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Sustainable Land Management in Target Landscapes in Angola's Southwestern Region

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

9798

Countries

Angola

Project Name

Sustainable Land Management in Target Landscapes in Angola's Southwestern Region

Agenices

FAO

Date received by PM

5/30/2019

Review completed by PM

12/5/2019

Program Manager

Jean-Marc Sinnassamy

Focal Area

Land Degradation

Project Type

FSP

PIF □
CEO Endorsement □

Project Design and Financing

1. If there are any changes from that presented in the PIF, have justifications been provided?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

Major changes happened between the concept and the project document that deserve better justification:

- The project name has changed: 1) Please, include a note/letter/message from the Ministry that there is a common agreement on this change. Once the evidence provided, the GEFSEC will update the title in the portal.

- The PIF was a mix of TA and INV at PIF and is now only TA. Please, justify.

- At the same time, the main target was changed from 80,000 ha for four provinces to 400,000 ha on two provinces: is it realistic to reach such target without any direct investment? How are you planning to reach such rate of SLM in two provinces?

- We understand the strategy to catalyze other donors and partners to finance SLM on the ground. However, the failure to obtain letters of cofinancing in cash/in grant is not a good signal. Please, explain.

- Cofinancing in cash/grant from FAO was expected at a height of 5.5 million of US$ at PIF level ($500,000 from FAO, $5 million from a donor agency, under negotiation at PIF level). At CEO endorsement, only $500,000 for project management costs is proposed in-kind, giving the impression that the GEF project is finally a stand-alone project (we take note of the mixed cofinancing from the government). Please, explain why the “negotiations” initiated at PIF level did not materialize?

- Don’t you see a contradiction or a major risk of failure, counting on other donors and partners to finance SLM on the ground (the GEF project now only provides TA) while you were not successful in securing one letter of cash cofinancing in 18 months?

July 16, 2019

Cleared.

Response to Secretariat comments

RE 1.1

Please refer to the uploaded email communication (Angola- Operational Focal Point Comments, dated 04.07.2019) confirming the requested change of project name and the corresponding adjustment of the project scope/area (for technical and strategic reasons)..

RE 1.2

The stronger emphasis on ‘technical assistance’ (TA) at CEO Endorsement stage – and consequently focusing less on ‘investments’ (INV), when compared to the PIF – is a direct result from the PPG’s stakeholder consultations and baseline assessments. Among the main assessments, FAO refers to a thorough baseline finance assessment, which resulted in more clarity on focus and scope of co-related development interventions.

Both the PPG consultations and assessments contributed to firming up the project’s scope, including the specific strategies, measures and the collaboration framework for envisaged SLM dissemination at CEO endorsement stage.

The targeted and specialized TA has been carefully designed to both complement and work in synergy with the co-related investments – whether the concerned projects, programs and initiatives currently constitute a 'financial baseline', provide co-financing to the GEF project, or make up contributions to the set of 'supportive approaches and tools' that have been prioritized to underpin the project strategy.

As described in the ProDoc, the project's implementation strategy is based on the application of multiple technical and methodological frameworks for which the proposed TA plays a pivotal role. They include primarily the following (refer to ProDoc sub-section 'Supportive approaches and tools' under section 1.3.1 for descriptions):

a) - FAO's Agroecological Zoning: FAO AEZ

b) -Agro-Pastoral Field Schools and Farmer Field Schools: AP/FFS

c) - Green Negotiated Territorial Development: GreeNTD

d) -Land Degradation Neutrality: LDN (and LDN Target Setting Program: LDN TSP)

The above-listed frameworks have their own methodological approaches, which will be carefully adapted to the situation ground and integrated to the proposed strategy in a coherent way, allowing them to reinforce the pursuit of SLM goals by maximizing the TA's impact in tandem with concurrent investments in the target areas. These investments have been duly identified, described and their impact assessed in ProDoc section 1.2.2 'Baseline Initiatives' and sub-section 'Technical Integration with relevant projects' (under section 1.3.1).

This is worth mentioning because the original project strategy, as it had been identified at PIF stage, foresaw some degree of upscaling of AP/FFSs in terms of their number and geographical coverage. Such upscaling would only be possible through investment – reason why the PIF had tagged "INV" in the classification of GEF finance typology. In the current stage, this investment no longer needs to come from GEF funds.

FAO has been in dialogue with all relevant partners that are active at the national and local levels, and which would be able to leverage such investments and ensure coordination on the ground.

In fact, the dialogue with relevant partners started at PIF stage and revolved around the afore-mentioned 'supportive approaches and tools' as well as the 'technical Integration with relevant projects'. Back then, several investment heavy initiatives were in the process of being confirmed.

The dialogue with partners was intensified during the PPG stage. The aim was to retain the level of impact that had been foreseen at the PIF stage, considering the project's limited GEF budget -- and irrespective whether those investments would be reflected in the project as co-financing. As a result, a feasible collaboration framework with other projects, programs and initiatives had been prioritized.

Partners such as the World Bank and IFAD, which have made – and continue to make – significant investments in the agricultural sector in Angola, have participated in PPG events and were duly consulted. The dialogue with these partners with respect to synergies and collaboration is expected to continue during the FSP's implementation.

The leverage that the project's focus on technical assistance is expected to bring about will be ensured through close collaboration with both baseline and co-related initiatives. This will maximize incremental benefits offered by the project to both existing and upcoming investments.

Conversely, the project will also help consolidate and improve an already existing network of AP/FFSs in the project's focus area, created and sustained by the GoA and several partner and baseline initiatives. It will do so by developing the dimension of AEZ-based SLM and by mainstreaming LDN indicators into the work on the ground.

Together, a suite of strategies, approaches, measures and tools are expected to strengthen the catalytic impact that FAO's proposed TA will bring to the Angolan development context and across baseline initiatives and investments. This TA has been designed to enhance the government's capacity to deliver services related to agroecology, SLM and agricultural extension. Capacity development and enhancement will focus to a large extent on CETAC, GABAC and other on national partner institutions that will be engaged in the project.

Finally, PPG studies indicated that the success of the activities under Components 2 and 3 would depend on a relatively advanced degree of maturity of AP/FFSs, therefore requiring a network of communities that collected experience with the approach for at least a couple of years. This was one of the baseline-related factors that contributed to the refinement of the project's geographical focus area (demo sites) under Components 2 and 3.

All of the elements mentioned in this response are duly reflected in the Project's Strategy. Refer e.g. to:

ProDoc Section 1.3.1, subsections:

'Supportive approaches and tools'

'Technical Integration with relevant projects'.

RE 1.3

Yes, it is realistic for three main reasons:

FIRST, there was a change in the project's geographic focus from southwestern to central Angola. A change in the calculated area coverage would be inevitable, because the area for target sites had only been indicatively, roughly and conservatively calculated during the PIF stage.

At the CEO endorsement stage, the targeted ‘demonstration landscapes’ were confirmed, and demonstration sites proposed. Several parameters for landscapes and sites have been assessed. This includes the total area coverage, which is now more precisely calculated and has resulted in the 400,000 ha for demonstration landscapes.

The SECOND reason refers more specifically to the descriptions that relate to the **‘tiered and nested approach’**, as it refers to: (a) spatial planning, and (b) landscape-level management for SLM. Both (a) and (b) may apply at different scales in different contexts. This requires differentiated approaches to spatial planning and landscape-level management for SLM. Such approaches have been duly reflected in the project strategy at CEO endorsement stage.

The ‘nested approach’ has been prioritized in the project strategy, as designed at CEO endorsement stage, after different ‘considerations’ and 'entry points’ with respect to the application of spatial planning and decision-making tools had been analyzed in the context of managing landscapes and land uses for SLM.

The relevant content that describes the nested approach is included in two boxes in FAO’s ProDoc, where the GEF Secretariat will find a rational and scientifically based explanation on how the project will handle and integrate the different scales:

ProDoc Box 2. The tiered nested approach to spatial planning and landscape-level management for SLM;

and

ProDoc Box 3. Three tiers within the nested approach to landscape level management applied in the project.

What is encompassed in the 400,000 ha of demonstration landscapes is precisely described in ProDoc para 43:

“43. For the demonstrative integration of AEZ-based SLM in planning and decision-making, this project has selected specific areas of intervention located in Huambo and Benguela Provinces called demonstration landscapes (or demo landscapes), and within which the work on the ground will be developed under Component 2. The three selected demo landscapes comprise of: (1) the communes of Alto Hama, in the municipality of Londuimbali; (2) the rural commune of Bailundo in the municipality with the same name; and (3) the commune of Chongoroi in the municipality with same name. The communes of Alto Hama and Bailundo are in Huambo Province and Chongoroi is in Benguela Province. The three selected demo landscapes have a combined approximate productive landscape of some 410,000 hectares, thus divided: site 1 with 57,000 hectares; site 2 with 269,000 ha and site 3 with 84,000 ha (more exact numbers in the ProDoc, Table 2). As of 2014 the selected communes respectively harbored a rural population of: (site 1) 9,000; (site 2) 25,000 (site 3) 50,000 – totaling 84,000 people and with an average of 53% women among them.”

In light of the numbers shown in ProDoc Table 2, it is worth highlighting that 42% of the targeted 400,000-hectare landscapes include rangelands. Because rangelands tend to be more sparsely populated than croplands, management approaches would naturally focus on larger areas, without necessarily multiplying the needed investment to achieve global environmental benefits. This is why the increase in area coverage is generally considered realistic.

More specifically on how different ‘tiers’ of landscape-level management can be simultaneously covered – as well as encompassed within each other in a ‘nested’ manner – FAO highlights the project’s GEF strategic alignment. Different sizes of landscape areas are aligned in a differentiated way to GEF strategies termed as ‘LD3’ and ‘LD1’. Refer to Part I, Table A (‘Focal Area Strategy Framework and Program’) of the CEO Endorsement form, where the target of 400,000 ha has been prioritized as follows:

Outcome 3.2: Integrated landscape management practices adopted by local communities based on gender sensitive needs.

