

A cross-sector approach supporting the mainstreaming of sustainable forest and land management to enhance ecosystem resilience for improved livelihoods in the Save and Runde Catchments of Zimbabwe

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

10257

Countries

Zimbabwe

Project Name

A cross-sector approach supporting the mainstreaming of sustainable forest and land management to enhance ecosystem resilience for improved livelihoods in the Save and Runde Catchments of Zimbabwe

Agencies

FAO

Date received by PM

12/11/2020

Review completed by PM

4/2/2021

Program Manager

Asha Bobb-Semple

Focal Area

Multi Focal Area

Project Type

FSP

PIF
CEO Endorsement

Part I ? Project Information

Focal area elements

1. Does the project remain aligned with the relevant GEF focal area elements as presented in PIF (as indicated in table A)?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/24/2021:

Cleared

1/19/2020:

-Yes. However please use the Drylands IP objective in Table A instead of the GEF Focal area objectives.

-Please also select '2' for RIO Marker on Climate Change Mitigation given the focus of the project on SFM.

Agency Response Addressed.

Project description summary

2. Is the project structure/design appropriate to achieve the expected outcomes and outputs as in Table B and described in the project document?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

4/2/2021:

Cleared.

3/24/2021:

Not fully.

- The following output is missing from Table B- *Output 3.2.3 Participatory landscape level LDN monitoring, reporting and evaluation system established and operational.*

1/19/2020:

Not fully. Please see comments below.

-On the first page of the CEO ER portal entry, please confirm the name of the the project Executing Agency. Currently INGO is listed, however in the project documentation, EMA is listed as the executing agency.

Component 2

-There is a reference made in the Pro Doc (Annex 1, Pgs 179 & 180) to Output 2.3.1. Is this an error as there is no Outcome 2.3 in Table B.

-Please clarify which Output corresponds with the *Indicator- # of ha of terrestrial protected areas under improved management forest conservation and sustainable use ; and Target- Management Plan for Chimanimani National Park covering 21,200ha developed.*

- Please also clarify which Output corresponds with the *Target - An additional 130,000 ha of forests sustainably managed by community-based forest management committees* and the corresponding indicators.

Component 3

- The Indicator on *# of national database strengthened to facilitate access to LD information to all relevant sectors to support LDN in Zimbabwe and the target and the Target -One intersectoral database gathering information from different sectors on the extend of LD and its trends, LD drivers and ecosystem health strengthened and widely used* do not seem to correspond with the Outputs listed.

We note that the ToC and the project description refers to out 3.2.3 on LDN monitoring, however it seems to be missing from the table.

Agency Response

References to Output 2.3.1 were eliminated.

It corresponds to Output 1.2.2 under which the design of the Management Plan for Chimanimani National Park will be supported. The request for support in developing the Management Plan for Chimanimani National Park was made by PWMA. In addition, the park is part of a TFCA with Mozambique providing opportunities for transboundary cooperation with support of the GCP/REM. This intervention was therefore integrated in the project despite the fact that the park is located outside of the targeted sub-basins (north of Chipinge).

Considering that no on-the-ground interventions will be funded by the GEF7 project in the park, this indicator was amended and replaced by *?# of management plans for Protected Areas developed for conservation and sustainable use?*.

Table F, Annex F, Table B and Annex 1 were amended accordingly.

This target corresponds to Activity xv under Output 2.1.1. The interventions will support the sustainable management of 90,000 ha of woodlands in riverine areas and 40,000 ha of woodlands in the buffer zone of Save Valley Conservancy through the creation of community-based forest management committees. Please see output level details in Table B and Annex A1

The name of Output 3.2.1 and Output 3.2.2 were amended to clarify that Output 3.2.1 will focus on the country level while Output 3.2.2 will focus on collaboration between countries. Activities (i) and (ii) under Output 3.2.2 have therefore been moved to Output 3.2.1.

Output 3.2.3 was added in Table B.

3/30/2020:

Output 3.2.3 is now reflected in Table B/Portal.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

Co-financing

4. Are the confirmed expected amounts, sources and types of co-financing adequately documented, with supporting evidence and a description on how the breakdown of co-financing was identified and meets the definition of investment mobilized, and a description of any major changes from PIF, consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

4/30/2021:

Cleared.

4/19/2021:

Thank you for the changes. Not all comments addressed. In reference to Point iii) we are unable to see the revisions for the IFAD letter. Please clarify or upload the revised letter.

4/9/2021:

Please see follow up comments below:

- i. All co-financing (including those in cash and grant) has been identified as 'recurrent expenditure'. Please review the definition of 'recurrent expenditure' in the GEF guidelines, and consider revising.
- ii. Co-financing from FAO has been indicated as 'recurrent expenditure', but the activities/support identified in the letter qualify as 'investment mobilized'. Consider revising.
- iii. Co-financing letter from IFAD does not specify the type of co-financing (grant), please amend. Additionally, the mentioned support and activities appear to fall under category grant and investment mobilized. Please consider revising.

4/2/2021:

Cleared.

3/25/2021:

Thank you for the additional information provided. Please see the follow up comment below:

- The cofinancing letter from ZPWMA does not specify the amount for cash vs in kind. Please revise.

1/19/2020:

Not fully.

- How is the co-financing contributing to the project in a tangible way. Please indicate the specific project targets and results to which the co-financing will contribute.

-Please ensure all co-financing letters specify the type co-financing to be provided- i.e. cash or in kind.

