

Tonga Rural Innovation Project Phase III (TRIP III)

Review CEO Approval and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID
12265
Countries
Tonga
Project Name
Tonga Rural Innovation Project Phase III (TRIP III)
Agencies
IFAD
Date received by PM
12/29/2025
Review completed by PM

Program Manager
Katsumasa Tanaka
Focal Area
Multi Focal Area
Project Type
MSP

CEO Approval Request

Part I - General Project Information

1. a) Is the Project Information table correctly filled, including specifying adequate executing partners?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Feb 6, 2026

Yes.

Agency Response

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Apr 2, 2026

•Yes. Thank you for addressing the comments.

Feb 6, 2026

Not yet.

- The project does not appears to contribute to CCM significantly. Please justify the reason for selecting "Significant Objective 1" for CCM or consider dropping it.
- The project has strong BD and LD components. Please explain why "Significant Objective 1" is selected for BD and LD. Please refer to GEF's comments in Project Description section below regarding the integration of LD.

Agency Response

CCM may have been wrongly checked in the Portal. This has now been corrected

?Principal Objective? has now been selected for CCA, BD and LD.

See responses below re-incorporating LD.

2. Project Summary.

a) Does the project summary concisely describe the problem to be addressed, the project objective and the strategies to deliver the GEBs or adaptation benefits and other key expected results?

b) Does the summary capture the essence of the project, is well written and is it within the max. of 250 words?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Apr 2, 2026

a-b) Yes. Thank you for addressing the comments.

Feb 6, 2026

a-b) Not yet.

- It exceeds the **250 word limit**. Please kindly shorten it.

- The **categorization of adaptation benefits** into ?Exposure, Sensitivity and Adaptive Capacity? does not appear to be aligned with the IPCC AR6 risk framework. Activities currently described as ?exposure? and ?sensitivity? benefits (e.g. agroforestry, crop diversification, and governance integration) primarily reduce sensitivity and enhance adaptive capacity rather than changing exposure (in a spatial sense). Please consider reframing these activities.
- This project already includes Land Degradation elements and has great potential to **integrate the LD perspective more broadly**. Please refer to GEF's comments in the Project Description Overview section below and revise the relevant sections, including Project Summary.

Agency Response

The [project summary](#) has now been shortened to 254 words.

We have removed reference to the categorization of adaptation benefits.

The LD perspective has been incorporated in the Project Description Overview and relevant sections.

3. Project Description Overview

- Is the project objective presented as a concise statement and clear?
- Are the components, outcomes, and outputs sound, appropriate and sufficiently clear to achieve the project objective and the core indicators per the stated Theory of Change?
- Are gender dimensions, knowledge management, and M&E included within the project components and appropriately funded?
- Are the GEF Project Financing and Co-Financing contributions to PMC proportional?
- Is the PMC equal to or below 10%? If above 10%, is the justification acceptable?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

April 23, 2026

a-c) Yes. All comments are addressed.

Apr 2, 2026

Overall comments:

- Thank you very much for strengthening the LD aspects throughout the document.

a-c) Not yet.

- On the Component numbering, please update the Project Components section as well.

3/27/2025

Official Use Only
Page 4 of 71

The logo for the Global Environment Facility (GEF) is displayed. It features a stylized green circular icon with a white 'e' shape inside, followed by the text 'gef' in a bold, lowercase font. To the right of this, the words 'global environment facility' are written in a smaller, lowercase font, with 'global' on the first line, 'environment' on the second, and 'facility' on the third. Below this text, in a very small font, is the phrase 'partnering for a better planet'.

land degradation, fostering social inclusion, and incorporating innovative solutions.

Project Components

Community development planning

A thick orange arrow pointing horizontally to the right, positioned to the left of the 'Component Type' header.

Component Type

Trust Fund

Technical Assistance

GET

GEF Project Financing (\$)

Co-financing (\$)

1,507,216.00

1,931,350.00

- The budget discrepancies have been addressed. Thank you.

d) Yes. Thank you for amending the PMC budget.

Feb 6, 2026

Overall comments:

- GEF welcomes this proposed project which is closely aligned with and strengthens IFAD's baseline projects by utilizing SCCF-A/GEF Trust Fund funding to address integrated challenges.
- However, **there is a missed opportunity to also incorporate a focus on combatting land degradation (LD)**. The targeting of the agriculture sector (i.e. mixed cropping, agroforestry) and small farmers provides a good entry point to strengthen existing or introduce at the local level sustainable land management practices for agro-ecosystem benefits and for the benefit of rural livelihoods. This is in line with what has been outlined as the main drivers of environmental degradation in the targeted areas.
- GEF recognize Tonga already has a GEF-8 project focused on LD (Transforming food systems through ecosystem-based approaches to combat land degradation and loss in ecosystem services in value-chains in Tonga ? GEF ID: 11684, Agency: FAO). However, it may be useful to consider linking the two projects and to the leverage the LD interventions that will be covered under the FAO project. Noting that the FAO project will also be looking at strengthening the enabling environment for LDN, there may be a possibility to explore how this can be leveraged at the site level for this project as well.
- Improving the narrative, including the Project Objective, Project Rational, and Project Descriptions, to incorporate the LDN response hierarchy of avoid, reduce, reverse which can be integrated with BD and CCA considerations should be explored.
- In addition, **the intent of this project's BD interventions related to invasive species management, as well as their potential for impact, is not clear**. Please clarify. If relevant, please refer to a GEF-FAO project (GEF ID: 10188) in Trinidad and Tobago, which looked at land rehabilitation in productive landscapes together with invasive species management and BD conservation.

a-c) Not yet.

- Please make necessary changes as the Agency response to the comments above.
- Currently, only "Component 2" has a numbering in the section heading. Please ensure consistency across component headings.

