



Conserving Biodiversity and Restoring Ecosystem Functions in the Day and Mabla Mountains

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

10874

Countries

Djibouti

Project Name

Conserving Biodiversity and Restoring Ecosystem Functions in the Day and Mabla Mountains

Agencies

UNDP

Date received by PM

6/23/2023

Review completed by PM

7/31/2023

Program Manager

Jean-Marc Sinnassamy

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
November 29, 2023

Addressed.

July 31, 2023

No.

This project mainly financed by LD resources at 70% and by BD resources at less than 30% defined as a BD. We are therefore surprised by the selection of Rio markers with Biodiversity as the main objective of the project and LD becoming a significant objective.

Deep changes are expected to come back to the intentions of the PIF approved by the Council.

We are seeing back activities/outputs that were submitted in the first version of the concept and removed from the approved PIF.

Agency Response

UNDP response - 16-Nov-23

Rio Markers for this project were corrected:

Biodiversity ? 1 (Significant Objective)

Land Degradation ? 2 (Principal Objective)

Climate Change Mitigation ? 0 (not targeted)

Climate change Adaptation ? 1 (Significant objective)

|

Both LD and BD are now tagged, the former as a Principal Objective, the latter as a significant one. There are also explanations in the project justification that explain how in a dryland environment, threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services are intertwined. Refer e.g. to PRODOC Box 1. Intertwined causal analysis of biodiversity loss and land degradation, plus the expected impacts of climate change on terrestrial ecosystems (reproduced in the CEO Endorsement Request).

|

In the current resubmission version of the PRODOC, the formulations and intention behind the project strategy have to a great extent been "reversed" to better reflect the project strategy that had been approved by the GEF Council through the PIF. This should be clear from the current formulations proposed for Components, Outcomes and Outputs in the CEO Endorsement Request PART I, Table B. The targets for the GEF Core Indicators were also updated.

|

Having said that, the current strategy in the PRODOC being resubmitted for CEO Endorsement also brought about important improvements vis-?-vis the PIF. E.g. gender mainstreaming is stronger and more consistent now. The hectares proposed are based on GIS analysis and on more complete information. Important elements pertaining to the project's viability and sustainability were also re-considered.

|

More importantly, the project's GEF eligibility is now compliant. Activities from the previous submission for CEO Endorsement that the GEF Secretariat had rejected through this review are now dropped (removed from the PRODOC). As a side note, UNDP is pleased to inform the GEF that support for eco-tourism will likely be funded from another source, strengthening thereby the potential partnerships that will support the GEF project.

|

To document the changes, UNDP included in the CEO Endorsement Request a thorough matrix in the PART II Section titled "DESCRIBE ANY CHANGES IN ALIGNMENT WITH THE PROJECT DESIGN WITH THE ORIGINAL PIF".

The matrix focuses on key elements of the project strategy, in particular, barriers, indicators and Components, Outcomes and Outputs. In terms of formulations, the matrix compares: (i) what had been presented and approved by the GEF Council at PIF stage (first column); (ii) the content of the PRODOC's previous submission version (second column); (iii) what is being presented through the current resubmission (third column "Updated TOC elements and Results Framework in the resubmitted PRODOC"). In the last column there are comments for justifying and explaining the changes.

One important change in the project strategy vis-à-vis the one at PIF stage is acknowledged herein:

- ? At PIF stage, two new PA sites were slated to benefit from the project: Day Forest (said to have 6,000 ha) and Mabla Forest (said to have 4,000 ha) adding up to 10,000 ha for Core Indicator 1 (Terrestrial PAs).
- ? During the PPG, there were doubts about the actual conservation value of Mabla Forest as a site. In PRODOC Annex 19.1.2 ("Characteristics of Project Sites"), it is clearly indicated that very little is known about the actual status of forests in Mabla and its resources. See e.g. PRODOC Figure 2, which shows the average biomass in both sites. Between 2010 and 2020, Mabla area lost 81% of its biomass. Even with the interannual fluctuations in above-ground biomass, which are typical in drylands, the 11,000-hectare polygon for the Day site displays an average of 2,474t between for the same period. For for the 20,000-hectare notional polygon for the Mabla site, this indicator is 182t.
- ? Also, during the PPG, the project's cost-effectiveness vis-à-vis proposed sites was also pondered. The Government agreed with the PPG team that, with the GEF budget available for the FSP, and with the prevailing capacity, logistics and the security constraints that affect Mabla, it would not be viable to maintain the same level of land use management in both Day Forest and Mabla Forest. The sites were then differentiated. Day Forest is considered a primary site that contributes with hectares and number of beneficiaries to the GEF's Core Indicator targets. Mabla is a secondary one and will be the object of an assessment to determine its conservation value.
- ? The key focus in the current project strategy is the operationalization of Day Forest as a PA (likely as national park), complemented by few certain activities to be pursued in Mabla, if the sites conservation value can be ascertained.

? On the plus side, the hectares for the sites were reassessed based on recent GIS analysis and with a net positive result. The final hectareage for Core Indicator 1 at CEO Endorsement stage is in the end 1,000 ha larger than at PIF stage.

? The area for a potential national park in Day Forest is now estimated between 10,000 and 11,000 ha (the latter was considered for GEF Core Indicator's purposes). The proposed polygon for Day Forest National Park (a PA yet to be created) would correspond more or less to that of the former National Park that existed there during the French colonial times (and which nominally had 10,000 ha). The polygon presented in the project's resubmission is still indicative. Consolidating the area would require assessments on the ground that will be conducted in connection with the demarcation and other work foreseen under Component 1.

? As for Mabla Forest site, only a "notional polygon" that was based on outdated and imprecise maps could be outlined.

? For the reasons explained further up, UNDP prefers not to report Mabla Forest site under Core Indicator 1, and neither under other Core Indicators.

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
December 4, 2023

We will forward the request to the portal IT team. Addressed.

November 29, 2023

We take note of the significant adjustments made to the project.

We also take note of the modifications brought to the project title "*Conserving Biodiversity and Restoring Ecosystem Functions in and around the Day Forest National Protected Area*", removing the reference to the Mabla mountains. We expect to see this modification reflected in the letter of endorsement, confirming that the national authorities are supporting this adjustment.

July 31, 2023

No.

- Several outputs (6.3/ visitor center, 6.4/locals, trails, sleeping areas, 6.5/new trails, new camps, toilets...) are not related to the project reasoning and we are not seeing the baseline, the added value of GEF resources, and the generation of GEB.

- We strongly recommend coming back to a result framework closer to the initial intention approved at PIF stage.

- On the proportionality of the PMC: the co-financing contribution to PMC is not proportionate compared with the GEF contribution to PMC. If the GEF contribution is kept at 5%, for a co-financing of \$9,700,000 the expected contribution to PMC must be around \$485,000 instead of \$360,000 (which is 3.7%).

Agency Response

UNDP response - 4-Dec-23

The modification of the project title is reflected in the Letter of Endorsement. We would appreciate the GEF Helpdesk to change the Project's title in the portal, as we can't do it from our side

UNDP response - 16-Nov-23

In the current PRODOC the former 'Outcome 6' was completely dropped from the project strategy.

Therefore, the outputs that the GEF Secretariat had referred to in the comment (6.3/ visitor center, 6.4/locals, trails, sleeping areas, 6.5/new trails, new camps, toilets...) are no longer part of the project, including in the budget, which was updated accordingly.

More importantly, in the current resubmission version of the PRODOC, the formulations and intentions behind the project strategy have to a great extent been 'reversed' to better reflect the project strategy that had been approved by the GEF Council through the PIF. For certain aspects, the current strategy is also an improvement vis-à-vis the PIF's.