-The co-financing letter from CTDT does not correspond with the Co-financing letter which says 'CTDO'. Please correct or clarify.

Agency Response

Additional information on the co-financing was added in Prodoc section 2.2 (and corresponding section in Portal)

Co-financing letters have been amended and resigned, they now specify the type of cofinancing.

The acronym CTDO was removed, CTDT is now used throughout.

3/30/2020:

The amended cofinancing letter from ZPWMA is now uploaded.

4/13/2021

- i. Addressed. Some co-financing sources were revised as suggested.
- ii. Revised
- iii. Revised

29/4/2021

Amended letter uploaded in Portal.

GEF Resource Availability

5. Is the financing presented in Table D adequate and does the project demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objectives?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

4/30/2021:

Cleared on the following basis:

- i) Co-financing is already covering a significant portion of additional project execution costs under the project. The remainder of the PMC costs will then be covered by the GEF under the PMC allocation, with a portion of National Project Coordinator appropriately charged to Components and PMC, as this position will contribute to technical quality assurance of the delivery of the outputs. The TOR has provided evidence of same.
- ii) The Execution Capacity Development expert and ESS Monitoring Specialist will cover tasks across PMC, M&E and Component 3 as shown in the TOR and so the costs have been allocated accordingly.

4/19/2021:

Please insert the detailed project budget in the portal under Annex E.

4/9/2021:

Please see follow up comments below:

- i. The costs of the vehicle (\$100,000), and the other associated costs such as maintenance (\$45,500), hire of vehicle (\$14,500) and 1 driver (\$72,000) are cleared.
- ii. Based on the Project staff (i. e. National Project Coordinator) budget breakdown, the GEF Financing appears to be covering the full costs of project staff time under PMC and the Components. Project staff costs should ideally be charged to the Project Management Costs of both the GEF portion and the co-financing portion? (see Guidelines paragraph 5 ? page 49) ? please Amend and indicate what portion of the co-financing will be covered by project staff.
- iii. Execution Capacity Development expert and ESS Monitoring Specialist must be charged to M&E Plan, not to PMC.

4/2/2021:

Cleared all comments addressed on the spot checks and the NPC's TOR.

3/24/2021:

Thank you for the information provided. Please see follow up comments below:

-We note in the response that '*Spot checks instead fall under M&E costs and are conducted by an independent service provider*'. However we note spot checks are showing under the PMC in the budget. Please clarify.

-We take note of the NPC's TOR, however given their overall role to *be responsible for the overall planning, coordination of project activities, and monitoring of project results* , please assign some of their costs to the PMC.

1/19/2020:

Table D as presented is adequate. Please see additional comments below on the project budget.

- We note the request for 2 project vehicles. Please provide justification for the need for the motor vehicles and explanation as to why this cannot be covered under the co-financing? Motor vehicles should not be covered under PMC.

- Please note that the costs for the *Drivers* will have to be covered under PMC, which need to be co-financed as per GEF policy guidelines.

- Please clarify the budget line item 'spot checks' and the differentiate between these and the 'Supervision visits' in the M&E budget.

- We note that the financing for the *NPC* and the *Administrative and Finance Manager* are spread across the components. Please indicate within their TORs the specific technical activities they will be undertaking or what aspects of the component they will be assisting to implement.

-Please clarify the role and need for the *Operational Capacity Expert* being charged under the PMC? What is the reporting line of this expert?

-Please clarify the budget line *International Expertise on Demand* under International Consultants? At this stage following the completion of the PPG, the line item should be more specific.

-Please clarify the budget line *Land degradation and restoration expert in Mozambique?*

-Please clarify the budget line *Research project on the prevention and control of invasions by bush and tree species* and to which Output it contributes

-Please also add the budget to the portal submission as per GEF guidelines.

Agency Response

The justification for the two vehicles needed for the project was further developed. Please see note in Annex A2 of the Prodoc.

The budget for the drivers was shifted to PMC. As part of the cofinancing from EMA, a full-time driver will be allocated to the project (?personnel? budget line in the cofinancing letter). The GEF7 budget now includes one driver.

The costs of the Supervision Visits are actually not included under the project?s budget ? these are related to FAO?s monitoring visits (fee covered). Spot check instead fall under **PMC** costs and are conducted by an independent service provider.

Please refer to Annex N in the Prodoc. The NPC will oversee the implementation of the interventions under the three components, and will require a strong technical background to control the quality of all project outputs as stated under Task iv) of the ToRs: ?vi) providing technical support and assessing the outputs of the project national consultants hired with GEF funds, as well as the products generated under each component of the project?.

The costs for Administrative and Finance Manager are now fully covered under PMC. Please see revised Budget in Annex A2 of the Prodoc.

The execution arrangements of the Zimbabwe DSL IP child project have resulted from a complex consultation process involving key actors responsible for delivering integrated landscape management and LDN under the leadership of the Ministry of Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry (MECTHI). The executing agencies proposed by MECTHI are the Environmental Management Agency (EMA) and the Community Technology Development Trust (CTDT). While both agencies guarantee most (but not all) the set of expertise, convening power and compliance with UN and GEF fiduciary standards required to execute, EMA requires additional PMC and Risk Mitigation Monitoring support of its execution capacities, as further described below.

Moreover, complex institutional arrangements (2 main Executing Entities and several sub- partners) require a high level of coordination, M&E and learning efforts that none of the potential Executing Agencies can bear without support. Under the circumstances, even inputs provided through implementing agency fee and own co-financing, alone, are not expected to be sufficient to ensure the desired level of coordination, application of environmental and social safeguards, coherent flow of knowledge and monitoring of companies? performances and contributions.