•Sources of fund (SCCF-A or GEF TF) and amount indicated in this section do not match those in the Project Description section and the Budget section. Please kindly review and harmonize the amounts in these three sections.

Project Description Overview

Project Objective ¹

To strengthen community development and improve rural livelihoods by promoting diverse agricultural production and commercialization, integrate resilient practices, improving biodiversity, fostering social inclusion, and incorporating innovative solutions.

Project Components	Component Type	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing(\$)
Community development planning	Technical Assistance	Outcome 1: Capacities enhanced to mainstream	Output 1.1: Climate- and biodiversity-informed suitability	GET	1,507,216.00
Component 2: Sustainable Livelihoods through Commercialization	Investment	Outcome 2: Adoption of Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) and	Output 2.1: Rural producers' access and adopt climate-smart and	SCCF-A	2,651,490.00
Policy Support and Knowledge Management	Technical Assistance	Outcome 3: Improved generation, sharing,	Output 3.1: At least three policy relevant knowledge products	GET	59,000.00

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) ¹

M&E	Technical Assistance	Outcome 4: Effective M&E framework informs adaptive management of the project. Indicators: A gender-responsive M&E framework. MTE and TE reports	Output 4.1: A gender and youth responsive M&E framework developed. Output 4.2: Mid-term Evaluation (MET) and Terminal Evaluation (TE) conducted to ensure adaptive management.	GET	75,184.00
Sub Total (\$)					4,292,890.00

Project Management Cost (PMC) ¹

GET	214,644.00
-----	------------

Expenditure Category	Detailed Description	Component (USD\$)			Sub-Total	M&E	PMC	Total (USD\$)	Responsible Entity (Executing Entity receiving funds from the GEF Approval)
		Component 1: Community development planning	Component 2: Sustainable Livelihoods through Commercialization	Component 3: Policy Support and Knowledge Management					
		Outcome 1: Capacities enhanced to mainstream climate resilience and biodiversity considerations in community and household members	Outcome 2: Adoption of Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) and biodiversity-friendly practices and livelihood diversification options by farmers and their household members	Outcome 3: Improved generation, sharing, and use of climate and biodiversity knowledge leads to strengthened policies and systems supporting resilient and biodiversity-friendly					
Grand Total		496 000	3 399 000	329 000		141 183	395 000	4 690 183	

d) Not yet. Please increase the co-financing's contribution to PMC to the same level as GEF project financing.

e) Yes.

Agency Response

Thank you, the component numbering has been updated

The document has been revised to both acknowledge and strengthen the project's contributions to combatting land degradation through sustainable land management within the target areas. This has included changes and additions to the baseline and alternative project descriptions, theory of change and linkages to the FAO GEF-8 project (GEF ID: 11684).

The revised document reflects recent consultations held with FAO colleagues to ensure close alignment and complementarity with FAO's GEF-8 project which also addresses LD. This is now reflected in the section on Associated Baseline Projects and in Table 2: Coordination with Ongoing and Planned Initiatives.

The project summary, objective, rationale and description have been revised to reflect the project's newly clarified LD-related activities and benefits.

? As noted in the sub-section on 'Threats to biodiversity,' invasive species in Tonga, particularly aggressive plant species such as *Cordia alliodora* and African Tulip, as well as invasive animals including rats and pigs, are contributing to the displacement of native vegetation, degradation of agricultural lands, and loss of habitat for endemic species. Building on the NISSAP and complementary initiatives such as PRISMSS, the project will address these pressures through the promotion of sustainable land management (SLM) and agroecological practices that reduce the spread and impacts of invasive species within productive landscapes. These include improved land-use planning, diversified cropping systems, agroforestry, and soil and vegetation management practices that enhance the competitiveness of native and locally adapted species.

In terms of impact, these interventions are expected to contribute to reduced spread of invasive plant species in agricultural areas, improved habitat conditions for native biodiversity, and restoration of ecosystem functions in degraded landscapes. By addressing land degradation and strengthening ecosystem resilience, the project will also reduce the vulnerability of production systems to invasive species encroachment. The project will further draw on lessons learned from comparable initiatives, including the GEF/FAO project in Trinidad and Tobago (GEF ID: 10188), to inform integrated approaches linking land rehabilitation, invasive species management, and biodiversity conservation in productive landscapes.

? Done.

? Done

? These figures now match

? PMC cofinancing has been increased to 5% of cofinancing

4. Project Outline

A. Project Rationale

a) Is the current situation (including global environmental problems, key drivers of environmental degradation, climate vulnerability) clearly and adequately described from a systems perspective and adequately addressed by the project design?

b) Have the role of stakeholders, incl. the private sector and local actors in the system been described and how they will contribute to GEBs and/or adaptation benefits and other project outcomes? Is the private sector seen mainly as a stakeholder or as financier?

c) If this is an NGI project, is there a description of how the project and its financial structure are addressing financial barriers?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Apr 2, 2026

a) Yes. Thank you for incorporating LD considerations.

Feb 6, 2026

- a) Not yet. Please refer to the comments on LD in the Project Description Overview section above.
- b) Yes.
- c) N/A

Agency Response

- a) See responses above any changes in the CEO ER

5 B. Project Description

5.1 a) Is there a concise theory of change (narrative and an optional schematic) that describes the project logic, including how the project design elements are contributing to the objective, the identified causal pathways, the thrust and basis (including scientific) of the proposed solutions, how they provide a robust solution and listing the key assumptions underlying these?

b) Is there a description of how the GEF alternative will build on ongoing/previous investments (GEF and non-GEF), lessons and experiences in the country/region?

c) Are the project components (interventions and activities) described and proposed solutions and critical assumptions and risks are properly justified? Is there an indication of why the project approach has been selected over other potential options?

d) Incremental/additional cost reasoning: Is the incremental/additional cost reasoning properly described as per the Guidelines provided in GEF/C.31/12? Has the baseline scenario and/or associated baseline projects been described? Is the project incremental reasoning provisioned (including the role of the GEF)? Are the global environmental benefits and/or adaptation benefits identified?

