

Seventh Operational Phase of the GEF Small Grants Program in Sri Lanka

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

10617

Countries

Sri Lanka

Project Name

Seventh Operational Phase of the GEF Small Grants Program in Sri Lanka

Agencies

UNDP

Date received by PM

5/12/2021

Review completed by PM

7/23/2021

Program Manager

Jurgis Sapijanskas

Focal Area

Multi Focal Area

Project Type

MSP

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

JS 8/2/2021 - All cleared, thank you.

JS 7/29/2021:

To ensure consistency across different parts of the project document, it is recommended to embed the Core Indicators used in the log-frame / table B. This would highlight the logic of intervention and role of Core Indicators. At the moment it is presented under the Core Indicators? section only. Also, Core Indicators used in this project (N 3, 4, 6 and 11) are not listed in the Theory of Change section.

Please add the core indicator targets in table B and consider adding them in the the Theory of Change section.

JS 7/19/2021 - All cleared, thank you.

JS 6/29/2021 - Thank you for the revisions and responses provided throughout this review sheet.

1 - Cleared.

2 - Thank you for the confirmation and amendments. However, contrary to what is said in the response below, "income generation from waste management will be

implemented in project locations" still appears in the innovativeness section of the portal. Please correct.

JS 5/12/2021

1- Please correct the Focal area codes in the first column of table A to match that of the second column:

Objectives/Programs	Focal Area Outcomes	Trust Fund	GEF Amount(\$)	Co-Fin Amount(\$)
BD-1-1	BD 1-1 Mainstream biodiversity across sectors as well as landscapes and seascapes through biodiversity mainstreaming in priority sectors	GET	911,073.00	2,530,000.00
LD-1-1	LD 1-1 Maintain or improve flow of agro-ecosystem services to sustain food production and livelihoods through Sustainable Land Management (SLM)	GET	227,769.00	635,000.00
LD-1-1	LD 1-2 Maintain or improve flow of ecosystem services, including sustaining livelihoods of forest-dependent people through Sustainable Forest Management (SFM)	GET	227,768.00	635,000.00
LD-1-1	LD 1-3 Maintain or improve flows of ecosystem services, including sustaining livelihoods of forest-dependent people through Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR)	GET	227,768.00	635,000.00
LD-1-1	LD 1-4 Reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses and increase resilience in the wider landscape	GET	227,768.00	635,000.00
Total Project Cost(\$)			1,822,146.00	5,070,000.00

Other than that table A is identical to the PIF's.

2- We note that solid waste management (SWM) is mentioned as potential activity to be supported in annexes 12 and 15 and in the innovation section ("income generation from waste management"). Please note that SWM was not proposed for support in the PIF and is not eligible for BD or LD funding. It could still be part of the project if financed through co-funding. Please revise accordingly.

Agency Response

30 July 2021:

The GEF 7 core indicator targets have been added to Table B in the CEO ER. And the narrative description of the theory of change has been updated in the CEO ER and Project Document by adding the GEF 7 core indicator targets.

16 July 2021

2- The portal entry has been corrected.

16 June 2021:

1. The focal area codes in the first column of Table A of the CEO Endorsement Request have been corrected.

2. Confirming that GEF BD and LD funds are not allocated for waste management activities. The entry in the innovation section stating "income generation from waste management" has been deleted. The list of provisional site interventions has been deleted from Annex 12 (*Baseline report on biodiversity*), as this information is included in Annex 15. The entry in Annex 15 (*Provisional site-based interventions*) has been revised as follows: "Restoring degraded coastal ecosystems, coupled with co-financing support for managing solid waste pollution and creating awareness, capacity building?".

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

JS 7/19/2021 - All cleared, thank you.

JS 6/29/2021 -

1- Cleared.

2a to 2 c - Cleared.

2d Contrary to what is stated in the response below, outcome 1.1 has not changed in the portal entry:

Project Component	Financing Type	Expected Outcomes
Component 1: Resilient landscapes for sustainable development and global environmental protection	Technical Assistance	Outcome 1.1: Participatory conservation and restoration models strengthened. Outcome 1.2: Management of

Please correct.

JS 5/12/2021

1- M&E budget is at 5.5% of GEF project financing, which is above average GEF's past portfolio. Please reduce the M&E budget to a maximum of 5% (\$82,825) or justify why this projects requires a larger than typical M&E budget.

2- Table B has been modified compared to the PIF. Some changes are are not explained/justified:

2a: PIF's outcome 1.4 (Strategic projects) and output 1.4.1 have been deleted. The CER states that they have been merged in outcome 2.2 but we fail to see where 2.2 and underlying output include strategic projects and a sustainability plan. Please explain and justify in the CER.

2b: PIF's Output 2.1.2. (Typology of community level projects developed and agreed by multi-stakeholder groups in each landscape together with eligibility criteria) has been deleted. Please explain and justify in the CER.