Focal Area Indicator 3.2: Application of integrated natural resource management (INRM) practices in wider landscapes.

-> Improved practices apply in approx. 400,000 ha of demo landscapes within the Wider Landscape.

A THIRD and final reason why the change from 80,000 ha to 400,000 ha is both realistic and justified, refers to the overall project strategy, as prioritized at CEO endorsement stage, and the catalytic impact that it is expected to have across baseline initiatives and investments. These elements have already been thoroughly described in the response provided to the point above.

Overall, considering the size of the GEF’s investment ($2.6 million), a landscape of 400,000 ha (as described in the ProDoc paragraph 43 further up) is a balanced target for the project, which proposes to manage them for SLM at different scales and through differentiated approaches according to the scale, the tiered intervention and the approach required.

RE 1.4

The confirmation of the project’s co-financing was based on a thorough financial baseline assessment and intensive consultations with partners that took place during the PPG. The results of these consultations and assessments for the co-financing are included in the ProDoc, Section 1.2.2 Baseline Initiatives and in other related sections that are cross-referenced in Section 1.2.2.

In fact, both donors and partners (Government included) will be making sizable investments on the ground, as the baseline finance assessment has demonstrated.

The framework for collaboration with donor financed projects is thoroughly described in the ProDoc. Refer e.g. to ProDoc ‘section 1.3.1 Project Strategy’ and the two key sub-sections: ‘Technical Integration with relevant projects’ and ‘Supportive approaches and tools’ where the collaboration with relevant investments is thoroughly presented.

Some of the co-related initiatives listed and described in the above-mentioned sections provide baseline finance to the project, others not.

Regardless, the GoA had prioritized co-financing the project from a suite of national programs of public investment, rather than from external donors stated in the GEF OFP confirmation email (annexed, dated 04.07.2019). This does not mean that there is a contradiction or an added risk, on the contrary, it strengthens ownership and national commitment.

For information on the mentioned national programs of public investment, FAO makes reference to ProDoc Section 1.2.2 (subsection 'Contribution from the General State Budget (OGE)', and in particular in ProDoc 'Table 5. Governmental investment baseline from the National Development Plan (PDN) 2018-2022'). Table 5 shows that both the baseline and co-financing includes relevant public investments from MINAMB (through GABAC and CETAC under it) and from MINAGRIF.

A total co-financing from the GoA, in the order of $17 million, and which is 42% larger than the $12 million foreseen at PIF stage, can be said underpin the project's GEF investment at CEO endorsement stage. This should be seen as a good sign.

RE 1.5

The response to comment 1.5 is provided together with comment 1.6 below.

RE 1.6

The project's confirmed co-financing increased from US$ 12M (which had been proposed at the PIF stage) to US$ 15M at CEO Endorsement stage. This is a 25% increase vis-à-vis the amount at PIF stage and it should be seen as a success.

In light of the level and composition of the co-financing at CEO endorsement stage, the actual need for FAO to step in and co-finance the project with cash has decreased. It decreased to the point that FAO's input was considered to produce better results, by complementing the project management costs through added technical assistance.

In the responses further up (see responses to comments 1.2 and 1.3), FAO demonstrated that a dialogue with all relevant partners that are active at the national and local levels had been conducted during the PPG and that it achieved material success, both in refining the project strategy and in its leverage.

This dialogue included partners such as the World Bank and IFAD, which are making significant investments in the agricultural sector in Angola. Interventions from these partners have been incorporated in the baseline finance.

FAO has also shown in the mentioned responses that, through collaboration frameworks and in synergy with the co-related investments – including both funding from donor partners and public investment – a catalytic impact can be expected from the project across baseline initiatives and co-financing investments.

Public investment from the GoA is a significant part of both baseline and co-financing. The fact that the GoA had prioritized co-financing mostly from national programs of public investment is not necessarily contradictory nor is it an added risk to the project, on the contrary, such a strategy strengthens ownership and national commitment. This view is corroborated by a letter from the GEF OFP (annexed, dated 04.07.2019).

FAO would like to highlight the content of ProDoc Table 4 ('Baseline Finance ($M), Leveraged ($M) and Total Co-financing ($): Overview per Source and Component'). Table 4 shows a baseline investment of US$100 million, which includes both donour financed projects and public investment.

Besides the public investment from the GoA, FAO also highlights the following baseline finance initiatives listed in ProDoc Table 4 with thorough cross references:

- *Row #5) WB PDAC/CADP - Program in Angola on Agriculture, investments since 2017, at $21.0 million contributing to the baseline;*
- *Row #6) IFAD SREP - Smallholder Resilience Enhancement Project, investment period 2019-2025, totaling $12.0 million as baseline;*
- *Row #7) IFAD-FAO ARP - Agricultural Recovery Project, investment period 2018-2025, reaching $7.6 million in baseline finance;*
- *Row #8) AFDB Agric Value Chains – Support to Sustainable Development & Growth, investments since 2019, and considered as a minimum at $12.0 million as baseline; and*
- *Rows #9) Baseline initiatives, whose assessed values currently add up to $3 million -- likely more once implementation is rolled out – and including: (9a) Other Programs: AFD Small-Grants (2019-2022); (9b) Other Programs: NL DSS and Rural Fin Projects (2019-2022); and 9c) Other Programs: SASSCAL-CETAC Project (2019-2022).*

Further to the justification herein, FAO would like to highlight that there was a slight mistake in the completion of Table C of the CEO Endorsement Request: 'C. Sources of co-financing for the project by name and by type'. This has now been corrected and perfectly congruent with the co-financing letters provided. It should have been "Grant" for the $1.5M from MINAMB OGE CETAC and "In-Kind" for the $500K from the same. In the corrected scenario for the co-financing, 93% of the project's co-financing is classified as "Grant". Even in the previously presented scenario, a total of 87% of the co-financing obtained for the project was indeed "in cash", i.e. "grants".

The bulk project's co-financing was indeed derived from public investments from the government, but it represents $14M out of the $15M presented as total co-financing at CEO endorsement stage.

Public investment from the GoA linked to the baseline represents less than half of the overall baseline finance (i.e. 43%) shown in ProDoc Table 4. ('Baseline Finance ($M), Leveraged ($M) and Total Co-financing ($): Overview per Source and Component'). The remainder of the baseline investments comes from donor partner investments.

Public investment is detailed in ProDoc Table 6 ('Projected Public Investments from the PDN: OGE Baseline summary per Component and Project Year (PY)'). The amounts of these investments were assessed conservatively from three national programs under MINAMB and MINAGRIF. Baseline amount detailed in Table 6 reached $42.3M for the duration of the project. To this amount, CETAC's own recurrent institutional budget adds $2.5 million more to the baseline finance (as shown in ProDoc Tabel 4.

Therefore, it would not do justice to the PPG efforts to mention that negotiations initiated at PIF level "did not materialize" or that there was "failure to obtain letters of co-financing in cash/in grant". Along the same lines the project is not in any way "a stand-alone initiative", given that it is anchored on a solid baseline of both donor partner initiatives and public investment.

2. Is the project structure/ design appropriate to achieve the expected outcomes and outputs?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

See item 1 on TA and INV. Please, justify.

July 16, 2019

Cleared.

Response to Secretariat comments

2.1 See clarification above (1.2)

3. Is the financing adequate and does the project demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objective?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

This point needs clarification.

- Without secured cofinancing in grants to finance SLM, we wonder if it is realistic to propose a target of 400,000 ha for the two provinces?

- We understand the project will provide knowledge and training, but how much is needed per farmer to buy seeds, and eventually fertilizers and tools to implement SLM, and transfrom 400,000 ha?

July 16, 2019

Cleared.

Response to Secretariat comments

RE 3.1

The justification for the proposed target of 400,000 ha in demonstration landscapes where SLM applies, is provided in related responses further up, as well as the relationship with the co-financing, which the GEF Secretariat will note, is primarily in grant (see in addition response provided under section 1.3).

RE 3.2

As for the second part of the comment, FAO considers that buying seeds and fertilizer for farmers is in no way a guarantee that land-use and land-management will be sustainable -- i.e. it is not a pre-condition for SLM. In fact, a strategy based on the purchase of seeds and fertilizer for farmers -- and on their behalf -- may even be counter-productive if sustainability / SLM is the goal.

In addition, two important facts relating to the project's context should be kept in mind:

(1) Of the 400,000 ha targeted by the project as demonstration landscapes, 42% is rangeland.

(2) Along the same lines, not all of the project end beneficiaries are farmers (or are 'farmers at 100% of the time'). Much of the landscapes in Chongoroi sites were classified as rangelands, because a large percentage of land-users practice nomadic pastoralism.

Therefore, the distribution of seeds and fertilizers to pastoralists, without taking their current land-use strategies or knowledge of modern agricultural techniques into consideration, could indeed lead to land degradation, in particular, in arid areas although considered as rangelands.

In addition, FAO refers to Part I, Table A (Focal Area Strategy Framework and Program) of the CEO Endorsement form concerning the target of 400,000 ha for demonstration landscapes, as well as to other explanations further up concerning; (i) differentiated strategies with respect to surface area coverage and the nested & tiered approach to landscape level management, and (ii) linkages to the GEF-6 focal area strategy. This is thus summarized in the referred Table A:

=> Under LD3 [Objective 3]: Reduce pressures on natural resources by managing competing land uses in broader landscapes; Program 4: Scaling-up Sustainable Land Management through Landscape Approach:

==

Outcome 3.1: Support mechanisms for SLM in wider landscapes established

Focal Area Indicator 3.1: Demonstration results strengthening cross-sector integration of SLM.