In order to address the above institutional, technical, and operational complexity and to ensure that the program is delivered as one coherent project, the Government of Zimbabwe has requested FAO to perform minor, targeted execution support functions essential to the smooth and consistent delivery of the program. This support will be provided by a dedicated consultant as follows:

? An Execution Capacity development Support and ESS monitoring specialist. The fiduciary assessment of execution capacity (conducted by the external audit firm BDO) has identified a number of weaknesses that will need minor active support and capacity building to enable EMA and CTDT to perform their role of Executing Agencies. This will be required especially during the first 2 years of implementation. As part of this process, the EA has requested training for harmonizing their procurement standards and process with UN and GEF standards, specifically on OPIM requirements. The fiduciary assessment also highlighted significant risks posed by EMA?s limited

sub-contracting capacities. FAO's specialist will build their capacities and closely support the implementation of the risk mitigation plan.

Even more importantly, to mitigate the risks associated with the operational and institutional complexity of the program (i.e. 2 main executing agencies + several sub partners), this part time profile, co-funded by FAO's own fees and resources, will ensure that all AWP&B, procurement plans and all reporting products are prepared in a consistent manner for smooth review and approval from the Project Steering Committee, a key PMC support task that Executing Agencies, alone, will not be able to ensure for a program of this complexity.

Coordination with the DSL IP Regional Exchange Mechanism (REM) for Southern Africa: FAO is well-positioned to ensure that the project optimizes its interactions both regionally and globally. Through the above minor execution support functions, FAO will be in a better position to enable the project management unit to interface directly with the REM ensuring a consistent and reliable bi-directional flow of data and knowledge.

Specifically the Execution Capacity development Support and ESS monitoring specialist, will perform the tasks as specified in the TORs in Annex N.

The budget line for International Expertise on demand was removed from the budget. It had been included to allow some flexibility re demand for other topics/ad hoc expertise emerging from the REM or the GCP.

The budget line aimed to have a dedicated expert from Mozambique to work on transboundary issues in collaboration with the Zimbabwean Land Degradation expert. However, this budget line was removed and the corresponding costs will be covered under the World Bank project in Mozambique.

This budget line was added following the demand of the Forestry Commission to identify more environmentally-friendly (they currently often use chemicals), efficient and cost-effective measures to prevent and control invasive tree and shrub species such as Lantana camara and Vernonia polyanthos. A management strategy will thereafter be developed for the management of invasive species in the targeted landscape. This will build on the experience of other countries in the region and was therefore moved under Output 3.2.2 (Activity iv) to increase the emphasis on regional cooperation.

3/30/2021

- Financial spot checks actually fall under PMC. Sorry for confusion. Response above amended (see highlight in yellow for ease of reference)

- PMC budget amended to include part of the Project Coordinator costs.

4/14/21

i. OK

ii. Cofinancing will cover for additional staff outside the project budget, each cofinancing partner has listed staff costs in respective cofinancing letters, these include both technical profiles as well staff costs in support to project management. A key post, that of the National Project Director will be fully co-financed by the government (carrying out key coordination & supervision functions). In view of execution complexities (two EA's and several sub partners) only a limited number of key PMC related positions (2) are to be fully budgeted under the GEF portion of PMC as these position require full time staff dedicated exclusively to the project.

iii. Please double check the TORs of PMU staff in Annex N. The Execution Capacity development Support and ESS monitoring specialist will also be responsible for delivering PMC eligible tasks as identified in the TORs. This is why associated costs are split across three eligible funding sources that correspond to the expert's tasks. PMC related tasks include the following:

? Provide coordination support to the PMU to ensure coherent delivery of the project in the context of complex implementation arrangements including numerous executing and sub-executing agencies.

? Build capacity of OPs on operations and administrative related matters as identified in relevant Fiduciary Assessment reports.

? Train and support the OP on Results-Based Management through on the job training.

? Support the OP in the actualization and harmonization of relevant reporting frameworks and templates with the OPA templates in line with FAO and GEF standards.

? Advise and support the OPs in the preparation of work plans and budgets ensuring compliance with FAO rules/regulations as specified under the signed OPAs.

? Ensure that the OPs maintain records of supporting documents for each financial transaction to be made available to Resource Partners' verifications missions.

? In case of ineligible expenditures detected in the quarterly based financial reports advise and support the Operational Partner in the formulation of remedial action.

? Support the EA in the elaboration of an ad-hoc procedure to select, manage and supervise subcontractors.

? Support the EA in the formulation of an ad-hoc procedure to manage potential conflict of interest in the procurement process.

Project Preparation Grant

6. Is the status and utilization of the PPG reported in Annex C in the document?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

1/19/2020:

Yes

Agency Response

Core indicators

**7. Are there changes/adjustments made in the core indicator targets indicated in Table E?
Do they remain realistic?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

4/2/2021:

Cleared.

3/24/2021:

Thank you for the information provided. Please see follow up comments below.

-Minor error with the text in the description of the core indicators. The first sentence refers to *Core Indicator 5*?

-We are unable to access the FAO Ex-Act tool as it seems to be in FAO's internal SharePoint network. Please upload to the portal.

- Re sub-indicator 6.1, thank you for the note on the indirect benefits. However please complete the remaining information on *Anticipated start year of accounting* and *Duration of accounting*.