2c: CER's Output 2.1.2 and Output 2.1.3 appear new. While they were referred to in the PIF, there was no mention of landscape strategies at output level. Policy advocacy was not present in the PIF. Please explain and justify in the CER.

2d. The new, reformulated outcome 1.1 is unclear: what does "strengthening models" mean? More generally, the focus of PIF's outcome 1.1 and output 1.1.1 on environmental outcomes (ecosystem services enhanced, biodiversity loss reduction) has disappeared to be replaced by an organizational focus. Please justify.

Agency Response

16 July 2021

2d. The phrasing of Outcome 1.1 has been corrected in the portal.

16 June 2021:

1. The M&E budget was based on 5% of the total GEF grant. The budget allocation for M&E has been adjusted to USD 82,700, which is slightly less than 5% of the sub-total of the technical components.

2. Changes in alignment of the project design with the original PIF are further elaborated on page 28 of the CEO ER and below.

2a. The strategic projects have been incorporated into Outcome 2.1 (correction), specifically Output 2.1.3. Outcome 2.1 focuses on enhancing landscape resilience through multi-stakeholder governance and strengthened partnerships. The strategic projects will directly contribute towards achievement of this outcome, e.g., through facilitating upscaling by linking CBOs with enabling private sector partners or larger NGOs, or through advocating for policy reform through coordinating with governmental entities. Under this context, the strategic grants are more appropriately positioned under Outcome 2.1. The overall sustainability plan for the project is part of Output 3.1.1.

2b. The typologies of community level projects are included in the landscape strategies. The landscape strategies will be updated under OP7 through close interactions with the multi-stakeholder landscape platforms. The actual funded grants depend upon the quality of the proposals that local CBOs develop in line with the landscape strategies.

2c. The updated landscape strategies under Output 2.1.2 are important outputs of the project, contributing towards achievement of enhanced resilience of the project landscapes (Outcome 2.1). Policy advocacy, as well as partnership building, is one of the potential aims of the strategic projects, depending upon the priorities identified in the updated landscape strategies and deliberations among the multi-stakeholder landscape platforms.

2d. The word 'models' has been removed from the phrasing of Outcome 1.1. The revised version is as follows: 'Participatory conservation and restoration strengthened?'. With respect to Output 1.1.1, the types of community projects will focus on reducing loss of biodiversity, supporting innovation in conservation, and protection of ecosystem services. Consistent with Barrier No. 1 described in the problem analysis, an integral focus of the SGP grants is on building and strengthening capacities of local CBOs in participatory conservation and restoration in order to deliver the envisaged global environmental benefits.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

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

JS 5/12/2021 - Yes, cleared.

We note with appreciation that co-financing has increasing from \$4.2 million at PIF stage to 5.7 million at CEO approval stage.

Agency Response
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 JS 5/12/2021 - Yes, cleared.

Agency Response
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 JS 5/12/2021 - Yes, cleared.

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
JS 7/23/2021 - Cleared, thank you.

JS 7/19/2021

We understand the uncertainties linked to target setting in SGP projects. However, targets on core indicators should be consistent with each other, which is not the case in this submission.

The text under table F states that the mitigation target is set based on the restoration activities reported under core indicator 3, which is coherent. But, as we understand it the project is to restore 3,000 ha of degraded agricultural lands, 3,000 ha of forest and forest

land, 3,000 ha of natural grass and shrublands, and 1,000 ha of wetlands when the target under core indicator 6 assumes that all restoration takes place in 10,000 ha of forests. The assumption in the EX-ACT calculations provided are that the project will bring 10,000 ha of forest under low degradation from a state of moderate degradation without the project, which would likely lead to an overestimate of the mitigation benefits provided by the project.

Please revise the target under core indicator 6, ensuring that underlying assumptions are consistent with that of core indicator 3.

Please also correct the typo in the portal entry of core indicator 3 and its subindicators. The revisions introduced in this submission mistakenly reduced the total target on core indicator 3 to 3,000 ha in total instead of the intended 10,000 ha.

JS 6/29/2021 -

Thank you for the target on core indicator 6 and the Ex-Act calculation provided but the consistency with the other targets is not clear.

According to core indicator 3, the project is to restore 1,000 ha of forest, 1,000 ha of agricultural land and 8,000 ha of wetlands, whereas the mitigation result in EX-ACT comes from 10,000 ha of forest under low degradation with the project vs moderate degradation without the project. If the project is to restore wetlands by recreating water bodies that do not exist anymore, this could lead to CH₄ emissions that are not accounted for in the calculations.

Please revise so that targets are consistent with each other and clarify how the assumptions used in the mitigation calculations relate to the other targets and anticipated work on the ground.

JS 5/12/2021 - Targets on core indicators 3, 4 and 11 have not changed.

However, we note that there is no target set under core indicator 6 when we could expect some mitigation benefits from the land-based interventions planned in the project. Please explain why this isn't the case or set a target based on a sound methodology for indicator 6.

