that has been gained from other relevant projects that are either completed or ongoing, and how this has been incorporated in project design to enable successful implementation. For example, please identify any relevant lessons learned from the GIZ project titled "Adapting agricultural production methods to climate change and stabilizing livelihoods in Western Bahr el Ghazal, South Sudan" which concluded in 2018, and how they are being incorporated in this new project.

As requested by STAP, please provide a more substantial clear theory of change for the project, with a diagram and descriptive text, that complements Figure 1 on the root causes, barriers and adaptation problem.

We have not located an explicit description of how this project will contribute to recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Please clarify this information with a concise explanation.

As requested by STAP, please expand explanation of the systems thinking approach in the design of this project, and ensure this is conveyed in the Theory of Change as has been requested elsewhere in this review.

Agency Response

UNDP/UNIDO 28th October 2021

- Regarding the TOC, we have expanded the ToC in the ProDoc (Pg. 15-20) and have moved this information to the CEO-ER (Please see in green highlight in 1a. Project description > Theory of Change / Problem Analysis).

- Regarding the COVID-19 analysis, please see CEO-ER (See in green highlight in 1a Project Description in 6. Global environmental benefits (GEFTF) and/or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF) > How the project will contribute to the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic) and in Pg. 24-25 3. The proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project which cover the

response , building on the existing sections on risks and mitigation pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Comment: As requested by STAP, please expand explanation of the systems thinking approach in the design of this project, and ensure this is conveyed in the Theory of Change as has been requested elsewhere in this review.

- Response: The systems thinking project is reflected in the theory of change where we refer to the watershed approach being followed by the project, 1a. Project description > Theory of Change / Problem Analysis in the CEO-ER and Pg.15 in the ProDoc. An entire section is devoted to this approach in the Feasibility Study ? Pg.72-84. (Please see the document which has been (uploaded to the Roadmap section of GEF portal on 30 June 2021)

UNDP/UNIDO 24 August 2021: We agree with the reviewer that the GIZ project whose lessons have critical value for the LDCF project strategy. We have, in fact, adopted a number of these lessons. The approach of farmer field school and hands on training as a means of enhancing capacities of communities and as the primary route for on-field interventions (please see pg. 19, footnote 39 in the ProDoc and Pg.16 and 68 in the CEO-ER). The GIZ programmes and associated lessons learned are discussed more detail in the Feasibility Study (pg. 94-95 and 188), however it was excluded from the ProDoc and CEO-ER as only concurrent projects are referred to in these documents.

We have now inserted a note on the GIZ project and its specific relevance to the LDCF project in both the CEO-ER (pg. 14) and the ProDoc (Pg. 40).

2. Is there an elaboration on how the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects were derived?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
GEFSEC 19July2021:

Yes

Agency Response

3. Is the proposed alternative scenario as described in PIF/PFD sound and adequate? Is there sufficient clarity on the expected outcomes and components of the project and a description on the project is aiming to achieve them?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion
GEFSEC 28Oct2021:

Cleared

GEFSEC 17Oct2021:

Please note the remaining comments above in part 2, question I.

GEFSEC 19July2021:

Please note the comments above in part 2 section I (Project Description Summary).

Agency Response

UNDP/UNIDO 28 October 2021: Please see responses in section above

UNDP/UNIDO 24 August 2021: This is noted.

4. Is there further elaboration on how the project is aligned with focal area/impact program strategies?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GEFSEC 19July2021:

Yes

Agency Response

5. Is the incremental reasoning, contribution from the baseline, and co-financing clearly elaborated?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GEFSEC 19July2021:

Yes

Agency Response

6. Is there further and better elaboration on the project's expected contribution to global environmental benefits or adaptation benefits?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GEFSEC 7Oct202:

Cleared

GEFSec 19 July 2021:

Please note the comments above on importance of maximizing impact ambition for GEBs and climate adaptation benefits.

Agency Response

UNDP/UNIDO 24 August 2021: This is noted. Kindly refer to the response on target beneficiaries and target area on pg. 7 of this document. We have additionally summarized the GEBs as below and included it in the CEO-ER (Pg. 28) and ProDoc (Pg. 20). Also see response to comment on pg. 24 below.

The project has specific global environmental benefits in the area of combating desertification, sustainable land management and restoration of ecosystems and ecosystem services which are the focus of component 2. The project will additionally contribute to the conservation of biodiversity and wildlife through its actions in community based forest management envisaged in component 3. Watershed restoration is an acknowledged strategy for disaster risk reduction through building resilience of communities against climate change[1]. Strengthening the sustainable management of ecosystems and implementing integrated environmental and natural resource management approaches remains a priority area of investment in disaster risk reduction for resilience in the Sendai framework[2]. The work proposed will contribute directly to the sustainable management of 15,000 ha of land in a region recognized as being highly vulnerable to desertification[3]. Conserving and restoring ecosystem services, particularly those pertaining to water with a specific emphasis on needs of vulnerable communities will contribute towards climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combating desertification.[4] Output 1 of the project will ensure that on-ground interventions contribute directly towards poverty eradication and combatting food insecurity among the most vulnerable populations. The proposed community mobilization and local institution and policy building, with a focus on natural resources will contribute and indirectly support the efforts in conflict resolution in Aweil and Aroyo which will contribute towards security in local communities and reduced tensions with the nomadic pastoral populations.