For the main explanations on these changes, refer to CEO Endorsement Request, PART II Section titled ?DESCRIBE ANY CHANGES IN ALIGNMENT WITH THE PROJECT DESIGN WITH THE ORIGINAL PIF?.

The PMC costs for co-financing are now proportional to the GEF?s PMC, which is 5% of the sub-total.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response
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
November 29, 2023

Addressed.

We acknowledge the reasoning with the WB, confirming \$4.5 million of cofinancing upon the \$30 million of the considered project.

July 31, 2023

Differences between PIF and project documents are normal. They need to be justified. However, when the nature of cofinancing and partners are changing too much, it is barely a good signal.

- Please, explain the discussions that happened with the World Bank and the connection between the proposed cofinancing and the GEF increment.

- The cofinancing support letter from the World Bank indicates \$30mil. Please revise the co-financing amount in consistent with letter of support.

Agency Response

UNDP response - 16-Nov-23

In the CEO Endorsement Request, section ?DESCRIBE ANY CHANGES IN ALIGNMENT WITH THE PROJECT DESIGN WITH THE ORIGINAL PIF?

The World Bank project, as indicated in the co-financing letter, has operations in Tadjourah region, where 61 percent of the population live below the poverty lines, the highest in the country. The World Bank?s project- ?Social Protection Emergency Crisis Response Project?, which started in June 2022, focuses on the social protection, sustainable livelihoods grants, community resilience building through cash transfers, training the community members and public servants. These activities which are articulated in Component 1 and Component 2 of the World Bank project are closely aligned with Component 2 of the proposed GEF project. Component 3 of the WB project articulates the livelihood grant mechanisms, engagement of the private sector and the climate financing from Public Private Partnership models to provide alternative sources of income for the community members thereby reducing the pressure on the Day Forest resources. The project identifies sustainable income generating activities (honey, milk transformation, basketry, agriculture, handicrafts...), the development of value chain and the training in business development and management skills to improve socio-economic status of the communities.

The World Bank co-financing letter was cleared by its legal department, and they preferred to indicate the entire project amount in its letter. Though half of the funds have already been disbursed for the distribution of safety net benefits, the component on sustainable livelihoods, which are aligned very closely with the proposed GEF project, has not started yet.

In agreement with the World Bank, UNDP is considering an amount of \$4,500,000 as adequate for reflecting the actual co-financing available through the World Bank for the duration of the project.

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
November 29, 2023

Addressed.

July 31, 2023

No

The value for money is not demonstrated and disappointing in comparison with the PIF.

Agency Response

UNDP response - 16-Nov-23

At PIF stage the total co-financing reached a total amount of \$9M. For the first submission, the total amount was \$10.06M. The co-financing from the MEDD increased from \$1.8M to \$2.56M, enabled through the additional technical personnel recruited for the Protected Area Management sub-Directorate. Similarly, the World Bank co-financing which was \$3M at the PIF stage, was revised to \$4.5M out of its \$30M project on social protection and crisis response. Hence, though the WFP co-finance of \$1.2M through its envisaged project on Food for Assets was cancelled, the total co-financing is higher by \$1.06M. Hence, at slightly higher than 1:3 ratio of GEF to co-financing, the project has a fairly robust position in terms of government and donor co-financing. Furthermore, the co-financing from the World Bank, which complements the GEF project interventions in leveraging community support and engagement crucial to ensure sustainability of the GEF funding, the co-financing presents a strong value-for-money case. In addition, the government cost sharing through the reinforced technical support at the project site (MAEPE-RH) through the sustainable land management interventions and nature-based solutions for addressing land degradation, and at the biodiversity protection level (MEDD), the in-kind co-financing from the government's ongoing and strategic programmes bolsters the value-for-money position for the project.

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
November 29, 2023

Addressed.

July 31, 2023

- There is a table reporting the status and utilization of the PPG.
- However, we may wonder the validity of these data as specialists for safeguards, stakeholder plan, and KM plan are budgeted again under the project grant. Please, clarify.
- Are the deliverables from the Social and Environmental Safeguards Specialist and Stakeholder Engagement and Gender Specialist available?

Agency Response

UNDP response - 16-Nov-23

The use of PPG funds was updated. PPG funds are now fully used. A small team has worked intensely in the PPG tasks and delivered results under challenging conditions.

The application of UNDP's Social Environmental Safeguards (SES) required several iterations to reach a satisfactory level. Still, there are important and significant SES risks associated with this project. Those have been highlighted in PRODOC Annex 9 and are fully explained in the SES. In light of the elevated SES risk level, there is a need to mitigate the relevant risks and to monitor and report against them more closely during implementation. This is in line with both GEF and UNDP requirements. For this reason, a dedicated project output was retained. This output corresponds to PIF stage output 3.2 Social and environmental safeguards risks mainstreamed across the work under Components 1-2, necessary management measures implemented and monitored. This is the main reason why there is focus on SES and enhanced social and environmental risk monitoring at CEO Endorsement stage, including in the current resubmission.

Note also that the old Outcome 6 (from the previous submission and relating to tourism investment) was dropped. This required slight adjustments to the budget. It also represented a chance to revisit the proportions that will go to Component 3 compared to the others and also to review and update several other sections of the PRODOC.

Yes, all deliverables of Social and Environmental Safeguards Specialist and Stakeholder Engagement and Gender Specialist are available and have been effectively incorporated and weaved into the PRODOC's content, which has already been submitted to the GEF. E.g. the Gender Action Plan (PRODOC Annex 12) is a key deliverable of the Gender Specialist; the Social and Environmental Safeguards documentation (Annex 7 and 8) is a key deliverable from the expert with the same title. Finally, the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (Annex 10) is a key deliverable from the Stakeholder Engagement. In light of changes to the project strategy, those annexes were adjusted in connection with the resubmission. Should the GEF require additional documentation, this can be provided.

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
November 29, 2023

Addressed.

July 31, 2023

- With a project financed at +70% from LD and claiming the LD Objective 1.1 on agriculture, we would expect significant GEB expressed in terms of Sustainable Land Management (core

indicator 4.3). This is the reason why 14,000 ha of productive landscapes under SLM were initially targeted (4.3). Now, the target = 0. It is obviously not acceptable. To be revised.

- The target under the CI 3.2 (forests and forest lands restored) was 200 ha at PIF level and is now at 300 ha. Acceptable.

- There is a new target 4.1 (improved landscape management to benefit biodiversity) = 1000 ha. OK

- All in all, the value for money is not demonstrated with very low LD benefits for this LD/BD project. To be revised.

- Beneficiaries: 1000 beneficiaries are targeted, half women, half men. More information on the way to reach this target would be welcome.

- The targets in the results framework are not consistent with the targets in the core indicator table. Please consider revising them.

- Please include WDPA IDs and METT score for core indicator 1 in the core indicator table.

Agency Response

UNDP response - 16-Nov-23

There has been a misunderstanding and possibly some typos in the presentation of GEF Core Indicator targets during the first submission of the PRODOC for CEO Endorsement. This is regrettable but it is now corrected.

As explained further up, a GIS based analysis was conducted for the PPG in September 2023. The area for sites and the potential for wider landscape level management were reassessed. This allowed UNDP to present figures for the GEF's Core Indicators, as well as sub-indicators with much more precision. They currently read as follows ? and with explanations added below Part I Table F of the CEO Endorsement Request

Targets for applicable Core Indicators with notes:

Target for Core Indicator 1) Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use (Hectares): 11,000 ha

Note on CI1):

? The area for a potential National Park in Day Forest is now estimated between 10,000 and 11,000 ha (the latter was considered for Core Indicator purposes). The proposed polygon for Day Forest National Park (yet to be created) corresponds approximately to the area and location of National Park that there existed during the French colonial times.