1/19/2020:

- At the moment the information provided below the table is on Zimbabwe's LDN targets. Please add a note below the core indicator table indicating how the project is accounting for the expected targets. For example, the portion that covers direct field based interventions, the portion that applies to the improved integrated land use planning, etc. Additionally, please specify the Aichi targets to which the BD indicators will correspond. Please ensure the information is consistent across key sections of the submission- Table B, GEBs and Results Framework.

-For Core Indicator 1, please include the METT score table for the targeted protected area.

-Component 2 includes 130,000 ha forest sustainably managed and 40,000 ha of woodland in buffer zone of a Forest Conservancy. Is this only production areas? If it is not all productive landscapes, please include the appropriate hectares under 4.1 or 4.4.

-We note the inclusion of the FAO Ex-Act Tool results, please include the complete FAO Ex-Act tool.

-Please complete all of the information for sub-indicator 6.1

Agency Response

A note was added below the core indicator table clarifying targets.

The contribution to Aichi Biodiversity targets was added.

The sections mentioning the targeted areas were crosschecked and adjustments/clarifications were made where required.

As previously mentioned, no on-the-ground interventions will be funded by the GEF7 project in Chimanimani National Park. The project will only support the design of the Management Plan. The implementation of the plan will be undertaken by ZPWMA as part of its mandate (see cofinancing letter).

The corresponding indicator was therefore amended and is no longer aligned to Core Indicator 1. The METT is therefore no longer relevant.

An MoU has already been signed with Mozambique for the management of the Chimanimani TFCA. A harmonised approach will be adopted in the Zimbabwean and the Mozambican sides of the TFCA. This will be facilitated under the Regional Exchange Mechanism.

Yes, the area is considered as production landscape as the objective is to enable the sustainable exploitation of forest products (e.g. NTFPs) by local communities in these woodlands. However, the interventions in forest areas, on riverbanks and around the Save Valley Conservancy will focus on increasing biodiversity. 65,000 ha have therefore been included under target 4.1.

A link to the complete Ex-Act tool was added in the ProDoc.

The quantity of carbon sequestered or emissions avoided as an indirect result of the project activities depends on the Integrated Land Use Plans to be developed and complementary funding sources to be raised to cover the interventions not prioritised under the GEF7 project. The indirect carbon benefits will therefore be measured and included at mid and end term of the project duration.

3/30/2021

- text amended
- Correct Ex-ACT link provided. The Ex-ACT document was also uploaded in Portal.
- Missing information added

Part II ? Project Justification

1. Is there a sufficient elaboration on how the global environmental/adaptation problems, including the root causes and barriers, are going to be addressed?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/24/2021:

Cleared.

1/19/2020:

Not fully. Please see comments below.

- One of the noted barriers are *Lack of coordination across regulatory frameworks and enforcement authorities*. We note that Outcome 1 will be addressing this barrier. Please indicate how the project will do things differently to try to encourage improved enforcement? Or is this being addressed through a parallel project/initiative? This is given the current context where fines/punitive measures are not sufficient enough to deter destructive action on the landscape. This also becomes an issue with the illegal mining.

-We note the barriers related to land-use planning, and the the different levels of plans that currently exist- i.e Master plans, Regional Plans and local plans. Please indicate, in which category do the Save and Runde sub-basins ILUPs fall? Will the approach taken in these proposed plans feed into national level plans?

-How much influence will the project have in the development of the '*comprehensive land policy*' that is currently underway?

-We note the main drivers of land degradation in the target sites as well as the increasing impact of drought on the landscape. Is the project putting in place particular interventions to mitigate drought. We note that the approach put forward by the Science Policy Interface of the UNCCD on Drought Smart land management maybe useful in this regard.

- We note that there are issues with land tenure on the targeted site- specifically *at least 32% of the targeted area having majority of the land tenure issues (A1 and A2 land tenure systems)*. We note that Output 1.1.2 will be touching on this issue, however as written it does not appear to be guaranteed as it is dependent on the new land policy. Please clarify and indicate how the project will be tackling this issue, or what other measures are going to be put in place, outside of the scope of the project to address this issue.

- We note that *39% of the targeted area falls into the category of communal land and suffers from sever environmental degradation (A and D models)*. Will different approaches to engagement of farmers be applied to the different models of land use/ownership ? (as described in this point and the point above).

-Please provide further information on the common management challenges that are shared with other countries in the sub-region or neighbouring countries.

Agency Response

Insufficient law enforcement in the targeted area is caused by limited capacity of government institutions on the ground combined with poor coordination between local authorities and traditional leaders. This will be addressed by clarifying the role of each party in policy enforcement and providing more authority to traditional leaders in enforcing regulations related to the management of natural resources. Two by-laws will be created under Output 1.1.5 ?to provide more authority for policy enforcement to traditional leaders to address land degradation issues in the targeted sub-basin?.

Reference was added as a footnote in Prodoc Part II 1.a 3) 3.2 Objective and components (p 67).

The Integrated Land-Use Plans (ILUPs) belong to a new category as the geographic scope is not defined by administrative boundaries but by the landscape. The ILUPs will

therefore be a guiding plan to harmonise the plans at the district and ward levels. The District- and Ward-level plans will be aligned to ILUPs and the ILUPs will be integrated in the national-level plan (i.e. the NEAP) under Output 1.2.2.