[1] UNISDR, Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015.

[2] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 - 2030.

[3] Ministry of Environment, Republic of South Sudan and United Nations Environment Programme, South Sudan First State of Environment and Outlook Report 2018.

[4] Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, ?CBD Home.?

7. Is there further and better elaboration to show that the project is innovative and sustainable including the potential for scaling up?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GEFSEC 17Oct2021:

Cleared

GEFSEC 19July2021:

Please note the comments elsewhere in this CER review sheet on importance of strengthening elements to ensure financial sustainability, particularly in terms of small scale farmers and entrepreneurs having access to capital and markets to continue to invest in the climate adaptation and resilience actions encouraged by the project, both during and after project completion.

Please provide further information on how this project will strive to influence the scale up of impact within and beyond the geographic project focus areas.

Agency Response

UNDP/UNIDO 24 August 2021: We have added to the section on sustainability and scaling up in the CEO-ER (Pg. 30) and ProDoc (Pg. 53-55) focusing specifically on the strategy to scale up the impact of the project within and beyond the geographic project focal area. Text below:

This project utilizes lessons learned and strategies from prior initiatives in the Northern and Western Bahr el Ghazal. Other than the projects referred to in section IV of the ProDoc (Pg. 37), this specifically includes the GIZ project: ?Adapting agricultural production methods to climate change and stabilizing livelihoods in Western Bahr el Ghazal?, which concluded in 2018 and the Govt. of Canada funded project: ?Upgrading the Fishery Sector in Upper Nile State, South Sudan, 2013-2019? which operated in the Greater Bahr el Ghazal region and was implemented by UNDO and the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries.

Most efforts in the scaling up and replication of the project will focus on areas that are in the vicinity of the project sites, including neighboring payams, counties and even states. This is because the biophysical conditions in the project site are very similar to other parts of South Sudan, particularly the northern states and specifically Northern Bahr el Ghazal. Furthermore, given the resource constraints, the capacity building and strengthening of government agencies focuses on line departments and their staff based at Aweil, Aroyo and Akuem. This includes extensive and in-depth training of line department staff and support to these agencies in terms of communication facilities, and

setting up of demonstration and test sites in their campuses. The entire process of replication will be facilitated by the contribution proposed to state policies in community based natural resources and forest management. Thus staff from agencies involved with the project, specifically those engaged in agricultural extension, veterinary care and pasture/forest management will be the primary vehicle for replication of project activities to other catchments in the vicinity of the project.

The involvement of the private sector and the building of local business skills is another mechanism to ensure the project interventions will be sustained and replicated based on their financial viability without external financing.

The project will additionally explore collaborations with local NGOs to support self-help groups and community based organizations. This will be based on self-help group model employed in many countries across the world, including Africa where it builds on rotating savings and credit associations and is supported by NGOs across the continent and reaches over 3.8 million people. This approach has been demonstrated to improve access to credit and asset ownership [1].

The matching funds approach is one among many mechanisms to provide a subsidy or for investments in assets for income generation and to incentivize groups to adhere to loan repayment schedules. This has been used effectively in government programs across South Asia, especially India [2], where it is part of rural development policies and credit systems. In Africa, subsidized grants, often through micro-finance institutions (MFI) and NGOs have been found to be effective to target not only self-help groups, but also vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities [3].

In the proposed project we will explore a tie-up with local financial service providers, wherein they provide support to save and access loans in community based organizations and self-help groups, to support investments into livelihood and income generation, including for entrepreneurs.

The project strategy also emphasizes mobilization and strengthening of community based organizations and local institutions as a key ingredient of sustainability, scaling up and replication. Scaling up of the project will be achieved by ensuring ownership of the project and its activities lie with the communities, government and local authorities and ensuring wider participation by different stakeholders who will continue operating in the project areas beyond GEF funding.

The project management structures will build on and strengthen existing institutional structures where possible and will provide small, matching-grants which will ensure financial viability and stability of user groups who require to cover O&M expenses of assets and facilities created by the project. Project activities will be aligned to existing development plans and programs especially at the payam and county level so that they are part of long-term strategies.

On a broader level, the M&E strategy proposed is designed to capture important lessons and experiences and to share these with both communities as well as project managers for decision making. The same information will be available to stakeholders at state and national levels and will be the basis for knowledge sharing, replication and scaling up of successful lessons and strategies from the project by other agencies.

[1] Gugerty, Biscaye, and Anderson, "Delivering Development"?

[2] Madheswaran and Dharmadhikary, "Empowering Rural Women through Self-Help Groups"?

[3] Klerk, "Funding for Self-Employment of People with Disabilities. Grants, Loans, Revolving Funds or Linkage with Microfinance Programmes.?"

Project Map and Coordinates

Is there an accurate and confirmed geo-referenced information where the project intervention will take place?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
GEFSEC 19 July 2021:

Yes

Agency Response
Child Project

If this is a child project, is there an adequate reflection of how it contributes to the overall program impact?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
N/A

Agency Response
Stakeholders

**Does the project include detailed report on stakeholders engaged during the design phase?
Is there an adequate stakeholder engagement plan or equivalent documentation for the implementation phase, with information on Stakeholders who will be engaged, the means of engagement, and dissemination of information?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GEFSEC 16Nov2022:

Cleared

GEFSEC 16Nov2022:

The final project document reference Annex 9 to include the Stakeholder Engagement Plan. This annex is not included in the document. Agency has uploaded a separate attachment (annex 9a that includes the stakeholder assessment). Please clarify if there is an annex 9b that would include the stakeholder engagement plan.