This was assessed from old maps and literature ? albeit with imprecision, considering the current advances in GIS technologies.

? Unlike what had been reported for CI1 at PIF stage, UNDP is no longer reporting the area of Mabla Forest under Core Indicator 1. This is because there were doubts about the conservation value of Mabla Forest during the PPG (see e.g. PRODOC Figure 2, which shows the average biomass per unit area in both sites.). In addition, the viability of having the project operate in both sites (Day Forest and Mabla forest) with the same level of intensity was questionable from a cost-effectiveness point of view. Therefore, a decision was made, in full consultation with the government, to have a differentiated approach to Mabla and concentrate efforts in Day Forest.

Target for Core Ind 3) Area of land restored (Hectares): 100 ha

Note on CI3):

? The areas that are proposed for restoration need to be kept modest and focused. At PIF stage the proposed target was 200 ha (half in Mabla and half in Day). The figure was later considered overly ambitious.

? During the PPG, some potential perimeters for ecosystem rehabilitation were indicatively proposed, but more like zones with an indicative location where such activities would take place, rather than a firm target or a precise location.

? Currently a comprehensive forest assessment and mapping for both Day and Mabla are missing. One such study is planned for the project's year 1 (Activity 1.1.1) and noting that it could not be conducted during the PPG because of the PPG's limited scope and budget.

? For now, a target of 100 ha for CI2 is considered adequate by subject matter experts.

Target for Core Ind 4) Area of landscapes under improved practices (excluding protected areas) (Hectares): 18,000 ha

Note on CI4):

? The area proposed for CI4 corresponds, with a good degree approximation, to the area of the Day Forest Wider Landscape, which has 29,000 ha less the area of 11,000 ha that corresponds to the PA (reported under CI1) ? hence 18,000 ha.

? Refer to PRODOC Figures 2 for more information on the polygons. The figure is also reproduced in the CEO Endorsement Request PART II, section 1a-1.

Target for Core Ind 11) Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment 1,000 beneficiaries (50% men, 50% women)

Note on CI11):

? At PIF stage, the number of beneficiaries suggested reached 4,000 (50% women; 50% men) and by also suggesting that 2,000 people would correspond to beneficiaries in Day Forest and the other 2,000 in Mabla Forest.

? During the PPG, these estimates proved to be quite unrealistic.

? To start with, the notional area for Mabla Forest, which has some 20,000 ha and very few access roads is sparsely populated, likely with some 500-700 people living within the mentioned area in small and scattered settlements.

? For Day Forest, a thorough assessment of the number of households was conducted during the PPG. It concluded that ?The [Day Forest] area supports 350 households (~1750 people) who have approximately 1000 livestock (largely goats and sheep, followed by cows, and a small number of mules and camels).?

? Therefore, proposing that the present GEF project targets 1000 people in Day Forest area is considered adequate.

? Work planned under Component 2 on ?Safeguarding and rehabilitation of rangeland and forest ecosystem through collaborative SLM? is expected to generate GEBs and socio-economic benefits that will reach the bulk of the 1000 beneficiaries, through among others income generating opportunities (e.g., through value chain development and livelihood improvement interventions) with other interventions under Component 1 (PA strengthening) expected to build capacities and skills of local government staff and local communities involved in PA management.

Core indicator sheet and METT sheet were updated.

Targets in the results framework are now consistent with the targets in the core indicator table.

Else, neither Day Forest nor Mabla Forest have WDPA IDs, the project will support the registration of Day Forest NP during implementation and following preparatory registration work with the government. Mabla Forest PA will also be supported to acquire a WDPA ID, if appropriate, following engagement with UNEP-WCMC and government.

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
November 29, 2023

Addressed.

July 31, 2023

Some problems are described, but it is difficult to understand how the proposed objectives, outputs, and activities are going to address these problems.

Agency Response

UNDP response - 16-Nov-23

For this resubmission of the PRODOC for CEO Endorsement, both the PRODOC and the CEO Endorsement Request have been thoroughly edited and revised, including the way the project's justification argument is structured and presented.

New data and evidence are also presented (see e.g. new maps and figures). See in addition new content in PRODOC Annex 19 (national and site-level context, baseline tables, maps, etc.).

A TOC is now included with a complete narrative, logical assumptions and drivers explained. The TOC helped structure the current project design.

The Global Environmental problem is now well justified.

In the PRODOC, refer to Section ?II. DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE? > and under it:

- ?The Global Environmental Problem?
- ?Relevant Baseline of recent measures and initiatives?
- ?The Long-term Solution and Barriers to be overcome?

In the CEO Endorsement Request, refer to PART II, Section 1A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION.

?1) The global environmental and/or adaptation problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed?

More importantly, refer to the TOC in both documents. It consolidates, in a crystal-clear manner, how the proposed Outcomes will address the above-referred problem and, under the respective Outcomes, through the proposed outputs and activities, which have also been revised.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
November 29, 2023

Addressed.

July 31, 2023

No. It is difficult to understand the reasoning that led to the modifications of the result framework.

Agency Response

UNDP response - 16-Nov-23

In the first submission for CEO Endorsement, certain aspects of the project strategy were not clear. Perhaps even the unusual way of numbering outcomes and outputs made it more difficult to understand the proposals.

For this resubmission of the PRODOC for CEO Endorsement, both the PRODOC and the CEO Endorsement Request Document have been thoroughly edited and revised, including the way the project's justification argument is structured and presented, and the elaboration on how the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects were derived.

New data and evidence are also presented (PRODOC Annex 19 with additional baseline content).

A clear TOC is now included with a complete narrative, logical assumptions and drivers explained. The baseline features in the TOC.

In the current resubmission, the Results Framework has been thoroughly revised. UNDP compared content between the approved PIF and the 1st submission PRODOC in order to get the best formulations possible for the Framework, pondering several aspects.

The TOC was instrumental in structuring the current project design, which builds on the baseline analysis.

In the response to the GEF Secretariat's first comment, UNDP explained that, in the current resubmission version of the PRODOC, the formulations and intentions behind the project strategy have, to a great extent, been "reversed" to better reflect the project strategy that had been approved by the GEF Council through the PIF.

It was also explained that the current strategy actually brought about important improvements vis-à-vis the PIF. E.g. gender mainstreaming is stronger and more consistent now. The hectares proposed under Core Indicators were based on GIS analysis and more complete information on the baseline. Important elements pertaining to the project's viability and sustainability were considered.

The project's GEF eligibility is now compliant, as also explained in another response box further up.

To document the changes, UNDP included in the CEO Endorsement Request a thorough matrix in the PART II Section titled "DESCRIBE ANY CHANGES IN ALIGNMENT WITH THE PROJECT DESIGN WITH THE ORIGINAL PIF", in addition to bullet-point narrative explaining the changes.

The mentioned matrix serves as guidance to understand the current iteration of the Results Framework.

Refer to PRODOC section II. Development Challenges and Section V. PROJECT RESULTS FRAMEWORK.

Refer also to CEO Endorsement Request, Part II, section 1a, and to ANNEX A: PROJECT RESULTS FRAMEWORK, where the same content is reproduced.

In the same document, PART I > Table B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION SUMMARY, an abridged version of the Results Framework with updated financial figures is also included.