The draft 'comprehensive gender-sensitive, land policy' is currently being finalised. The GEF7 project will not have influence of the Land Policy document. However, it will contribute to the implementation of relevant recommendations of the new land policy in the targeted sub-basins through the creation of by-laws to support the implementation of the ILUPs. This was further clarified in Prodoc Part II 1.a 3) 3.2 Objective and components (p 67).

Yes, the project focuses on supporting the sustainable management of natural resources which includes building the climate resilience of production systems. Interventions will therefore include the use of drought-resilient species, implementation of water and soil conservation initiatives, crops diversification among others. In addition, the IFAD cofinancing project will further contribute to increased water availability for irrigation. Training will also be provided on climate-resilient practices of farm, forest and rangeland users as well as local authorities.

The project approach and interventions are strongly aligned with the Drought Smart Land Management approach and interventions promoted under the UNCCD Science-Policy Interface for crop, grazing, forests and woodlands, and mixed land uses (except for urban areas which are not targeted under the project). In addition, UNCCD input provided at several stages of the project design has been thoroughly integrated in the Project Document. References to this guidance were added in the relevant sections.

The comprehensive gender-sensitive land policy that is currently being finalized aims to address existing land-tenure issues particularly in A1 and A2 models (which cover 32% of the targeted sub-basins) and secure land ownership including for women, youth and disabled people. The policy will also promote improved agricultural practices in agricultural land. The project will contribute to the application of this new law in the targeted sub-basins to clarify land ownership and access rights, and promote SLM (creation of by-laws under Output 1.1.5). In addition, the establishment of the community-based forest management committees under Output 2.1.1 (and the supporting by-laws under Output 1.1.5) will enable to clarify land ownership, uses and access rights in the corresponding forest area. The participatory development of the ILUPs will enable to identify any additional issues around land ownership and access rights in the sub-basins and design the required interventions to address them. The clarification above is now reflected in Prodoc Part II 1.a 3) 3.2 Objective and components and Annex I

No interventions specific to land-tenure models (e.g. A1&A2, A&D) have been identified so far. This will depend on the new land policy. Following an adaptive approach, if deemed necessary based on the new land policy and the first stages of the participatory planning process, specific engagement interventions will be implemented

to ensure efficient participatory processes across the land use categories of the sub-basins. Indeed, key success factors of the project are strong community engagement, and clarifying and securing land ownership and access rights.

The information above is reflected in Prodoc Part II 1.a 3) 3.2.

These are listed in Prodoc Annex J.

Common barriers to implementing SLM and SFM identified in the region include:

1. Weak or absent enabling mechanisms to apply the LDN approach comprehensively at national and landscape levels to address land degradation through SLM and SFM.
2. Inadequate frameworks and capacity for integrated, cross-sectoral land and resource planning, management, and governance.
3. Insufficient knowledge and experience within governmental institutions, extension services and amongst land users/communities to apply sustainable production practices (SLM/SFM) in an integrated manner.
4. Limited incentives to adopt sustainable management practices, access to markets, green value-chains, and business opportunities.
5. Absence of harmonized approaches to assess and monitor the effect of improved practices of SLM and SFM on selected indicators and progress towards LDN

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

1/19/2020:

Yes

Agency Response

3. Is the proposed alternative scenario as described in PIF/PFD sound and adequate? Is there sufficient clarity on the expected outcomes and components of the project and a description on the project is aiming to achieve them?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

3/24/2020:

Cleared

1/19/2020:

Not fully.

Please see comments above under question 1 (Part 11- Project Justification).

-In addition please see below:

-Please elaborate on the potential opportunities for green recovery in relation to the impacts of COVID. These may include innovation for connectivity e.g. mobile technology to access tools and information on sustainable land management practices in times of restricted movement, provision of green jobs.

-Output 1.1.1 indicates various landscape level governance platforms will be established. In what existing governance framework will these be anchored in order to enable their continuity?

- Output 1.2.2 indicates financial mechanisms will be developed at the national level. Please clarify what these include? How will these be institutionalized to ensure sustained support? We note the Indicator of success is *(iii) Increased support for SLM and/or SFM through # government finance mechanisms and programmes as a result of the project*. However this indicator does strongly encourage development of a sustained system.

-Output 2.2.1- We note the potential measures that will be put in place to improve the regulatory/policy environment related to charcoal. Please clarify whether or not sustainable charcoal production will be one of targeted value chains for development.

-Output 2.2.2 largely indicates that private sector financing opportunities will be explored. We would expect that this particular research would have been undertaken at the PPG level, and concrete recommendations made for implementation of a system of financial support during project implementation. What concrete results are expected from this output? What are the corresponding targets and indicators?

-Outcome 3.3- A significant amount of the activity in this component is heavily reliant on the REM. How will this support at the national level be sustained beyond the life of the project? What are the national institutional practices and regional coordinating mechanisms being put in place/ how are existing regional bodies being strengthened to ensure continued interaction with neighbouring countries for dryland management?

Agency Response

Opportunities for green recovery in relation to the impacts of COVID have been added in Prodoc section 5 Risks.a)

The landscape-level TWGs are a replica of the national committee in terms of representation. Their establishment will enable smooth coordination of activities from local to national level and vice versa. At national level, the platform is coordinated by the Ministry of Environment through EMA, feeding into the Parliamentary Portfolio

Committee on Environment. At landscape level, LDN activities will be handled by the LTWG, coordinated by the Provincial Development Coordinator with support from EMA and MECTHI. At the local level, the LTWG will be supported by the District Development Coordinator, the Environment Committees and the Environment Sub-committees. Institutional structure will be refined in a participatory manner with decentralised government at the beginning of the project to ensure that the LDN process is adequately supported from the central to the local level beyond the project lifespan.