GEFSEC 19July2020:

Given the fundamental importance of the multi-stakeholder approach and local ownership throughout this project, please explain how the different actors who will be engaged in project execution will be identified. For example, please explain what criteria and process will be used, and who will ultimately decide on who is selected, and how will engagement of females and marginalized groups be assured? Further, please provide further explanation on how this engagement will ensure local ownership, and thereby contribute to long term sustainability of the project activities.

We welcome the focus on an integrated watershed approach and a focus on multi-actor engagement. Please expand on the strategies and specific actions that will be employed to ensure engagement of the range of actors throughout implementation, including within watershed scales. In doing so, please articulate approaches to ensure coordination among national decision-makers and decision-making bodies and community and field level actors.

Agency Response

UNDP/UNIDO, 16 November 2022: The Stakeholder Engagement Plan (Annex 9) was missing and has been uploaded on the portal. Annex 9 is based on the findings presented in the Stakeholder assessment report (Annex 9a).

The link to this document that was uploaded

is: [https://gefportal.worldbank.org/api/spapi/LoadDocument?fileName=https%3A%2F%2Fworldbankgroup.sharepoint.com%2Fsites%2Fgefportal%2FGEFDocuments%2F20b50904-7e57-e911-a827-](https://gefportal.worldbank.org/api/spapi/LoadDocument?fileName=https%3A%2F%2Fworldbankgroup.sharepoint.com%2Fsites%2Fgefportal%2FGEFDocuments%2F20b50904-7e57-e911-a827-000d3a365662%2Fceoendorsement%2FAnnexesappendixestotheprojectdocuments_Annex9-Stakeholder%20Engagement%20Plan%20PIMS%206011%20-%20SEP22Dec2020.docx)

[000d3a365662%2Fceoendorsement%2FAnnexesappendixestotheprojectdocuments_Annex9-Stakeholder%20Engagement%20Plan%20PIMS%206011%20-%20SEP22Dec2020.docx](https://gefportal.worldbank.org/api/spapi/LoadDocument?fileName=https%3A%2F%2Fworldbankgroup.sharepoint.com%2Fsites%2Fgefportal%2FGEFDocuments%2F20b50904-7e57-e911-a827-000d3a365662%2Fceoendorsement%2FAnnexesappendixestotheprojectdocuments_Annex9-Stakeholder%20Engagement%20Plan%20PIMS%206011%20-%20SEP22Dec2020.docx)

UNDP/UNIDO 24 August 2021: How the different actors who will be engaged in project execution will be identified. What criteria and process will be used, and who will ultimately decide on who is selected, and how will engagement of females and marginalized groups be assured.

The identification of actors engaged in project execution will be decided through a process of consultation between government agencies and staff at the payam or boma level, traditional leaders and projects staff ? specifically the community engagement and the gender expert. This process will take place at the incipient stage of project implementation and during the mobilization phase (Activities 2.1.3, 2.2.1, 3,1,1) after the initial socio-economic assessments are completed (Activities 1.1.2, 1.1.3 and 1.1.4) and will precede the physical interventions. The initial phase of the project will also be used to prepare additional safeguard related documents (as detailed in the ESMF) and update the gender analysis and stakeholder engagement plan. Three basic criteria will be used to identify beneficiaries will include:

- Vulnerability to climate change impacts based on assessment of livelihoods, socio-economic status and local bio-physical and risk assessment (outputs of activity 1.1.2-1.1.4).
- Willingness to participate, including willingness to be part of a user group and share responsibilities and benefits. This will include an assessment of kinship and social grouping.
- Consultation with local leaders and elders and of representatives of CBOs and locally active federations, associations and NGOs.

Engagement of women and marginalized groups will be ensured through safeguards and provisions such as in Output 1.1, Output 2.2, please see pg.29 in ProDoc ? highlighted text):

- Extensive sensitization, training and awareness building on issues of gender and equity among communities, including their leaders and representatives (Activity 2.2.1 and 3.1.1), as well as for project staff (Activity 1.4.5) at multiple levels.
- Careful and deliberate planning to include gender responsive strategies in design of interventions (Activity 1.1.3), social inclusion (Activity 1.3.2) and extension support and training (Activity 1.3.3)
- Minimum representation on committees and associations (ProDoc pg. 19 ? highlighted) as well as on project management (Pg.62 ? highlighted) .

- Creation of exclusive groups for women and vulnerable communities.

Provide further explanation on how this engagement will ensure local ownership, and thereby contribute to long term sustainability of the project activities

Local ownership will be ensured through a process of transfer of assets to the group coupled with institution of a system for financial sustainability based on micro-grants given to groups. In addition, these groups will be provided training in basic organizational issues including accounting, management and monitoring. (see Pg.33 ? highlighted).

Expand on the strategies and specific actions that will be employed to ensure engagement of the range of actors throughout implementation, including within watershed scales. In doing so, please articulate approaches to ensure coordination among national decision-makers and decision-making bodies and community and field level actors.