Various demonstration results / The AEZ support mechanism is fully consolidated and includes 3 demo landscapes, with 10 SLM plans delivered, and the continued integration of SML across the Wider Landscapes, with 6.1 million ha, as well as in the 3 demo landscapes, through FFSs/APFs, as well as through targeted capacity building of extension services.

=> Under LD3 [Objective 3]: Reduce pressure on natural resources by managing competing land uses in broader landscapes; Program 4: Scaling-up Sustainable Land Management through a Landscape Approach:

==

Outcome 3.2: Integrated landscape management practices adopted by local communities based on gender sensitive needs.

Focal Area Indicator 3.2: Application of integrated natural resource management (INRM) practices in wider landscapes.

Improved practices apply in approx. 400,000 ha of demo landscapes within the Wider Landscape

=> LD-1 [Objective 1]: Maintain or improve the flow of agro-ecosystem services to sustain food production and livelihoods; Program 1: Agro-ecological Intensification

==

Outcome 1.2: Functionality and cover of agro-ecosystems maintained

Focal Area Indicator 9.1: Land area under effective management in production systems with improved vegetative cover.

Estimated projections for micro landscapes:

- 6,881 ha of agricultural lands

- 7,800 ha of rangelands

Total estimation of -14,681 ha

4. Does the project take into account potential major risks, including the consequences of climate change, and describes sufficient risk response measures? (e.g., measures to enhance climate resilience)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

- Within the 18 months of project development, FAO did not succeed in obtaining a letter of cofinancing from other donors and partners: the risks of this project to stay a stand-alone project, disconnected from other initiatives should be weighted, with mitigation measures.

July 16, 2019

Cleared.

Response to Secretariat comments

RE 4.1

It is inaccurate to state that the project is a "stand-alone initiative." The framework for collaboration with partners is thoroughly described in the ProDoc. The project's incremental reasoning is the consolidation of this strategy.

In addition, a similar comment has been responded to under Topic 1.5. The point made in the conclusion of the response is that the project is not in any way "a stand-alone initiative", given that it is anchored on a solid baseline of both donor partner initiatives and public investment.

Refer otherwise to ProDoc, '*Section 1.3.1 Project Strategy'* and under it, the two key sub-sections: '*Technical Integration with relevant projects' and 'Supportive approaches and tools*' where the collaboration with the related initiative is thoroughly presented.

Refer to various ProDoc tables mentioned in the response to Comment 1.5, namely:

ProDoc, Table 4 ('Baseline Finance ($M), Leveraged ($M) and Total Co-financing ($): Overview per Source and Component').

5. Is co-financing confirmed and evidence provided?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

- From a general point of view, it is very disappointing to not find cofinancing in grants from other agencies and from FAO, as announced at PIF level. Having only cofinancing from Ministries, and in-kind cofinancing from FAO for the management costs, significantly reduces the ambition of the project.

- The letter from the Ministry of Environment mentions a different project title (Central region vs. South Western region): please provide a confirmation from the GEF OFP that there is a common understanding of where the project will take place; or provide revised letters of cofinancing. This change of project title is not a light change, as the project is now restricted to the Benguela and Huambo provinces, and three other Provinces were removed (Namibe, Cunene, and Huila).

- The letter from the Ministry of Agriculture also mentions the Central region and not the Southern Western region. Please either provide a confirmation by email from the GEF OFP that there is a common understanding with the Ministry of Agriculture of where the project will take place, or provide a revised letter of cofinancing.

- For the letter of cofinancing from the Ministry of Agriculture, please provide an informal translation in English.

July 16, 2019

Cleared.

Response to Secretariat comments

RE 5.1

As indicated, the response to a related comment (RE 1.5 and RE 1.6 – TOGETHER), it is not correct to state that the project's co-financing is only in-kind.

In the first submission, there was indeed a slight mistake in the completion of Table C of the CEO Endorsement Request: 'C. Sources of co-financing for the project by name and by type'. Yet, even in the co-financing scenario, erroneously presented in the first submission, a total of 87% of the co-financing obtained for the project would have been "grants", which counts as "in cash".

The mentioned mistake has now been corrected and reflects in the July re-submission. Table C is now perfectly congruent with the co-financing letters that are appended to the project's request for CEO endorsement.

Concerning the correction made: The US$ 1.5M from MINAMB OGE CETAC should have been correctly labeled as "Grant" and the US$ 500K as "in-kind". In the corrected scenario for the co-financing, 93% of the project's co-financing is classified as "Grant".

To further add elements to the response for what an apparent reduction in "the ambition [level] of the project" is, FAO would stress the results of PPG consultations, of the baseline assessment carried out and of the resulting refinement process vis-à-vis the overall project strategy. Two core changes occurred when transitioning from a PIF to a ProDoc for CEO endorsement. These changes are described earlier (in response to other comments) and they are summarized below:

The first noteworthy change is a narrowing down of the original focus area of implementation as proposed in the PIF. From the initial set of provinces of Namibe, Cunene, Huila and Benguela, the project focus areas have now been restricted to Benguela and Huambo. As this reduced area corresponds more with "Central" than "Southwest" Angola. This reduction of geographical scope implied a slight change of the wording in both the project's titles and its objectives.

This narrowing down of the project's geographical focus is justified in the project's scope and reasoning. It is based on ecological, institutional, land-use, and baseline/technical arguments. All the arguments are presented in detail in the FAO ProDoc -- refer to ProDoc, Section 1 (Relevance) and Section 2 (Feasibility). The focus on Benguela/Huambo also corresponds with a better alignment with the environmental agenda of the Government of Angola, whose representatives manifested a clear preference for a more focused area of implementation, and which ideally included the institution CETAC. The decision made good sense for FAO, which proceeded to adjusting the project design to the new government priorities. Due diligence on capacity issues, projects risks and safeguards were duly re-considered. In the project strategy as presented at CEO endorsement stage, CETAC is slated to host the technical team responsible for conducting the Agroecological Zoning (AEZ) as it is proposed. However, it should be taken in consideration that the scope of the AEZ system, to be developed through Component 1, remains national (e.g. the AEZ system will be designed in a way that will enable its scaling up to a national scope, as well as including further tools and functions) and that the reduction of the implementation area applies only to Components 2 and 3.

The second noteworthy change relates to the way the strategy to support and disseminate SLM through AP/FFSs is approached. As identified in the PIF, the original strategy foresaw some degree of upscaling of AP/FFSs in terms of their number and geographical reach. Project development during the PPG opted to adopt a cost efficient strategy that will be able to retain the level of impact foreseen at the PIF stage, but within the limitations imposed by the project's limited resources. This will be done by developing a closer fit with baseline and co-related initiatives, so as to maximize the incremental benefits offered by the project. Conversely, the project will also help consolidate and improve an already existing network of AP/FFSs in the project's focus area, created and sustained by the GoA and several baseline initiatives. It will do so by developing the dimension of AEZ-based SLM and by mainstreaming LDN indicators into the work on the ground. In addition, PPG studies suggested that the success of the activities under Components 2 and 3 may depend on a relatively advanced degree of maturity of AP/FFSs, therefore requiring a network of communities that have had experience with the approach for at least a couple of years. This was one of the baseline-related factors that contributed to the above-mentioned narrowing down of the project's geographical focus area under Components 2 and 3.

RE 5.2

See confirmation and clarification provided by the Angola GEF OFP (annexed, dated 04.07.2019).

RE 5.3

See confirmation and clarification by Angola GEF OFP (annexed, dated 04.07.2019)

RE 5.4

An informal translation of MINAGRI's letter of co-financing has been uploaded as well.

6. Are relevant tracking tools completed?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

- We take note of the ambitious target of 400,000 ha of SLM in two provinces. However, explanation would be welcome on how this number was calculated.

- LDN indicators are mentioned in the result framework: could it be possible to include carbon gains and GHG emissions reduction in the project targets? If baseline data are available, please include a value under the indicator 6.

July 16, 2019

Thanks for the clarification. Please, be prepared to include carbon monitoring at point, as it is one of the indicators needed for LDN.

Response to Secretariat comments

RE 6.1

Reference is made to ProDoc, section 1.3.4 The global Environmental Benefits, part of which is transcribed herein (paragraph 227):

"227. The design of the project strategy prioritized a nested, multi-scale and participatory approach to spatial planning and to the integration of SLM into prevalent agricultural practices. Through this approach, the project will contribute to stabilizing land use and reversing negative land degradation trends within selected landscapes, directly and indirectly:

** within the 6.1 million-ha Wider Landscape of Huambo and Benguela, and*

** within 409,699 ha of multi-use demo-landscapes in the municipalities of Londuimbali, Bailundo and Chongoroi – including at least five 'production systems' – (i) agriculture; (ii) rangeland; (iii) pastoral; (iv) forestry; and (v) mixed systems – allowing the project to demonstrate its approach on the ground both within a predominantly agricultural zone and predominant pastoral / rangeland area.*

See also response 1.3

RE 6.2

Baseline data on carbon is currently scant and based only on remote sensing data applied to polygons that correspond with the targeted landscapes. The carbon indicators refer to the maintenance of the current status quo in terms of Tons CO2 e/ Ha for above ground biomass and for soil carbon. It would be too ambitious vis-à-vis the project strategy and the current level of data availability to include measures of GHG emissions reduction or refer to actual gains in carbon through sequestration.

The actual baseline for sub-indicator 6a mentions that the assessment of carbon was mostly a desk-based exercise – i.e. not ground-truthed. Reference is made to ProDoc section 1.3.4 The global Environmental Benefits, part of which is transcribed herein (paragraph 228):

“228. Given the project’s limited scope and duration, halting and reversing land degradation means by and large maintaining the current status quo in terms of above Tons CO2 e/ Ha of above ground biomass (60.7) and soil carbon (72.6). As the AEZ system develops, other parameters can come into play and a more precise measurements of land degradation will be refined.”