The majority of the financial mechanisms to be strengthened under the project (i.e. devolution fund, carbon tax fund, Environmental Fund) are already institutionalised. Similarly, the main government programme to be strengthened (i.e. the Presidential Input Scheme) is ongoing. Attracting more funds from the private sector for provincial development is a clear target of the government as stated under the National Development Strategy 2021-2025 which was finalised in November 2020. It is therefore expecting that the LDN RoundTable will be maintained to further identify funding opportunities. Raising additional funds will indeed be necessary to be able to achieve the National LDN targets. It is now clarified that the institutionalisation of the RoundTable will be supported under Output 2.2.2.

The information above is reflected in the Sustainability section of the Prodoc (Part II Section 7), pg. 84.

Based on the consultations undertaken during the PPG phase, the government is strongly against any type of charcoal production. It is currently strictly forbidden. The project will therefore take a cautious approach in changing perceptions that charcoal can indeed be a clean and a renewable source of energy. The first step towards sustainable charcoal production is therefore to create adequate policy to enable the use of sustainable practices for charcoal production when no green alternatives can be found. This will be done under Output 1.1.4. In addition, the project will support improved knowledge on current charcoal production and consumption patterns in the region (Output 2.2.1). Finally, under the REM, evidenced-based best practices on sustainable charcoal production from other countries will be communicated to all the countries.

During the PPG phase, potential Value Chains have been identified as well as key private sector actors for each value chain. However, the final selection of the Value Chains will be made in a participatory manner with local communities during the project implementation. A major role of LDN RoundTable is to match community needs with relevant private sector actors and develop tailored-made agreements accordingly (Output 2.2.2). The participatory processes with private sector companies under the RoundTable will enable to diversify the support options thereby maximising private sector contribution to SLM and SFM. Expected outputs is the attribution of loans by microfinance institutions to support community members in adopting SLM and SFM practices, and financial support by private sector companies to community groups through funding agreements for Value Chains development. The number of loans

and agreements cannot yet be estimated as it depends on the final selection of Value Chains by local communities under the ILUPs.

The project will work with and strengthen the capacity of the UNCCD focal point (and LDN working group) who is already well connected to regional mechanisms such as SADC LDN work under the GGWI.

Text below on regional exchange mechanisms beyond project:

The REM will be established and managed in close collaboration with regional networks, particularly SADC and the Miombo Network. SADC under its LDN and Great Green Wall outreach already works closely with Zimbabwe and the other SADC member states and will play a key role in maintaining regional cooperation after the project ends. LDN will remain a key theme for regional knowledge sharing because of the National LDN targets of each countries and the support from UNCCD. Zimbabwe and other child projects will further benefit from SADC's key areas of work that are in support of the child project's objective including the Operationalization of the SADC Regional Agricultural Policy (RAP), Sub-regional Action Programme to Combat Desertification (SRAP), Natural Resources, Disaster Risk Management, and Social and Human Development. SADC has also established a Water, Energy, Food Nexus Conceptual Framework and Governance structure: the project will take advantage of the SADC WEF Nexus Dialogues as a platform to bring together the Water, Energy, Agriculture and Economic Planning sectors. Zimbabwe and other child projects will further benefit from SADC platforms such as Environment Technical Committee meetings and Environment Ministers meetings as opportunities for pursuing inter-country policy dialogue. IUCN and UNCCD are currently finalizing a Drought Management Plan for SADC, and the GCP offers an important opportunity for capacity enhancement for drought mitigation within the framework of this plan.

The above was added in the Sustainability section of the Prodoc (Part II Section 7), page 84.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/24/2021:

Cleared

1/19/2020:

Not fully.

As this is a child project under the Impact program, we expect additional details on how the project aligns with the Program and less so on focal area alignment.

Agency Response Additional details provided. The "Alignment with GEF focal area and/or Impact Program strategies" section of the Prodoc further explains the alignment of the Zimbabwe child project with the DSL IP.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

1/19/2020:

Yes

Agency Response

6. Is there further and better elaboration on the project's expected contribution to global environmental benefits or adaptation benefits?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

4/2/2021:

Cleared.

3/24/2021:

We note in the response that the *Rio marker was selected at 0 in alignment to other child's projects.*

However the Rio Marker is showing as '1' in the portal submission. Please correct or clarify.

1/19/2020:

Not fully.

Please include the expected adaptation benefits, in particular as RIO marker '1' was selected for Adaptation.

Agency Response

Rio marker was selected at 0 in alignment to other child's projects. Adaptation benefits are however mentioned under the Benefits section of the prodoc as well as being mentioned all throughout the prodoc.

3/30/2020

Rio marker now at 0 in portal submission.

7. Is there further and better elaboration to show that the project is innovative and sustainable including the potential for scaling up?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/24/2021:

Cleared.

1/19/2020

Not fully.

Sustainability

- A significant amount of training will take place at the local and national level. How will this be institutionalized to ensure the ability of the project partners to continue with training post project.

-How will the CSBs, Community based forest management committees and other community level cooperatives continue to be supported?

-What are the plans to ensure the sustained access to finance by the FFPOs?

Agency Response

At the local level, the community-based FFS network will enable continued access to training on SLM and SFM practices for farm, forest and rangeland users beyond the project implementation phase. This will support the maintenance of improved management practices and sustainable value chains that provide a steady source of income. This will create incentive for the maintenance of the FFS network.

