

BIOREACH: Biodiversity Conservation and Agroecological Land Restoration in Productive Landscapes of Trinidad and Tobago

Edit and Submit CEO Endorsement

Basic project information

GEF ID

10188

Countries

Trinidad and Tobago

Project Name

BIOREACH: Biodiversity Conservation and Agroecological Land Restoration in Productive Landscapes of Trinidad and Tobago

Agencies

FAO

Date received by PM

11/3/2020

Review completed by PM

6/8/2021

Program Manager

Sarah Wyatt

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

5/18/2021

Yes.

12/8/2020

Yes, generally. However, there are issues to be addressed within specific activities.

Agency Response Thank you for the revision. The comments have been addressed.

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

5/18/2021

Yes, thank you for the responses.

12/8/2020

No, please address the following:

Component 1:

- Gender - the presence of women at meetings should be a basic indicator, but some measure of actual participation is needed as well. The text as written states that 40% of groups will include women. Is this supposed to be that groups will include a minimum of 40% women?

- Component 2

- o Outcome 2.1-Please clarify the meaning of this outcome. We note that T&T does not currently have LDN targets, so how will this achievement be measured?

- 2.1.2 - How will longer term follow up with farmers be ensured to provide for the success of these systems?

- o What portion of the targeted sites have been used as quarries or for oil and gas exploration? What commitments are being made by the government to ensure that there are no future plans for activities that destroy the proposed rehabilitated lands?

- o Output 2.1.3-How will the new approach be enforced and regulated?

- 2.1.4 - Some of these activities are not eligible under the GEF strategy on IAS. We ask that you revisit this Outcome to rethink the activities. IAS activities should be focused on IAS that impact threatened and native species not agricultural species. What kind of scientific capacity?

- o Outcome 2.2-Where are the PAs and zones for restoration in relation to the targeted sites outlined in Outcome 1? There is language that talks about activities that will be done during PPG. Have they been completed?

- Output 2.2.1 - How will this data be brought together with the data from PAs?

- 2.2.3 - The GEF does not support captive breeding. How much land will be restored? What kind of land? How does it relate to activities in other parts of the project?

Component 3

- Outcome 3.1

o It is important to note that the main focus of GEF financing is the delivery of GEBs. While this component as presented is heavily focused on agriculture, the link to the landscape and the ecosystems that will be rehabilitated is very important and will need to come out strongly in the narrative. What is the connection to Outcome 2? Is Component 3 targeting the same sites and small farmers as outlined in Component 2? In demonstrating the benefits of applying the agroecological to productivity and livelihoods, it is also important to demonstrate clearly the GEBs. Please ensure this link (for Outcome 3 and the corresponding Outputs) is made in the narrative.

o Due to the issue with disease of the coconut crops, how will this be overcome?

- Pineapple is also a surprising choice given its role as a significant driver of negative environmental impacts in other countries given its minimal root structure and often need for chemicals. How will this be addressed?

- Ecotourism - It is probably necessary to consider COVID impacts here on the activities or at least flexibility as it is difficult to know what the situation will be just a year from now. It may be a question of language, but throughout there is a description of focusing on expanding ecotourism in ecologically vulnerable areas. This sounds like that means actually expanding the footprint in sensitive areas. We believe that the idea is to focus on ecologically important areas, but it would be good to clarify this.

- Outcome 3.2

- It is unclear how this is a "circular economy approach" as generally used as a term by the GEF. We suggest revising the terminology.

o Output 3.2.1-The activities described below do not clearly indicate how they may support efforts for sustainable certification and labelling of products produced. Please clarify? Will this be done for specific value chains, or for specific landscapes? How will the smallholder farmers be involved in this process?

- 3.2.3 - What efforts will be made to ensure that these activities will not have unintended negative consequences for biodiversity? How will the link to benefits for biodiversity be ensured? USAID has provided good guidance of TOCs for conservation enterprise that could be useful here.

- Outcome 3.3

o What are the efforts being made (by Trinidad and Tobago) to ensure that there is a solid foundation on which to build a green value chain policy or at least that this process happens soon after or in parallel? This could include determining what is the state of degradation of all productive landscapes? Mapping and identifying the landscapes for rehabilitation/restoration, setting LDN targets etc.

Component 4

o Output 4.1.1-What is the mechanism to ensure that this data is maintained and how

will it feed back into the land use planning carried out in Component 1 and by other entities?

- Very much welcome the suggestion to use an existing and effective platform - iNaturalist (one of the reviewers may already have observations in TT on iNat).
- How does the last activity focused on wild plants relate to other activities?

Agency Response

04/07/2021

Noted with thanks.

Component 1

- Gender is far more integrated into the results framework now. In addition to ensuring that women receive trainings, the following gender indicators have been added: Under Outcome 1.1 Percentage of women part of land use management mechanisms; Under Output 1.1.1 Land use plans include gender considerations; Output 3.2.1 Percentage of producers developing business plans/strategies to increase biodiversity products in the markets (disaggregated by sex); Output 3.3.1, Number of agricultural policies including agroecological considerations and gender dimensions. In addition, sex-disaggregated data is requested under Outcome 3.1, Output 3.1.2, Outcome 3.2, Output 3.2.1. In addition the indicator and target has been clarified under 1.1 to ?At least 40 per cent of members of land use mechanisms are women?. Please refer to Annex 1 of the project document for the updated output indicators.