To summarize:

| PIF State | PRODOC's previous submission version | Current PRODOC for CEO Endorsement | Comment |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Objective: To protect and restore biodiversity, forests and ecosystem functions and enhance the livelihoods of vulnerable communities in degraded mountain landscapes in Djibouti | Objective: To protect and restore biodiversity, forests, rangelands and ecosystem functions and enhance the livelihoods of vulnerable communities in the degraded mountain Day Forest landscapes in Djibouti. | Objective: To protect and restore biodiversity, forests and ecosystem functions and enhance the livelihoods of vulnerable communities in degraded mountain landscapes in Djibouti | We reverted back to the exact same formulation that had been included in the PIF and approved by Council. While it would have been useful to directly mention rangelands in the objective, there is reference to it in ecosystems functions, so it remains implicit. |
| 1. Enhance PA system policy and financing framework and emplace management in Day and Mabla PAs | Component 1: Enhanced PA system policy, financing framework and physical management of the Day Forest National Park | Component 1) Enhance the PA terrestrial sub-system's operational framework and emplace management in Day Forest National Park | Words changed: From "policy and financial framework" to simply "operational framework", as this is more attainable considering the current context and baseline. The "PA terrestrial sub-system" is explicitly mentioned, making the outcome more precise and implicitly encompassing Mabla. "Mabla PA" is left out of the outcome's formulation because more studies would be needed to assert the area's biodiversity value. The core focus must be on Day Forest. |

| | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2. Safeguard and restore rangeland and forest ecosystem functions through forest restoration and sustainable land management in and around the Day and Mabla PAs | Component 2: Restored and safeguarded rangeland and forest ecosystem functions through forest restoration and sustainable land management practices in and around the Day PA | Component 2) Safeguarding and rehabilitation of rangeland and forest ecosystem through collaborative SLM | Previously, the component's formulation was too wordy and sounded more like an output. The current formulation is shorter and the focus on SLM as a key strategy is explicit and qualified by mentioning a collaborative approach. This implies that SLM techniques are adopted through extensive consultations with communities. |
| 3. Safeguards, Gender & Knowledge Management | Component 4: Cross-cutting issues for good project management: Social and Environmental Safeguards, including gender issues, M&E, and Knowledge Management are planned and executed | Component 3) Knowledge Management, M&E, Safeguards and Gender | In the PRODOC resubmission for CEO Endorsement, we only have 3 Components. The formulation for Component 3 is similar to the one in the approved PIF, only with the order of words swapped. Also, the component name's formulation in the 1st submission for CEO Endorsement read more like an outcome. It was therefore preferred to retain a formulation closer to what we had at PIF stage. |

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
November 29, 2023

Addressed.

July 31, 2023

The GEF Council agreed on a PIF that was the result of exchanges between UNDP and the GEF Secretariat.

Several outputs and activities that were not justified from a GEF point of view were removed from the concept (we can understand that some stakeholders may be interested in these outputs and activities, but you should find a different way to finance them).

We do not think it is fair to introduce again these outputs and activities that lead to a project that become not fully eligible from a GEF point of view: we lost the SLM targets and the additional BD activities are not eligible as they do not generate global environment benefits.

The best solution would be to come back to a project closer to the initial intention approved at PIF level and either remove all not eligible activities or find a way to cover them by other sources.

Agency Response

UNDP response - 16-Nov-23

The project's GEF eligibility is now compliant. Activities from the previous submission for CEO Endorsement that the GEF Secretariat had rejected through this review have been dropped (removed from the PRODOC).

As a side note, UNDP is pleased to inform the GEF Secretariat that support for eco-tourism will likely be funded from another source, strengthening thereby the potential partnerships that will support the GEF project during implementation.

In the current resubmission version of the PRODOC, the formulations and intention behind the project strategy have, to a great extent, been reversed to better reflect the project strategy that had been approved by the GEF Council through the PIF. This should be clear from the current formulations proposed for Components, Outcomes and Outputs in the CEO Endorsement Request PART I, Table B. The targets for the GEF Core Indicators were also updated.

The current strategy in the PRODOC being resubmitted for CEO Endorsement also brought about important improvements vis-à-vis the PIF. E.g., gender mainstreaming is stronger and more consistent now. The hectares proposed are based on GIS analysis and on more complete information. Important elements pertaining to the project's viability and sustainability were also re-considered.

To document the changes, UNDP included in the CEO Endorsement Request a thorough matrix in the PART II Section titled "DESCRIBE ANY CHANGES IN ALIGNMENT WITH THE PROJECT DESIGN WITH THE ORIGINAL PIF".

The matrix focuses on key elements of the project strategy, in particular, barriers, indicators and Components, Outcomes and Outputs. In terms of formulations, the matrix compares: (i) what had been presented and approved by the GEF Council at PIF stage (first column); (ii) the content of the PRODOC's previous submission version (second column); (iii) what is being presented through the current resubmission (third column "Updated TOC elements and Results Framework in the resubmitted PRODOC"). In the last column there are comments for justifying and explaining the changes.

The project objective remains the same as in the PIF.

The Project's Component titles and Outcomes are very similar to what had been approved by the Council at PIF stage. The differences are either cosmetic or they represent an improvement vis-à-vis the PIF. All changes are justified in the CEO Endorsement Request.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
November 29, 2023

Addressed.

July 31, 2023

No,

The text under the chapter " alignment" does not provide the elements making this project eligible under BD 2.7 and LD1.1.

To be revised.

Agency Response

UNDP response - 16-Nov-23

New Content regarding the policy alignment has been added to the PRODOC and CEO Endorsement Request.

In the PRODOC refer to Section II > Policy alignment > Alignment with GEF Focal Area Strategies.

In the CEO Endorsement Request, refer to PART, Section 4) Alignment with GEF Focal Area and/or Impact Program strategies.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
November 29, 2023

Addressed. Thanks for the annex 19 that helps a lot to better understand the national and site context.

July 31, 2023

No

Outputs and activities were added or adjusted, without any reference to the baseline situation or the cofinancing, giving the impression of a stand-alone project, without connection or synergy with other programs and initiatives.

To be revised.

Agency Response

UNDP response - 16-Nov-23

In the current resubmission version of the PRODOC for CEO Endorsement, various sections were updated. There is new content to describe the incremental reasoning, contribution from the baseline, and from the co-financing.

In the PRODOC refer to Section III > General Strategy > Incremental Cost Reasoning and Global Environmental Benefits to be generated.

For the same content in the CEO Endorsement Request, refer to PART II > 1a > 5) Incremental/additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline, the GEFTF, LDCF, SCCF, CBIT and co-financing.

In the above referred sections, the arguments showing the project's incremental logic are presented (?without the project?, and then ?with the project?).

The baseline is thoroughly described. In the PRODOC refer to Section II > Relevant Baseline of recent measures and initiatives, which cross-refers to an PRODOC Annex 19.2.B.

The connections and synergies with other programs and initiatives is thoroughly presented in the above-referred passages and PRODOC annex.

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

November 29, 2023

Addressed.

July 31, 2023

The chapter in which the Global Environment Benefits are described does not provide the elements to understand the targets under the different Core Indicators.

To be revised.

Agency Response

UNDP response - 16-Nov-23

In the current resubmission version of the PRODOC for CEO Endorsement, various sections were updated. There is new content to describe the global environmental benefits (GEBs).

In the PRODOC refer to Section III > General Strategy > Incremental Cost Reasoning and Global Environmental Benefits to be generated.

For the same content in the CEO Endorsement Request, refer to PART II > 1a > 6) Global environmental benefits (GEFTF).