e) Other Benefits: Are the socioeconomic benefits resulting from the project at the national and local levels sufficiently described?

f) Is the financing presented in the annexed financing table adequate and demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objectives? Are items charged to the PMC reasonable according to the GEF guidelines?

g) How does the project design ensure resilience to future changes in the drivers and adaptive management needs and options (as applicable for this MSP)?

h) Are the relevant stakeholders (including women, private sector, CSO, e.g.) and their roles adequately described within the components?

i) Gender: Does the gender analysis identify any gender differences, gaps or opportunities linked to project/program objectives and activities and have these been taken up in component description/s?

j) Are the proposed elements to capture and disseminate knowledge and learning outputs and strategic communication adequately described?

k) Policy Coherence: Have any policies, regulations or subsidies been identified that could counteract the intended project outcomes and how will that be addressed?

l) Transformation and/or innovation: Is the project going to be transformative or innovative? Does it explain scaling up opportunities?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

April 23, 2026

- c) Yes. All comments have been addressed. Thank you.

Apr 2, 2026

- a) Yes. Thank you for updating the ToC.
- c) Not yet. Please see the remaining issues below:

Component 1:

- Thank you for the additional information. On the institutionalization and sustainability of project impacts, the coordination with relevant Ministries appears crucial. Please refer to GEF's comment under 5.2 Institutional Arrangements and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Project below and elaborate on the coordination mechanism.

Component 2:

- Thank you for the additional information on 1) the sustainability of project outcomes, 2) linkage between Component 1 and 2, and 3) details of the Community Economic Livelihood Grants (CELGs) and Innovation Facility. Please incorporate brief explanations of these elements under B. Project Description.
- On 1) and 2), the coordination with relevant Ministries appears crucial. Please refer to GEF's comment under elaborate on the coordination mechanism under 5.2 Institutional Arrangements and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Project below.

Component 3:

- Thank you for the clarification.

d, f, j) Yes. Thank you for responding to the comments.

Feb 6, 2026

a) Not yet. Please refer to the comments on LD in the Project Description Overview section.

b) Yes.

c) Not yet.

- Please refer to the comments on LD in the Project Description Overview section.
- Please also address the following comments specific to each component:

Component 1:

- Is there consideration to develop or strengthen existing mechanisms to monitor results and positive/negative changes in the landscape, biodiversity, etc.?
- Please describe how the training (Output 1.3 and 1.4) will be institutionalized and create sustained impacts beyond a project cycle.
- Please also refer to the comment in the ESS section below.

Component 2:

- Please describe the plans to maintain farmer field schools (Output 2.2), Agrometeorological advisory services (Output 2.4), and seedbanks (Output 2.6) beyond a project cycle to secure sustainability of project impacts.

- How do Component 1 and 2 contribute to each other? Please clarify the linkage and ensure these Components reinforce each other rather than being implemented independently. For example, do local officials and community members trained (Output 1.3 and 1.4) support activities under Component 2?
- Please elaborate on the Community Economic Livelihood Grants (CELGs) and clarify grant sizing, selection criteria, and expected number of beneficiaries, as well as governance structure, including the oversight role of the Agency.
- Please also briefly explain how the Innovation Facility (Output 2.3) will be managed and administered, including the oversight role of the Agency.
- Please also refer to the comment in the ESS section below.

Component 3:

- Are there other knowledge products being considered outside of policy-related knowledge products? What are the measures to share the results and lessons of the project with other communities and activities on the ground?
- One of the 3 indicators for this component is # of multistakeholder consultations and coordination mechanism events conducted to enhance climate mainstreaming among related sectors. However, it is not clear which output is geared towards this work. There is value in strengthening coordination mechanisms at the local level and national level. This could be considered.

d) Not yet.

- Please reframe the incremental/additional cost reasoning in line with the GEF policy (<https://www.thegef.org/documents/incremental-costs>), including the following elements: 1) Baseline (IFAD TRIP III + IFAD TRIP I & II), 2) SCCF-A-supported increment that adds adaptation benefits, 3) GEF TF-supported increment supported that adds global environmental benefits (BD and LD), 4) resulting adaptation and global environmental benefits. A concise description addressing these elements would be sufficient.

e) Yes.

f) Not yet.

- Sources of fund (SCCF-A or GEF TF) and amount indicated in the Project Description Overview section do not match those in the Project Description section and the Budget section. Please kindly review and revise them.

g-i) Yes.

j) Please see the comment above on Component 3.

k-l) Yes.

Agency Response

- a) As noted above, the project's LD benefits have been acknowledged and further strengthened in the revised submission, including the diagram of the theory of change.

Component 1:

? The project will introduce assessment of climate, biodiversity and land degradation risks into CDP development process. In the complementary IFAD project, CDP development process will be institutionalized to allow for periodic stocktaking of these thematic risks and updating of the plans. These periodic updates can serve as conduit for a medium / long term monitoring of changes in climate, biodiversity and land degradation status in particular communities. Furthermore, Tonga NBSAP to 2030 listed a number of relevant national and regional monitoring framework for forest ecosystems, agrobiodiversity, species conservation and alien invasive species. The project will contribute to the operationalization of some of these frameworks, including by introducing mechanisms to monitor and track biodiversity friendly practices and CSA adoption in community development (see Component 3.3).

? As a first entry point, the budget for training activities includes a cofinancing element. This cost-sharing approach reflects the ownership of the government and translates into an approach that supports the integration in national policies (e.g. JNAP2) to formalize trainings as mandatory after project completion. Secondly, the role of MORDI-TT is critical given its track record to train and mobilize a cohort of ?master trainers? accompanied by training manuals/briefs uses as ?handover kits?.