For the same reason -- and in addition to uncertainties in the data -- no indicator concerning carbon had been included in the Results Framework. FAO would prefer to leave carbon measures out of the Results Framework for now, as they would add little value to the project in the absence of a precise baseline.

At the same, FAO would like to provide assurances to the GEF that carbon measurements are relevant, and they will be on focus during implementation. As the AEZ system develops, more precise measures of land degradation -- and of LDN more specifically -- will be refined. This is foreseen under Component 1.

Other references to carbon can be found in ProDoc Table 7. Incremental Cost Reasoning, as follows:

* Carbon sequestration: relevant parameters remotely monitored on 6.1 million hectares (plus prescribed ground-truthing in areas to be defined), more specifically:

(i) Above ground biomass is maintained, with +/-10% fluctuations due to natural climatic variability, at approximately:

41.1 Tons CO2 e/ Ha for Alto Hama

40.8 Tons CO2 e/ Ha for Bailundo

80.2 Tons CO2 e/ Ha for Chongorói

==================================

54.0 Tons CO2 e/ Ha mean for the three combined

(ii) Soil Carbon is maintained: ~72.6 Tons CO2 e/ Ha (averages)

IN TOTAL

54.0 Tons CO2 e/ Ha of above ground biomass and 72.6 Tons CO2 e/ Ha of soil carbon maintained (biomass and soil carbon loss stabilized)

7. Only for Non-Grant Instrument: Has a reflow calendar been presented?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement NA

Response to Secretariat comments

8. Is the project coordinated with other related initiatives and national/regional plans in the country or in the region?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

- On one hand, the reasoning of the project needs a good coordination with other initiatives and projects. On the other hand, the absence of letter of cofinancing from other partners seems a problem. Please, clarify the level of dialogue and cooperation with other funds and initiatives.

- FAO is the GEF Agency selected by Angola under the GEF7 Drylands Program. A word about how the GEF6 and GEF7 projects are going to work together for complementarity would be welcome.

July 16, 2019

Cleared.

Response to Secretariat comments

RE 8.1

FAO does not see the absence of letters of co-financing from partners as “a problem”, but rather as an advantage and a risk reduction strategy (refer to clarification from GEF OFP, dated 04.07.2019)

FAO has been in dialogue with all relevant partners that are active on both the national and local levels. Some of these partners are able to leverage investments that will complement the project strategy. FAO has taken a suite of steps to ensure coordination of initiatives with these partners throughout the PPG process – regardless of whether investment from donor partners would be reflected in the project’s co-financing or not.

The development of a collaboration framework which included both donor partners and the government had been prioritized. The dialogue with development partners had started at PIF stage, when several investment heavy initiatives were still in the process of being confirmed. Some were concluded during the PPG stage and information on these initiatives has been included in the ProDoc as either baseline investment and/or as initiatives with which the project will seek synergies and collaboration.

More specifically, partners such as the World Bank and IFAD, which are making significant investments in the agricultural sector in Angola, were invited and effectively participated in the PPG events. The dialogue with these partners, with respect to synergies and collaboration, is expected to continue during the FSP’s implementation.

We highlight in ProDoc, Table 4 (‘Baseline Finance ($M), Leveraged ($M) and Total Co-financing ($): Overview per Source and Component’). It shows a baseline investment of $100 million, which includes the above-mentioned public investment and underpins the project in its baseline context. Besides the public investment, FAO also highlights the following baseline finance initiatives listed in

ProDoc, Table 4 with thorough cross references to other tables, explanatory content and external links:

- *Row #5) WB PDAC/CADP - Program in Angola on Agriculture, investments since 2017, at $21.0 million contributing to the baseline;*
- *Row #6) IFAD SREP - Smallholder Resilience Enhancement Project, investment period 2019-2025, totaling $12.0 million as baseline;*
- *Row #7) IFAD-FAO ARP - Agricultural Recovery Project, investment period is 2018-2025, reaching $7.6 million in baseline finance;*
- *Row #8) AFDB Agric Value Chains – Support to Sustainable Development & Growth, investments since 2019, and considered as a minimum at $12.0 million as baseline; and*
- *Rows #9) Baseline initiatives, whose assessed values currently add up to $3 million -- likely more once implementation is rolled out – and including: (9a) Other Programs: AFD Small-Grants (2019-2022); (9b) Other Programs: NL DSS and Rural Fin Projects (2019-2022); and 9c) Other Programs: SASSCAL-CETAC Project (2019-2022).*

Refer also to ProDoc, 'Section 1.3.1 Project Strategy' and under it, two key sub-sections: 'Technical Integration with relevant projects' and 'Supportive approaches and tools' where the collaboration with related initiative is thoroughly presented.

See in addition: ProDoc, Table 3. Baseline Finance: List with Descriptions and Co-financing from Baseline ($M)

RE 8.2

It was not possible to include in the first submission references to the GEF7 project for Angola under the Drylands Sustainable Land Management IP because of the timing of submissions. Currently it is and a new box has been added to ProDoc page 68.

Given the choice of 'geographies' for the GEF7 pipeline project for Angola under the Drylands Sustainable Land Management IP, there is excellent scope for collaboration.

As explained further up (RE 5.1), both from a technical and strategic alignment points of view, the change in geographic focus in this project as observed between PIF and ProDoc stages made good sense when the decision was made. It makes even more sense now, given the content and 'selected geographies' for Angola's new GEF7 project, which has been recently approved by the GEF, would otherwise have been an overlap.

Slight changes to the ProDoc currently mention the GEF-7 project in ProDoc, *section 'Technical Integration with relevant projects' (under section 1.1.3).* It reads as follows:

"A new GEF-7 FAO child project was approved for Angola under the GEF's Impact Program titled '**IP SFM DRYLANDS'.** The child projects title is:

'Land and natural resource degradation neutrality and community vulnerability reduction in selected Miombo and Mopane Ecoregions of Angola (Okavango and Cunene River Basin) '

The new project will promote sustainable and resilient land use practices across productive landscapes in the Miombo and Mopane ecoregions of Angola.

A focus on Okavango and Cunene river basins and on Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) principles are part and parcel of the project's objective.

Three technical components are foreseen: (1) Effective governance support on SLM and SFM in the targeted Miombo and Mopane landscape; (2) Scaling up SLM and SFM best practices at landscape level and with a transboundary focus; and (3) Effective knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation.

Collaboration will be sought on the ground and through the participation of CETAC, once the AEZ Unit is fully functional, to assist with assessments and AEZ analysis, which include LDN but is not restricted to it.

Overall AEZ results will be substantial building blocks for integrated landscape planning (by taking climate projections and suitable land use opportunities into account). Moreover, the dryland intervention will benefit from the work developed in both demo sites and demo landscapes – i.e. with regards to 'upscaling' – as well as 'outscaling' – evidence-based best SLM practices. Both projects will pioneer such approaches in Angola."

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

Addressed.

However, please confirm the definition of project beneficiaries you used.

The number of beneficiaries (1,500) seem very low in comparison with the expected target of 400,000 ha under SLM, especially in a country where the average size of farms is around 1.5 ha. Please, clarify.

July 16, 2019

Cleared.

Response to Secretariat comments

RE 9.1

There will be direct and indirect beneficiaries in the project, which are segmented according to the different tiers encompassed by the project and the nested approach to scale. For a reference to the 'tiered and nested approach' that permeates the project strategy, see response to Comment 1.5.

The definition of project beneficiaries is presented in a structured way in the Results Framework, Indicator 1, which is transcribed below in full with explanations in brackets for the ease of reference:

“Indicator #1) Number of project beneficiaries, of which women:

1a) Indirect beneficiaries in Wider Landscape (provincial level):

/Huambo (rural communes only)

/Benguela (no coastal municipalities only, rural communes)”

[EXPLANATION: Sub-indicator 1a refers to the population of rural communes within all municipalities in Huambo province and in all of the non-coastal municipalities in Benguela province. Rural communes have been defined by default in the 2014 Census as the non-urban ones. The count of the targeted population for sub-indicator 1a, refer to ProDoc, Table 1. The Wider Landscape: Overview of the resident rural population per municipality. The indirect beneficiaries of the project at the level of the Wider Landscape are slated to benefit from the interventions under Component 1, namely through the development of the AEZ system and the corelated national capacity to produce useful AEZ products, which will be developed by the project within CETAC (see ProDoc, Figure 7). The Focus Zone and the Wider Landscape within the national geographical context]

“1b) Indirect beneficiaries in demo landscapes: rural population of selected communes:

/ Alto Hama (Londuimbali)

/ Bailundo (Bailundo)

/ Chongoroi (Chongoroi)”

[EXPLANATION: Sub-indicator 1b refers to the population in the rural communes encompassed by the demo landscapes. At this level, benefits are also indirect, to the extent that SLM strategies foreseen under Component 2 will apply to target landscapes with a likely focus on municipal level (SLM Plans under Output 2.1) and at the level of communes, as well as at the micro-level (A network of AP/FFSs under Output 2.2), which are by default nested in the level above. As for the definition of demo landscapes, included in ProDoc, Para 43, which is transcribed in full in the response to Comment 1.3. See in addition Box 6 (On the training program for land-use decision making at community-level) for additional explanations.]

“1c) Direct beneficiaries in demo sites: population of selected communities served by AP/FFSs”

[EXPLANATION: This tier refers to the 1,500 people that compose the assessed direct beneficiary population, and which corresponds with the current count of family farmers assisted through AP/FFSs. The number of 1,500 is a conservative estimate. During the project inception, a thorough identification of the active FFS/APFSs should take place. During the PPG phase direct beneficiaries were assessed by sampling, considering the dynamic nature of the level of stage of activation of FFS/APFSs). The estimate of 52% as women is congruent with census data and data from the 2015/16 databases maintained by the RETESA Project and MOSAP Projects].