Agency Response

22 July 2021

Estimated mitigation co-benefits from the land-based interventions have been revised using the FAO Ex-Ante Carbon Balance Tool (EX-ACT), and the revised EX-ACT spreadsheets have been added to Annex 24 to the Project Document. The GEF Core Indicator Worksheet (Annex 18 to the Project Document) has also been revised with these figures, as well as the ProDoc (page 40) and CEO ER (page 4).

GHG emissions avoided through interventions in the agriculture, forestry, and land use sector (AFOLU) are included in the Core Indicator 6 estimations (Sub-Indicator 6.1). Using the FAO Ex-Ante Carbon Balance Tool (EX-ACT), roughly 278,523 tCO₂e over a 20-year lifetime are approximated to be avoided through the 7,000 ha of restoration interventions under Core Indicator 3 (see Annex 24 for EX-ACT output), including, 3,000 ha of forest and forest land, 3,000 ha of natural grass and shrublands, and 1,000 ha of wetlands (mangroves). An additional 3,000 hectares under degraded agricultural lands restored will need to be further estimated at project inception as there is uncertainty at this stage on the type of activities/crops that will be cultivated, and corresponding expected mitigation co-benefits.

Additionally, the typo in the portal entry of core indicator 3 and its subindicators, has been revised.

16 July 2021

The estimations made with EX-ACT are based on provisional project interventions. In our opinion, it would be more prudent to update the estimations once the actual project interventions are designed, approved, and implemented under the SGP grant modality. The description in the Project Document and CEO, and estimated co-benefits associated with GHG emissions avoided, have been updated by indicating ?The estimations are preliminary and based on the provisional interventions outlined in Annex 15. Updated estimations will be made as the actual project interventions are designed, approved, and implemented under the SGP modality.?

16 June 2021.

Estimated mitigation co-benefits from the land-based interventions have been added to the end targets for Core Indicator 6. The estimations were made using the FAO Ex-Ante Carbon Balance Tool (EX-ACT), and the EX-ACT spreadsheets have been added to Annex 24 to the Project Document. The GEF Core Indicator Worksheet (Annex 18 to the Project Document) has also been revised with these figures.

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

JS 6/29/2021 - Cleared, thank you.

JS 5/13/2021

1- Please correct the typo in the section on the wetlands of Colombo:

...mammals, reptiles, which ameliorate the climate, are disappearing.

Threats identified in the OP7 Landscape Strategy.

- Lack of coordination among government agencies and among agencies and communities, leading to weak implementation of regulatory policies.

It should most probably read OP6.

The rest is cleared.

Agency Response

16 June 2021:

Revised to ?Threats identified in the OP6 Landscape Strategy.?

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 6/29/2021 - Cleared, thank you.

JS 5/13/2021

1- Please correct the following typo in the KCF's baseline:

	ms and can contribute to this larger project.
Provincial/District/ Urban plans or national focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The plan for the Matale district has three foci related to the GEF 7 cycle, namely agriculture, tourism and 'environment'. Proposed GEF 7 activities that align with this plan are highlighted in Error! Reference source not found.• The plan for the Kandy district is still being prepared and unavailable for review.

2 In the baseline related to the Mannar landscape, please add GEF-7 project ID 10552, Natural Capital Values of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems in Sri Lanka Integrated into Sustainable Development Planning, IUCN; currently in PPG phase. This project plans to have interventions in the South East Palk Bay. Please make plans to coordinate with this project during implementation.

Agency Response

16 June 2021:

1. The subject entry in the KCF baseline has been revised to the following: "Provisional OP7 activities that align with this plan are highlighted in Annex 15 to the Project Document ("Provisional site-based interventions")."

2. The GEF-IUCN project (GEF project ID 10552) has been added to the baseline activities in the Mannar landscape. The SGP OP7 project will coordinate with this project during implementation.

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

JS 6/29/2021 - All cleared, thank you.

JS 5/18/2021

1) See comments on table B for changes from PIF that have not been justified in the CER.

2) 1.2.2: Please clarify if there will be a market assessment to determine the most feasible types of enterprises to support or whether this will be more supply driven.

3) Please clarify "3.1.1.8. Prepare a sustainability plan". Why is there a separate plan instead of activities already embedded in the design of the project? Is this plan to be acted upon during the project? It seems doubtful as, according to the work plan, it is to be prepared at very end of the project, in parallel to the TE. What would be the added value of a "plan" in this condition?

4) The COVID action framework in annex 17 includes "Community-based wildlife management, including expanding work on curbing poaching and illegal wildlife trade (i.e. as the source/vector of zoonotic pathogens)." as a proposed action. However, we fail to identify such activities in the provisional site interventions and the CER does not mention poaching or wildlife trade. Please clarify or align.

Agency Response

16 June 2021:

1) See responses above to comments on Table B.

2) The following information has been added to the narrative description of Output 1.2.2. "The project will build upon the market assessments conducted during OP6. Feasibility and partnership arrangements will also be considered in the individual grant proposals."

