



Restoration and sustainable management of Land for improved livelihoods in the degraded landscapes of Free State and Northwest Provinces of South Africa

Review PIF and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

11331

Countries

South Africa

Project Name

Restoration and sustainable management of Land for improved livelihoods in the degraded landscapes of Free State and Northwest Provinces of South Africa

Agencies

IUCN

Date received by PM

10/2/2023

Review completed by PM

11/23/2023

Program Manager

Jean-Marc Sinnassamy

Focal Area

Multi Focal Area

Project Type

FSP

GEF-8 PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF) REVIEW SHEET

1. General Project Information / Eligibility

a) Does the project meet the criteria for eligibility for GEF funding?

b) Is the General Project Information table correctly populated?

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

2. Project Summary

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

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

3 Indicative Project Overview

3.1 a) Is the project objective presented as a concise statement and clear?

b) Are the components, outcomes and outputs sound, appropriate and sufficiently clear to achieve the project objective and the core indicators per the stated Theory of Change?

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

3.2 Are gender dimensions, knowledge management, and monitoring and evaluation included within the project components and appropriately funded?

Secretariat's Comments

November 19, 2023

Addressed,

October 12, 2023

- Gender issues are considered and included in some outputs (1.2.4, 1.2.5, 2.1.5).
- However, the project responsiveness to gender inequality could be improved and reflected in the formulation of other outputs. For instance: Output 1.1.2, 1.1.3, or under the component 3. Please, complete.
- For some outputs, the specific issues of gender inequality could please be clearly formulated in the description of activities (for instance 1.2.1, 1.2.3, 2.1.1). Please, complete.

Agency's Comments

IUCN, November 10, 2023

Project responsiveness to gender inequality now reflected in the following outputs:

Output 1.1.2 adjusted to Policy instruments that enable venture creation Incentives for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups including women, youth, and people with disabilities (e.g., entrepreneurship, starter packs/packages, jobs creation, skills development etc.) mainstreamed, aligned, integrated, and implemented.

3.1.1.

Inclusive (of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups including women, youth, and people with disabilities community-led) and Community-led ecosystem restoration and NbS interventions supported.

3.1.3. Inclusive (of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups including women, youth, and people with disabilities community-led) and Community-level biodiversity stewardships programmes promoted.

4.1 SITUATION ANALYSIS

a) is the current situation (including global environmental problems, key contextual drivers of environmental degradation, climate vulnerability) clearly and adequately described from a systems perspective?

b) Are the key barriers and enablers identified?

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

4.2 JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT

a) Is there an indication of why the project approach has been selected over other potential options?

b) Does it ensure resilience to future changes in the drivers?

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

d) are the relevant stakeholders and their roles adequately described?

Secretariat's Comments

November 19, 2023

Addressed.

October 12, 2023

- While the project included a list of consultation carried, it does not include any details on relevant civil society groups or community groups consulted or elaboration of their important role to achieve project objective project and the different project components. While it states that these will be consulted during PPG phase, agency should provide some further details on who, when and how these will be engaged and consulted during the project development phase. Please, complete.

Agency's Comments

IUCN, November 10, 2023

The requested information has been added to existing table in Section D Stakeholder Engagement with additions highlighted in yellow. In specific, the names of some groups that will be consulted has been included this include the women, youth and disabled

organisations, the private sectors and local N.G.Os. Period when their involvement is needed has also been included in the table of stakeholders.

5 B. Project Description

5.1 THEORY OF CHANGE

a) Is there a concise theory of change that describes the project logic, including how the project design elements will contribute to the objective, the expected causal pathways, and the key assumptions underlying these?

b) Are the key outputs of each component defined (where possible)?

Secretariat's Comments

November 19, 2023

Addressed.

October 12, 2023

Yes.

However, an effort could be done to simplify the ToC diagram (by not writing all the outputs for instance).

Agency's Comments

IUCN, November 10, 2023

Outputs in the ToC diagram have been summarised and the updated TOC is now uploaded in the PIF.

5.2 INCREMENTAL/ADDITIONAL COST REASONING

Is the incremental/additional cost reasoning properly described as per the Guidelines provided in GEF/C.31/12?

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

5.3 IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

a) Is the institutional setting, including potential executing partners, outlined and a rationale provided?

b) Comments to proposed agency execution support (if agency expects to request exception).

c) is there a description of potential coordination and cooperation with ongoing GEF-financed projects/programs and other bilateral/multilateral initiatives in the project area

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

Secretariat's Comments

November 19, 2023

Addressed.