? See response below

Component 2

? On Component 2, like the above, mainstreaming the FFS approach (Output 2.2) into the national agricultural extension system and reflected in the Tonga Agriculture Sector Plan (TASP) will ensure it is a standard service provided by MAFF with permanent access to trained facilitators and resources. On Agrometeorological services (Output 2.4), the Tonga Meteorological Service (TMS) is implementing a Quality Management System (QMS) to standardize how forecasts are shared with farmers. This will be assessed at project start-up with key stakeholders to secure sustainability of project impacts after completion. For seedbanks (Output 2.6), given that capacities at community level are to an extent limited, the project supports a more direct role of MORDI-TT combined with community ownership (e.g. managed by local management committees that oversee "open-pollinated nurseries" allowing farmers to save and replant seeds independently of imported commercial supplies. An additional element which can be capitalized through the CELGs is developing value-addition strategies, such as selling packaged, high-quality seeds to schools and hospitals to create internal revenues for MORDI-TT which can sustain the nurseries.

? Under Component 1, Participatory plans (CDPs and LDPs) provide the primary mechanism for identifying community priorities and guiding livelihood investments while incorporating climate resilience, biodiversity-friendly practices, SLM etc. These community priorities and livelihood investments will then be financed through CELGs and Innovation Facility under Component 2.

? **CELGs:** CELG matching grant investments are expected to support cluster farms (CFs), community gardens, handicraft activities, and other initiatives identified through the community planning process. The communities on each island group are classified as small, medium and large. The number of CFs per community that can be financed is assumed as 1,3 and 4 for small, medium and large CF respectively. The CELG will cover fifty percent of the estimated costs, which may cover the cost of fencing material and initial land preparation. The remaining fifty percent is in the form of in-kind contribution towards the setup and site development costs. The CELG is only available for one three-year cropping cycle. Subsequent cycles are fully funded by the beneficiaries. The CELG applications are submitted to a Project Review and Appraisal Committee (PRAC) for assessment. The PRAC will provide an executive management function for the various grant windows ? CELGs, agribusiness partnerships and the innovation facility. MORDI TT will be responsible in assisting with the preparation of grant applications for the PRAC including screening and reporting results to the PMU.

Innovation Facility: This facility prioritizes youth to propose demonstration and testing of innovative technologies and/or youth-focused business models in areas such as mechanisation services, greenhouse and drip irrigation, digital applications, and value addition/waste utilisation. The grant award criteria will consider cultural relevance and local ownership; strategic alignment and policy support; digital connectivity; and inclusivity and equity.

? See response below.

? **On Component 3 (KM products)**, indeed the project will support several KM materials as deemed relevant. This may include KM products on agricultural biodiversity, CSA, post-harvest, business management, weather, climate and market, documentation on innovative business models, technologies and practices. Key dissemination pathways will include FFS and other training events with beneficiary farmers and mobile apps for farmers.

? **Multistakeholder consultations:** will be mostly relevant under Component 3 to facilitate and support the development of policy drafts.

? The ICA has been redrafted and now includes a concise description of the key elements.

•These figures have been revised and now match

5.2 Institutional Arrangements and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Project.

a) Are the institutional arrangements, including potential executing partners, outlined on regional, national/local levels and a rationale provided? Has an organogram and/or funds flow diagram been included?

b) Comment on proposed agency execution support (if agency expects to request exception). Is GEF in support of the request?

c) Is there a description of coordination and cooperation with ongoing GEF and non-GEF financed projects/programs (such as government and/or other bilateral/multilateral supported initiatives in the project area, e.g.).

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

April 23, 2026

a) Yes. Nevertheless, GEF notes that **it is generally encouraged for GEF-funded projects to set up a more formal coordination mechanism** (e.g. Project Steering Committee) during the project implementation.

Apr 2, 2026

a) Not yet.

•Thank you for the additional information provided. Please clarify further how the coordination 1) between IFAD and MORDI TT, 2) with the baseline projects, and 3) with relevant Ministries and stakeholders (e.g. CSOs, local communities) work in practice during the project implementation. Will there be a project steering committee? Please include a diagram, if useful.

•On 3), the coordination with relevant Ministries appears to be particularly important for this project. This is because this project is implemented by MORDI TT, not by the government, while the MEIDECC, MAFF, and MoF are expected to play key roles as co-financers as well as guarantees of project sustainability (see GEF's comments above under the 5 B. Project Description - c). GEF assumes that IFAD and MORDI TT have developed coordination mechanism with these Ministries. Please explicitly describe how the coordination takes place.

Feb 6, 2026

a) Not yet.

- In the GEF language, MORDI-TT is the Executing Entity, not the Implementing Agency. MORDI-TT is also described as the Implementing Agency in the third para of the Project Description section. Please correct the terminology.
- Please provide a brief description of MORDI-TT.
- Please describe 1) how the Agency oversee the implementation of the project, 2) how the GEF-funded project coordinates with the baseline project funded by IFAD, 3) how the project coordinates with relevant government ministries, such as MAFF, MEIDECC, and DLG.

b) N/A

c) Yes.

Agency Response

? April 29, 2026

a) Thank you, the recommendation is well noted.

Thanks, this has been revised.

? **Brief description.** The following text has been added to the CEO ER (footnote 19): MORDI TT has a strong track record in facilitating and enabling community-based rural development activities. It has been the lead Executing Agency for both IFAD TRIP I and II project?s spanning over the past 13 years and has established relationships with all 122 rural communities in the TRIP II project area.

• **Implementation oversight.** As noted in the risks table, under ?Capacity for Implementation?, the NGO has an experienced team familiar with IFAD project implementation, M&E and reporting procedures as well as established facilities for production of planting materials (seeds and seedlings). Their strong presence on the ground ? has also allowed for a good working relationship with Local Government agencies throughout Tonga.