A continuous engagement with stakeholders will be maintained during the entire project period through hands on training and ground level interventions that will be conducted throughout the project period ? coinciding with seasonal calendars (see Annex 4, pg. 95 of ProDoc). This will be coupled with formal interactions between stakeholders during events such as exchange visits and watershed committee meetings (Activities 3.1.1, 1.1.5 and Output 2 ? see pg. 28 ? highlighted.). The latter will be particularly important as they will bring together the entire range of stakeholders in the watershed and provide a multiple stakeholder platform for coordination and experience sharing between stakeholder engaged in this project as well as other projects and initiatives in the area.

Knowledge management activities will additionally ensure that national level agencies, project staff and members from the project steering committee regularly visit field sites and interact with communities. Representatives of the communities will also be given opportunities to share their experience and knowledge at national and at international events.

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Has the gender analysis been completed? Did the gender analysis identify any gender differences, gaps or opportunities linked to project/program objectives and activities? If so, does the project/program include gender-responsive activities, gender-sensitive indicators and expected results?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GEFSEC 7Dec2021:

Cleared

GEFSEC 4Nov2021:

The project has submitted a gender analysis and action plan but please provide some summary information in the section on gender in the portal.

GEFSEC 19July2021:

Please include reference to the gender analysis and action plan in section 3 of part II (Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment), which is uploaded as a document in the Roadmap section.

Agency Response

UNDP/UNIDO 24 August 2021: A link to the gender analysis and action plan has been provided both in the CEO-ER and the ProDoc

UNDP/UNIDO, 26 Nov 2021: A summary information has been added to the CEO ER in the relevant section of the portal:

The following Gender equality is a significant objective of the proposed project. A comprehensive gender analysis and gender action plan were formulated to guide the project activities and gender is comprehensively addressed and integrated with the proposed project strategies. The Gender Action Plan (GAP), facilitate equality in accessing project benefits by both men and women. It will ensure that all women are actively consulted and engaged in project design, decision-making, implementation and monitoring processes, including the active engagement of marginalized groups of women (indigenous, displaced, unmarried, young women. Finally, gender-disaggregated data and information will be collected to inform M&E and adaptive management responses during project implementation. The GAP includes activities to be undertaken in order to ensure mainstreaming of concerns related to gender equality and equity. It will guide the Project Management Unit (PMU) as well as project partners on involvement and integration of men and women, not only in the delivery of outputs, but also in the monitoring and evaluation of the process and the results obtained.

The project aims to incorporate gender analysis and gender concerns into all aspects of policy, procedures, projects, and monitoring systems. The project implementation strategy and its activities are gender responsive and designed to increase participation of women in decision-making processes, while facilitating equality and equity for both men and women to the extent possible, given the constraints of systemic barriers that are related to deep-rooted traditions and power structures. While some of the root causes of the existing gender imbalances in South Sudan cannot be resolved given the focus, resources, and time that is available for this specific project, activities will ensure that both men and women will be empowered to increase their understanding and appreciation of the importance that both genders play in ensuring climate resilience.

In line with national policies as well as GEF and UNDP guidelines, the project will adopt the following principles in its day-to-day management:

? Demonstrate gender-responsiveness in all interactions with project stakeholders;

? Refrain from using language or behaviour denoting bias and disrespect for any individual based on gender;

? Avoid gender stereotyping in project documents and communication outputs;

? Support zero tolerance for sexual harassment, gender-based violence and/or sexual exploitation and abuse of men, women, girls and boys that may occur in connection with any of its supported activities; and

? Collect gender statistics/information under gender-responsive indicators to inform results-based and adaptive M&E; this allows for evidence-based decision-making throughout the project cycle.

The GAP has been developed with particular attention to existing forms of discrimination against women and adequate mechanisms to overcome these limitations. The project will seek to reduce the risk that these discriminations are inadvertently reproduced in project implementation. Participation of illiterate representatives in the capacity-building activities will be enabled in order to ensure participation of the most vulnerable stakeholders. A specific focus on those structures is key for indigenous women's empowerment so that safeguards are mainstreamed in stakeholder engagement and gender action plans. A careful analysis of existing roles and responsibilities of women (divided per subgroup) along with details of time commitments, constraints and capacities was done during the PPG process and will be developed further as part of the inception phase. This will lead to specific strategies for each of the target groups that proposed activities do not add to the burden on women, even as they ensure their full participation. Specific activities where concerns and priorities of women will be taken on board during the design and prioritization of technological interventions include:

i. Small scale irrigation, land preparation, agro-processing, storage and post harvest technologies.

ii. Interventions which can replace or alleviate labor inputs into tasks typically assigned to women will be prioritized. This includes interventions such as shallow boreholes, animal powered draught, milling and drying technologies as well as fuel efficient stoves.

iii. Interventions which can directly reduce their burden in tasks such as fuel wood and water collection. This includes siting of water harvesting structures and fuel wood plantations that may be proposed.

The project will work with and generate awareness about women's issues and their rights among traditional leaders and members of the communities. This will contribute towards the process of empowerment of women and facilitate their meaningful participation in decision making within the communities. The project will furthermore ensure that women are represented in user groups and CBOs involved in implementing project activities including:

a. Watershed restoration and assisted restoration and reforestation to increase biomass productivity and access to fuel.

b. Water harvesting structures for human, livestock and small scale irrigation.

c. Climate smart agriculture, including vegetable gardens and crops.

d. Income diversification including small ruminants, apiculture and NTFP.