“1d) Direct beneficiaries of capacity building programs other than FFS/APFS (including staff from extension services and public institutions, technicians, academics, decision makers and entrepreneurs)”

[EXPLANATION: This cut is a narrower set of direct beneficiaries that are referred to in Output 2.3 (A broad training program focused on SLM). A target number of 300 people by project end, of which a minimum of 25% will be women, is considered a minimally realistic estimate for this segment of beneficiaries. Explanations are provided in ProDoc, Box 6 (On the training program for land-use decision making at community-level).]

RE 9.2

The number is considered adequate for the projects, given the 3-progned project strategy, which focuses on AEZ under Component 1 (and dedicates the needed finance for it) and on finance under Component 3 (with a limited budget that should bring leverage). Only Component 2 can be said to include 'interventions on the ground' benefiting communities, government officials and extensionists (directly and indirectly), and also within a limited but well targeted budget.

Therefore, only 'demonstration' activities in selected 'demonstration sites' (different and much smaller than 'demonstration landscapes') would be feasible as a complement to the SLM planning foreseen under Component 2.

More specifically, part of the strategy for Component 2 includes:
"Based on these SLM plans, willing local beneficiaries who are members of AP/FFSs within demonstration landscapes, of whom at least 40% will be women, will be assisted by the project towards the adoption and integration of SLM practices at the micro-landscape level in local land-use management."

The count of 'INDIRECT' beneficiary population at the level of demo landscapes has the basis of the argument in ProDoc, para 43:

"[...] As of 2014 the selected communes respectively harbored a rural population of: (site 1) 9,000; (site 2) 25,000 (site 3) 50,000 – totaling 84,000 people and with an average of 53% women among them.

[Footnote: With the current population growth rate in Angola, the population within these sites may reach 100,000 people by project end.]"

The reference to the estimated population in micro-landscapes (demo sites) is presented in Para 239, Section 1.3.4 The global Environmental Benefits – transcribed herein:

"239. The targets in terms of functionality and cover of agro-ecosystems will be achieved by supporting at least 1,500 farmers in the project area to develop their capacities in SLM and in the rehabilitation of degraded land areas. The capacitation of existing AP/FFSs and communities for SLM will ensure the sustainability of the generated GEBs in the long run."

10. Does the project have descriptions of a knowledge management plan?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Addressed.

Response to Secretariat comments
Agency Responses

11. Has the Agency adequately responded to comments at the PIF stage from:

GEFSEC

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement NA

Response to Secretariat comments

STAP

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Addressed.

Response to Secretariat comments

GEF Council

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Addressed.

Response to Secretariat comments

Convention Secretariat

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement NA

Response to Secretariat comments

Recommendation

12. Is CEO endorsement recommended?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

No. Please, address the comments above.

July 16, 2019

All comments are addressed. However, it seems that FAO will directly execute some activities in this project: Per GEF policies, you did not include an explicit request signed by the GEF OFP of the participant country indicating the specific roles and responsibilities of all partners, including any execution activities provided by a GEF Agency. Without such justification for the executing activities that FAO may perform, we cannot assess and take a decision. We recommend to FAO to remove these activities and focus on the role of implementing agency.

November 8, 2019

We take note of the justification and information provided. However, we would need clarifications to verify the cost-efficiency of the proposed approach:

1. Please, confirm that the budget below (27%) represent FAO consultants to "execute" tasks.

5300 Salaries Professional Total											

5542 Consultants - Internationally -recruited	CTA International GIS and AEZ expert	year	3.5	100,000	350,000					**350,000**	100,000	100,000	100,000
	International Agro-Economy expert with good knowledge of SLM finance	month	24	10,000			240,000			**240,000**	60,000	80,000	80,000
	International ITC Program Analyst (part-time)	month	12	8,000	96,000					**96,000**	24,000	24,000	24,000
	Consultancy for the development of e-inclusion strategy and training program	lumpsum	1	15,000	15,000					**15,000**	15,000		
5542 Consultants - Internationally-recruited Total					**461,000**	**0**	**240,000**	**0**	**0**	**701,000**	**199,000**	**204,000**	**204,000**

2. A local consultant is budgeted at 96,000 (cf. below) – Please, confirm that this consultant will work on the financing aspects of the component 3, but will not be a financing officer for the project (if it is the case, this consultant should be covered by the project management costs).

National Budget and Operations Officer	month	48	2,000			96,000		

3. Could you please justify the amount of 144,000$ for travel?

5900 Travel - Duty	Travel	year	4	36,000	64,000	56000	24000			**144,000**	36,000	36,000	36,00
5900 Travel - Duty Total					**64,000**	**56,000**	**24,000**	**0**	**0**	**144,000**	**36,000**	**36,000**	**36,00**

4. Could you please provide a justification to assign the vehicle ($55,000) and the maintenance ($60,000) to the component 2?

6000 Expendable Equipment	Furniture, supplies, fuel and maintenance of vehicles and other items	year	4	15,000	30000	30,000				**60,000**	15,000	15,000	15,000
6000 Expendable Equipment Total					**30000**	**30000**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**60,000**	**15,000**	**15,000**	**15,000**
	1 Vehicle	vehicles	1	55,000		55,000				**55,000**	55,000		
6100 Non Expendable Equipment Total					**60,000**	**55,000**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**115,000**	**95,000**	**12,500**	**0**

5. The general operating expenses are adding 5% of project management costs – taken from components 1, 2, 4, and pmc.
6. All in all, it seems that the management costs (two staff + operating expenses + vehicle + maintenance + travel) represent 22% of the project budget. More justification is needed to justify such amount and understand the cost-efficiency.

6300 General Operating Expenses	Operational Expenses of the AEZ unit	year	4	14,250	17,000	40000				**57,000**
	Operational Expenses for supporting all activities relating to SLM planning and implementation in demo sites.	year	4	12,500		50,000				**50,000**
	Miscellaneous, including transaction costs, insurance, utilities	year	4	8,925				30000	5,700	**35,700**

6300 General Operating Expenses Total			**17,000**	**90,000**	**0**	**30,000**	**5,700**	**142,700**	

November 25, 2019

Thanks for the clarifications and modifications. Here are our observations:

1. Point taken about the consultants recruited by FAO.

5300 Salaries Professional Total													
5542 Consultants - Internationally -recruited	CTA International GIS and AEZ expert	year	3.5	100,000	350,000					**350,000**	100,000	100,000	100,000
	International Agro-Economy expert with good knowledge of SLM finance	month	24	10,000			240,000			**240,000**	60,000	80,000	80,000
	International ITC Program Analyst (part-time)	month	12	8,000	96,000					**96,000**	24,000	24,000	24,000
	Consultancy for the development of e-inclusion strategy and training program	lumpsum	1	15,000	15,000					**15,000**	15,000		
5542 Consultants - Internationally-recruited Total					**461,000**	**0**	**240,000**	**0**	**0**	**701,000**	**199,000**	**204,000**	**204,000**

2. We take note of the changes into the budget: 1) the budget line referring to the local consultant ($96,000) has been removed; 2) the budget is dispatched between the budget line “5650 Contracts” under the partnership with the University (Faculdade de Ciencias Agrarias) and the job shadowing program.

National Budget and Operations Officer	month	48	2,000			96,000			

3. The point about the travel costs (144,000$) is taken.

5900 Travel - Duty	Travel	Year	4	36,000	64,000	56000	24000			**144,000**	36,000	36,000	36,00
	5900 Travel - Duty Total				**64,000**	**56,000**	**24,000**	**0**	**0**	**144,000**	**36,000**	**36,000**	**36,00**

4. The point about the costs of the vehicle ($55,000) and the maintenance ($60,000) is made. We suggest reducing the costs of maintenance down to $33,000 to stay close to 10% of pmc (already twice the allowed rate). Please use cofinancing resources to complete, if needed. These budget items, if reduced, can be accepted, as we understand that cofinancing will take in charge other vehicles for the network of agroecological centers and FFS: please provide the amount. Please, not that there is no reason to maintain these costs under the technical components: Please transfer these expenses to the project management costs. This comment also applies for the two drivers (29,000x2).

5. We take note of the explanations about the “general operating expenses”. However, we are still not sure about the meaning of these “6300 general operating expenses” and it is the difficult to discuss these lump sums (initially $142,700, and now $117,200). To maintain project management costs around 10%, please transfer these charges to the cofinancing.

6. Based on the revised numbers and our understanding, the project management costs should be reduced to 1) two staff ($120,000), 2) vehicle + reduced maintenance ($88,000), and the two drivers ($29,000 x2) = $266,000, representing 10.08% of the project budget. Please, correct and confirm.

January 2, 2020

Thanks for the revisions and explanations. We would like to confirm that we take note of the proposed implementation modes proposed by FAO and requested by the GEF OFP. After discussions with GEF management, we found them acceptable on the main lines. However, and as discussed with the FAO’s GEF coordinator at the GEF Council, responses are still needed on pending points to be aligned with GEF project policies and guidelines:

1. PPO highlighted the fact that the position of "CTA International GIS and AEZ expert" was planned for the whole project duration and could ensure a role of project coordination and management (see the ToR: "The CTA will be responsible … for the operational planning, management and monitoring of all project's activities. He/She will provide technical support and ensure a good implementation of the activities in line with the project result framework, work plan and approved budget"). If this is confirmed, this position should be partially covered by the pmc. Please, revise or confirm that this position is purely technical and will not include project management and supervision functions.
2. The first line of locally recruited consultants also includes a position of Project Coordinator/national Expert in SLM/spatial planning. If this position includes project management functions, it should be covered by pmc: either revise the budget breakdown, or revise the terms of reference and the title of this consultant.