Additionally, explanatory notes were included in CEO Endorsement Request, PART I under Table E. PROJECT'S TARGET CONTRIBUTIONS TO GEF 7 CORE INDICATORS.

The passages referred to herein, and especially the notes under Table F, provide thorough explanations to understand the targets under the different Core Indicators.

There are additionally new maps that were added to the PRODOC and CEO Endorsement Request. See in particular PRODOC Figures 2 and 5, reproduced in the latter document.

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
November 29, 2023

Addressed.

July 31, 2023

So far, we are not seeing the interest to respond to this question as the current proposal does not reach an acceptable GEF standard.

Agency Response

UNDP response - 16-Nov-23

In the current resubmission version of the PRODOC for CEO Endorsement, various sections were updated.

The sections that refer to innovation and sustainability have been strengthened.

In the PRODOC refer to Section IV > Sustainability and > Innovativeness

For the same content in the CEO Endorsement Request, refer to PART II > 1a > 7) Innovation, sustainability and potential for scaling up.

UNDP trusts that the GEF Secretariat will find that the new content has reached the acceptable level so that the project can be CEO Endorsed.

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
November 29, 2023

Addressed.

July 31, 2023

- In Annex D on Project Map and Coordinates, please consider inserting the geographic location of the site directly under the dedicated 'GEO Location' data entry field in the portal.

Agency Response

UNDP response - 16-Nov-23

CEO Endorsement Request PART II, section 1B. PROJECT MAP AND GEO-COORDINATES was updated and the coordinates corrected.

A GIS file in Google Earth format is also made available. **Spatial [F11] coordinates of central project are (as per the 2004 Law on PAs):**

| Landscape | Geospatial Coordinates |
|--------------|----------------------------------|
| Day Forest | 11°45'46.7208"N; 42°29' 5.2152"E |
| Mabla Forest | 11°55'33.59"N; 42°58'51.95"E |

Photo containing GIS data for Day and Mabla polygons and other features included in Project Maps and GEO-coordinates in CEO ER.

Child Project

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

NA

Agency Response

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

July 31, 2023

Addressed.

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

November 29, 2023

Addressed.

July 31, 2023

- There are some data about gender issues and the status of women in Djibouti. Unfortunately, these elements are not mainstreamed in the result framework. If " women" are included in some activities, gender issues are absent from the formulation of outcomes and outputs.

To be revised.

Agency Response

UNDP response - 16-Nov-23

In the current resubmission version of the PRODOC, the formulations and intention behind the project strategy have, to a great extent, been reversed? to better reflect the project

strategy that had been approved by the GEF Council through the PIF. This should be clear from the current formulations proposed for Components, Outcomes and Outputs in the CEO Endorsement Request PART I, Table B. The targets for the GEF Core Indicators were also updated.

Having said that, the current strategy in the PRODOC being resubmitted for CEO Endorsement also brought about important improvements vis-?-vis the PIF. In particular, UNDP highlights that gender mainstreaming is stronger and more consistent now.

UNDP mentions the following TOC elements (including outcomes and outputs) in which a gender targeted approach was applied:

? BARRIER 4) Limited mastery of SLM techniques and insufficient empowered participation by local communities and women hinder innovation

? Output 1.4) PA management enhanced to ensure at basic operations and management in collaboration with community cooperatives, including those led by women and promoting gender equality and women?s empowerment

? Output 1.5) PA management training workshops held for DEDD staff, local ecoguards and locally-led land and water user management committees, ensuring strong, if not equal, female participation

? Outcome 2.2) Improved livelihoods and benefits for local population living and sustainably using the Day Forest Wider Landscapes, women included

? Output 2.1) Participatory landscape management committees established, ensuring strong, if not equal, female participation

? Output 2.2) Land Use Planning (LUP) prepared in a gender-sensitive and participatory manner as Integrated PA & watershed/landscape management plans are adopted by communities and regulating authorities

? Output 2.3) Community-based, gender-sensitive sustainable grazing agreements are adopted to enhance natural regeneration

? Foundational Activities 2.3.0 / 2.4.0) (ii) Training given on cooperative building, business management and access to microfinance, via CPEC, for rural communities (women included) to support chosen livelihoods.

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
November 29, 2023

Addressed.

July 31, 2023

We take note that there is an intention to involve the private sector. However, the fact that no specific entity is named to provide some of the services proposed in the project sounds as wrong signal.

At least, you may name some potential partners on the ground, if not from the private sector, from entities who work with local farmers (farmer organizations, cooperatives...). In terms of partnership and specifically the private sector, the project stays vague. It is an alert for a project presenting "substantial" risks.

To be revised.

Agency Response

UNDP response - 16-Nov-2023

The CEO Endorsement Request included a Private Sector chapter, which explained the constraints of engaging the private sector in Djibouti. The section also mentioned a few activities in which they were expected to be included and how.

In the PRODOC the term "private sector" appears 27 times. Members of the private sector will be part of the Technical Committee for the project (Management Arrangements), along with academia, and NGOs.

Yet, UNDP has reservations about directly naming private sector entities in documents such as a PRODOC, because it could wrongly infer preferential treatment before due process for confirming the mode of engagement on any specific entity (including through contracts, which generally depend on procurement). Nevertheless, several activities will depend on inputs from private sector entities.

An example of this is from Activity 2.3.1) *Small scale feed mill set up in Tadjourah, using Prosopis-based feed with extra added nutrients and grasses, to produce sufficient feed for animals of Day*. The relevant passage follows:

"Parts for the mill will be ordered from abroad, and a national or international feed mill consultant along with the private sector who has initiated the feed mill facility in Tadjourah ville will provide technical assistance to set up the mill and transfer of knowledge and technology to the Directorate of Livestock under Ministry of Agriculture for potential replication in other agro-pastoral communities."

Indeed, a potential private sector partner has been identified for the above activity, but it is not named in the PRODOC.

The private sector will also be engaged on issues relating to support for nature-based micro and small-scale enterprises (MSME), in collaboration with the World Bank's co-finance supporting sustainable livelihood component (Component 2. This effort will be further reinforced by the government's (Center for Leadership and Entrepreneurship) efforts of facilitating Islamic microfinancing for the formalized MSMEs.

When members of the private sector participate in UNDP GEF project events, their names affiliations and coordinates are recorded. When a project starts implementation, the project coordinator can always refer to these documents to be oriented on who to engage.

UNDP hopes that this explanation is sufficient, without the need to directly name any specific private sector entities in the project document and ancillary documentation.

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
July 31, 2023

Addressed.

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
July 31, 2023

Upon request from the government (letter available), UNDP will provide a limited support for execution. The activities are listed (draft agreement available) and the cost is estimated at \$123,876. GPU management approved the request.

Agency Response

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

November 29, 2023

Addressed.

July 31, 2023

There is a list of national documents and plans.

We suggest reviewing this question when a GEF eligible project under GEF7 LD and BD strategies will be available.

To be reviewed.

Agency Response

UNDP response - 16-Nov-23

The project's GEF eligibility is now compliant. Activities from the previous submission for CEO Endorsement that the GEF Secretariat had rejected through this review have been dropped (removed from the PRODOC).

In response to the comment, UNDP invites the GEF to see updated content in the CEO Endorsement Request, PART II, Section 7. CONSISTENCY WITH NATIONAL PRIORITIES. The same content can be found in the PRODOC, Section II. Development Challenge > Policy Alignment.

The above-mentioned sections actually explain how the project fits with national strategies and plans, or reports and assessments under the relevant conventions, which in this case are the CBD and the UNCCD.