3) The description of the sustainability plan has been elaborated under Activity 3.1.1.8. Indeed, the landscape approach embedded in the project design is inherently meant to increase the likelihood that results achieved are sustained. The sustainability plan will provide guidance on ensuring the durability of the multi-stakeholder platforms, e.g., through advocating for 'champions' in the project landscapes, facilitating mainstreaming of the landscape strategies into local planning and budgetary frameworks, and promoting continued collective action among CBOs through participation on the multi-stakeholder platforms and networking with other enabling partners.

The timing of the sustainability plan in the multi-year work plan (*Annex 3* to the Project Document) has been moved to earlier in the project implementation timeframe, coincident with updating of the landscape strategies.

4) The subject proposed action in the COVID-19 Analysis and Action Framework (*Annex 17* to the Project Document) has been revised as follows: 'Community-based natural resource management, including management of human-wildlife conflicts.'

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 5/18/2021 - Cleared.

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 5/18/2021 - Cleared.

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

JS 7/23/2021 - Cleared, thank you.

JS 7/19/2021 -

Thank you but the additional text and response below do not provide evidence that the proposed interventions (pruning *Prosopis* and letting cattle graze under) would provide benefits for globally significant biodiversity or explain how they fit in a larger IAS management plan/strategy.

Hence please remove "*Protecting important habitats and conserving globally significant biodiversity by biodiversity by partnering with landscape stakeholders on initiatives involving management and control of invasive alien species (IAS) such as Prosopis, e.g., utilizing non-chemical approaches such as targeted livestock grazing.*" from the scope of the project's subgrants.

JS 6/29/2021 - Thank you for the reformulations but they do not explain how the intended interventions would generate global environmental benefits in their specific form and context.

In particular, please note that prevention and management of IAS has its own specific entry point (BD-2-6) in the GEF-7 BD focal area strategy, which makes clear that GEF will support only the implementation of comprehensive prevention, early detection, control and management frameworks. Small grants do not seem conducive of the comprehensive pathways approach outlined in the GEF-7 BD focal area strategy. We notably understand that here the proposal is to conduct some pruning to allow cattle to graze under *prosopis*, which would not resolve the IAS issue and its impact on local flora. Please thus remove prevention and management of invasive alien species from the scope of the project's subgrants.

JS 5/18/2021 - Please clarify how "Niche/indigenous crop cultivation", creating cattle grazing area (by pruning Propopis), fire prevention and control, and the reduction of pollution to urban wetlands relate to Global environmental benefits.

Agency Response

22 July 2021

As requested, the phrase below has been removed from the ProDoc and CEO:
"Protecting important habitats and conserving globally significant biodiversity by biodiversity by partnering with landscape stakeholders on initiatives involving management and control of invasive alien species (IAS) such as Prosopis, e.g., utilizing non-chemical approaches such as targeted livestock grazing." from the scope of the project's subgrants.

16 July 2021

IAS present significant threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services in some parts of the project landscapes. Recognizing that small grants under the SGP are unlikely to provide a comprehensive approach as stand-alone interventions, however, SGP typically works in partnership with other stakeholders, e.g., delivering added value through engagement of local communities.

The provisional site-based intervention involving IAS has been rephrased by indicating "... by partnering with landscape stakeholders on initiatives involving management and control of ...?"

16 June 2021:

The descriptions of the following site-based interventions have been revised:

?Sustainable land management and protection and sustainable use of agrobiodiversity through on-farm diversification, including cultivation of niche/indigenous crops.?

?Protecting important habitats and conserving globally significant biodiversity by strengthening local capacities in community-based fire prevention and control.?

?Protecting important habitats and conserving globally significant biodiversity by controlling invasive alien species (IAS) such as *Prosopis*, e.g., utilizing non-chemical approaches such as targeted livestock grazing.?

?Protecting habitats and conserving globally significant biodiversity by reducing pollution in urban wetlands and increasing awareness.?

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

JS 6/29/2021 - Cleared.

JS 5/19/2021 -

1- There is no reference to the "sustainability plan" as intended in activity 3.1.1.8 (already commented on in comment box 3 above) in the sustainability section. It only refers to sustainability plans each project proposal will have to develop. Please explain.

Agency Response

16 June 2021

This section has been updated, with inclusion of the overall project sustainability plan as follows:

?The individual sustainability plans will feed into the overall sustainability plan for the project, which will focus on ensuring structures are in place to sustain the landscape approach, including the multi-stakeholder landscape platforms, integration of the landscape strategies into local development planning, and encouraging collective action among CBOs to deliver multiple benefits.?

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

JS 5/12/2021 - Yes, cleared.

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

NA

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

JS 7/19/2021 - All cleared, thank you.

JS 6/29/2021 -

1- Thank you but the new text in 5.4.7 still does not provide "Approaches and methodologies of involvement of marginalised groups" as announced in the risk section. It simply states that attention has been and will be paid to the issue. Please explain *how* the project intends to engage marginalized groups (beyond women who are adequately covered in other parts of the documents) in practice.

JS 5/19/2021 - The GEP is provided as annex 8 and report on PPG consultation as Annex 9.