Technical support, training and financing will be provided on the sustainable use of natural resources, while actively engaging NGOs focused on women's rights and economic empowerment as natural vehicles for promoting gender equality. Approaches to support women in sustainable land-use and alternative income-generation will take into account the fact that they typically have different interests and incentives than men to participate in these types of activities. For all capacity-building activities (component 2), a detailed Gender Responsive Budget (GRB) will be designed that disaggregates expenditures in terms of women and men, girls and boys.

Private Sector Engagement

If there is a private sector engagement, is there an elaboration of its role as a financier and/or as a stakeholder?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GEFSEC 4Nov2021:

Cleared

GEFSEC 19July2021:

We note the assertion in section 4 of Part II (Private Sector Engagement) that "The project will extend linkages with private sector financing...". However, it is not clear what specific outputs and activities will ensure this. Please deepen this explanation in the private sector engagement section, as well as other relevant sections.

We also note the assertion that "Private sector participation in the supply of seeds, implements and materials for small scale irrigation, including installation of shallow boreholes and low cost pumps" will be encouraged". Please specify how this will be achieved beyond private sector suppliers selling materials to be purchased with project expenses and given to farmers, and how financial sustainability of farmers ability to buy these materials will be assured. Similar, in what way will private sector actors "... be engaged with for supply of veterinary products and services and linkages with cattle markets and markets for superior breeds of drought resilient varieties of livestock". For example and as commented above in section 2 of Part I (Project Description Summary), please consider and articulate support for development of lending systems and practices and/or other approaches for small scale farmers to access capital and repay loans for materials needed to deploy climate resilient agricultural practices, as feasible.

We note the important indication that "Training will be provided to entrepreneurs and small business in administrative and technical aspects, and by linking them with micro financing services. Linkages to financial services will be established and guidelines institute for operation and management of food post-harvest processing facilities and markets under governmental agencies or federations and associations." Please expand on how this will occur and what financial service providers will be engaged. Please clarify

the associated outputs and budget for this important area of activity as well as expand description of this area of project intervention in the Project Description Summary and/or Project Justification.

Agency Response

UNDP/UNIDO 22 September 2021: Thanks to the reviewer for highlighting this. We have now included a mechanism for financial support to farmers, pastoralists and entrepreneurs and adjusted the budget so that USD150,000 is allocated towards support for FSPs and NGOs to support self-help groups (community savings), entrepreneurs to access loans to supply adaptation technologies. See CEO-ER (Pg. 21 and 31) and ProDoc (Pg. 29 and 56). Kindly note that all support and de-risking measures proposed will be provided in the form of technical assistance as UNDP does not have the necessary financial instruments to provide guarantee or supplement savings or rotating funds as suggested, be it in grant or non-grant form.

Risks to Achieving Project Objectives

Has the project elaborated on indicated risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved? Were there proposed measures that address these risks at the time of project implementation?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GEFSEC 17Oct2021:

Cleared

GEFSEC 19July2021:

Please consider and expand on the risk of entrepreneurs and small scale farmers being unable to invest or sustain investment in transition to climate adaptation and resilience practices due to lack of access to capital, and how this will be mitigated.

Agency Response

UNDP/UNIDO 22 September 2021: Risk: added to the risk analysis table of the CEO-ER.

Coordination

Is the institutional arrangement for project implementation fully described? Is there an elaboration on possible coordination with relevant GEF-financed projects and other bilateral/multilateral initiatives in the project area?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GEFSEC 16Nov2022

Cleared

GEFSEC 14November2022:

Please clarify if UNDP will not have any role in project execution, and if this is the case then please be all references to roles are clear on consistent on this. In doing so, please use GEF terminology with regards to project implementation and execution, in this and all GEF project documentation, to avoid confusion.

GEFSEC 7Dec2021:

A) We note the recent guidance from UNFCCC COP26 to the GEF in November 2021 within "Report of the Global Environment Facility to the Conference of the Parties and guidance to the Global Environment Facility" (FCCC/CP/2021/L.8) which requests the GEF to consider ways to "...prevent implementing agencies from serving simultaneously as executing agencies". With this in mind, we encourage UNDP to reconsider if it would be possible to involve national partners to a greater extent in project execution, and/or have a different international organization with active presence in Juba perform the project execution function. For example, we understand FAO has a significant and active presence in South Sudan, and we encourage further consideration of this option in collaboration with national organizations as relevant.

B) Please ensure all Execution Agencies are listed in the project information at the top of section I.

C) The table under section 6 (Institutional Arrangement and Coordination) is misaligned.

GEFSEC 4Nov2021:

The table under section 6. Institutional Arrangement and Coordination is misaligned.

GEFSEC 17Oct2021:

Cleared

GEFSEC 19July2021:

Related to the comment above on stakeholders, please explain how the selection of "community based organizations, private sector, traditional leaders and extension and development staff from the government and on-ground responsible parties" will be conducted for participation in the Watershed Management Committees. For example, please explain what criteria and process will be used, and who will ultimately decide on who is selected, and how will engagement of females and marginalized groups be assured? Furthermore and also related to a comment on stakeholder engagement, please

expand on how coordination and flow of information will be assured between national decision makers and local actors throughout project implementation.