See in particular a focused analysis in PRODOC Box 2 (Alignment of the project with key national policies and plans) ? reproduced in the CEO Endorsement Request.

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
November 29, 2023

Addressed.

July 31, 2023

There is no KM strategy, as this is an activity proposed under the year 1.

- The project proposal mentions KM&L in components 2 and 4 and the project budget and results framework include KM&L deliverables such as training, website development, dissemination, etc. In addition, KM section presents a budget and a timeline for KM&L activities. Meanwhile, it is proposed that a KM plan be developed during 'year one' of the project. This is very confusing. How can there be a budget and timeline for KM deliverables when a KM plan has not yet been developed? In fact, a KM plan should have been developed during project preparation. Please, explain why you did not deliver such a plan.

- The agency is requested to reflect on and better describe the overall KM&L approach for the project in the KM section, addressing key GEF KM&L expectations at CEO endorsement stage as follows:

- a. an overview of existing lessons and best practice that inform the project concept
- b. plans to learn from relevant projects, programs, initiatives & evaluations
- c. processes to capture, assess and document info, lessons, best practice & expertise generated during implementation
- d. tools and methods for knowledge exchange, learning & collaboration, including training, knowledge platforms and websites
- e. knowledge outputs to be produced and shared with stakeholders (at community, national and international levels as appropriate)
- f. a discussion on how knowledge and learning will contribute to overall project impact and sustainability
- g. plans for strategic communications and outreach (dissemination of project outcomes, lessons, etc.)
- h. budget and timeline for the implementation of KM&L related activities/deliverables

Accordingly, the agency could better integrate KM&L objectives and deliverables into existing project components (as separate sub-components dedicated to knowledge capture, exchange, capacity development/learning). It should also include a brief description of a Communications Strategy/Plan for outreach,

awareness raising and dissemination of project outputs/results. This should be properly reflected in the project's budget and timeline as well.

Agency Response

UNDP response - 16-Nov-23

A KM plan was indeed delivered, and it is included in the PRODOC and CEO Endorsement Request in the relevant section. The plan was updated in response to the present comment. Refer also to content in the Stakeholder analysis, Gender action plan and the SES document, which provide the information of the existing knowledge base (and gaps).

For the new content in the CEO Endorsement Request, refer to Part II > 1b > 8. Knowledge Management.

Additionally, further developing the KM plan during the FSP implementation is a necessary activity. This is because it is difficult to predict the exact KM needs before implementation starts. The content presented in the relevant section in the CEO Endorsement Request provides the key elements of what should be considered in the project strategy, including implementation. Yet, the fully-fledged and actionable strategy for KM will need to be developed once a team is in place, aligned with other detailed plans for implementation. The KM Plan is also expected to be regularly updated to respond to project stakeholder needs in an adaptive and dynamic manner.

Each of the questions posed by the GEF Secretariat on KM and compliance with GEF requirements are answered herein and, in this case, in bullet point format further down.

As for the new content in the CEO Endorsement Request, Section on KM, refer in particular to PRODOC Box 3. Key KM Elements in the Project's Strategy (matrix). It lists the following key elements of KM and explains how they are reflected in the project:

Capacity Building: Building the capacity of various stakeholders, including recipient countries, to manage and utilize environmental resources effectively.

Learning: Activities that aim to institutionalize learning before, during, and after the implementation of the GEF project. This includes lessons learned from successes and failures, which are then integrated into the design and implementation of new projects.

Information Management: Systematically collecting, managing, and making information accessible to all stakeholders. This can include databases of project results, environmental data, and other relevant information.

Knowledge Sharing: GEF encourages sharing of knowledge across projects, countries, stakeholders, and partners to enhance global and local environmental outcomes. This could involve dissemination through reports, workshops, conferences, and online platforms.

Innovation: Supporting the development and application of innovative solutions to environmental challenges and to sharing these innovations across its network.

Networks and Partnerships: Establishing and maintaining networks and partnerships that facilitate knowledge exchange and collaboration between different actors in the environmental sector.

There is in the Total Budget and Workplan a specific budget for the following outcome (and its outputs and activities): Outcome 3.3 (?Knowledge Management and Outreach ensured for gender-sensitive and evidence-based decision-making and scaling up of best practices?). This budget is distinct from other elements under Component 3. In the previous CEO Endorsement submission, UNDP indicated that KM is mainstreamed throughout the project, so that several project personnel and consultants will be working in one way or another in KM. This remains valid and is additional to and aligned with what is planned under Outcome 3.3.

As a direct response to the GEF Secretariat's comments on KM (a-h):

a. an overview of existing lessons and best practice that inform the project concept

b. plans to learn from relevant projects, programs, initiatives & evaluations

Already in the first section (section II > Development challenge), the following is stated:

- ? Given Djibouti's limited land area and the prevailing grazing pressure on scarce land resources, any strategy for addressing the combined land degradation and biodiversity challenges in the country must be developed by considering the existing baseline interventions on the ground and by learning lessons from previous programs related to land use.
- ? PRODOC Annex 19.2 includes in subsection B an overview of past projects, from which the current GEF project can draw useful lessons, obtain data, maps and reports. The main initiatives were plotted into a matrix and additional descriptive information on these projects was included in the subsection, along with information on why they are relevant.
- ? In the same Annex, sub-section A, the relevance of other donor funded baseline finance initiatives, including interventions proposed as co-financing from the baseline is asserted in PRODOC Table 7.
- ? The actions for learning lessons are a KM activity and will be performed not just during inception but throughout the project. ? An example of this is: Activity 3.5.3 (Knowledge products showcasing the best practices and lessons learned developed) ? which includes the following: "The activities proposed under Components 2 and 3 are innovative and designed to be supported by the policy reforms and other foundational activities proposed under Component 1. The activities, such as installation of fog harvesters and others, will be piloted for the first time in Djibouti, whereas the failures of some innovations piloted in the past such

as the Prosopsis-based animal feed mill will be improvised by building on the past lessons and adopting the best available and most appropriate technologies. "

c. processes to capture, assess and document info, lessons, best practice & expertise generated during implementation

? The project will build up databases and draw on existing databases to assess and document info, lessons, best practice and to leverage expertise generated during implementation. UNDP and other partners (UNCCD, CBD) will support the process. Several facilities for it exist. E.g. the NBSAP Forum, the UN Biodiversity Lab and LDN networks.

d. tools and methods for knowledge exchange, learning & collaboration, including training, knowledge platforms and websites

? Component 3 has an entire Outcome dedicated to KM and several activities are mentioned there. While it will be important to follow the guidance contained in the PRODOC. The descriptions in the relevant section indicate how the support structure for KM will be developed (incl. websites, platforms and databases).

? The general plan for KM activities is to hire a consultant (or a team of consultants through a company) who will be working throughout the project period, not just in year 1. The calendar for developing these activities is very clear in those descriptions included under the outputs of Project Outcome 3.3) Knowledge Management (KM) and Outreach ensured for gender-sensitive and evidence-based decision-making and scaling up of best practices. A plan will be prepared in year 1, but there are plans outlined up to year 5, which will be consolidated throughout the mentioned consultancy.

e. knowledge outputs to be produced and shared with stakeholders (at community, national and international levels as appropriate)

? Knowledge outputs include products that will be prepared / produced as a result of KM activities. It is difficult to predict all of them, including because the project adopts an adaptive management approach.