1- The section "5.4.7 Ensuring inclusive stakeholder engagement ", only addresses gender, youth and private sector. Please clarify if these cover all the marginalized populations in the target landscapes and if not, please explain how proper engagement with all marginalized groups will be ensured.

Agency Response

16 July 2021

The Stakeholder Engagement Plan in Annex 8 to the Project document has been updated with the following entries in Section 5.4.7:

Specific ways in which the project will engage with marginalized groups include:

? Under Activities 1.1.1.1 and 1.2.1.1, with support of the multi-stakeholder landscape platforms, encourage marginalized groups to develop proposals for small grant interventions.

? Under Activities 1.1.2.1, 1.1.2.2, 1.2.2.1 and 1.2.2.2, deliver capacity building to marginalized groups through learning-by-doing and fostering partnerships with enabling stakeholders.

? Under Activity 2.1.1.1, update the terms of reference for the multi-stakeholder platforms with measures aimed at including marginalized groups on the platforms.

? Under Activity 2.1.2.2, engage marginalized groups in the updated participatory baseline assessments of the project landscapes.

? Under Activity 2.1.2.4, include specific actions for addressing issues facing and benefitting marginalized groups into the updated landscape strategies.

16 June 2021:

Section 5.4.7 of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (Annex 8 to the Project Document) has been revised with the following: ?Consistent with the SGP mandate, the project will proactively advocate for inclusion of youth, the elderly, people with disabilities and other marginalized groups. Social inclusion is incorporated throughout the project strategy, including the updated landscape baseline assessments, development of updated landscape strategies, formulation of grant proposals, participation in the multi-stakeholder landscape platform, capacity building, fostering enabling partnerships, and knowledge management.?

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

JS 7/19/2021 - All cleared, thank you.

JS 6/30/2021 - Thank you but please confirm that all "Gender-responsive considerations" listed in Table 3: Indicative gender-responsive project activities of Annex 10 will be implemented.

JS 5/19/2021 - The gender analysis and action plan provided in annex 10 includes a table (Table 3: Indicative gender-responsive project activities) with a long list of proposed gender-responsive activities. Please clarify which ones will be actually implemented.

Agency Response

16 July 2021

Table 3 of the 31 May 2021 version of the Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan was updated. The gender-responsive considerations listed in this table have been integrated into the indicative project activities outlined in the Project Document.

16 June 2021:

Table 3 (*Gender-responsive considerations integrated into the indicative project activities*) of the *Gender Analysis and Action Plan* (Annex 10 to the Project Document) has been revised, harmonizing better with the indicative activities described for the project outputs.

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

JS 5/19/2021 - Cleared. We note that more precise information on specific private sector partners is provided in the SEP.

Agency Response

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

JS 7/19/2021 - All cleared, thank you.

JS 6/30/2021 -

1- Thank you but the new text in 5.4.7 does not provide "Approaches and methodologies of involvement of marginalized groups". Please explain how the project intends to do that in practice.

2 and 3 - Cleared, thank you.

JS 5/19/2021 -

1- Risk 1 states that "Approaches and methodologies of involvement of marginalised groups are addressed in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan". However we failed to locate the corresponding information. Does it refer to the section "5.4.7 Ensuring inclusive stakeholder engagement ", which is restricted to gender, youth and private sector considerations? Please clarify.

2- Climate risks:

2a - We note that the attached climate risk screening is more a PIF level analysis than an in-depth climate risk assessment expected at CER stage for high climate risk localization like the ones in this project, and that the detailed assessment are postponed to implementation phase "as part of the updated participatory landscape-seascape baseline assessments". Please clarify the plans to carry out these full climate risk assessments (timeline, scope, methodology, who is responsible for the development, stakeholder involvement).

2b - We also note that "CBOs will be required to include an assessment in the project proposal documents on the risks of climate and geophysical hazards on proposed infrastructure and assets". Please clarify how the project will support CBOs in doing so (what tools and technical support?) and how these assessments will be reviewed.

3- Please address environmental risks related to tourism development.

Agency Response

16 July 2021

1- The Stakeholder Engagement Plan in Annex 8 to the Project document has been updated with the following entries in Section 5.4.7:

Specific ways in which the project will engage with marginalized groups include:

? Under Activities 1.1.1.1 and 1.2.1.1, with support of the multi-stakeholder landscape platforms, encourage marginalized groups to develop proposals for small grant interventions.

? Under Activities 1.1.2.1, 1.1.2.2, 1.2.2.1 and 1.2.2.2, deliver capacity building to marginalized groups through learning-by-doing and fostering partnerships with enabling stakeholders.

? Under Activity 2.1.1.1, update the terms of reference for the multi-stakeholder platforms with measures aimed at including marginalized groups on the platforms.

? Under Activity 2.1.2.2, engage marginalized groups in the updated participatory baseline assessments of the project landscapes.