Component 2

- Outcome 2.1 - Thank you for the comment. Currently the country is in the process of validating their identified land degradation neutrality targets, and the project will work to contribute to those targets when they have been made official. However, to address

the concern, Outcome 2.1 has been rephrased to read: "land degradation decreased?". As noted in the ProDoc, a study conducted during the PPG (appended) noted the sites, types and levels of degradation. These sites will be monitored through drone footage, and funds have been allocated to monitor the sites in question in partnership with the Environmental Management Authority.

- 2.1.2- Longer term follow up with farmers will be done through extension officers, as it is mentioned in the project document, who will also receive capacity building through the project.
- None of the targeted sites for this output have been used as quarries or for oil and gas exploration. This was one of the reasons for the site selection. The project does not want to incur any risks or conflicts in zones that are large-scale commercial development. The sites targeted by the project are mostly under threat from residential or small scale agriculture in the buffer zones of protected areas. Government has reviewed the sites in question through a steering committee, a validation workshop and a review of the project document and has not flagged any development in the areas.
- 2.1.3- The following text has been added on page 40: "Initiatives will be enforced through collaboration between community groups, residents as well as government agencies including the Forestry Division. As was apparent in the IFPAMTT project (GEF ID 4769), initiatives that support people's livelihoods and safety, and that have good community engagement, are more likely to be successful. For this reason, the project is supporting fire surveillance and control, which is a shared concern and immediate threat to people's livelihoods and safety. There will be an exit strategy in the project to devolve these activities to the Forestry Department. They have identified the gaps and needs they face to take on fire monitoring and control and the project has been designed to meet those gaps so that they can take ownership."

The Department of Police and Armed Forces have further been identified as actors supporting these initiatives, and as the project will work upon an integration of the relevant actors to ensure enforcement. The following text has been added: "The project will also ensure that a clear exit plan is designed following the mid-term evaluation, so that each entity has a clear role and responsibility and can ensure sustainability of these interventions beyond project duration."

- 2.1.4- The point on what is permissible under IAS is well-taken. The language has been revised to reflect that the issue at hand is really pests causing degradation of native biodiversity and loss of agricultural production. The Output now reads: "Pest management plan established for three sites?". In terms of what is meant by scientific capacity the following clarification has been made on page 41: "Enhancing scientific capacity through exchanges (on pest prevention and management experiences of indigenous biodiversity) between laboratories, training of staff and facilitating greater South-South collaborations."

- 2.2- Project activities will not be taking place in the PAs, but in their buffer zones to reduce pressures. The PAs were supported through a previous GEF project (GEF ID 4769); this project is complementary to leverage successes from the initiative but not to duplicate. It is thus being carried out in vulnerable sites outside of the PAs. This information is provided on page 35 of the project document which reads: "The four project sites are outside of the protected areas identified in a complementary GEF project "Improving Forest and Protected Areas Management in Trinidad and Tobago (IFPAMTT)". The purpose of working in buffer zones and corridors is to reduce pressures on protected areas and synergize interventions with other GEF investments to be able to observe greater biodiversity outcomes. It is also to increase knowledge among communities bordering PAs on how their activities may or may not impact demarcated zones." The tasks identified to be carried out under the PPG were conducted and these have been clarified in the text.

- 2.2.1- Biodiversity monitoring protocols were established under the previous IFPAMTT GEF project. This project will build on this and employ these practices. The following text has been added to page 43: "As noted in the Terminal Evaluation of the IFPAMTT project, some of the PAs have processes in place to collect information which is to be fed to the EMA databases; this project will complement those initiatives by employing best practices gleaned from the previous GEF project, and collect biodiversity data to be incorporated into EMA databases and used for policy development."

- 2.2.3- Reference to captive breeding has been removed. Table 2 on page 17 provides all the sites where land restoration is planned with associated hectares.

Component 3

- 3.1- Thank you for the comment. Component 2 targets mainly natural side restoring forests, burned areas and riparian zones while component 3 will concentrate on restoring agricultural productivity and environmentally friendly production techniques

for green commodities such as cocoa. The text introducing Component 3 on page 46 now reads: "This component will strengthen fledgling value chains that can benefit biodiversity while supporting livelihoods. This component is aligned with the country's aims to bolster national agricultural production while increasing employment in the sector. Green value chains offer the economically transformative potential that can also benefit biodiversity and reduce land degradation. The value chains identified in this project have been determined through extensive ministry, CBO, farmer and other stakeholder consultations and through an agroecological assessment carried out on the sector^[1]. This component further seeks to provide incentives to farmers and residents to support biodiversity protection and sustainable land management; this is in fact one of the strategies for sustainability and for project exit; there is a greater likelihood of project activities being sustained beyond project duration if they enhance people's livelihoods. Component 3 is complementary to Components 1 and 2; while Component 1 focuses on biodiversity-friendly land use planning, and Component 2 seeks to achieve forest and agriculture landscape restoration, Component 3 offers the entry points to achieve results under Components 1 and 2. Component 2 will focus on restoring natural ecosystems such as degraded forest, frequently burned fire climax and riparian sites. Component 3 will focus on sites to restore agricultural productivity and to promote environmentally friendly agricultural production methods and the production of "green" commodities. The value chains targeted under this component provide specific and tangible activities that can be addressed and remedied to support goals under Components 1 and 2. Land use planning, biodiversity protection and restoration cannot happen without attention to specific livelihood activities that can support those outcomes; part of the capacity building will include consideration of biodiversity resources and how these can be supported through sustainable activities. The activities under this component will achieve global environmental benefits through alignment with the following GEF 7 focal area objectives: Mainstream biodiversity across sectors as well as landscapes and seascapes through biodiversity mainstreaming in priority sectors (BD-1-1); Maintain or improve flow of agro-ecosystem services to sustain food production and livelihoods through Sustainable Land Management (SLM) (LD 1-3); Reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses and increase resilience in the wider landscape (LD-1-4).