? To respond to the comment from the GEF Secretariat, it is worth mentioning the specific outputs under Project Outcome 3.3 (Knowledge Management (KM) and Outreach ensured for gender-sensitive and evidence-based decision-making and scaling up of best practices), along with related activities:

o *Output 3.4) Knowledge Management Plan developed and implemented*

? *Activity 3.5.1) Developing the KM Plan*

? *Activity 3.5.2) The MEDD website is modernized and improved*

? *Activity 3.5.3) Knowledge products showcasing the best practices and lessons learned developed*

o *Output 3.5) Effective dissemination and mutual sharing of best practices and lessons learned for regional and national stakeholders, including women facilitated and documented.*

? The above content is included in the relevant section in the PRODOC with thorough descriptions.

f. a discussion on how knowledge and learning will contribute to overall project impact and sustainability

? A thorough calendar and a plan for KM products will be developed during the project's year 1 and implemented. The required details will be included therein.

? See sub-section ?The Approach?.

g. plans for strategic communications and outreach (dissemination of project outcomes, lessons, etc.)

? A thorough calendar and a plan for KM products will be developed during the project's year 1 and implemented. The required details will be included therein.

? For the resubmission, an indicative Timeline is included in the CEO Endorsement Request as a chronogram.

h. budget and timeline for the implementation of KM&L related activities/deliverables

? A budget and an indicative Timeline are included in the CEO Endorsement Request, section "Knowledge Management".

Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS)

Are environmental and social risks, impacts and management measures adequately documented at this stage and consistent with requirements set out in SD/PL/03?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
July 31, 2023

Addressed.

Agency Response
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
November 29, 2023

Addressed.

July 31, 2023

- Section 9 in the Portal is missing the detailed M&E budget. It is requested that the agency include the M&E budget.

Agency Response

UNDP response - 16-Nov-23

In the CEO Endorsement Request, PART II, Section 9. MONITORING AND EVALUATION, the Budget for M&E was included (reproduced herein):

Table) M&E Budget

| GEF M&E requirements to be undertaken by Project Management Unit (PMU) | Indicative costs (US\$) |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Inception Workshop and Report | 5,000 |
| M&E required to report on progress made in reaching GEF core indicators and project results included in the project results framework | 14,000 (2,800/year) |
| Preparation of the annual GEF Project Implementation Report (PIR) | 0 |
| Monitoring of Environmental and Social Management Plan, including Gender Action Plan, Livelihoods Action Plan, Biodiversity Action Plan, Stakeholder Engagement Plan | 10,385 |
| M&E Officer costs | 60,996 |
| Supervision missions | 3,000/year (\$15,000) |
| Learning missions | 1,123/year (\$5,615) |
| Independent Mid-term Review (MTR): | 45,243 |
| Independent Terminal Evaluation (TE): | 45,246 |
| Translation of MTR and TE reports | 7,000 |

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| TOTAL indicative COST | US\$222,485 |
|------------------------------|--------------------|

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
July 31, 2023

Addressed.

Agency Response

Annexes

Are all the required annexes attached and adequately responded to?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

November 29, 2023

Thanks for the deep changes and adjustments.

Please, remove the mention of bank charges in the budget (not eligible to the GEF): see lines 48 and 49.

We take note of the terms of reference for the main project positions (project manager, international chief technical advisor).

We take note that most of non-eligible activities in the project were removed. These changes are reflected in the budget.

Budget

- Would it be possible to have a budget using the format proposed in the guidelines? All GEF agencies use in general an excel version of this template. The current budget in the portal is developed on several pages, making its analysis relatively difficult. Thanks.

- A Project Manager is being charged across components and PMC. Per Guidelines, the costs associated with the project's execution have to be covered by the GEF portion and the co-financing portion allocated to PMC. That said, when

the situation merits (i.e. not enough co-financing funds), the project's staff could be charged to the project's components with clear Terms of Reference describing unique outputs linked to the respective component? (paragraph 4 ? page 42 of the Guidelines).

- Please, clarify the costs for vehicles: $3,900+10,400+10,400+9,620 = 34,320$ Are you planning this amount for car rental?

- $3,200+2,000+2,000+11,008 = 18,208 =$ for fuel? Please, explain the calculations.

- The quality control reminds the following observation: The use of GEF funds to purchase vehicles is strongly discouraged. Such costs are normally expected to be borne by the co-financed portion of PMCs. Any request to use GEF funding to purchase project vehicles must be justified by the exceptional specific circumstances of the project/program and the PM approval is required in the portal. Please, clarify if the purchase of a vehicle is planned with GEF resources.

- Before moving further, we would then need additional information to eventually consider this option (status of the existing vehicle fleet from the executing partner, role of cofinancing for car....).

- Please, clarify why some administrative activities are budgeted under the component 4:

- procurement assistance to prepare ToR, bidding, etc (\$24,000);

- Admin and finance assistance to support finance and budget matters on cost sharing basis with other GEF and GCF projects (\$24,000).

- The current presentation does not allow to really understand the use of \$560,000 under the component 2. Please, clarify.

- Please, revise the budget when the result framework will be closer to what was approved at PIF level. Several items, without more information on the baseline situation, the role of cofinancing, and clarifications on sustainability issues cannot be validated:

- museum, history center, visitor center, ateliers, shops, rooms for volunteers, huts, trail....) # \$258,200.

- 1 National consultant to train on environmental management and plastic upcycling. \$14,000.

- Ecotourism consultant. \$35,000,

- language trainer to teach French and English to the tour guides. USD 26,000

- Consultants for stakeholder plan (3,500), safeguards (21,000), KM (3,500)+ all these aspects should have been financed during the PPG and are expected at CEO endorsement. Please, clarify.

Agency Response

UNDP response - December 4, 2023

Thank you for your suggestion and removed the bank charges in the budget in the project document.

UNDP response - 16-Nov- 2023

1) A budget using the format proposed in the guidelines (GEF Template is being provided, including in Excel.

2) Yes, the Project Manager will essentially play a technical role in the project and also will be supported by other project personnel and by UNDP for the managerial tasks. Therefore, for the ease of budgeting, the remuneration for the Project Manager was distributed across the technical components and not included under the PMC costs. The TOR for the Project Manager has been included in the PRODOC.

3) UNDP did not plan to buy a new car from the GEF resources for this project. UNDP Djibouti has a pool of cars that can be used by projects on a rental basis. The vehicles comply with security requirements for UNDP projects. The fleet is well maintained and has the advantages of managing high-value and utility goods at scale. Access to the vehicles for rental is provided to UNDP projects only and at costs that are below the market rates. UNDP-managed projects need, however, to make provisions for renting the cars and for fuel ? and this is what is reflected in the budget. So, the amounts mentioned in the comments are indeed for vehicle rental and fuel. The costs were indicatively apportioned according to the expected intensity of activities on the ground and allocations may vary as the project implementation progresses. UNDP hopes that the GEF finds the option acceptable.

4) Purchasing a vehicle was not considered, in line with the GEF rules, but the option of renting vehicles for purposes of accessing project sites is key. While the PMU will have

access to government/MEDD vehicles for field visits/travel purposes, the field-based project staff will need to be able to rent vehicles when they need to travel around the project site.

5) The budget has been revised, given that the result framework is now closer to what was approved at PIF level.

6) The following personnel will support the Project Manager with administrative and managerial tasks: Procurement Assistant, Admin and Finance Assistant, Finance and Operations Officers. In the revised budget, these positions are only charged to PMC costs. In turn, provisions for a national Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) for the project to support the PMU on specific technical tasks, were added. It was missing from the previous iteration. The TOR for the CTA were included in the PRODOC.