Agency Response

UNDP/UNIDO, 16 November 2022: The language in the CEO Endorsement Request has been revised from "UNDP/UNIDO-led activities" to "activities under UNDP/UNIDO as GEF Agency" to avoid misunderstandings. In the revised implementation arrangement, GEF Agencies will not execute or support the execution of GEF-funded activities.

UNDP/UNIDO, 4 November 2022:

We have agreed to this suggestion of the GEFSEC. World Vision South Sudan has been asked to play the role of the executing agency. WVSS has the requisite experience, expertise and field presence to play this role. Micro-assessments of World Vision South Sudan have been completed.

The table under institutional arrangements and coordination has been updated accordingly.

To comply with GEF Guidance from UNFCCC Conference of parties COP26 November 2022 guidance to GEF (FCCC/CP/2021/L.8) which requested the GEF to consider ways to "prevent implementing agencies from serving simultaneously as executing agencies and also providing oversight support.

UNDP conducted comparative analysis to identify possible implementing agent, agency should meet the following criteria, have presence in Aweil Northern Bhar El Ghazal State, and proven experience in implementing environment related projects.

World Vision international South Sudan was identified as the appropriate partner to implement the Watershed approaches for climate resilience in agro-pastoral landscapes project. World Vision International South Sudan has a large operation with numerous bases all over South Sudan, including the region targeted by the project. WVISS is currently managed a portfolio of projects worth over 88 million USD, including experience in climate change adaptation and watershed management, which are essential for this LDCF investment.

World Vision International agreed to commit co-finance to the project, this is extremely important as the project management budget is very tight and relies heavily on matching resources to operate. In addition, WVISS shared with Country Office CO a list presenting their expertise and resources and capacities on the ground which will support the implementation, HACT assessment is conducted, and overall risk rating was low.

Consultation with the Government focal institution the Ministry of Environment and Forestry on the proposed execution arrangement was conducted, the Ministry agreed to the proposed execution arrangements, provide that the project management unit PMU will be located at the Ministry of Environment and Forestry.

With WVISS as implementing partner the project budget will be slightly adjusted, WVISS will manage the project management and charges 5 percent project management support cost, while making 700K contribution as co-finance.

UNDP/UNIDO 24 August 2021: The first part of this question has been partially addressed in the stakeholder section above. The response below is now presented in the CEO-ER (Pg. 17) and in the ProDoc (Pg. 19).

The primary government agency at Aweil who will coordinate project activities with their payam counterparts is the State Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Forestry (SMoAEF). The SMOAEF along with the field PMU at Aweil and the payam officers at Aroyo and Akuem will identify and invite local institutions and CBOs to participate in the watershed committee meetings. This will be in addition to the grassroots agencies who are involved in the project activities and identified on the basis of comprehensive socioeconomic surveys and vulnerability assessments (Pg. 33 ProDoc, Activity 1.1.2-1.1.4).

All groups in the watershed committee will need to have a physical presence in the respective watersheds and a direct participation in watershed restoration and related project activities. The watershed committee is meant to be an inclusive platform, however its core group will comprise of relevant agency representatives as identified by the local government and the field PMU.

The flow of information between the national decision makers and local actors is described in page 65 of the ProDoc. We have added a figure to illustrate this further to the CEO-ER (Pg. 57) and the ProDoc (Pg. 67)

UNDP/UNIDO, 26 Nov 2021: Formatting of this section has been corrected in the portal.

Consistency with National Priorities

Has the project described the alignment of the project with identified national strategies and plans or reports and assessments under the relevant conventions?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GEFSEC 28Oct2021:

Cleared

GEFSEC 17Oct2021:

Please explain the extent to which this project is relevant with the 2018 "Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan", as well as aligned with the National Development Strategy that was effective as of July 2018.

GEFSec 19July2021:

Please explain the extent to which this project is relevant with the 2018 "Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan", as well as aligned with the National Development Strategy that was effective as of July 2018.

We note the statement in section 7 that "Five key thematic areas of the project is [are?] closely aligned with the NAPA of South Sudan.". However, it appears the text that follows describes consistency with only 3 thematic areas (environment, water resource management, and agriculture". Please clarify and add as needed.

Agency Response

UNDP/UNIDO 28 October 2021: We have added additional sections to the CEO-ER (7. Consistency with National Priorities.) and ProDoc (Pg. 11-12) on the R-ARCSS and to the CEO-ER (7. Consistency with National Priorities.) and ProDoc (Pg. 11 and 12) on the NDS. Text is repeated below:

Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS)

The R-ARCSS was a milestone in the long running peace process in South Sudan. The agreement was signed on the 12th of September and was an outcome of negotiations lead by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). The R-ARCSS brought a formal end to the war since 2013, prescribed a power sharing agreement and provided a roadmap to peace and development. Key features of the agreement were the formation of the Revitalised Transitional Government of National Unity (RTGoNU), formed in February 2020. The agreement outlined a new power-sharing arrangement along with infrastructure to monitor and evaluate the ceasefire and implementation of the pre-transitional provisions. It provides procedures for accessing humanitarian assistants, management for the country's resources . In spite of delays and set-backs, the R-ARCSS provides an avenue for lasting political settlements between political actors. The proposed project is in close alignment with a number of provisions of the R-ARCSS. This includes:

- Provisions for representation and reservation for women in executive positions to the Council of Ministers and transitional justice institutions, the emphasis on gender and youth empowerment and position against gender based violence and protection of the needs of women, girls and those of other groups with special needs. These are expected to provide policy support and impetus to the gender-responsive strategies proposed in the project.
- The provision to establish a Women Enterprise Development Fund for provision of subsidized credit for women-based enterprise development and capacity building of women entrepreneurs is closely aligned with the project strategy to support women in livelihood diversification and could provide formal mechanisms to access credit, funds and government subsidies for activities under Output 2.4.