October 12, 2023

- Please, explain if an executing role will be devoted to IUCN. and also explain, justify the executing role of FAO.

- Add an explanation to describe cooperation with ongoing initiatives and projects, including potential for co-location and/or sharing of expertise/staffing.

- Knowledge Management : This is a project that includes capacity building, knowledge and information sharing elements, especially within its Components 2 and 3. An overall approach to Knowledge Management and Learning has been provided in the Project Description. Proposal includes KM&L deliverables that enable and enhance access to knowledge and information such as trainings and capacity building programs as well as knowledge sharing and learning platforms. Plans for dissemination are mentioned. However, there is no reference to an overall Communication Strategy. The agency is requested to include a brief description of a project Communications Strategy/Plan for outreach, awareness raising and dissemination of outputs/results/lessons. This can be added to a project component as well as the project description, as appropriate.

Agency's Comments

IUCN, November 10, 2023

IUCN will have no execution role.

FAO will be executing entity on the strength of available technical expertise on the subject in the country, subregional and head quarters who are dedicated to support the project. FAO as technical agency of UN responsible for agricultural resources management compliments the IUCN to ensure that human progress, economic development and nature conservation take place together.

In addition, IUCN and FAO have been cooperating in country and in the region which provides fertile ground for effectiveness and upscaling of good practices. In South Africa IUCN and FAO are working in collaboration with the Government of South Africa through the Department of Agriculture, land Reform and Rural Development, Department of Forestry Fisheries and Environment as well as the Global water partnership on a US\$110 Million dollar proposal for submission to the Green Climate Fund. This project which is at concept stage provides strong opportunities for upscaling many of the good SLM practices which will be implemented in the project. If the projects are implemented at same time, there will be ease of sharing personal, and optimising on resource allocation, making the project more effective in delivery.

The relevant text related to development of a project communication plan is now added in the relevant section of the PIF and is as follows:

A Project communication plan will be developed for the project for purposes of outreach, awareness raising and dissemination of outputs/results/lessons. The communication plan will define main elements including objectives/purpose, situational Analysis, Audience Personas, Messaging, Channels, Communications Matrix, Goals, Strategies & Tactics.

5.4 a) Are the identified core indicators calculated using the methodology included in the corresponding Guidelines (GEF/C.54/11/Rev.01)?

b) Are the project's indicative targeted contributions to GEBs (measured through core indicators)/adaptation benefits reasonable and achievable?

Secretariat's Comments

November 22, 2023

Addressed.

November 19, 2023

Partially addressed.

- The result framework and the sustainability sections mention the importance of **beneficiaries**. However, the core indicator 11 on beneficiaries has not been used. It is uncommon and not recommended for LD and NRM projects. Please, provide a number of beneficiaries, with disaggregated targets for men and women.

October 12, 2023

All the indicators include targets.

- However, some explanations about the way to obtain these targets would be welcome.

- Please, consider at least at CEO endorsement to include the carbon gains of all different land management.

Agency's Comments

22 Nov, IUCN

Kindly note that explanatory text is now added in the Core Indicators section of the PIF

Approximately 110 000ha of degraded land will be restored, and sustainable land management practices enhanced. South Africa LDN report shows that it has prioritized a target of rehabilitating and sustainably managing 2 436 170 ha of grassland and 2 646 069 ha of savanna biomes by 2030. The project will target 110 000 ha of landscapes under improved governance and other enabling conditions for restoration and SLM (including state (communal), municipal (commonage) and if necessary, privately owned land). Furthermore, the project will strengthen private investment through improved access to financial services and development of a stronger rural value chain, which will be designed to incentivise adoption of SLM practices, reinforce local institutions for natural resource governance and strengthen local livelihoods. The project includes a strong emphasis on leveraging private investments in SLM to scale up tried and tested approaches in degraded drylands. While the project will target 110 000 ha of degraded areas, a further 800 000 ha of land will be targeted for improved governance and coordination. This will be done by targeting the governance structures in the North West and Free State Province and associated municipalities.

Core indicator 11: Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender. Approximately 160,000 people (86,800 female; 73,200 male) will directly benefit from the project. The two project sites have a combined population of ~1 million, of which 72% live in rural areas and are engaged in some form of subsistence agriculture. The project targets are expected to directly benefit 15-20% of the total population across the two proposed project landscapes. This equates to approximately 140,000 people in the North West Province and 200,000 people in the Free State Province.