(2) & (3) Coordination between GEF and baseline project including relevant government ministries. The following text has been added to the section on ?Implementation Arrangements?: MORDI TT will engage several Implementing Partners through MOUs and disbursement of fund to undertake policy work including MAFF (agriculture), MEIDECC (climate, disaster risk management and agro-met services) and the DLG (decentralisation/local government). MORDI TT is also a member of the Pacific Farmer Organisations (PFO) which is the implementing agency of the EU funded/IFAD administered Farmer Organisations for Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific (FO4ACP) project.

5.3 Core indicators

- a) Are the identified core indicators calculated using the methodology included in the corresponding Guidelines (GEF/C.54/11/Rev.01)?
- b) Are the project?s targeted contributions to GEBs (measured through core indicators)/adaptation benefits reasonable and achievable? Are the GEF Climate Change adaptation indicators and sub-indicators for LDCF and SCCF properly documented?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 1, 2026

a-b) Yes. Thank you.

April 23, 2026

a-b) Not yet.

•In keeping with the elements of the project on LD and particularly SLM please assign some of the targets to sub-indicator 4.3, so that targets are shown in both 4.1 and 4.3

Apr 2, 2026

a-b)

GEF TF

•Since the project maintains the potential for BD benefits, these also need to be reflected in the core indicator table. Hence, GEBs can be assigned to sub-indicator 4.1.

SCCF-A

•Thank you for responding to the comments.

Feb 6, 2026

a-b) Not yet.

GEF TF

•BD indicators are not included. Please include relevant indicators.

SCCF-A

•Please consider selecting "true" for the following fields or provide reasons for selecting "false":
1) direct adaptation benefit to private sector, 2) NAP implementation, 3) GCF collaboration (a relevant GCF project is mentioned in the pro doc), 4) local community engagement, 5) South-south knowledge exchange (Component 3?), and 6) climate challenges: Natural Hazards and Land Degradation. Please also carefully double check if other SCCF Meta Information is accurately provided.

•Please consider capturing 6 CDPs (Output 1.5) with Core Indicator 3. Sub-indicators are not properly set. Please make sure that all the expected results are properly captured by the Core and Sub-Indicators.

Agency Response

April 29, 2026

a-b) A target of 500 ha has been assigned to sub-indicator 4.3. The target for sub-indicator 4.1 has been subsequently reduced to 568 ha.

The Core Indicators description has been revised to clarify that the project will contribute to achievement of Sub-indicator 4.3 through support to the introduction of improved land and resource use practices in Tonga. These will include specific practices related to sustainable land use, biodiversity conservation and climate-smart agriculture. The project target will be for these and other improved practices to be adopted over an area of at least 1,068 ha., representing the area of the landscape under sustainable land management in production systems (Sub-Indicator 4.3).

addressed

? the CDPs are captured in ha under SCCF core indicator 2.

5.4 Risks

a) Is there a well-articulated assessment of risk to outcomes and identification of mitigation measures under each relevant risk category? Are mitigation measures clearly identified and realistic? Is there any omission?

b) Is the rating provided reflecting the residual risk to the likely achievement of intended outcomes after accounting for the expected implementation of mitigation measures?

c) Are environmental and social risks, impacts and management measures adequately screened and rated and consistent with requirements set out in SD/PL/03?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

April 23, 2026

a-c) Yes. All comments have been addressed. Thank you.

Apr 2, 2026

a-c) Not yet. Thank you for revising the Key Risks section. However, this section still needs to be revised further. While specific issues have been listed below, please ensure the Agency carefully reviews all risk categories.

(Ref: <https://www.thegef.org/documents/risk-appetite-framework>)

- Some risk categories still mention "PPG phase" (e.g. environment and social). Please list up risks the Agency can reasonably expect at this stage, rather than deferring them to the intimal implementation phase.

- The purpose of the Key Risks section is to 1) identify project-specific risks that may affect the achievement of project outcomes and 2) suggest mitigating measures; it is not intended to identify general contextual risks Tonga faces. Accordingly, on the climate-related risk, please clarify 1) how climate-related risk may potentially affect the achievement of project outcomes and 2) how such risk could be mitigated, rather than stating the climate rational of the project.

Feb 6, 2026

a-c) Not yet.

- The risk section does not appear up-to date as it mentions PIF and PPG phase. GEF will review the section again after the update. Please make sure that it articulate the risks faced by the project and how it plans to mitigate such risks.

Agency Response

comment addressed

The risk section has been updated to remove references to PIF and PPG and to clearly articulate risks and mitigations processes and mechanisms

5.5 NGI Only: Is there a justification of financial structure and use of financial instrument with concessionality levels?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestN/A

Agency Response

6 C. Alignment with GEF-8 Programming Strategies and Country/Regional Priorities

6.1 Is the project adequately aligned with Focal Area objectives, and/or LDCF/SCCF strategy?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Apr 2, 2026

Thank you for showing the alignment with GEF TF and SCCF-A strategies.

Feb 6, 2026

Not yet.

•Instead of listing key themes of the project, please explicitly present the project's alignment with BD and LD "Focal Area Strategies" of the GEF-8 Programming Direction (GEF TF) and the "SCCF Priority Areas" of the GEF-8 LDCF/SCCF Strategy. A short and concise description for each strategy is sufficient.

<https://www.thegef.org/council-meeting-documents/gef-ldcf-sccf-32-04-rev-01>

https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/2023-01/GEF-8_Programming_Directions.pdf

Agency ResponseThe previous theme-based discussion has been replaced with brief descriptions of contributions to, and alignment with, the focal and priority areas of GEF and SCCF, respectively.

6.2 Is the project alignment/coherent with country and regional priorities, policies, strategies and plans (including those related to the MEAs and to relevant sectors).

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Apr 2, 2026

Yes. Thank you for addressing the comment.

Feb 6, 2026

Not yet.