? Under Activity 2.1.2.4, include specific actions for addressing issues facing and benefitting marginalized groups into the updated landscape strategies

16 June 2021:

1. Section 5.4.7 of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (Annex 8 to the Project Document) has been revised with the following: ?Consistent with the SGP mandate, the project will proactively advocate for inclusion of youth, elderly, people with disabilities and other marginalized groups. Social inclusion is incorporated throughout the project strategy, including the updated landscape baseline assessments, development of updated landscape strategies, formulation of grant proposals, participation in the multi-stakeholder landscape platform, capacity building, fostering enabling partnerships, and knowledge management.?

2. Climate and disaster risks. The project budget, SESP (Annex 5), Risk Register (Annex 6), and the Climate and Disaster Risk Screening (Annex 16) have been modified with the information described below.

2a. Within the SGP, the actual project interventions and specific locations of the interventions are defined in the individual grant proposals. The climate and disaster risk screening (Annex 16 to the Project Document) provides information on the vulnerabilities in the project landscapes and general guidance on managing the risks. The updated landscape strategies will incorporate information on climate and disaster hazards and key stakeholders responsible for disaster risk reduction and management. CBOs will be required to include an assessment in their project proposal documents of the risks of climate and geophysical hazards on proposed infrastructure and assets, and

describe what measures are proposed to reduce and manage the risks. The design and implementation of project interventions will be guided by the Country Programme Management Unit (CPMU), technical advisory consultant(s), and the National Steering Committee (NSC) and supported by the multi-stakeholder landscape platforms. Officers from Divisional and/or District level Disaster Management Centers in the project landscapes will be invited to participate on the landscape platforms and to provide inputs and guidance on developing mitigation plans and managing the risks identified in the grant proposals.

2b. The NSC, technical advisory consultant(s), and multi-stakeholder landscape platforms will review the climate and disaster risk assessments and provide guidance to the proposed mitigation measures. The project budget has been adjusted by allocating 6 weeks for a technical advisory consultant. Additional technical advisory support can also be provided through the grant co-financing from UNDP (TRAC funds). Moreover, CBOs have the opportunity to apply for a SGP preparation grant, e.g., to obtain specialist assistance for assessing climate and disaster risks and developing mitigation measures. This information would then be incorporated into the SGP grant proposal.

3. The assessment and management measures described for Risk 3 in the SESP (Annex 5 to the Project Document) and the Risk Register (Annex 6 to the Project Document) have been updated with the inclusion of potential environmental risks associated with ecotourism interventions.

?Potential environmental risks associated with ecotourism development will be assessed in grant proposals including such interventions, and mitigation measures will be required in the formulation of the grant proposal?;

? Mitigation measures will be implemented, as needed for managing potential environmental risks associated with ecotourism interventions?.

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

JS 6/30/2021 - All cleared, thank you.

JS 5/17/2021

1- Please add GEF-7 project ID 10552, Natural Capital Values of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems in Sri Lanka Integrated into Sustainable Development Planning, IUCN; currently in PPG phase. This project plans to have interventions in the South East Palk Bay. Please make plans to coordinate with this project during implementation.

2- Please delete or clarify what is meant by the UNDP Country Office" *will also provide other types of support at the local level such as infrastructure and financial management services, as required*", noting that, as the agency knows, IA and EA roles are to be kept separate.

Agency Response

16 June 2021:

1. The following was added: **“GEF-7 project ID 10552 (under development), Natural Capital Values of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems in Sri Lanka Integrated into Sustainable Development Planning.** The SGP OP7 project will coordinate with this IUCN-GEF project in the Mannar landscape.”

2. The subject sentence has been deleted.

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

JS 6/30/2021 - Cleared.

JS 5/20/2021

1- Please add a reference to the contribution of this project to achieving Sri Lanka's LDN targets. A short mentioning and a cross-reference to the "Alignment with GEF focal area and/or impact program strategies" section of the CER would be sufficient.

Agency Response

16 June 2021:

The following entry has been made: **“The project will contribute towards achievement of the national Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Targets for Sri Lanka (December 2017), which include halting the conversion of forests and wetlands to other land cover classes, restoring and improving degraded forests, increasing forest cover, and reducing the rate of soil degradation to improve land productivity and soil organic carbon stocks.”**

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

JS 6/30/2021 - Cleared.

JS 5/20/2021

1- The KM approach described does not contain any information on how the project intends to learn from other initiatives. Please correct.

Agency Response

16 June 2021:

The KM approach has been updated by indicating the following: ?The Knowledge Management Strategy and Communications Strategy will also describe specific actions for encouraging learning from other initiatives, e.g., participating in the multi-stakeholder platforms, knowledge fairs, networking with civil society, governmental stakeholders, and the donor community, etc.?

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

JS 6/30/2021 - Cleared, thank you.

JS 5/12/2021 - The project is still rated with moderate risk. An updated Social and Environmental Screening Procedure Template is provided, with accompanying Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan; Stakeholder Engagement Plan; and COVID-19 Action Framework. We also note that PPG concluded that no IPLC are present in targeted sites.