IUCN, November 10, 2023

The description/explanation has been added in the relevant section of the PIF and reads as below:

The project will rely on existing land degradation monitoring processes in obtaining targets for the indicators. In addition to official Government annual reports where districts report on status of land degradation including Area of land restored and Area of landscapes under improved practices the project will also rely on Agricultural Research Council's Institute for Soil, Climate and Water (ARC-ISCW) which has developed a Land Degradation Index, which takes into account soil erosion by water and wind, soil salinisation and acidification, hydro-climatic parameters, land cover and the loss of biodiversity. Measurements will be corroborated with other sources of information in the public domain such as South African Land Degradation Monitor (SALDI).

Thank you for the advice on including carbon gains of all different land management at the CEO endorsement stage

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

Secretariat's Comments NA

Agency's Comments

5.6 RISKS

- a) Are climate risks and other main risks relevant to the project described and addressed within the project concept design?**
- b) Are the key risks that might affect the project preparation and implementation phases identified and adequately rated?**
- c) Are environmental and social risks, impacts and management measures adequately screened and rated at this stage and consistent with requirements set out in SD/PL/03?**

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

5.7 Qualitative assessment

- a) Does the project intend to be well integrated, durable, and transformative?**
- b) Is there potential for innovation and scaling-up?**
- c) Will the project contribute to an improved alignment of national policies (policy coherence)?**

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

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

6.1 Is the project adequately aligned with focal area and integrated program strategies and objectives, and/or adaptation priorities?

Secretariat's Comments Yes.

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments

Yes,

Targets 2, 3, 6, 7, 8.

Agency's Comments

7 D. Policy Requirements

7.1 Is the Policy Requirements section completed?

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

7.2 Is a list of stakeholders consulted during PIF development, including dates of these consultations, provided?

Secretariat's Comments Yes. Three main meetings were organized in March, April, and summer 2023. The list of stakeholders is provided.

Agency's Comments

8 Annexes

Annex A: Financing Tables

8.1 Is the proposed GEF financing (including the Agency fee) in line with GEF policies and guidelines? Are they within the resources available from (mark all that apply):

STAR allocation?

Secretariat's Comments

November 30, 2023

Addressed.

November 28, 2023

Unfortunately, the changes made by the Agency are not accurate, so the figures in the LoE in BD STAR ? GEF Project Financing (\$1,785,272) are lower than the figures in Portal (\$1,785,273). Similarly figures in LoE in LD STAR ? PPG Agency Fee (\$9,036) and Total PPG Agency Fee (\$13,499) are lower than the same figures in Portal (\$9,037 and \$13,500 respectively). Figures in Portal can't be higher than the allocated funds in LoE. Please ask the Agency to amend.

The total financing (from GEFTF) being requested for this project is US\$ 6,049,447 inclusive of project preparation grant (PPG), if any, and Agency fees for project cycle management services associated with the total GEF Project Financing. The financing requested for South Africa is detailed in the table below.

Sources of Funds	GEF Agency	Focal Area Source	Amount (in US\$)				Total
			GEF Project Financing	GEF Project Financing Agency Fee	Project Preparation Grant (PPG)	Project Preparation Grant (PPG) Agency Fee	
GEFT	IUCN	BD STAR	1 785 272	160 674	49 591	4 463	2 000 000
GEFT	IUCN	LD STAR	3 614 682	325 320	100 409	9 036	4 049 447
Total GEF Resources			5 399 954	485 994	150 000	13 499	6 049 447

ANNEX A: FINANCING TABLES

GEF Financing Table

Indicative Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds ⓘ

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds ⓘ	Grant / Non-Grant	GEF Project Grant(\$)	Agency Fee(\$) ⓘ	Total GEF Financing(\$)
IUCN	GET	South Africa	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: LD-1	Grant	3,614,681	325,319	3,940,000.00
IUCN	GET	South Africa	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: BD-1	Grant	1,785,273	160,673	1,945,946.00
Total GEF Resources(\$)						5,399,954.00	485,992.00	5,885,946.00

November 19, 2023

- The amounts allocated in the LoE by Sources of Funds are not matching the amounts in table ?Sources of Funds? in Portal.

- Actually, the mismatch between those tables was not only restricted to 1 dollar: accidentally the Agency put the BD values in LoE (\$2,000,000) in the LD values in Portal, and the other way around as well (the values of LD in LoE of 4,049,447 were allocated to BD in Portal). Please, exchange the values in Portal, so Sources of Funds table in Portal will match the values allocated in LoE (checking the STAR status: South Africa has the exact amount available in LD).