January 9, 2020

The project is recommended for CEO endorsement.

Response to Secretariat comments

January 8, 2020

We are very pleased that the GEF Secretariat has accepted the proposed implementation modalities.
Regarding the two pending points in the above comments, the GEF Secretariat had queried if the TOR for two project posts -- namely for the National Project Coordinator (NPC) and the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) -- included tasks that were related to 'project management', given that the budget for these two posts are not being charging the component 'Project Management Costs' (PMC).
Adjustments were made to the budget and the TOR for the National Project Coordinator and CTA. Text in Section *'2.1.1 Institutional Framework and Coordination'*, sub-section *'d) Project technical, coordination and steering committees'* had to be harmonized accordingly. These changes served to align the Project Document with the GEF's project policies and guidelines.

More specifically, we have now carefully reviewed the different TORs that were included in the PRODOC's Appendix VI. Normally, TORs are indicative, when they are included in a PRODOC for CEO Endorsement, meaning that they would need to be appraised before publishing. A note on it was included in page 174.
In light of the GEF Secretariat's comments, an early round of content scrutiny in relation to the TORs was carried out. Amendments were made to TORs for the following Project Management Unit (PMU) positions included in Appendix VI

[7a] TOR for the Finance & Administration Officer
[7b] TOR for the Procurement Officer
[1] TOR for the National (Technical) Project Coordinator (NPC)
[2] TOR for the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA)

We would like to assert that the 'Finance & administration officer' and the 'Procurement officer' (posts 7a and 7b) will have the prime responsibilities vis-à-vis the project operational management and its budget.

As the project leader, the National Project Coordinator (NPC) is expected to coordinate with the Project's Finance & Administration Officer and the Procurement Officer on a number of executive decisions that involve the project's finances, administration, operational management and procurement process. Yet, the NPC has essentially a technical profile and role. The CTA, in turn, has a fully technical role and profile.
Regarding the project's coordination and management, there is a clear division of labor among key PMU members. The NPC will be supported by the Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) in the day-to-day technical execution of the project for the project -- and stressing the CTA 'supportive' and 'advisory' functions in this regard. The CTA will not be involved in project management.
In order to reflect the limited operational role of the NPC, a small portion of the remuneration for the post was preferred charged to project management costs in the budget -- up to 12.5%, as now reflected in 'Appendix VI) Budget'.
With the changes introduced, the content of TORs and related sections is now fully consistent with the project's budget, which has already been accepted by the GEF Secretariat. The amount and ratio for Project Management Costs remained unchanged vis-à-vis the last PRODOC iteration.

Below is a summary changes in the uploaded and revised project document:

- **Appendix VI) Terms of Reference:** descriptions and tasks for the following posts have been revised to varying degrees (all changes highlighted).
  [7a] TOR for the Finance & Administration Officer
  [7b] TOR for the Procurement Officer
  [1] TOR for the National (Technical) Project Coordinator (NPC)
  [2] TOR for the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA)

- **Section '2.1.1 Institutional Framework and Coordination'**, sub-section **'d) Project technical, coordination and steering committees'**: Changes were made to keep the content consistency with revised TORs. The exact division of labor concerning the management of the project is explained.

- **Appendix IV) Budget:**
-
- -The budget line for the NPC was thus amended: An amount of $30,000, representing 12.5% of the total for that line, was moved to the PMC Component. The “No of Units” now reads ‘4 years’ and the “Base USD Unit” $60,000. This was typo that is now corrected, with no consequence to total amount of the NPC line.
-
- - In order maintain the same PMC amounts and ratio, as well as the total GEF grant, the number of months dedicated to the Procurement Officer decreased to 24 and to the ‘National expert in GreeNTD’ increased from 6 to 11 months. Total amounts per year and for Components 1 and 3 changed accordingly.
-
- - PRODOC Table 7 (*Incremental Cost Reasoning*) and the main table in Section 2.1.4 (*FAO Inputs*) were slightly adjusted as a consequence of the changes made to the break-down Component’s totals. Those changes are minimal vis-à-vis the previous iteration and refer to only 3% and 6% of amounts for Components 1 and 3 respectively.

-

Dec 3rd 2019:

Point 1-3

N/A

Point 4

The funds for ‘6000 Expendable Equipment’ described as ‘Furniture, supplies, fuel and maintenance of vehicles and other items’ have been reduced to $33,000 and moved to PMC. The project’s co-financing is expected to absorb these costs.

FAO Angola re-confirms its commitment to co-financing the project and providing more details thereof through a new letter uploaded to the GEF’s portal.

The residual amount of $27K has been reallocated to other budget lines as described in Point 5 below.

Point 5

All budget lines under the heading ‘6300 general operating expenses’ have been eliminated from the project’s budget. The project’s co-financing is now expected to absorb these costs.

FAO Angola reconfirms its commitment to co-financing the project and will provide more details thereof through a new letter uploaded to the GEF’s portal.

The amount of $117,200, which was preciously linked to 6300-lines has now been redistributed across the following lines according the justification below:

- A total of $45,700 has been added to the budget line ‘5650 Contracts CETAC’, which concerns the project’s hosting agreement for at least a 4-year period. The framework of the arrangement has been discussed with the MINAMB during the PPG. These discussions will now be intensified in light of the prospects reaching the project’s approval. In mid-2018 a Capacity Needs Assessment of CETAC had been carried out as part of the PPG. It concluded that, in the post-project period, the sustainability of the CETAC as a center of excellence for AEZ and related services will by-and-large depend on a balanced investment from MINAMB, FAO, the GEF as well as other sources. This investment will be particularly important in the project’s first years, taking the current baseline fully into consideration. For the purpose of creating ideal conditions in CETAC, the mobilization of GEF funding during the project’s first year (primarily), is therefore justified given CETAC’s absorptive capacity. For the remainder of the project, the details and amounts assigned to CETAC’s agreement will be according to needs and performance. Residual amounts were hence allocated to years 2, 3 and 4 of the project.

- Budget line ‘5920 Training & workshops’ budget did indeed receive an increase in amounts in the previous iteration. Yet, it could still be better supplied with funds for achieving the goals set for it in the FAO GEF Project Document. The increased training budget reaches now $23,550K per year. This will allow the strengthening of essential capacity building activities under Component 2 that are linked to the dissemination of SLM and LND concepts among key stakeholders in the Central Plateau.

- A total of $45,700 has been now added to ‘Translations, editorial and web services..., bulk’ budget line. The line description has also changed. It now mentions ‘web-GIS publishing and mobile app development’. These aspects had in fact been considered as a needed service and this was already foreseen in different project activities. However, since the previous iterations, it also needed to be adequately reflected in the budget.

Point 6

The changes proposed by the GEF have been performed accordingly. The summary is shown below.

These changes are described in the responses to Points 4 and 5 above.

Expenses Account	Costs description	Unit	No of Units	Base USD Unit	Comp 1	Comp 2	Comp 3	Comp 4	PMC	Grand Total	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	CHANGES MADE in v. 011219: NOTES	was previously	difference	X check + difference for subtotals
5650 Contracts	CETAC	lumpsum	1	59,850	28,050	28,275	3,525	0	0	59,850	25,000	15,000	12,000	7,850	Increased by $45.7K, distributed across components and years as shown	14,100	45,750	justified
5660 Locally contracted labour	Drivers (x2)	year	4	14,500	0	0			58,000	58,000	14,500	14,500	14,500	14,500	Moved to PMC	58,000	0	justified, recommended by GEF
5660 Locally contracted labour	Translations, editorial and web services (including web-GIS publishing and mobile app development), bulk	year	4	15,438	21,000	24,750	0	16,000		61,750	15,438	15,438	15,438	15,438	Increased by $45.7K, distributed equally across components and years as shown	16,000	45,750	justified
5920 Training & workshops	Training and meeting activities at the level of FFS/APFS	lumpsum	1	94,200	0	94,200	0			94,200	23,550	23,550	23,550	23,550	Increased by $52.7K, distributed across components and years as shown	41,500	52,700	justified
6000 Expendable Equipment	Furniture, supplies, fuel and maintenance of vehicles and other items	year	4	8,250					33,000	33,000	8,250	8,250	8,250	8,250	Deducted $27K and moved the remaining #33K to PMC. Costs are expected covered by co-financing.	60,000	-27,000	justified, reduction recommended by GEF
6100 Non Expendable Equipment	1 Vehicle	vehicles	1	55,000		0			55,000	55,000	55,000				Moved to PMC	55,000	0	justified, recommended by GEF
6300 General Operating Expenses				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		Lines 6300 General Operating Expenses removed	117,200	-117,200	justified, recommended by GEF

Previous responses:

Point 1

We would not call these FAO Consultant but rather project consultant hired by FAO on behalf of an in consultation with the Government. It is correct to say that internationally-recruited consultants foreseen in the PRODOC will be fully occupied with tasks pertaining to the project and its workplan.

FAO makes reference to content included in PRODOC Appendix VI, which contains the indicative Terms of Reference for the ‘Core Project Team’ plus other relevant TORs, where these tasks are listed with thorough cross-references to the project’s outputs and components.

The costs of securing the services of internationally-recruited consultants to the project may be high, when compared to the project’s total budget. However, all due considerations on cost efficiency have been made and alternative options assessed – e.g.:

- The ‘CTA International GIS and AEZ expert’ is foreseen as an in-country resident post, in order to maximize the skills’ transfer (national capacity building potential) embedded in the project post. Support for setting up the new unit in CETAC for service-oriented national data analysis and as technical unit dedicated to agroecological zoning (AEZ) and LDN-related geospatial analysis, requires the type of expertise that is currently not found in country. The same may be said about the need for carving out partnerships and rolling out a ‘Job shadowing program’, aimed at engaging trainees and CETAC’s appointed staff members (learning-by-doing).