Please clarify why environmental risks related to tourism development are not addressed.

Agency Response

16 June 2021:

The assessment and management measures described for Risk 3 in the SESP (Annex 5 to the Project Document) and the Risk Register (Annex 6 to the Project Document) have been updated with the inclusion of potential environmental risks associated with ecotourism interventions.

?Potential environmental risks associated with ecotourism development will be assessed in grant proposals including such interventions, and mitigation measures will be required in the formulation of the grant proposal?;
? Mitigation measures will be implemented, as needed for managing potential environmental risks associated with ecotourism interventions?.

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

JS 7/19/2021 - All cleared.

JS 6/30/2021

1- Cleared.

2- Thank you. However, please:

2a- clarify how Area of landscapes under improved practices (excluding protected areas) will be measured in practice in the context of this project. It seems only "Review of information contained in approved projects / management plans / agreements" is planned. No ground truthing or actual land degradation and biodiversity data collection seem to be planned. How will SLM and improved practices for biodiversity be confirmed?

2b- Most indicator measure means rather than actual impact/outcome (e.g. 5: Sustainable management of common resources, as indicated by the number of new partnerships between CBOs and enabling stakeholders for participatory conservation and restoration initiatives ,8 Strengthening socioeconomic benefits for women, as indicated by the number of projects that target socioeconomic benefits and services for women; 10 Empowering women in natural resource governance, as indicated by the number of projects that improve the participation and decision-making of women in natural resource governance).

Please consider adding indicators or replacing some of these indicators to measure actual outcomes.

JS 5/20/2021

1- M&E budget is at 5.5% of GEF project financing, which is above average GEF's past portfolio. Please reduce the M&E budget to 5% (\$82,825) or justify why this projects requires a larger than typical M&E budget.

2- It seems the announced annex 4 *Monitoring plan* was not uploaded with this submission. Please correct and cross-reference Annex 4 in this section of the CER template in the portal.

Agency Response

16 July 2021

2a. The "Data source / collection methods" in the Monitoring Plan (Annex 4 to the Project Document) has been updated with the inclusion of "ground truthing of improved practices". And the field coordinators have been added to the list of those responsible for data collection.

2b. Indicators 8 and 10 are among the mandatory SGP gender indicators, and the PPG team has considered it important to integrate these into the project results framework rather than maintaining a separate indicator framework connected to the gender action plan. Regarding Indicator 5, measuring the number of new partnerships between CBOs and enabling stakeholders, it is our opinion that this indicator is measuring impact, specifically the durability of the participatory landscape approaches catalyzed with the support of the GEF SGP funds.

16 June 2021:

1. The M&E budget was based on 5% of the total GEF grant. The budget allocation for M&E has been adjusted to USD 82,700, which is slightly less than 5% of the sub-total of the technical components.

2. Annex 4 (*Monitoring plan*) has been uploaded to the portal.

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

JS 6/30/2021 Cleared, thank you.

JS 5/20/2021

1_ - Please clarify and consider reformulating the language in the paragraph dedicated to "Secure and unite the family concept", which appears quite normative on what is considered the "family concept", "family security" or "social values".

Agency Response

16 June 2021:

The term "Secure and unite the family concept" has been reformulated to: "Support community development, particularly those initiatives that contribute towards generating environmental benefits". And the targeted groups have been revised to read "especially for women, youth, the elderly, people with disabilities, and other marginalized groups".

Annexes

Are all the required annexes attached and adequately responded to?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 7/19/2021 - Cleared, thank you.

JS 6/30/2021 -

Please justify why a new consultant position (technical advisor) has been added with the budget saved on travel and audiovisual production. What makes this position necessary when it was not included in the first submission and there are already 3 full time field coordinators on top of the national coordinator and program assistant for this \$1.8 million project? Please consider instead increasing the amount allocated to small grants.

The rest is cleared.

JS 5/13/2021

The audit response template submitted with this endorsement request has been reviewed and cleared from a technical and programmatic perspective. The financial, operational, and policy due diligence may reveal issues that may still need to be addressed by UNDP.

1. Budget:

We note small grants represent a total of \$1,195,680 once UNOPS fee is deducted, that is 72.2% of GEF project financing, which is acceptable. We also note that PMU staff are charged both to PMC and components but that PMC is exhausted and adequate terms of reference are provided in Annex 7 of the ProDoc.

1a- Please clarify what are the \$50,000 of "Rental-maintenance" and why they are not covered by UNOPS 6% fee.

1b- \$28,800 are budgeted for a "driver" for what appears full time over 4 years, which does not seem justified for this project, especially when \$55,100 of travel costs are already planned for. Please delete and allocate to small grants.

1c. There is a typo in the budget template, "outcome 2.1" appears twice. Please correct in the attached file and in the portal entry.

1d. See comments above on M&E budget (above the 5% typical amount).

2- The Work plan is announced in section "IX.Total Budget and Work Plan" of the ProDoc but appears only in annex 3. Please correct.