October 12, 2023

Yes

However, there is one dollar difference between the BD and LD amounts in the sum of Tables ?GEF Financing Table? + ?PPG? (BD = \$4,049,448 / LD = 1,999,999) compared with the amounts in the Table ?Sources of Funds for Country Star Allocation? and in LoE (BD = \$4,049,447 / LD = 2,000,000) ? the amounts in each field of Tables ?GEF Financing Table? + ?PPG? need to exactly match the amounts allocated in the LoE ? please ask the Agency to amend.

GEF Financing Table

Indicative Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Grant / Non-Grant	GEF Project Grant(\$)	Agency Fee(\$)	T Fin
IUCN	GET	South Africa	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocati	Grant	3,614,682	325,320	3,9
IUCN	GET	South Africa	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocati	Grant	1,785,272	160,673	1,9
Total GEF Resources(\$)						5,399,954	485,993	

PPG							
GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Grant / Non- Grant	PPG(\$)	Agency Fee(\$)
IUCN	GET	South Africa	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocati	Grant	100,409	9,037
IUCN	GET	South Africa	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocati	Grant	49,591	4,463
Total PPG Amount						150,000	13,500

Sources of Funds for Country Star Allocation

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Sources of Funds	Total(\$)
IUCN	GET	South Africa	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocati	4,049,447
IUCN	GET	South Africa	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocati	2,000,000
Total GEF Resources(\$)					6,049,447

Sources of Funds	GEF Agency	Focal Area Source	Amount (in US\$)				Total
			GEF Project Financing	GEF Project Financing Agency Fee	Project Preparation Grant (PPG)	Project Preparation Grant (PPG) Agency Fee	
GEFT	IUCN	BD STAR	1 785 272	160 674	49 591	4 463	2 000 000
GEFT	IUCN	LD STAR	3 614 682	325 320	100 409	9 036	4 049 447
Total GEF Resources			5 399 954	485 994	150 000	13 499	6 049 447

Agency's Comments

29 Nov, IUCN

We apologise for the earlier discrepancy. Kindly note that the figures have been adjusted in the portal to be made consistent with the LoE except for the PPG agency fee for LD reduced by USD 1. The reason for this discrepancy is as the portal indicates if the aggregate LD STAR allocation is maintained at USD 4 049 447, then there is an

overallocation of USD 0.27. In order to address this validation error, the PPG Agency fee for LD has been revised downward by USD 1.

22 Nov, IUCN

We apologise for inadvertently making this mistake which we have now corrected. Kindly note that we have adjusted the agency fee by USD1 downwards as there is a validation error of LD being allocated by USD 0.27 if we reinstate the LD allocation to USD 4, 049, 447

IUCN, November 10, 2023

As advised, this is now corrected in the portal to reflect the same figures as the LoE.

Focal Area allocation?

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

LDCF under the principle of equitable access?

Secretariat's Comments NA

Agency's Comments

SCCF A (SIDS)?

Secretariat's Comments NA

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments NA

Agency's Comments

Focal Area Set Aside?

Secretariat's Comments NA

Agency's Comments

8.2 Is the PPG requested within the allowable cap (per size of project)? If requested, has an exception (e.g. for regional projects) been sufficiently substantiated?

Secretariat's Comments Yes.

Agency's Comments

8.3 Are the indicative expected amounts, sources and types of co-financing adequately documented and consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines?

Secretariat's Comments

November 22, 2023

Addressed.

November 19, 2023

- We take note of the proposed cofinancing. However, we are surprised that the level of cofinancing is so low for a country as South Africa (ratio 1: 1.4). For comparison, the average cofinancing for LD portfolio in GEF7 was 1:7. Please, justify and see if you can increase it.

- The note below the cofinancing table is actually to explain how " investments mobilized" are defined. However, explanations about in-kind cofinancing would be welcome to explain its role, what kind of activities will be financed, and how the GEF financed will be complementary to generate global environment benefits. Please, complete.

- As said above, cofinancing is lacking in front of pmc.

- The PIF does not show any information in the co-financing table (see screenshot below). Please ask the Agency to present the information as requested in Guidelines.

Indicative Co-financing

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)
Describe how any "Investment Mobilized" was identified				Total Co-financing(\$)

Agency's Comments

22 Nov, IUCN

Kindly note that the we have included more cofinancing from the government total cofinancing now being USD 21, 790, 120

IUCN, November 10, 2023

This has been addressed and cofinancing has been added.