- The issue with coconut crops will be overcome through activities highlighted in the projects: under Output 2.1.2 Establish integrated pest management farmer field schools; subject will include integrated management of nutrients (composting/management of water, water harvesting, water retention, mulching, etc.), under 2.1.4 Bring red ring disease and its vector (palm weevil) and other stem and flower damaging insects under control through sustainable means, especially in replanting/reforesting initiatives, Enhance scientific capacity through exchanges between laboratories, training of staff and facilitating greater South-South

collaborations, Support ongoing research initiatives and testing resilient palms, Improve access to planting materials and widening varietal gene pool, Conduct phased rehabilitation of infected plantations, with agroforestry approach to avoid monoculture.

- Pineapple: any intervention in the pineapple value chain will be done with an eye to enhance sustainability. These activities are being conducted to enhance production methods to support biodiversity and SLM, while also meeting the livelihood communities. The following additions have been made to the text on page 50: ?The investment in the pineapple value chain is also to address the often unsustainable practices associated with it such as high use of agro-chemicals, deforestation, biodiversity loss and high water use. Some of the changes the project will promote is to:

- ? Pineapple plant waste is re-incorporated in the soil to maintain soil structure, nutrient levels
- ? Pineapple waste can produce beneficial bacteria and fungi into the soil to reduce in the use of other chemical pesticides.
- ? Pineapple production will be conducted with diverse agroforestry so as to move away from monoculture, create barriers from forest and water sources and create conducive environments for wildlife and biodiversity?

Please also see Chapter 8 of the appended Scoping study which is focused on pineapple.

- Ecotourism: The following text has been added to page 51: ?convert traditional tourism into the kind that supports sustainable practices. The goal is not to have people trespass on vulnerable areas, but to use the already existing tourism traffic and convert it to sustainable forms while providing eco alternatives to the usual. Tourism offers an entry point for financing sustainable practices, private sector innovation and public-private partnerships. It is evident that COVID-19 will have massive impacts on the tourism sector, and it is unknown how long travel restrictions and protocols will remain in place. While international tourism will be significantly affected, in-country and inter-island (between Trinidad and Tobago) tourism may increase as people go on day-trips or explore, with international options closed. This may be an opportunity to pilot smaller eco initiatives and build domestic appropriation and interest.?

- 3.2 Circular Economy approach- The point is well taken and the text has been amended back to what was approved in the PIF: ?Enabling environment for green, biodiversity-friendly value chain development.

- 3.2.1- the following text has been added to clarify this: ?Branding exercises will be undertaken to achieve greater recognition and popularity of sustainably produced

goods. Activities under 3.2.2 will be complementary to activities under Component 2 which seek to improve agroecological practices for land restoration; smallholders as part of the value chain will see benefits from increased demand of final goods. These will be done according to value chains and the text has been added on page 56.

- 3.2.3- the following text has been added on page 57 ?In order to ensure that activities do not further negatively impact vulnerable areas, ecotourism operators will have to demonstrate the following:

- ? The initiatives support socioeconomic benefits to communities
- ? Sustainable management of environmental resources and biodiversity
- ? Raising of awareness for conservation outside protected areas
- ? Do not create additional stress on biodiversity, land or water resources
- ? Do not lead to deforestation or loss of flora and fauna?

3.3- the following clarification has been provided: ?There are several processes under way which will serve as a foundation upon which such a policy can build, these include: the setting of LDN targets (these have been identified and are pending formal approval) as well as policies related to food security. Food security is a key national priority for Trinidad and Tobago (T&T). The goal is to ?create a food secure nation? by providing access to adequate, nutritious, safe and affordable food to all people at all times. In addition, in its National Development Strategy 2016-2030 and its 2018 Midyear Budget Review, the government has expressed its intention to transition towards a more diversified economy, which produces a broad spectrum of export competitive, high-value products and services. In this regard, the government has identified agriculture and agro-processing among the economic areas for the establishment of new business clustering. The focus on agriculture, provides an entry point for promoting sustainability, and greening, while meeting government priorities. There is an appetite for increasing sustainability in various sectors, which are apparent through the National Environmental Policy? ?Sustainably Managing Natural Assets?, is the second priority area identified. This policy recognizes that halting the loss and degradation of biodiversity will yield compounded benefits to biodiversity-related industries, such as ecotourism, and the general well-being of all citizens, and seeks to protect, restore and promote the sustainable use of biological resources and halt biodiversity loss. It also notes the need to encourage through market-based mechanisms and alternative incentive programmes the conservation, and wise use of biodiversity.^[2]

The focus on improved land management in the National Environmental Policy, also provides an entry point through which to work on greening value chains. The policy recognizes that land and soil are finite resources that provide critical supporting and regulatory ecosystem functions including, but not limited to: the growth of crops, regulation of water quality and quantity, carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation and provision of space for human settlement. The availability of land and soil resources to support rapid population growth is limited. Therefore, their management is important to ensure that the needs for both the human and natural environments are met.?