At the provincial and national levels, the project will support the institutionalization of the LDN working group which will have received training to support LDN monitoring using a training-of-trainers approach and will therefore be able to provide further training where required. Members of the Environmental Committees and Environmental

Sub-Committees will receive training from the trainers through the training-of-trainers approach which will strengthen the sustainability of the project.

At the global level, the institutionalization of knowledge exchange mechanisms through existing regional and global platforms such as SADC, Miombo network and WOCAT will enable continued access to the latest information on good practices to inform training activities beyond the project lifespan.

The above is further explained in Prodoc Part II Section 7 under the Sustainability sub section.

Each of these structures focus on income generating activities and are therefore expected to be maintained using part of the profit by the beneficiaries. Under the project, all the required training for the autonomy of the structure will be provided. Local government and FFS will be in charge of provide complementary training where necessary.

The maintenance of the LDN RoundTable by government will enable further identification of opportunities for private sector actors to support FFPOs. The evidence base on successful partnerships between private sector and community groups will support further development of these support mechanisms.

Project Map and Coordinates

Is there an accurate and confirmed geo-referenced information where the project intervention will take place?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

4/30/2021:

Cleared.

4/19/2021:

Comment not addressed. Please insert the map in the portal under Annex D.

4/9/2021:

Please see a follow up comment below:

Please include the maps in the appropriate place in the Portal.

1/19/2020:

Yes

Agency Response

4/29/2021

Map inserted in Portal under Annex D.

Child Project

If this is a child project, is there an adequate reflection of how it contributes to the overall program impact?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

1/19/2020:

Yes.

Agency Response

Stakeholders

**Does the project include detailed report on stakeholders engaged during the design phase?
Is there an adequate stakeholder engagement plan or equivalent documentation for the implementation phase, with information on Stakeholders who will be engaged, the means of engagement, and dissemination of information?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

1/19/2020:

Yes

Agency Response

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Has the gender analysis been completed? Did the gender analysis identify any gender differences, gaps or opportunities linked to project/program objectives and activities? If so, does the project/program include gender-responsive activities, gender-sensitive indicators and expected results?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

1/19/2020:

Yes

Agency Response

Private Sector Engagement

If there is a private sector engagement, is there an elaboration of its role as a financier and/or as a stakeholder?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/24/2021:

Cleared.

1/19/2020:

Not fully.

-Please explain the "basket product approach" mentioned in Table B.

-Is the project going to explore the possibility of utilizing carbon taxes and the PES as an avenue where the private sector may make a contribution at scale.

-It was encouraging to see the role of media documented and that the key private sector function of broadcasting, print and online media information is being utilized. Further development of media linkages could be encouraged across the program to develop consistent branding, messages and resources.

Agency Response

The basket product approach aims to diversify the income sources of the beneficiaries to increase their resilience to climate change. Instead of focusing on one product (or Value Chain), the beneficiaries will be supported in strengthening several products (on

farm and forests that are linked to SLM and SFM approaches). This will mitigate the effect of potential climate event, ensuring food and nutrition security and support diversification of income.

Yes, there is currently no PES policy in the country so the project will first support its development under Output 1.1.4. The experience from other countries in the region regarding PES will be built on to develop this policy through the REM.

Under Output 2.2.2, the type of agreements to be signed between community groups and private sector companies for Value Chain strengthening will be defined on a case-by-case basis and will likely include PES (if adequate PES opportunities are identified in the sub-basins and depending on the PES policy development process). This is now clarified in the relevant sections.

Further explanation was provided in the Private Sector Engagement Section of the Prodoc.

This is well noted and will be addressed under the GCP.

Risks to Achieving Project Objectives

Has the project elaborated on indicated risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved? Were there proposed measures that address these risks at the time of project implementation?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

1/19/2020:

Yes

Agency Response

Coordination

Is the institutional arrangement for project implementation fully described? Is there an elaboration on possible coordination with relevant GEF-financed projects and other bilateral/multilateral initiatives in the project area?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/24/2021:

Cleared.

1/19/2020

We will not be able to support the IA/EA arrangements as presented due to the following reasons listed below. Please make the necessary adjustments in the project document.

1. The justification provided in this case is to ensure a more effective collaboration between the Miombo/Mopane cluster countries under the programmatic approach, and also to provide an opportunity for a harmonized, well-coordinated and cost-efficient deployment of tailored technical assistance to support child project countries in addressing common land degradation challenges. This is not considered a justification for a GEF policy exception, which explicitly precludes the merging or crossing over of the implementing functions of the GEF Agencies and the execution functions undertaken by EAs.
2. The proposed arrangement on the procurement of all international expertise for the child project through FAO is not in line with this policy. GEF policy strongly prefers national execution of projects and the utilization of national expertise to provide technical assistance locally. The intended harmonized, well-coordinated and cost-efficient deployment of tailored technical assistance to support child project execution can be achieved by other means than by providing execution support by the Implementing agency.
3. FAO as the Lead Agency for the DSL program also implements and executes the associated Global Coordination Project (GCP) for this program. This function is crucial for ensuring coherence among all child projects under the program, and also has a specific budget for providing technical assistance through the GCP. In addition, child projects are expected to allocate funds for engagement in global (and specifically for this IP regional cluster) activities for learning and knowledge sharing.
4. If situations of low capacity in the country would require specific execution support, we request the GEF Agency to procure a "third-party" to execute as a preferred way forward.
5. Finally, written requests by OFPs are only a condition for consideration of the request, and do not automatically lead to GEF's concurrence with the request. In the specific case, the conclusion of the PM is to not approve the request.