Annex B: Endorsements

8.4 Has the project been endorsed by the country?s(ies) GEF OFP and has the OFP at the time of PIF submission name and position been checked against the GEF database?

Secretariat's Comments

October 12, 2023

Yes. The LoE is signed by the OFP assigned at the time of the PIF submission.

Addressed.

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments Yes.

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments Yes.

Agency's Comments

8.5 For NGI projects (which may not require LoEs), has the Agency informed the OFP(s) of the project to be submitted?

Secretariat's Comments NA

Agency's Comments

Annex C: Project Location

8.6 Is there preliminary georeferenced information and a map of the project's intended location?

Secretariat's Comments

November 19, 2023

Addressed.

October 12, 2023

Maps are available. However, geographical coordinates are not included.

Please, check the guidelines on how to present the information on targeted landscapes.

Agency's Comments

IUCN, November 10, 2023

Maps with geographical coordinates have been added

Annex D: Safeguards Screen and Rating

8.7 If there are safeguard screening documents or other ESS documents prepared, have these been uploaded to the GEF Portal?

Secretariat's Comments

There is a Preliminary ESMS Screening

Agency's Comments

Annex E: Rio Markers

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

Secretariat's Comments

November 19, 2023

Addressed.

October 12, 2023

Please, justify the selection of 2 for BD Rio Marker and 1 for LD.

Agency's Comments

IUCN, November 10, 2023

The requested justification has been added under Annex E Rio Markers of the uploaded word version as well as provided in detail below:

The project activities are supporting and responding to the National Action plans under the CBD and UNCCD. The activities are designed to improve the capacity of the two provinces to cope with increased incidences of drought and the loss of biodiversity. Sustainable land management will ultimately contribute to biodiversity conservation and to reducing climate risk and ultimately combat desertification.

With regards to Biodiversity the project will contribute protection or enhancing ecosystems, species or genetic resources through in-situ or ex-situ conservation or remedying existing environmental damage. It will also provide institution building, capacity development, strengthening and research. And assist South Africa to meet its obligations under the CBD convention.

With regards to desertification, the project contributes to protecting and enhancing dryland ecosystems and or remedying existing environmental damage as well as to promote capacity development and South Africa's obligations to achieve the UNCCD. It also promotes the rehabilitation of land and water resources, conservation and sustainable management of land and water resources. It also promotes Development and transfer of environmentally sound traditional and local technologies, knowledge, know-how and practices to combat desertification, e.g., methods of conserving water and livestock production.

Annex F: Taxonomy Worksheet

8.9 Is the project properly tagged with the appropriate keywords?

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

Annex G: NGI Relevant Annexes

8.10 Does the project provide sufficient detail (indicative term sheet) to take a decision on the following selection criteria: co-financing ratios, financial terms and conditions, and financial additionality? If not, please provide comments. Does the project provide a detailed reflow table to assess the project capacity of generating reflows? If not, please provide comments. Is the Partner Agency eligible to administer concessional finance? If not, please provide comments.

Secretariat's Comments NA

Agency's Comments

9 GEFSEC Decision

9.1 Is the PIF and PPG (if requested) recommended for technical clearance?

Secretariat's Comments

November 30, 2023

The PIF is recommended for clearance and WP inclusion.

November 28, 2023

Please, see the remaining comment in the cell 8.1 (financing annex). Upon receipt of revised financing tables, the PIF will be recommended for clearance and WP inclusion.

November 19, 2023

Some points above have not been fully addressed. The PIF cannot be recommended yet.

October 19, 2023

The PIF cannot be recommended yet. Please, address the comments above.

Agency's Comments

9.2 Additional Comments to be considered by the Agency at the time of CEO Endorsement/ Approval

Secretariat's Comments

- Check carbon gains and include targets under the core indicator 6.
- Confirm (increase) cofinancing.
- Maintain gender responsiveness, especially activities against gender inequality, very visible in the project document.
- Develop the sustainability aspects.
- Detail the KM strategy (including lessons and best practices from the GEF5 and GEF7 projects).

Agency's Comments

Review Dates

	PIF Review	Agency Response
First Review	10/19/2023	11/10/2023
Additional Review (as necessary)	11/19/2023	11/22/2023
Additional Review (as necessary)	11/28/2023	11/30/2023

PIF Review

Agency Response

Additional Review (as necessary)

11/30/2023

Additional Review (as necessary)