Component 4

- 4.1.1- The appropriate mechanism being used will be identified during project duration, this has been clarified with the following text: ?This project will seek to create knowledge products that support current information gaps, and identify the mechanisms that are most appropriate to disseminate information.? on page 60

The last activity under 4.1.1 also includes the following clarification on page 60: ?This information will support the collection of biodiversity data, and the variety of uses of biological resources, housed by EMA?

[1] Grimes, *Agroecology Assessment*.

[2] National Environmental Policy, 2018. Available online at:
<https://www.planning.gov.tt/sites/default/files/National%20Environmental%20Policy%20%28NEP%29%20T%26T%202018.pdf>

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 NA

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

5/18/2021

Yes.

1/9/2020

No. How are these investments helping this project to meet its targeted objectives and GEBs? In particular in relation to Outcome 3 where a significant amount of the co-financing has been identified.

Agency Response

04/07/2021

The co-financing section (pgs 15-16) now highlight which programmes will support which GEBs through alignment with GEF focal areas. A table has also been added on page 32 which highlights the GEBs to be achieved through project initiatives.

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

1/9/2020

Yes.

Agency Response NA

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

1/9/2021

Yes.

Agency Response NA

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

5/18/2021

Yes.

12/8/2020

No. Please include GEB related targets for all relevant Outcomes (in particular Outcomes 2 & 3). Please also ensure that the targets in Table B, Core Indicator sheet and the Results Framework all align.

Agency Response

04/07/2021

A new table has been added on page 32 that highlights all the GEBs expected from the project as well as the activities that will help achieve them. The following text has also been added (page 31): "This project is fully aligned with the strategy and spirit of the GEF *Impact Program on Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration* in that its core approach promotes "a sustainably integrated landscape that simultaneously meets a full range of local needs, including water availability, nutritious and profitable crops for families and local markets, and enhanced human health; while also contributing to national economic development and policy commitments; and delivering globally to the maintenance of biodiversity, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and provision of food, fiber, and commercial commodities to international supply chains."

The project is expected to deliver significant global environmental benefits: 1,500 hectares of land restored (on fairly small islands is significant); 1,000 hectares of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas); and 5,531 number of direct beneficiaries who will benefit from the GEF investment. The targeted areas under this project provide spatially explicit geographies defined on the basis of the vulnerabilities ecosystem services and; these investments will support the conservation

of globally significant biodiversity, support healthy ecosystems, and promote sustainable use of natural resources.

In terms of concrete activities that the project will undertake to support the conservation of globally significant biodiversity and reduce land degradation, these include the following: (...)?

Table B, the Core Indicators and Results Framework are all aligned.

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

5/18/2021

Yes.

12/8/2020

No. Please address the following:

- Is poor governance a root cause or a barrier to the environmental problems faced?
- The information provided here could benefit from more specific details on the problems with land degradation/environmental degradation. We note the information provided in the scoping study. However please include here available data on how much land is degraded/or trends related to land use change or degradation of productive landscapes in general; how this relates to the productive practices that are carried out on the landscape; what are the specific land degradation related challenges of the target sites of the project?
- We note Component 3 will be focused on improving specific value chains and the additional information provided in the scoping study. Please also provide some information in the context as it relates to these value chains and how they relate to the issues with the land degradation/environmental degradation as well as the relevance of these value chains to the target sites.

- This section is also missing information on the current context as it relates to COVID and the impact it may have had on the target areas and beneficences of the project.

Agency Response

04/07/2021

Thank you for the comments.

- Poor governance has been moved to the 'barriers' section for clarity.

- The following information has been added to land degradation threats (page 26):
Land degradation: Quarrying, unsustainable agricultural practices (clearing of forest reserves for short-term crops that give quick cash, etc.), unplanned residential settlements (illegal occupation/encroachment), and infrastructure development are identified as key causes of degradation. Illegal quarrying and other commercial activities can also pose security risks as many are associated with powerful entities linked with criminal activity. *In addition, monoculture has also damaged soil quality and caused degradation, with sugarcane plantations for instance, their long-term mono-production, together with high acid-forming chemical applications, have caused deficiencies in soil calcium and magnesium content. Further, the use of chemical fertilizers has further led to land degradation. Fertilizer practices after the mid-1900s became standardized using wheeled tractors and aircrafts. Fertilizers such as Sulphate of Ammonia, Triple Super Phosphate, Aragonite and Muriate of Potash applications (SAC-STC1987) was applied to all farms with the exception of areas deficient in major elements. If these practices are to be continued, biodiversity boarding agricultural lands will be under threat. Chemical weed control programmes became more relevant with the ever-increasing cost and scarcity of labourers after emancipation. Dominant weed species during this time were: Corn Grass (Rottboellia exaltata), White Para Grass (Brachiaria platyphylla), Para Grass (Brachiaria mutica), Bamboo Grass (Paspalum fasciculatum), and Seed Under Leaf (Phyllanthus amarus) (SAC-STC1987). Daconate (MSMA- active ingredient), Paraquat combined with 2,4,D Amine or Actris DS were the main herbicides used during the dry seasons. During the wet seasons, residual herbicides such as Gesaprim were used in newly planted fields, whereas Diuron was applied to ratooning areas. Paraquat + Diuron+ 2, 4,D Amine was used as broad-spectrum herbicides in many fields. Other chemicals used (targetted for specific weeds) include: Dalapon, Asulox, Actril D and combinations of Asulam/Dalapon (SAC-STC1987).*