- Please explicitly show the alignment with Tonga's National Adaptation Plan (NAP).

Agency Response

A fully updated bullet point description of the project's explicit alignment with JNAP2 has been added to the section on Alignment with national plans, policies and strategies

6.3 For projects aiming to generate biodiversity benefits (regardless of what the source of the resources is - i.e., BD, CC or LD), does the project clearly identify which of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework the project contributes to and how it contributes to the identified target(s)?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Feb 6, 2026

Yes.

Agency Response

7 D. Policy Requirements

7.1 Are the Policy Requirement sections completed?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Apr 2, 2026

Yes. Thank you.

Feb 6, 2026

Not yet.

- Please complete the responses to the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment section.

Agency ResponseThe tick box under Section D has been ticked (YES) and a Gender and Social Inclusion plan has been developed as part of the baseline project

7.2 Is the Gender Action Plan uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Feb 6, 2026

Yes.

Agency Response

7.3 Is the stakeholder engagement plan uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

April 23, 2026

Yes. The comment addressed.

Apr 2, 2026

The risk table section on stakeholder has not been updated and does not describe any potential risks. In addition, the SEP has not been updated to reflect the comment on stakeholder engagement provided. Please update the section as well as the SEP.

Feb 6, 2026

- GEF notes that the SEP has been submitted.
- Please provide a summary in the risk table on risks related to stakeholders and elaborate in the annexed SEP the roles of the different stakeholders related to project components and outputs. In addition, please complete the section that requires agency to select what role civil society will play in the project.?

Agency Response

- updated SEP document uploaded in roadmap

The risk table already includes a short summary on the risks related to key stakeholders (the Prime Minister's Office, MAFF, MEIDECC, MoH, MIA, MTED and Ministry of Public Enterprises MPE, Department of Local Government, WAGED, TMS, TNYC, FFS, Micro-credit providers, national association of growers, civil society organisations, mass media). This is further elaborated in Table 1 of the SEP with roles defined among different stakeholders by project component.

8 Annexes

Annex A: Financing Tables

**8.1 GEF Financing Table and Focal Area Elements: Is the proposed GEF financing (including the Agency fee) in line with GEF policies and guidelines? Are they within the resources available from (mark all that apply):
STAR allocation?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Feb 6, 2026

Yes.

Agency Response

April 29, 2026

A portion of \$ 639,270 has been assigned to LDFA. The share for the BD has been subsequently reduced to \$ 1,216,774.
Focal Area allocation?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 1, 2026

Yes. All comments have been addressed.

April 23, 2026

Not yet.

•Please assign a portion of the funding (GEF Financing Table and Focal Area Elements) to the LDFA. There will be no need to change the LOE.

Apr 2, 2026

Not yet.

•GEF appreciates the strengthened the LDFA elements; however, to aligned the new project structure and Focal Area allocation, it is requested to assign some of the GEF TF financing to the LDFA, ideally should be LD-1. At the moment all funds are assigned to the BD FA.

Feb 6, 2026

Yes.

Agency Response

LDCF under the principle of equitable access?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestN/A

Agency Response

SCCF A (SIDS)?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Feb 6, 2026

Yes.

Agency Response

SCCF B (Tech Transfer, Innovation, Private Sector)?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestN/A

Agency Response

Focal Area Set Aside?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestN/A

Agency Response

8.2 Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

a) Is PPG reimbursement requested and if so, is it within the eligible cap of USD 50,000?

b) Is the use of PPG attached in Annex: Status of Utilization of Project Preparation Grant (PPG) properly itemized according to the guidelines?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Feb 6, 2026

Yes.

Agency Response

8.3 Source of Funds

Does the sources of funds table match with the OFP's LOE? Note: the table only captures sources of funds from the country's STAR allocation

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Feb 6, 2026

Yes.

Agency Response

8.4 Confirmed co-financing for the project, by name and type: Are the amounts, sources, and types of co-financing adequately documented and consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines? e.g. Have letters of co-finance been submitted, correctly classified as investment mobilized or in-kind/recurring expenditures? If investment mobilized: is there an explanation below the table to describe the nature of co-finance? If letters are not in English, is a translation provided?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 1, 2026

Yes. All comments have been addressed.

April 23, 2026

Not yet.

- The requested co-financing letters have not been submitted for the Recipient Country Government and beneficiaries. This is mandatory are CEO endorsement, if not confirmed, please remove theses sources from the co-financing table.
- The co-financier name in the table has also not been updated (yellow). Also, in-kind contributions are typically recurrent expenditures (red).

Confirmed Co-financing for the project, by name and type

Please include evidence for each co-financing source for this project in the tab of the portal

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)
Recipient Country Government	MEIDECC, MAFF, Ministry of Finance	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1,758,000.00
GEF Agency	IFAD	Grant	Investment mobilized	5,300,000.00
Beneficiaries		In-kind	Investment mobilized ✓	3,115,000.00
Total Co-financing(\$)				10,173,000.00

Please describe the investment mobilized portion of the co-financing

The co-financing to the GEF project will be USD 5,300,000 in grant (investment mobilized) contribution from the IFAD TRIP III project (2026-2032).

Apr 2, 2026

Not yet.

- The requested co-financing letters have not been submitted, and the co-financier name in the table has also not been updated (yellow). There seems to be discrepancy between the PDF and Word versions.
- Also, in-kind contributions are typically recurrent expenditures (red).

Confirmed Co-financing for the project, by name and type

Please include evidence for each co-financing source for this project in the tab of the portal

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)
Recipient Country Government	MEIDECC, MAFF, Ministry of Finance	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1,758,000.00
GEF Agency	IFAD	Grant	Investment mobilized	5,300,000.00
Beneficiaries		In-kind	Investment mobilized ✓	3,115,000.00
Total Co-financing(\$)				10,173,000.00

Please describe the investment mobilized portion of the co-financing

The co-financing to the GEF project will be USD 5,300,000 in grant (investment mobilized) contribution from the IFAD TRIP III project (2026-2032).