Agency Response

The proposed inclusion of technical assistance is based on a capacity building approach according to identified capacity gaps at various levels. FAO has not intended to

engage/finance FAO experts but international consultants in the sub-region that are familiar with corresponding technical approaches working directly with PMU and government counter parts as part of a capacity building approach at the onset of the projects. A corresponding letter has been submitted for this purpose.

The approach has been modified now in line with GEF policy without risking the anticipated results. The project budget has been amended accordingly. Funds were reallocated to increase investments into field-based operations per GEF-SEC recommendations. Budget revisions were made.

The Operational Capacity Building expert was renamed and is now appearing under the national consultants budget line. Justification for this position is provided in the comment above. TORs available in Prodoc Annex N.

Consistency with National Priorities

Has the project described the alignment of the project with identified national strategies and plans or reports and assessments under the relevant conventions?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

1/19/2020:

Yes. Very good and informative alignment table for LDN targets. We encourage to use this table for all child projects in the monitoring approach.

Agency Response

Knowledge Management

Is the proposed Knowledge Management Approach for the project adequately elaborated with a timeline and a set of deliverables?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/24/2021:

Cleared.

1/19/2020:

Not fully.

-Please confirm the timeline and specific KM deliverables. We note that they may be mentioned in other sections of the document, however please note them in this section showing how they are supporting the KM approach.

Agency Response The gender-sensitive Knowledge Management strategy will be developed under Output 3.2.1 by a dedicated expert during Y1 and will define specifically the products and timeline. However, a list of key deliverables with approximate timeline was added under the Knowledge Management section.

Monitoring and Evaluation

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/25/2021:

Cleared

1/19/2020

Not fully

-Please clarify the nature of the Final Report. Can this be covered by the staff time of the PMU?

Agency Response The Final Report was merged with the Final Evaluation costs as this is part of the final assessment package and needs to be conducted independently from the PMU (conflict of interest).

Benefits

Are the socioeconomic benefits at the national and local levels sufficiently described resulting from the project? Is there an elaboration on how these benefits translate in supporting the achievement of GEBs or adaptation benefits?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

3/24/2021:

Cleared.

1/19/2020:

Not fully.

-The narrative provided provides significant details on the socio economic benefits, however link to the GEBs targeted for this project is not clearly stated.

-Please also elaborate on the specific categories beneficiaries (Core Indicator 11).

Agency Response

A summary of the environmental benefits to be generated under the project was added to the GEBs section in the Prodoc

Information on the number of beneficiaries disaggregated by gender was added under this section. 15,000 land-users (including 52% of women) will directly benefit from the project. In addition, approximately 60 government staff will receive training on LDN and cross-sectoral coordination under Output 1.1.1 and 1.1.2. Approximately 20 non-government staff from partner organisations and CSO and 30 government staff will receive training to become trainers on LD assessment, integrated land-use planning and LDN monitoring under Output 1.1.3. It is expected to reach a far larger number of trainees through the training-of-trainer approach. Women will represent 52% of the trainees across the project interventions. This information was added under the relevant section.

ZELA will play an important role in Outputs 1.1.4 and 1.1.5 regarding the identification of policy gaps and policy formulations/reviews.

Annexes

Are all the required annexes attached and adequately responded to?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

4/30/2021:

Cleared.

4/19/2021:

As mentioned above, please insert the project map (Annex D) and the detailed project budget (Annex E).

1/19/2020

Yes

Agency Response

29/4/2021

Addressed.

Project Results Framework

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

1/19/2020

Yes

Agency Response

GEF Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

1/19/2020

Yes

Agency Response

Council comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

1/19/2020:

Yes

Agency Response

STAP comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
1/19/2020

Yes

Agency Response
Convention Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response
Other Agencies comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response
CSOs comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response
Status of PPG utilization

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
1/19/2020

Yes

Agency Response
Project maps and coordinates

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
1/19/2020

Yes

Agency Response

Does the termsheet in Annex F provide finalized financial terms and conditions? Does the termsheet and financial structure address concerns raised at PIF stage and that were pending to be resolved ahead of CEO endorsement? (For NGI Only)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

N/A

Agency Response

Do the Reflow Table Annex G and the Trustee Excel Sheet for reflows provide accurate reflow expectations of the project submitted? Assumptions for Reflows can be submitted to explain expected reflows. (For NGI Only)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

Did the agency Annex H provided with information to assess the Agency Capacity to generate and manage reflows? (For NGI Only)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

GEFSEC DECISION

RECOMMENDATION

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

4/30/2021:

The follow up comments have been addressed. The project is cleared and recommended for CEO Endorsement.

4/19/2021:

Not at this time. Please address the comments above on the IFAD co-financing letter, the project map and the project budget.

4/9/2021:

Not at this time. Please address the follow up comments above.

3/24/2021

Not at this time. Please address the comments above.

1/21/2021

Not at this time. Please address the comments above.

Review Dates

	Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review	1/21/2021	
Additional Review (as necessary)	3/24/2021	
Additional Review (as necessary)	4/2/2021	
Additional Review (as necessary)	4/9/2021	
Additional Review (as necessary)	4/19/2021	

CEO Recommendation

Brief reasoning for CEO Recommendations