Component 3- As requested, information from the scoping study has been added to the project document on page 46. On the contextual piece it is noted: 'At present, most of Trinidad and Tobago's productive landscapes (wetlands, natural forests, protected areas

and environmentally sensitive areas) are under threat by human encroachment and their unsustainable practices. Effective market strategies and policies are crucial for the successful development of clusters of key commodities at the national level. Agroecological practises must be equally attractive to both young and old farmers. In order to protect native biodiversity and restore critical ecological corridors between productive landscapes, the entire country needs to support the initiative. The idea of commercializing agroecological products is not new (Wezel et al., 2009, Callicott, 1988) and has been in practice over a century (FAO, 2018). Nonetheless, this initiative can be more lucrative in Caribbean countries such as Haiti, Guyana and Jamaica; having high poverty rate with GDP's that are dependent on agriculture (FOASTAT 2019). For Trinidad and Tobago, this provides a challenge, as agriculture contributes minimally towards the country's GDP, and has dropped from 2% in 1995 to 0% in 2016 (FOASTAT 2019); further reducing food security for the islands. At present, the Current Market Prices/Percentage Contribution during the period 2014_r to Q1*2019_p is 1.3 for the Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry industry. Green Commodity Clusters are a relatively new paradigm in supply chain management. Green Commodity Clusters are known to mitigate negative ecological impacts on natural resources, ecosystems and biodiversity. It does this by utilizing eco-friendly practices (design, procurement, processing, waste disposal and recycling) to recapture value at every stage of the food value chain (Hilmi, 2019, Begashaw et al., 2019). In Trinidad and Tobago, few Green Commodity Clusters have already been implemented, for example, through the progress of the solar photovoltaic industry (Charles, 2014), and the establishment of the Green Market in Santa Cruz; a community-based sustainable development (CANARI 2019). Based on a National Baseline Study (see appended scoping study). The enterprises are typically small- to medium-scale operations in rural areas that are either production systems or others that process agricultural raw materials or provide marketing, transport, and other services. The participants in the consultations identified the commodities that they produced on the farm, which was in alignment with the National Baseline Study and included crop, livestock, fish and apiculture. Most enterprises appeared to be producer-driven, and most of the farmers represented industrial models of monoculture which were not in alignment with the value proposition of agroecology. The offerings included primary products with some degree of value addition as well as service and experiences.

Apart from the primary products, there are some enterprises that operate along the agroecological principles and generates a range of products and services – an indicator that there is the capacity residing within the sector to operate along the full value chain. The range of activities provided by these enterprises are wide and includes – sorting, grading, and packing, consolidation into useful categories for direct sales, wholesalers and distributors – a conventional marketing system. Some of the farm owners indicated that their enterprises were profitable while all indicated that they would appreciate increased income from their activities and that they believed that there was a great capacity for increased efficiencies and productivity.

The sites of where each value chain will be pilot is now added to the text: ?It is anticipated that cocoa will be pursued in South and West of Nariva Swamp, West of Valencia Forest Reserve, South of the Northern Range Reserve in Trinidad. This may depend on the land use plans developed and the priorities identified in each site.?, ? It is anticipated that rice will be pursued in South and West of Nariva Swamp. This may happenen in other sites as well based on interest, and will depend on the land use plans developed and the priorities identified in each site.?. ?It is anticipated that roots and tubers will be pursued in South and West of Nariva Swamp, West of Valencia Forest Reserve, South of the Northern Range Reserve in Trinidad and in the Courland Watershed in Tobago. This may depend on the land use plans developed and the priorities identified in each site.?. ?Pineapple will be cultivated West of Valencia Forest Reserve, South of the Northern Range Reserve in Trinidad. This may depend on the land use plans developed and the priorities identified in each site.?. ?Coconut will be cultivated in West of Valencia Forest Reserve, South of the Northern Range Reserve in Trinidad and in the Courland Watershed in Tobago. This may depend on the land use plans developed and the priorities identified in each site.?

- COVID-19: The following text has been added on page 28, ?**COVID-19 pandemic**:
The COVID-19 pandemic poses an economic and a health and safety threat and barrier. The numbers of COVID-19 in Trinidad and Tobago have been fairly low, compared to global rates, and due to strict travel restrictions, the country has managed to control the pandemic. However, the pandemic creates an ongoing situation of uncertainty, and it is unknown how it will spread in the near future. One of the major economic consequences, as a result of the project, are due to a sudden shutdown of tourism. While much of the TT economy is dependent on oil, tourism has played a significant role in the economy and is seen as a growing sector. COVID-19 may have some limitations on community gatherings, in-person meetings, disenfranchisement of already marginalized communities. However, it can also create a supportive environment for this project. The project will support the restoration of 1,500 hectares, and improve practices over 1,000 hectares of land. In so doing, the most vulnerable will be included, skills and capacity will be fostered, and opportunities provided to strengthen livelihoods and improve social cohesion. COVID-19 will further reinforce the need for TT to produce its own food, provide healthy and sustainable alternatives, develop sustainable agriculture that can withstand climatic/season changes, and develop resilient livelihoods.?