Feb 6, 2026

Not yet.

- Please specify the "beneficiaries" on the co-financing table and attach a co-financing letters for all sources.

Agency Response

April 29, 2026

The co-financing letter has been submitted on 23 April in the Portal through the roadmap documents. The co-financier name in the table has been updated.

Annex B: Endorsements

8.5 a) Has the project been endorsed by the GEF OFP/s of all GEF eligible participating countries and has the OFP name and position been checked against the GEF database at the time of submission?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Feb 6, 2026

Yes.

Agency Response

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Feb 6, 2026

Yes.

Agency Response

c) Do the letters follow the correct format and are the endorsed amounts consistent with the amounts included in the Portal?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Feb 6, 2026

Yes.

Agency Response

8.6 For NGI projects (which may not require LoEs), has the Agency informed the OFP(s) of the project before the PIF submission?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestN/A

Agency Response

Annex C: Project Results Framework

8.7 a) Have the GEF core indicators been included?

b) Have SMART indicators been used; are means of verification well thought out; do the targets correspond/are appropriate in view of the budget (too high? Too low?)

c) Are all relevant indicators sex disaggregated?

d) Is the Project Results Framework included in the Project Document pasted in the Template?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 1, 2026

Yes. All comments have been addressed.

April 23, 2026

Not yet.

•Please refer to the comments on indicators above and ensure the results framework and GEF indicators are aligned.

Apr 2, 2026

Not yet.

•Please refer to the comments on indicators above and ensure the results framework and GEF indicators are aligned.

Feb 6, 2026

Not yet.

•Please refer to the comments on indicators above and ensure the results framework and GEF indicators are aligned.

Agency Response

April 29, 2026

Addressed

GEF indicators aligned with the results framework

See explanation above on the LDCF core indicator #3. All other GEF core indicators are included at the objective level in the results framework.

Annex E: Project map and coordinates

8.8 Are geo-referenced information and maps provided indicating where the project interventions will take place ?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Apr 2, 2026

Yes. Thank you for addressing the comment.

Feb 6, 2026

Not yet.

•Please add coordinates of all the five island groups (Vava'u, Eua, Tongatapu, Ha'apai, and the Nuias) (and others if any).

Agency Response

? Coordinates have been added to island groups (see Annex D)

Annex F: Environmental and Social Safeguards Screen and Rating

8.9 Have safeguard screening document and/or other ESS document(s) attached and been uploaded to the GEF Portal?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Apr 2, 2026

Yes. Thank you for the clarification.

Feb 6, 2026

- It is acknowledged that the project has submitted the ESSS supporting document, ESCMP and stakeholder engagement plan, with an overall ESS risks classified as Moderate.
- GEF appreciates the project built on experience and extensive consultations with local communities and include indicators related to benefits on Indigenous Peoples.

1. Please consider supporting Indigenous Peoples self-determined priorities, indigenous governance, traditional and local knowledge, land tenure system and capacity building for Indigenous Peoples and local community in the project particularly Component 1 and 2. b.
2. Please also consider including monitoring indicator to capture improvement of indigenous governance, traditional and local knowledge, and land tenure system.

Agency Response

Indigenous Peoples? (IP) cultural heritage and knowledge will be identified and promoted, in particular as assets for coping with climate variability and climate change. This includes traditional knowledge associated with seasonal cycles, cropping systems, food and water security, traditional ecological knowledge, environmental conservation, as well as indigenous knowledge on handicraft production as a means of livelihood diversification.

? The following monitoring indicators pertain:

? **Under Outcome level 1, SF.2.1 Households satisfied with project-supported services** is a disaggregated monitoring indicator which captures Indigenous households with an end target of reaching 7,070 households.

? **Under Output 2.1, Indicator 3.1.1 Groups supported to sustainably manage natural resources and climate-related risks** captures Indigenous people with an end target of 2,672 people.

? **Under Output 2.2, Indicator 1.1.3 Rural producers accessing CSA production inputs and/or technological packages/ / People benefitting from GEF-financed investments** captures Indigenous people with an end target of 8,432 people.

? **Under Output 2.3, Indicator # of people trained/ exposed to new technologies through the innovation facility** captures Indigenous people with an end target of 500 people

? **Under Output 2.4, Indicator 3.1.2 Persons provided with climate information services** captures Indigenous people with an end target of 14,059 people

Please refer to Annex C Project Results Framework for further details.

Annex G: GEF Budget template

8.10 a) Is the GEF budget template attached and appropriately filled out incl. items such as the executing partner for each budget line?

b) Are the activities / expenditures reasonably and accurately charged to the three identified sources (Components, M&E and PMC)?

c) Are TORs for key project staff funded by GEF grant and/or co-finance attached?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 1, 2026

Yes. All comments have been addressed.

April 23, 2026

a-c) Not yet.

- The budget table is using the correct categories, but the subtotals are missed. Please amend it.

Apr 2, 2026

a-c) Not yet.

- There are still minor differences (\$1) in the project financing amounts, for component 2 and the M&E, when comparing the Project Description Overview Table with the budget provided in Annex G. Please harmonize and update where necessary.

Component 2: Sustainable Livelihoods through Commercialization	Investment	Outcome 2: Adoption of Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) and	Output 2.1: Rural producers' access and adopt climate-smart and	SCCF-A	2,651,490.00	5,955,000.00
Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)						
M&E	Technical Assistance	Outcome 4: Effective M&E framework informs adaptive management of the project.	Output 4.1: A gender and youth responsive M&E framework developed.	GET	75,184.00	

Expenditure Category	Brief Description	Component 1: Community development planning	Component 2: Sustainable livelihoods through Commercialization	Component 3: Policy Support and Knowledge Management	Sub-Total	M&E	PMU	Total (M&E)	(Consulting, EOP, monitoring, audits, from the GET, Annex G)
Grand Total		1,507,000	1,085,490	98,000	2,690,490	75,184	232,000	2,997,674	

- Please consider using the template included in Annex 7 of the Guidelines ? the categories formatting including subtotals must be exactly followed. (Ref: <https://www.thegef.org/documents/project-and-program-cycle>)
- Thank you for sharing the TORs for the "Climate Vulnerability Assessments (CVAs)", but the daily rate and number of days for the consultancy are missing. Please provide these details.