Alignment with the National Development Strategy

The National Development Strategy of South Sudan succeeded the South Sudan Development Plan in providing strategic guidance for national planning in the unique country context of South Sudan. The strategy is guided by four principals of 1) peace, security and rule of law; 2) democracy and good governance; 3) socioeconomic development and 4) international compacts and partnerships. The SS-NDS is aligned

with the Vision 2040 (see below) and its seven pillars. The proposed project is aligned with the following strategic actions of the SS-NDS:

- Enabling conditions and integration of displaced South Sudanese: The project, through component 2, will specifically involve internally displaced persons and other marginalized communities.

- Ensure secure access to adequate and nutritious food: Climate smart interventions in agro-pastoral landscapes are the core of the proposed project's strategy. These will directly contribute towards food security and climate resilient livelihoods of agro-pastoral communities.

Furthermore, the project is aligned with the communication strategy proposed under the SS-NDS wherein participatory processes are used to identify activities based on inputs of diverse stakeholders and the use of multiple modes of communication including print and electronic media. The project will also contribute towards strengthening coordination between government and citizens and ensure institutional and human resource development, which are strategic priority actions under the SS-NDS under the governance cluster. Under the economic cluster, the project will contribute towards the cluster goals or improving food security and livelihoods and the strengthening of economic development infrastructure by supporting construction of water harvesting and irrigation infrastructure as well as improving basic infrastructure for post-harvesting and storage of agricultural produce.

UNDP/UNIDO 24 August 2021: Thank you for spotting this typographical error. The project is aligned with **three** of the five thematic areas of the NAPA. See PIF Pg. 23.

The text in the CEO-ER (pg 47) and ProDoc, (Pg. 13) now reads:

?The project is aligned with three of the five key thematic areas of the NAPA of South Sudan.?

Knowledge Management

Is the proposed ?Knowledge Management Approach? for the project adequately elaborated with a timeline and a set of deliverables?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GEFSEC 17Oct2021:

Cleared

GEFSEC 19July2021:

We appreciate the description of the knowledge management approach and associated activities and budget in section 8 of part II. However please explain and ensure how this

approach, and these activities and budget are reflected in section B (Project Description Summary).

Agency Response

UNDP/UNIDO 24 August 2021: The project's knowledge management strategy and related activities are integrated with its three components. A summary on the knowledge management approach of the project is provided on Pg. 50 and a detailed list of relevant activities and budget allocations which are spread across the components is provided in the table on Pg. 54 to 58 of the CEO-ER.

Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS)

Are environmental and social risks, impacts and management measures adequately documented at this stage and consistent with requirements set out in SD/PL/03?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GEFSEC 17Oct2021:

Cleared

GEFSEC 19July2021:

There seems to have been a formatting problem with the last several rows at the bottom on the table on "Measures to address identified risks and impacts". Please clarify.

Agency Response

UNDP/UNIDO 24 August 2021: This has been corrected at re-submission.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Does the project include a budgeted M&E Plan that monitors and measures results with indicators and targets?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GEFSEC 19July2021:

Yes

Agency Response

Benefits

Are the socioeconomic benefits at the national and local levels sufficiently described resulting from the project? Is there an elaboration on how these benefits translate in supporting the achievement of GEBs or adaptation benefits?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
GEFSEC 17Oct2021:

Cleared

GEFSEC 19July2021:

Please expand on what the specific socio-economic benefits will be, beyond those captured by the Trust Fund and climate change adaptation (CCA) results frameworks, and how these will contribute to achieving GEBs and CCA impacts.

Agency Response

UNDP/UNIDO 24 August 2021: We have expanded the section on global environmental benefits in the CEO-ER (pg 28) and pg. 20 in the ProDoc). Also kindly see response on page 15 above.

Socioeconomic benefits of the project that go beyond its life and which contribute to global environmental benefits and climate change impacts include the following:

Improved biomass production from restored watersheds as a result of soil and water conservation will lead to higher productivity of livestock, improved catches from fisheries and higher harvests of NTFP for local communities. This will also directly contribute towards the objectives of the SLM objectives of the UNCCD in a region that is considered to be highly threatened by desertification.

The project will assist communities in adapting to climate induced disasters by adopting practices that diversify agriculture and reduce the risk of crop failure. The project will additionally reduce post-harvest losses, improve storage of crops and facilitate higher profit margins from food processing. This will contribute directly towards long term resilience against impacts of drought. Diversified income streams will further help reduce food insecurity over long terms.