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
5/18/2021

Yes, thank you for the additions.

12/8/2020

No.

- Many of the baseline projects relate to the agriculture sector. Does T&T have any baseline projects that are more related to land rehabilitation, restoration and/or biodiversity?

Agency Response

04/07/2021

The following initiatives have been added on page 30: UNDP- **Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Network (NES-Net)** Phase II (US\$346,455) seeks to address the science, policy and practice of pollination and pollinator management in Trinidad and Tobago. Issues facing pollinators in Trinidad and Tobago largely stem from a lack of data, a lack of public awareness and a lack of pollinator-appropriate management. This project aims to address these challenges by engaging a broad range of stakeholders through public awareness and citizen science initiatives, identifying knowledge gaps, encouraging and supporting scientific research, facilitating collaboration and improving livelihoods, and reviewing policy. It is expected that as a result of these activities, knowledge and understanding of pollinators and their threats and management options among the general public increases; management of pollinators improves, particularly among food producers; a number of tools are made available to present and future generations; relationships among stakeholders are improved; and policy options are highlighted. There are strong links with this project especially in the area biodiversity monitoring, data collection, and community-based information gathering. Further, findings from NES-Net can help identify which types of crops and agroforestry could mutually support the findings from both projects, i.e. also support pollinators and other biodiversity.

Government-funded ***National Reforestation and Watershed Rehabilitation Programme*** (USD 12,528,000). This programme involves tree planting and upkeep, forest fire prevention, environmental outreach and public awareness. The BIOREACH project will work in collaboration with this initiative, to support the government programme in targeting the capacity, knowledge and skills gaps, deliver strategic interventions on forest fire prevention and support initiatives through restoration works in Trinidad and the Courland Watershed in Tobago, while enabling Forestry Officers to maintain project results beyond the duration of BIOREACH.

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

5/21/2021

No, please include the ToC in the Portal entry.

12/8/2020

No.

- The submission would benefit from the inclusion of the ToC prior to the project description, along with a detailed explanation of the ToC. The project includes many different components and the discussion will assist in understanding the linkages between the different components.
- Please consider including the causal pathways from the threats and barriers to the strategies. Please also differentiate the threats from the barriers and the drivers from the assumptions. As presented it is not clear which strategy is addressing a particular threat/barrier.
- Assumptions should be testable. If we do x, then y will result (the assumption is that x will lead to y).

Agency Response

04/07/2021

Thank you for the comment. Please find Theory of Change on page 62 and also attached as Annex 18 of the project document.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

1/9/2021

Yes. However issues remain as outlined in other questions.

Agency Response

04/07/2021

A more detailed description with the alignment with focal areas have been provided in other responses.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

1/9/2021

Yes.

Agency Response NA

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

5/18/2021

Yes, thank you.

1/9/2021

No, more information is needed on how these activities will generate LD and BD GEBs.

Agency Response

04/07/2021

Noted. Kindly see the table presented on page 32 that highlights LD and BD GEBs.

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

1/9/2021

Yes.

Agency Response NA

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

1/9/2021

Yes.

Agency Response NA

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 NA

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

5/21/2021

Yes.

1/9/2021

Yes. It would be good to have some of the arrangements described as some remain as hypotheticals, such as CANARI "could do" something.

Agency Response

04/07/2021

CANARI is mentioned as an example of a CSO that has been identified as having the capacity to carry out activities in the project during the project formulation. For implementation, however, the entity has to be selected according to FAO procedures and in consultation with the government. Some of CANARI's areas of expertise that could deliver project activities are identified, however, any selection of partner stakeholders will undergo FAO competitive processes and assessments. What we can assure though is that FAO will not execute.

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

5/21/2021

Yes, thank you for the revisions.

1/9/2021

Yes. We would like to see the inclusion of indicators on the quality of participation and voice in projects.

Agency Response

04/07/2021

Kindly see all the revised indicators in the results framework which now include gender considerations even further.

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

1/9/2021

Yes. This was well done.

Agency Response Thank you for the comment.

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

5/21/2021

Yes, thank you for these additions. COVID certainly complicates arrangements.

1/9/2021

No, while the description of COVID in the risk table is fine. We would like to see better examination of this issue.

Has not been mentioned as a consideration for green recovery or building back better. Given the current context with the global pandemic, please include a brief narrative on how the project has identified potential opportunities to mitigate impacts created by COVID-19, to deliver GEBs and/or climate adaptation and resilience benefits, and to contribute toward green recovery and building back better in Trinidad and Tobago. Is there an opportunity to consider how the project (within the mandate of GEF financing), can assist with any COVID related medium term impacts that may be faced by the country? Are any of the sites selected also hotspots for food insecurity or unemployment that may have been caused by COVID impacts? OR consideration for use of technology for SLM/LDN/sustainable agriculture for the project and in instances of future pandemics? Please refer to the GEF Guidance on incorporating COVID considerations in PIF submissions for further information. This is available on the GEF website here <https://www.thegef.org/documents/project-design-and-review-considerations-response-covid-19-crisis-and-mitigation-future>