Contractual Services –	Climate Vulnerability Assessments (CVAs) and crop-specific analyses based on climate trends	232 000						232 000	MORDI-TT
------------------------	---	---------	--	--	--	--	--	---------	----------

- GEF appreciates the thorough information shared about ?Agro-met services? and ?Policy scoping studies.? Kindly add a brief description to finalize each entry on the budget table.

Contractual Services – Company	Agro-met services		302 000					302 000	MORDI-TT
International Consultants	Policy Scoping studies			97 000				97 000	MORDI-TT

- GEF will review the budget table again and provide comments if appropriate.

Feb 6, 2026

a-c) Not yet.

- Sources of fund (SCCF-A or GEF TF) and amount indicated in the Project Description Overview section do not match those in the Project Description section and the Budget section. Please kindly review and harmonize the figures in these three sections.
- Please review Appendix A: Indicative Project Budget Template included in the Guidelines on the GEF Project Cycle Policy and include **a sub-totals for each category of expenses**.
- Please provide the **TORs / daily rate / number of days for the consultancy** "Climate Vulnerability Assessments (CVAs)". Also provide more details on what the agro-met services and the policy scoping studies will include. At CEO Approval the budget should provide a good level of understanding of each activity financed through GEF resources.

Contractual Services – Facilitation	Climate Vulnerability Assessments (CVAs) and crop-specific analyses based on climate trends	232 000						232 000	MORDI-TT
Contractual Services – Company	Agro-met services		302 000					302 000	MORDI-TT
International Consultants	Policy Scoping studies			97 000				97 000	MORDI-TT

- GEF will review the budget table again and provide comments if appropriate.

Agency Response

April 29, 2026

The subtotals have been added in the budget table.

These figures have been harmonized

- updated CVAs TORs attached including Agro met services and policy studies details

- addressed
- On the agromet services:

Tonga Meteorological Service (TMS) has developed periodical weather forecasts with good quality with the support of the Pacific Community. However, there's a gap in translating these forecasts to agronomic advice that are meaningful for producers. The proposed project will support the development and roll-out of digital agro-met information and early warning systems established through a clear coordination mechanism between TMS and MAFF. This service will develop agronomic advisory based on the weather forecasts, promoting CSA and alternative livelihood development in the process. There is potential to incorporate location and crop-specific agro-met advisories such as crop calendars, planting and harvesting times, pest and disease warnings and disaster risk reduction measures. By including Tongan language and culturally appropriate communication channels, the service is expected to reach remote and outer island rural communities in a timely and understandable format. TRIP III will also support

improved access to and utilisation of the service throughout Tonga by raising awareness of smallholders on how to access and act on the information. Soil moisture and temperature sensors may be added to weather stations to enhance climate data parameters.?

-

On policy studies:

?The project will support policy and capacity development in conjunction with MEIDECC^[1] concerning environment, biodiversity and climate issues; MAFF regarding the enabling environment and policy framework for food security and agricultural commercialisation; and the DLG regarding decentralisation of development planning. Three policy scoping studies will be undertaken covering the policy mandates of MEIDECC, MAFF and Department of Local Government to identify several (2-4) key policy areas with potential to enhance rural livelihoods, improve environmental integrity and enhance community resilience to multiple challenges. The results of the policy scoping studies will be validated with broader stakeholders. The project will then support further policy analysis and development, strengthening the capacities of MEIDECC, MAFF and the DLG to undertake such work. Opportunities will be sought to integrate biodiversity conservation, climate change and mitigation for land degradation in the policies of MAFF and DLG.?

- CVA TORs attached

^[1] Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications.

Annex H: NGI Relevant Annexes

8.11 a) Does the project provide sufficient detail (indicative term sheet) to take a decision on the following selection criteria: co-financing ratios, financial terms and conditions, and financial additionality? If not, please provide comments.

b) Does the project provide a detailed reflow table to assess the project capacity of generating reflows? If not, please provide comments.

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestN/A

Agency Response

Additional Annexes

9. GEFSEC DECISION

9.1.GEFSEC Recommendation Is the project recommended for approval

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 1, 2026

Yes. All comments have been addressed. This project is recommended for approval.

April 23, 2026

Not yet.

- Please address the remaining comments on core indicators (and results framework, if relevant), focal area allocation, budget, and co-financing.

Apr 2, 2026

Not yet.

- Please address the remaining comments.
- Please confirm if IFAD uses any project document for their internal approval - if they do, it needs to be uploaded to the Portal and circulated for the Council .

Feb 6, 2026

Not yet. Please address the comments above.

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

- Please **report on the implementation of the gender-specific results, including the Gender Action Plan, in PIR, MTR and TE**, in particular, highlighting challenges, lessons learned and best practices, and any adjustments introduced (adaptive management), as applicable.
- Please ensure the close coordination between the GEF Agency, Executing Entity, relevant Ministries, and other stakeholders. It is encouraged to establish a formal coordination mechanism, such as a **project steering committee**.

9.3 Review Dates

1SMSP CEO Approval Response to Secretariat comments

First Review	2/13/2026	3/27/2026
Additional Review (as necessary)	4/2/2026	4/21/2026
Additional Review (as necessary)	4/23/2026	
Additional Review (as necessary)	5/1/2026	
Additional Review (as necessary)		