3- Please remove the track changes in the ProDoc and make sure a clean, final document is provided:

and the cash co-financing transferred to UNDP bank account only.

311. Confirmed Co-financing: The actual realization of project co-financing will be monitored annually and during the mid-term review and terminal evaluation process and will be reported to the GEF. Note that all project activities included in the project results framework that will be delivered by co-financing partners (even if the funds do not pass through UNDP accounts) must comply with UNDP's social and environmental standards. Co-financing will be used for the following project activities/outputs:

Activity/Output	Co-financing Partner	Amount
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Agency Response

16 July 2021

For clarification, the technical advisor is not a new position. In response to one of the OP6 midterm review recommendations, the program recruited a technical advisor to provide guidance to the CBOs implementing small grant interventions. The field coordinators were also recruited in response to one of the MTR recommendations. The PPG team considered that it would be advisable to maintain the limited services of the technical advisor for OP7.

The allocation for grants is 70% of the total GEF grant and cannot be increased any further.

16 June 2021:

1a. The \$50,000 sum is for rental-maintenance costs associated with the premises of the SGP Country Programme Management Unit. The entry in the budget template has been

adjusted to read 'rental-maintenance premises'. The costs associated with rental and maintenance of the SGP CMPU premises are not covered by the UNOPS 6% fee. UNOPS is the implementing partner (executing agency) and operational costs for the project are covered by the project budget. The UNOPS fee is related to the support services that UNOPS provides related to project execution.

1b. This position is an integral part of the SGP Country Programme Management Unit, delivering more than driving services, i.e., provides transportation for the SGP Country Programme Management Unit members, consultants, visitors, and other programme stakeholders; prepares travel reports; makes logistical arrangements for the CMPU; and assists the CMPU with day-to-day logistical and field support activities. The title of the position has been revised to 'Transport and Logistics Officer'. Travel and audiovisual production costs have been partly reduced, and as indicated earlier, costs have been allocated for a Technical Advisory Consultant.

1c. The second entry of 'Outcome 2.1' has been changed to 'Outcome 2.2' in the budget template and in the portal entry.

1d. The M&E budget was based on 5% of the total GEF grant. The budget allocation for M&E has been adjusted to USD 82,700, which is slightly less than 5% of the sub-total of the technical components.

2. Section IX of the Project Document contains the UNDP Total Budget and Work Plan (TBWP). The 'work plan' part of the TBWP is the breakdown of the budget across the project components and over the 4 years of implementation. Annex 3 contains the multi-year work plan, which shows the expected timing of the project activities over the 4 years of implementation.

3. The track changes have been removed in the subject paragraph of the Project Document.

Project Results Framework

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 7/23/2021 - Cleared.

JS 7/19/2021 -

1- With the correction, the total target under core indicator 3 (restoration) is now only 3,000 ha in the portal entry's table F, when the rest of the submission, including the results framework in the prodoc plans for a total 10,000 ha restored. Please correct table F so that it shows F shows 3,000 ha of degraded agricultural lands restored (Sub-Indicator 3.1), 3,000 ha of forest and forest land restored (Sub-Indicator 3.2), 3,000 ha of natural grass and shrublands restored (Sub-Indicator 3.3), and 1,000 ha of wetlands (including mangroves) restored (Sub-Indicator 3.4).

JS 6/29/2021 -

1- The targets for area of land restored in the results framework is not consistent with the sub-indicators for core indicator 3 of the portal entry (e.g. 8,000 ha of wetlands restored in the portal vs 1,000 in the results framework). Please revise.

2- See comment 2 above on M&E.

Agency Response

22 July 2021

Table F has been revised in the portal, in line with the rest of the submission.

16 July 2021

1- The 8,000-ha figure for wetlands restored was the indicative hectarage included in the PIF. The portal entry has been corrected to 1,000 ha at endorsement

GEF Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

Council comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

STAP comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

Convention Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

Other Agencies comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

CSOs comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response
Status of PPG utilization

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request Cleared

Agency Response
Project maps and coordinates

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 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

NA

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 NA

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 NA

Agency Response

GEFSEC DECISION

RECOMMENDATION

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 8/2/2021 - Yes, this project is recommended for endorsement.

JS 7/29/2021- Not yet. Please address the last remaining comment (see first comment box of this review sheet) and resubmit

JS 7/23/2021- Yes, this project is recommended for endorsement from a technical point of view.

JS 7/19/2021 - Not yet. Please address remaining comments above (comment boxes I.7, II.6 and Results Framework) and resubmit.

JS 6/30/2021 - Not yet. Please address remaining comments above and resubmit.

JS 5/20/2021 - Not yet. Please address comments above and resubmit.

Review Dates

	Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review	5/20/2021	
Additional Review (as necessary)	6/30/2021	
Additional Review (as necessary)	7/19/2021	
Additional Review (as necessary)	7/23/2021	
Additional Review (as necessary)	7/29/2021	

CEO Recommendation

Brief reasoning for CEO Recommendations