Agency Response

04/07/2021

Noted with thanks. COVID-19 considerations have now been included in various sections of the project document:

e.g. page 28, under threats;

- Under Outcome 1.1 page 36- the following text has been added ?The COVID-19 pandemic may act as an impediment in some of the activities under this outcome. Given that much of the intervention is focused on collaborative, participatory and inclusive approaches, there is the threat that if new domestic restrictions/protocols or social distancing rules are in place, the level of engagement may suffer. Moreover, COVID-19 may serve to further entrench the marginalizing of vulnerable groups e.g. women who are often with caregiving roles may be limited, as may elders in communities or those with a lack of access to technology. The project will thus have to come up with innovative ways to engage individuals to ensure participation and eventual appropriation. With the emerging ?new normal? as a result of the COVID19 pandemic disaster, digital solutions in the conduct of multi-stakeholder platform consultations will be explored as an adaptive measure when physical meetings cannot be undertaken. Electronic monitoring for activities will also be initiated if in-person activities cannot take place. Drones, photographs and use of GIS will be piloted by multi-stakeholder platforms to keep track of interventions. In some cases, collaboration with smaller more local organizations may happen through proxy institutions that are in proximity and have access technology/communication tools that can be shared. Whatsapp and mobile phones, which many have access to, will be used for communication and exchange of information.?

- Under Component 2 (page 37), the following text has been added: ?With COVID-19, there is the opportunity to ?build back better?. With a focus on health and disease, there is the opportunity to place a cultural focus on health and safety, healthy consumption and production, and investing in resources that will last a long time. The travel threats posed by COVID-19 responses, highlight the need for Trinidad and Tobago to reduce its dependency on foreign agriculture and utilize its resources in ways that are sustainable. This context provides an entry point to promote sustainable agroecological systems that take into account the vulnerability of ecosystems and find ways to both replenish them and provide communities with the services they need.?

- Under Component 3 (page 46): ?Despite the challenges that COVID-19 poses, there are opportunities that should be explored under this Outcome. On the marketing end of the value chains, much of the work will be to promote the adoption and consumption of sustainably produced value chains. Given the context of COVID-19, there is an opportunity to tie this to a growing interest in health and wellness. There is already the beginnings of the health and wellness industry in TT, and establishing sustainably produced products within that context could increase adoption. Similarly COVID-19

highlights the uncertainties and the unpredictability with foreign products?it offers an opportunity to develop nationally with best practices to ensure long term sustainability of natural resources.?

- Under Component 4 (page 59): ?The project will have to be mindful to create inclusive feedback mechanisms that exist despite COVID-19 restrictions that may arise. The project will have to leverage key community champions or organizations in the sites to help disseminate messaging and support appropriation of project results.?

- Under Stakeholder Engagement the following text has been added: ?A revised Stakeholder Engagement Plan will also be developed at inception. This will be to ensure that the project takes into account the latest information with regard to stakeholder engagement, capacities, nature of interest, participation methods, associated costs, and timelines. This is particularly relevant as the project consultations took place before the COVID-19 pandemic, whose impacts are yet unknown and changing. A revised comprehensive stakeholder engagement plan at inception will allow the project manager to take stock of the roles different stakeholders can play, and how their engagement may differ or change than identified during the PPG.?

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

5/21/2021

Yes. Thank you for the changes.

We note that FAO will undertake a small role in execution through the contracting and hiring of one consultant related to forest fires. FAO will use its own resources for recruitment and supervision with the amount shown going to the consultant and their expenses. This has been cleared by the GEF Programs Unit Manager.

1/9/2021

No, we have requested that any agency execution be discussed with the Secretariat prior to submission - ideally earlier in project design to avoid unnecessary work. The letter from the OFP stating why the project execution by the Implementing Agency is being requested is not fully explained. Additionally, the organizational chart does not reflect that the PMU will be hosted at FAO. Is there an

opportunity to use a different GEF implementing agency for execution or a different national execution agency such as the Ministry of Planning and Development.

Agency Response

04/07/2021

Thank you for the comment. The institutional arrangements have been changed to ensure that the FAO is not hosting the PMU, and to ensure country ownership and execution of the initiatives. The FAO will provide an oversight role. Please see the following text that has been added on page 96: "The Project Management Unit (PMU) will be hosted in the Ministry of Planning and Development, which is also the Chair of the Technical Advisory Committee." and "The EMA will have the fiduciary responsibility for contracting the National Coordinators, and supervisory role for the PMU will belong to the Chair of the Technical Advisory Committee. The collaborative structure of this project provides opportunities for cross-ministerial and cross-island participation, while promoting country ownership by a variety of parties, with clear roles and responsibilities to ensure accountability, and success."

As presented and requested in the updated letter of support by the OFP, FAO is requested to seek the unique expertise of an international fire-prevention specialist and administer this small part time consultancy (40 k) directly to provide required technical support for the project. The Government has manifested the intention to benefit from FAO's direct technical assistance on this matter. These will not be used for FAO staff whose technical support will be covered by agency fees which would not be able to cover the extent of support required though.

Likewise, the audits will not be directly administered by FAO, these will be conducted by an external audit firm as per FAO policy and as well understood by GEF PPO.

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

5/21/2021

Yes.