The project will directly benefit over 18% of the population (75,000 persons) of the two counties in which its sites are located. Its indirect beneficiaries are expected to be substantially larger as the project will revive and strengthen local institutions for sustainable management of their resources and will enhance capacities of government extension and veterinary services to support farmers and pastoralists in the other payams

of these counties. The strategy of the project specifically prioritizes support to vulnerable groups and women who will gain from a slew of income generation activities further strengthened by training, innovative financial services and mentorship.

Annexes

Are all the required annexes attached and adequately responded to?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GEFSEC 16Nov2022

Cleared

GEFSEC 14Nov2022:

The budget is not showing which activity will be led by the Ministry of Environment and Forest and which activities would be led by UNDP - under the column "Responsible Entity?", one finds amounts (\$\$\$), not entities. Also, there is an overlap between the column "sub-total" and "PMC" (see below). Please amend.

GEFSEC 7Nov2022:

Cleared

GEFSEC 3December2021:

A) With regards to the budget in Annex E, despite earlier agreement to purchase only one 4X4 vehicle, the "justification for purchase of field vehicles" seems to indicate the purchase of "to" 4X4 pickups. Please clarify and ensure the purchase of a maximum of one 4X4 vehicle.

B) Additionally, the budget table under Annex E follows UNDP's budget table, rather than the GEF budget template. Please use the GEF project budget template as agreed among the GEFSec and all Agencies.

C) We note the budget table in Annex E shows different component total amounts to what is shown for component totals in table B in the Portal. When transferring the budget table in Annex E to the GEF template, please ensure the component totals align with table B in the portal.

D) We note the indication of "other operating costs" and "miscellaneous expenses". Unspecified miscellaneous expenses cannot be covered by the GEF.

GEFSEC 4Nov2021:

The budget table under Annex E follow UNDP's budget table but not the GEF budget template. Please change to use the GEF budget table.

Also on the budget table, please correct the following:

- (i) Budget table shows different component total to table B in Portal

- (i) Unspecified miscellaneous expenses cannot be covered by the GEF.

Agency Response

UNDP/UNIDO, 16 November 2022: The column for the Responsible Entity has been populated in the GEF budget table. This is marked as 'World Vision South Sudan?', the main Responsible Entity for this project. For activities under UNIDO as GEF Agency, the Responsible Entity will be selected at inception.

UNDP/UNIDO, 4 Nov 2022:

A) Only one 4X4 vehicle will be purchased as also clarified earlier (Pg.9). Budget and budget notes have been updated accordingly.

B) The GEF budget template has been provided. We have also provided the UNDP budget template with the UNIDO budget included for sake of clarity as this was not provided in the UNDP pro-doc. Note that these documents are now part of Annex H.

C) Budget table amounts (Annex H) have been corrected and are now aligned with table B.

D) This is noted. The heading 'miscellaneous expenses?' has been removed and funds are now budgeted under other appropriate budget lines.

UNDP/UNIDO, 26 Nov 2021: The budget table is updated with a UNDP/UNIDO GEF budget template.

Component totals have been reconciled to match in the GEF budget template (the difference in total was due to the UNDP co-financing which should not appear in the budget of the CEO ER, per Table B) and additional specifications are added on the miscellaneous expenses to explain that these will cover 'unforeseen costs including field related expenses?.'

Project Results Framework

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GEFSEC 17Oct2021:

Cleared

Agency Response

GEF Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

Council comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

STAP comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

Convention Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

Other Agencies comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

CSOs comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

Status of PPG utilization

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GEFSEC 17Oct2021:

Cleared

Agency Response

Project maps and coordinates

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GEFSEC 17Oct2021:

Cleared

Agency Response

Does the termsheet in Annex F provide finalized financial terms and conditions? Does the termsheet and financial structure address concerns raised at PIF stage and that were pending to be resolved ahead of CEO endorsement? (For NGI Only)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

N/A

Agency Response

Do the Reflow Table Annex G and the Trustee Excel Sheet for reflows provide accurate reflow expectations of the project submitted? Assumptions for Reflows can be submitted to explain expected reflows. (For NGI Only)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

Did the agency Annex H provided with information to assess the Agency Capacity to generate and manage reflows? (For NGI Only)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

GEFSEC DECISION

RECOMMENDATION

Is CEO endorsement recommended? (applies only to projects and child projects)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GEFSEC 16Nov22

This project is recommended for clearance

GEFSEC 14Nov22:

Please address remaining comments on GEF policy alignment. Please also tag the UNDP Audit Checklist and UNDP Prodoc as "public" so these can be shared for posting with Council members.

GEFSEC 3Dec2021:

Please address the remaining comments.

GEFSEC 4Nov2021:

Please address the further policy oriented comments.

GEFSEC 28Oct2021:

All comments to date have been addressed and this project is technically cleared.

GEFSEC 17Oct2021:

Thank you for the responses and changes to the CER made to date. Please address the few further comments above.

GEFSEC 19July2021:

Please address the set of comments provided in this first review.

Review Dates

	Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review	7/20/2021	
Additional Review (as necessary)	10/17/2021	
Additional Review (as necessary)	10/28/2021	
Additional Review (as necessary)	11/5/2021	
Additional Review (as necessary)	12/7/2021	

CEO Recommendation

Brief reasoning for CEO Recommendations