- The topic of SLM finance is new in Angola and it is at the core of the subject matter of Component 3. Capacity for analyzing the complexities of the Angolan agro-economy and for advising the national stakeholders towards informed decision-making in connection with the practical land-use planning and AEZ exercises foreseen in Component 2 equally requires seniority, expertise and international exposure. Hence, the same logic as mentioned for the CTA applies.

- From an ITC technical point of view, and cognizant of the current capacity baseline of CETAC and partners, the presence of an international during the first inception months of the project for establishing and handing-over the ITC infrastructure was considered necessary.

- All international consultants will be tasks with training national stakeholders. The penetration of mobile technologies in the rural areas of Angola still faces limitations and special attention to the gender aspects in it requires inputs from consultants with due international exposure. Therefore, the ‘Consultancy for the development of e-inclusion strategy and training program’ was also ‘tagged’ as international.

It is worth noting that all the consultancies mentioned above, classified under budget lines ‘5542 Consultants - Internationally-recruited’ were all considered necessary for the project in its current strategy and have been accepted and endorsed by the government. In the letter from the Angola’s GEF OFP, dated 25 September 2019, and currently included in the PRODOC in Annex D, the Government of Angola clearly stated that it had requested FAO's support for setting up the project management unit and for availing specialized services covering topics such as AEZ and LDN, as well as technical support for strengthening the country's growing network of Agroecological Centers (AEC) as well as of Agro-Pastoral / Farmer Field Schools (AP/FFSs).

Finally, it should be added that both the international consultants (on focus here), as well as the national ones, will be carefully selected, according to their profile and the requirements of the tasks foreseen in the TORs. The selection processes will be carried out in close consultation with the government. This is duly highlighted in a note in PRODOC Appendix VI.

Point 2

The PRODOC's Budget in Appendix IV was amended and applicable adjustments carried over to the PRODOC's Appendix VI) Terms of Reference.

The tasks that were in the included in earlier iterations of the PRODOC under the project position 'National Budget and Operations Officer' were not well placed under Component 3. The TOR previously outlined for the position was also not fully correct.

Both aspects have now been corrected in the PRODOC in the relevant Appendices. Operational tasks are envisaged covered by the: (i) Finance & administration officer; and (ii) Procurement officer. The corresponding budget line has been removed from the budget.

Funds, amounting to $96K, which were previously dedicated to a 'National Budget and Operations Officer' (as shown above) have now been allocated to other budget lines -- more specifically to Letters of Agreement (LOA) budget lines, as follows:

- Budget line [5650 Contracts] for 'Faculdade de Ciências Agrárias, Instituto de Investigação Agronómica and other partners.' was thereby increased by $32,000 and the budget is now spread across Components 1, 2 and 3.

- Budget line [5650 Contracts] for LOA (prospective): Job shadowing program engaging trainees and CETAC's appointed staff members...' increases by $64,000 and extends the program into Component 3 aspects.

Expenses Account	Costs description	Unit	No of Units	Base USD Unit	Comp 1	Comp 2	Comp 3	Comp 4	PMC	Grand Total	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	CHANGES MADE / Note	was previously
5650 Contracts	Faculdade de Ciências Agrárias, Instituto de Investigação Agronómica and other partners.	lumpsum	1	104,000	48,000	24,000	32,000			104,000	39,625	48,625	12,625	3,125	Line increased by $32,000	72,000
5650 Contracts	LOA (prospective): Job shadowing program engaging trainees and CETAC's appointed staff members. Ref. to C1 description.	lumpsum	1	254,000	95,000	95,000	64,000			254,000	63,500	63,500	63,500	63,500	Line increased by $64,000	190,000

The relevant text in PRODOC Table 19. Proposed Letters of Agreement has been amended accordingly.

Point 3

FAO carried out careful scrutiny on the amounts allocated to travel across the years and Components.

Considering the scope of activities under all three technical Components (1, 2 and 3), the number of people who are expected to be engaged in capacity building activities and may require travel, the proposed travel budget was considered adequate. The total of $144K for travel costs is less than 5.5% of the total budget. It is $36K per year in average, which may even be on the low side.

The project's travel budget is expected to be used for following activities / cost items:

- Domestic travel in connection with various the consultancies foreseen under budget lines '5543 Consultants - Locally-recruited'. It is expected that most of the qualified short/medium-term consultants who will serve the project are not based in the Central Plateau region, but e.g. in Luanda. They will have to be flown to Huambo and to other project sites. There are at least 12 consultancies foreseen in the mentioned budget lines' group. Considering an average travel cost of $2.5K per year per consultancy, a total of $30K per year is considered reasonable.

- A residual amount of approx. $6K per year will be used for international travel in connection with international consultancies foreseen under budget lines '5542 Consultants - Internationally-recruited'.

- In connection with various stakeholder engagement processes, the project's core team is expected to travel extensively within the Wider Landscape targeted by the project, which has a surface area of 1.1 million hectares. This will be primarily road travel, and hence tapping into budget lines for vehicle, fuel and maintenance. Yet, other costs may also be involved and should be catered for under the '5900 Travel- Duty'.

Expenses Account	Costs description	Unit	No of Units	Base USD Unit	Comp 1	Comp 2	Comp 3	Comp 4	PMC	Grand Total	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
5900 Travel - Duty	Travel	year	4	36,000	64,000	56,000	24,000			144,000	36,000	36,000	36,000	36,000
5900 Travel - Duty Total					**64,000**	**56,000**	**24,000**	**0**	**0**	**144,000**	**36,000**	**36,000**	**36,000**	**36,000**

Point 4

It should be noted that amounts for maintenance are in fact spread across Components 1 and 2 ($30K under each). In addition, not all of the amounts would be exactly used for vehicle maintenance. The budget line '6000 Expendable Equipment' reads as follow:

"Furniture, supplies, fuel and maintenance of vehicles and other items".

More importantly, as explained in connection with Point 3 above, there is a need of mobility by the Project's team in connection with stakeholder engagement, and more specifically with the development of the network of agroecological centers and FFS. The Wider Landscape that is targeted by the project encompasses 1.1 million hectares of rough terrain. The state of the road network in Angola is generally poor, imposing high costs of maintenance to vehicles.

The transport and mining industries in Africa generally adopt operational standard indicators for defining the 'optimal fleet replacement cycle' in an effort to keep costs down. It represents the point when the costs of maintenance of a vehicle are likely to exceed those of its cumulative depreciation. It is normally measured in years of vehicle usage in the rough terrain, with daily usage and heavy millage.

In Angola, the optimal fleet replacement cycle for all-terrain vehicles can be as low as 3 years, as assessed by the industry.

FAO's extensive experience with fleet management in Angola also confirms this, prompting the agency to make provisions in its projects for an optimal management of vehicles.

The proposed costs for vehicle and maintenance were be considered adequate, along with its spread across the components. No changes were made to the budget.

Point 5

Nominally, an amount of $142,700 is currently assigned to the Project's PMC component. This amount remains and it is consistent with what had been assigned to PMC at PIF stage. It is equivalent to 4.9999% of the project's sub-total.

However, as noted by the GEF Secretariat in the Point 5 comment, other costs could also be more 'broadly interpreted' as contributing to the project's management costs.

An adequate ratio with respect to the project's total budget should hence be assessed, in line with GEF policies, not least also to keep the project's management costs within reasonable limits.

These lines, as currently revised by FAO, can be summarized in the table below, and they add up to $237,200 – an amount that represent no more than 9.87% of the project's sub-total:

Expenses Account	Costs description	Unit	No of Units	Base USD Unit	Comp 1	Comp 2	Comp 3	Comp 4	PMC	Grand Total	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
5543 Consultants - Locally-recruited	Finance & administration officer	month	48	1,250					60,000	60,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
5543 Consultants - Locally-recruited	Procurement officer	month	48	1,250					60,000	60,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
6300 General Operating Expenses	Operational Expenses of the AEZ unit	year	4	11,750	17,000	30,000				47,000	11,750	11,750	11,750	11,750
6300 General Operating Expenses	Operational Expenses for supporting all activities relating to SLM planning and implementation in demo sites.	year	4	8,625		34,500				34,500	5,500	11,500	11,500	6,000
6300 General Operating Expenses	Miscellaneous, including transaction costs, insurance, utilities	year	4	8,925				30,000	5,700	35,700	8,932	8,905	8,932	8,931
PMC "broadly interpreted"	**SUB-TOTAL: project management costs – including ops lines from components 1, 2, 3, 4, and pmc**				**17,000**	**64,500**	**0**	**30,000**	**125,700**	**237,200**	**56,182**	**62,155**	**62,182**	**56,681**
	PMC actual ratio is not 22%	***The amount of $237,200 represents less than 10% of the project's sub-total ..... =>***								**9.87%**				
Grand Total					**1,201,576**	**706,825**	**478,525**	**127,100**	**125,700**	**2,639,726**	**814,312**	**760,745**	**601,492**	**463,177**

To reach the mentioned amount, FAO reduced two of the budget lines listed above by $25.5K, namely:

- Line 'Operational Expenses of the AEZ unit' added up to $40K before; it is currently $30K.

- Line 'Operational Expenses for supporting all activities relating to SLM planning and implementation in demo sites' added up to $50K before; it is currently $34.5K. (It should be noted, though, that these expenses do not fit the Program and Project Cycle policy definition of PMC as these are specifically allocated to the roll out of key capacity building results of Component 2 (AEZ and SLM demonstration sites).

The $25.5K were then transferred to a '5920 Training & workshops' budget line, which actually needed to be better supplied with funds, as follows:

Expenses Account	Costs description	Unit	No of Units	Base USD Unit	Comp 1	Comp 2	Comp 3	Comp 4	PMC	Grand Total	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	
5920 Training & workshops	Training and meeting activities at the level of FFS/APFS	lumpsum	1	41,500		41,500				41,500	10,375	10,375	10,375	10,375	Line increased by $25,500

Compliance with the GEF's new policies on 'RULES AND GUIDELINES FOR AGENCY FEES AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT COSTS' (Oct 2019) is hereby ensured.