1/9/2021

No, the relationship to LD strategies needs more information as noted above.

Agency Response

04/07/2021.

Noted. Please see pages 101-104 for National Priorities. In addition, please note the following text on page 103: **LDN Targets:** TT has not yet formalized LDN target under the LDN Target Setting Programme. It is likely that when TT establishes the baseline data for the requisite parameters for LDN which is land coverage, soil organic carbon content and land productivity, a target would subsequently be adopted. This target in the first instance, is likely to be limited to one developmental sector for ease of implementation, which may focus on degraded areas that have a legal obligation for rehabilitation. While the LDN targets have not been formally approved and shared, this project document has been reviewed and endorsed by stakeholders that have been involved in the LDN process.?

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

5/21/2021

Yes.

1/9/2021

No, please provide these.

Agency Response

04/07/2021

Kindly see the Knowledge Management Activities with deliverables and timelines on page 105.

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

1/9/2021

Yes. We welcome the special attention given throughout to the indigenous peoples of TT.

Agency Response Thank you for the comment.

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

1/9/2021

Yes.

Agency Response NA

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

5/21/2021

Yes.

1/9/2021

No, this would be a good opportunity to discuss the role of this project relative to the economic slowdown caused by COVID.

Agency Response

04/07/2021

Kindly see responses to Risks and Ecotourism questions. Also, COVID economic slowdown has now been addressed in several sections of the project document.

Annexes

Are all the required annexes attached and adequately responded to?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

1/9/2021

Yes.

Agency Response NA

Project Results Framework

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

1/9/2021

Yes.

Agency Response NA

GEF Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

5/21/2021

Yes.

1/9/2021

No, if the project will not comment on land tenure, how will it ensure the durability of the work done through the project?

Agency Response

04/07/2021

There are several government entities that are involved with land tenure in Trinidad & Tobago. These include: The Commission of State Lands; Forestry Department; Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Food Reclamation. They were consulted throughout the PPG, and to support government policies and initiatives under way, the project will address land issues through a biodiversity lens (restoration, rehabilitation, improved management, diversity). The project will also address uses of land by

communities?these are areas through which the project can have impact. In targeted, vulnerable sites, through effective multi-stakeholder consultation, government enforcement, participatory mechanisms, the project can design and implement land-use plans that are bought in by communities if they have had a hand in drafting them, and if they take into account their vulnerabilities. Through pilots, learning by doing, skills development and investment in livelihoods through sustainable agroecology and green value chain development, the project seeks to make impact on land use.

Council comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

1/9/2021

Yes.

Agency Response NA

STAP comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

5/21/2021

Yes.

1/9/2021

No, however they have been mentioned elsewhere in this review sheet.

Agency Response NA

Convention Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response NA

Other Agencies comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response NA

CSOs comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response NA

Status of PPG utilization

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

1/9/2021

Yes.

Agency Response NA

Project maps and coordinates

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

1/9/2021

Yes.

Agency Response NA

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

NA

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 NA

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

5/21/2021

No, please address the issues below -

1. Expected Implementation Start has already past ? please amend
2. Please add the National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation (NAMDEVCO) Under Other Executing Partners for consistency with section 6.
3. Please review proportionality in the co-financing contribution to PMC. If the GEF contribution is kept at 7%, for a co-financing of \$18,134,662 the expected contribution to PMC must be around \$1,269,426 instead of \$567,968 (which is 3.1%). As the costs associated with the project management have to be covered by the GEF portion and the co-financing portion allocated to the PMC, the GEF contribution and the co-financing contribution must be proportional, which means that the GEF contribution to PMC might be decreased and the co-financing contribution to PMC might be increased to reach a similar level. Please ask the Agency to amend either by increasing the co-financing portion and/or by reducing the GEF portion.
4. The budget table under Annex E is not readable ? please include a legible budget (suggestion: instead of presenting the who is executing in each column, perhaps the Agency can leave one column per component with a final column for the responsible for each budget line. By so doing, the budget table could fit in the margins).
5. Budget table: National Project Coordinator and Local Tobago Coordinator are mainly charged across project components ? please charge them mainly under PMC (both portions: GEF and co-financing) as their task as described in the TORs are referred to coordination activities (per the comment above).
6. Office materials is charged under project component 4 - please charge it under PMC (both portions: GEF and co-financing)

7. Miscellaneous of \$30,200 is charged under project component 4 ? the GEF doesn't cover Miscellaneous. Please remove it from the GEF portion and/or to charge it to the co-financing portion.
8. Motorized vehicles are preferred to be charged to co-financing resources
9. On co-financing: the last co-financing item listed below (Tobago Housing Assembly) does not have actual co-financing letter - the attachment is blank.
10. On Core Indicators: Results indicators found in PIF under Core Indicator table (below Table E) are not reflected in Annex A ?Project Results Framework? found under CEO Endorsement. Thus Project Results Framework needs to be further developed to reflect that.(We note that the GPU Manager has cleared an exception for agency execution by FAO related to the recruitment and supervision of one specialized consultant, noting that no project resources will stay with FAO as all FAO expenses related to this activity will be covered by FAO.)

1/9/2021

Not at this time. Please revise and resubmit. We would be happy to discuss executing arrangements or other issues.

Review Dates

	Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review	1/9/2021	
Additional Review (as necessary)	5/21/2021	
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		