Point 6

We have carefully reviewed the budget lines that are being considered to cover management costs with the following results and proposed revisions:

Vehicle: FAO will co-finance a second vehicle, which will solely be used by the PMU for PMC related activities. The project vehicle (covered by the project's budget) will therefore only be used for Component 2 related activities (in alignment with response 3).

Operational Expenses: The budget under general operating expenses has been carefully reviewed and reduced (see point 5). The remaining part of the budget will directly contribute to the achievement of key capacity building results of Component 2 (AEZ and SLM demonstration sites).

Travel: The travel budget will mainly cover the training events and workshops across the Components (see response to point 3). The remaining part of the (travel) budget will be used for monitoring activities (MTR and FE). All travel associated with the PMC will be covered by FAO (see also point above on co-funding project vehicle).

1st Re-submission Response: As stated in the Project Document, and as now re-confirmed and formalized through a letter from the GEF OFP (uploaded in the GEF portal as " OFP confirmation letter"), the government of Angola has requested FAO to support the project's execution. The Government's request was based on the project's technical and cross-sectoral nature and on the government's recognition that, as a neutral partner, FAO is uniquely positioned to work with a wide range of entities in view of building national capacity for cross-sectoral landscape level management, in particular line ministries and subsidiary entities in charge of the environmental and agricultural portfolio at the national level, alongside Provincial Governments and other national partners.

At the provincial level, the needs for capacity development are even greater than in the capital. The project focuses on landscape-level management across municipalities in two different provinces. In order to achieve its goals, the project will specifically strengthen the technical and specialized capacity of a national center of excellence based in Central Plateau region of Angola – namely the Centre of Tropical Ecology and Climate Change (CETAC), which is one of the subsidiary institutions of the Ministry of Environment (MINAMB). A strengthened CETAC will be able to work more effectively with other centers of excellence based in the same region, including the Faculty of Agrarian Sciences in Huambo (FCA) and the Institute of Agronomic research (IIA), also located in Huambo.

The ultimate goal of this arrangement will be that national entities have the full capacity to carry out a detailed *National* Agro-Ecological Zoning (NAEZ) for an informed decision making in land use planning benefiting the country's endeavor in achieving LDN. The comprehensive NAEZ approach as a tool for cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder landscape-level management is new to Angola (and the entire region) allowing a very detailed planning capacity as it incorporates specific land use recommendations based on a multi-sectoral data collection and analysis. Targeted communities will be capacitated to translate the results of the NAEZ by demonstrating concrete SLM actions on the ground that will be up and outscaled with support of the involved Agro-Ecological Centers. The foundation to achieve this goal is the introduction and roll out of specialized training programmes comprising of: (i) a tailored training program dedicated to: 1) comprehensive/cross-sectoral data collection techniques 2) using products of WebGIS DSS (such as the UNCCD GM recommended and open access Collect Earth application) and other related topics, to be progressively delivered to AEC in Chipipa in close collaboration with the ICE SLM project, (iii) the application of the GreeNTD approach at local level in the targeted communities, and (iv) the implementation of adapted agro-ecological practices (based on the results of the NAEZ and tested in a participatory manner through the Agropastoral/Farmer Field School Approach). These topics require specialized expertise, which the Government had explicitly requested FAO to assist with, providing a crucial contribution to the country's Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) agenda and related policies.

The government of Angola maintains its leading role in the project (and ownership of resources), as they will lead the Project Steering Committee (PSC) which is chaired by the Project National Director (NPD), who is a high level staff from the Ministry of Environment. The PSC approves the project's Annual Work Plans and Budget (financial reports and financial plans of payments and disbursements related to the AWP) that will be managed by the Project's Management Unit (PMU) in close collaboration and follow up of the NPD. A brief outline of the NPD's role in the project has been included in the PRODOC in Appendix VI (Draft Terms of Reference).

As highlighted above, developing national capacity is the ultimate intent of PMU arrangements. All core project activities will be rolled out by the PMU through different governmental institutions, both at the national and/or at the local level. As a specialized UN agency, FAO is expected to work together with beneficiary and host institutions in the government for the recruitment of project staff (setting up the PMU). FAO's role in the recruitment processes will ensure the upholding of both technical and procedural standards. Government will participate in the drafting of ToRs for consultants to be hired through the NPD. Exceptions would include the evaluations, which require independence from the PMU. The proposed arrangement is justified because of the technical nature of the project's subject matter (NAEZ in the project's wide landscape). Such exercise had not been previously attempted in Angola and it requires inter sectorial cooperation, the availability specialized expertise and a focused capacity building program. FAO will ensure the realization of these goals through its role as foreseen in the Project Document.

As for FAO's role as both a GEF Agency and a specialized UN Agency, it is worth mentioning that FAO is in full alignment with the GEF Project and Programme Cycle Policy. FAO's roles and responsibilities with respect to project management has an established firewall between the execution and implementation functions. This is done by securing the segregation of duties associated to internal FAO roles, namely the Budget Holder (BH), Lead Technical Officers (LTO), Funding Liaison Officer (FLO), Office of Evaluation (OED), and Corporate Units as described in the PRODOC. In connection with it, FAO would like to reiterate that all project grants will be disbursed on the ground for the timely delivery of project outputs, while the agency's oversight and supervision functions will be undertaken by its own staff and funded by the agency's fees.

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Review Dates

	Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review		
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		

CEO Recommendation

Brief Reasoning for CEO Recommendations

Context

Land degradation is a serious threat to ecosystem services and livelihoods in Angola. ln 2010, Angola had 43.6 million hectares of tree cover, extending over 35% of its land area. From 2001 to 2017, Angola lost 2.45 million hectares of tree cover, equivalent to a 5.6% decrease since 2000 and 167Mt of CO_2 emissions. ln 2017 alone, which was the 'peak year' in the mentioned series, Angola lost approximately 280,000 hectares of tree cover, equivalent to 18.3Mt of C02 of emissions.

Yet, in the current post-conflict era, there have been very few attempts to systematically address it. The extent of land degradation across the national territory, and its impacts on the rural economy – including its growth potential – are yet to be assessed, along with further impacts on food security.

In the meantime, land use is changing rapidly in various parts of the country and mostly in an unregulated fashion. In the rural zones, most land-use change is caused by shifting cultivation, overgrazing and the unsustainable use of fire across the landscapes.

A legal and policy framework is in place in Angola for developing and enforcing land-use plans in different geographical and jurisdictional settings. However, there are many gaps in the practical application of these frameworks. Technological and capacity barriers need to be overcome before plans, tools and stakeholder consultation mechanisms can be applied for halting and reversing land degradation, thereby avoiding the associated loss of ecosystem services.

Another set of barriers relates to access to finance for sustainable land management (SLM), in which the general context of the agricultural economy is relevant. Investing in Angola's agricultural sector can potentially help the Angolan economy reduce its dependency on both the oil sector and food imports – and taking action towards it has been prioritized by government in its National Development Plan for the period 2018-2022.

Project

The Project's Objective is to reverse negative land degradation trends in selected landscapes in Central Angola by combining sustainable and rational approaches to planning, decision-making and land-use management with participatory approaches to build the capacity of local stakeholders:

The project is designed on the three following interconnected technical components and a fourth component for KM and monitoring: 1) Agroecological zoning (AEZ) integrated planning; 2) Sustainable Land Management in target landscapes, and 3) Economic and financial leverage approaches to SLM.

The first component will produce a centralized national AEZ-based decision support, reinforce CETAC capacities, and generate a comprehensive mapped analysis for the targeted Provinces of Huambo and Benguela. The second component will use these mapped data to improve land-use planning and decision-making entities, generating social agreements and participatory sustainable land management (SLM) plans to adopt and integrate SLM practices at the micro-landscape level. The Agro-Pastoral and Farmer Field Schools (AP/FFS) approach in targeted areas will be progressively capacitated by a training program focused on SLM. The third component will aim to identify and develop suitable options for financing SLM initiatives and on improving national capacity for leveraging resources from multiple sources to be invested in SLM.

The project targets the Provinces of Huambo and Benguela, because of the severity of land degradation, the proximity of CETAC/AEC (Centre of Tropical Ecology and Climate Change/ Agroecological Centers), and the growing network of AP/FFSs available to deliver community-level extension services and for upscaling the approach.

Global Environment Benefits

The project will support at least 400,000 ha under SLM, with more effective agricultural, rangeland and pastoral management to restore ecosystem functions, including productivity.

Country Strategy

The project fits with the National Development Plan 2018-2022 and the recent designed LDN targets (designed within the LDN Target Setting Program announced at the UNCCD COP12 in Ankara, Turkey).

GEF Strategies

The project is aligned with the LD1 Program 1 on agro-ecological intensification and LD3 Program 4 on scaling up SLM through a landscape approach.

Innovation, Scaling up & Sustainability

Innovation: The project will use several institutional and technical innovations: AEZ, planning for Sustainable Land Management, AP/FFS, and mainstreaming of AEZ and SLM in local spatial planning and agriculture programmes.

Scaling up: The project focus zone will function as a national SLM 'upscalable lab', aimed at demonstrating a multi-scale approach to spatial planning and land-use management. From 'micro' to 'macro', the project will encompass the farm-level, selected communes, the municipalities, and the wider landscape within two provinces of Huambo and Benguela with a strong potential for scaling up.

Sustainability: The project strategy will empower national and local institutions to ensure sustainability (Centre of Tropical Ecology and Climate Change, CETAC, Agroecological Centers (AECs). CETAC has the long-term potential to become a country-level hub in domain of SLM.