7) A budget allocation for \$560,000 under component 2 (Grants) (\$250K+\$200K+\$110K) has the following break-down:

? Local cooperatives/Community Based Organizations managing and securing the PA and supporting their livelihood for the entire project period such as:

- o * Local cooperatives / Community Based Organizations to train and employ local community members to do physical work for the project: fencing, permaculture terraforming, rangeland rehabilitation, nursery rehabilitation and nursery care. Cooperatives will be selected based on the competitive procurement process. Total grant amount= USD 250,000;

- o * Local cooperatives / Community Based Organizations to train and employ local community members to support the DEDD in operationalization of the PA in its initial years. The local cooperatives and associations will be engaged to build the "park-and -people" relationships and collaborative governance approaches. During the transition phase, the local cooperatives/CBOs will work as park managers, ecoguards, park entrance guard to help the PA bolster. Cooperatives will be selected based on the competitive procurement process. Total grant amount= USD 200,000;

- o *Local cooperatives / Community Based Organizations to train and employ locals to work as Prosopis collectors and operate and maintain the feed mill. Cooperatives will be selected based on the competitive procurement process. Total grant amount= USD 110,000.

8) Currently, the baseline finance for the project is adequately presented and the budget has been revised. Changes to the following budget lines applied:

? Lines that were linked to the ecotourism outcome (former Outcome 6) have now been eliminated (museum, history center, visitor's center, ateliers, shops, rooms for volunteers, huts, trail...).

? Lines for certain consultants (plastic recycling, ecotourism, language training) were eliminated.

? Lines linked to landscape level management were strengthened.

9) Funding for Consultants for stakeholder engagement, safeguards and KM are still necessary during the FSP implementation. The work is different from what had been foreseen and executed at PPG stage. Activities under Component 3A are complex and will require support, including and in particular those linked to KM, for whom task description is thorough. Stakeholder engagement during implementation will need to be strengthened. The project manager needs the continued support from a team, and this is why these consultancies will do. Some are longer, others shorter. They are deemed necessary. To give an example, a comment from GEF Council member for Canada mentioned the need for ensuring traceability in solar panel supply chains given the link between the solar panel industry and forced labor in the Xinjiang region. Also, GEF Council member for Germany mentioned the need to evaluate the potential impacts of all community-related activities on the targeted communities, as not necessarily will each group in every community be in favor of the activities to be carried out. These remarks justify the need for a stronger and continued stakeholder consultation and engagement process, as well as for scrutinizing activities against safeguards principles. Furthermore, the proposed activities will be implemented in a fragile ecosystem, where ensuring environmental safeguards is of utmost importance. Similarly, the proposed interventions are envisaged through active community engagement, such as the installation of exclosures and/or enclosures to manage overgrazing, and to enable restoration and rehabilitation of the core areas. Such activities can face local resistance ? a risk that was already identified in the project. Therefore, a concerted and continued process of consulting and engaging local communities is needed during implementation. UNDP will ensure that it is compliant with applicable social safeguards, and thereby strengthen key elements that contribute to the success of the project. A safeguards consultant would ensure that, during implementation, UNDP safeguards will continue to be upheld, in light of the complexity of certain activities.

Project Results Framework

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
November 29, 2023

Addressed.

July 31, 2023

- See the comment on the consistency of targets between the result framework and the core indicator table.

Agency Response

UNDP response - 16-Nov-2023

The Core indicator sheet and METT sheet were updated.

Targets in the results framework are now consistent with the targets in the core indicator table and sheet.

GEF Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

Council comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

November 29, 2023

Comments from Germany and Canada are addressed.

Addressed.

July 31, 2023

We did not find the responses to the comments made by the Council Members (Germany and Canada).

Please, clarify.

Agency Response

UNDP response - 16-Nov-2023

[Content included in the CEO Endorsement Request, Annex B.]

|

Canada Comments

? Farmer-Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) techniques have a long history of success in increasing tree and vegetation cover and land productivity in grazing lands in Niger. They

may have a potential to enhance natural regrowth of shrubs and trees in Djibouti and complement the techniques that are currently included in the sustainable grazing agreements. Consider exploring FMRN techniques as one of the interventions in the agreements if they have not been considered yet.

? The choice of solar energy to power the water pumping systems in Ouadis represents the most appropriate technological solution in the context of the GEF proposal. In addition, it reduces GHG emissions from fossil fuels in these communities and is an environmentally and economically attractive option for these communities. It's important to have increased transparency and traceability in solar panel supply chains given the link between the solar panel industry and forced labour in the Xinjiang region.

? It's important to mention the issue of waste management from renewable energy equipment (solar panel, batteries, etc.). Without imposing all responsibility for waste management on the implementing partner, an analysis of how this will play out would be welcome.

|

Response:

? There are provisions in the budget for the engagement of a rangeland specialist. Once the person is recruited, UNDP will ensure that techniques such as the Farmer-Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) and their long history of success in increasing tree and vegetation cover and land productivity in grazing lands in Niger, so that applicability in Djibouti can be considered.

? Solar panels are under consideration as a source of energy for powering the fogharvesters. In line with UNDP's Sustainable Procurement Policy and Guidelines, UNDP will ensure that safeguards apply to the choice of supplier, in particular if there are reports of forced labor behind the value chain. This applies not just to solar panels but also to other goods that may be procured.

? Along the same lines, UNDP's safeguards consider waste as a potential source of pollution that requires specific handling according to type ? solar panels and batteries considered. All UNDP projects include a plan for decommissioning and handing over equipment after the project ends for safe disposal. These considerations and safeguards measures come into play at that point.

|

|

Germany Comments

Germany approves the following PIF in the work program but asks that the following comments are taken into account:

Suggestions for improvements to be made during the drafting of the final project proposal:

- ? Germany welcomes the project proposal which builds on previous projects in the area. The following points for improvement are suggested:
- ? The project heavily relies on country ownership and commitment, including mobilization of domestic finances. Country ownership and commitment are vital elements in the long-term success of the project itself as well as in the long-term success of sustainable PA management (in particular domestic financing, which is supposed to increase by USD 300,000 annually, and the PA agency to be created). We would like to suggest that the project proposals sets out how such long-term commitments are going to be secured (e.g. through legislative measures) and what alternatives might be used in case domestic support cannot be maintained in the long run.
- ? The creation of alternative livelihoods based on livestock increased by at least 20% may also negatively impact biodiversity and ecosystem services. The project should thus consider a careful assessment of the positive and negative impacts expected from such activities.
- ? One way of ensuring that biodiversity and ecosystems of PAs are protected by local communities is by applying a community-based management approach. The project proposal mentions community engagement several times, without going into the details of how such engagement will be carried out. Given the importance of fair and equitable engagement of indigenous peoples and local communities, we would like to suggest that the project evaluates the potential impacts of all community-related activities on these communities (not necessarily will each group in every community be in favor of the activities to be carried out).

Response:

- ? There are ongoing discussions with the government on the issue of how to fund PAs (terrestrial and marine) and the need to enhance investments. The targets for the indicator in question were agreed with the government. There are e.g. new initiatives that may come into fruition soon -- e.g. the Sovereign Carbon Initiative which is formed through a Presidential Decree in March 2023 and identified Port (and Maritime) and Aviation as two sectors with mandatory Carbon Contributions with an aim "to reduce GHG emissions and finance environmental and energy programs that address the challenges of climate emergency". During project implementation discussions will continue to ensure that the funds for sustaining PA management are guaranteed, including from the emerging sources of funds, such as the one mentioned.

? The project has been scrutinized for social and environmental risks. The positive and negative impacts expected from activities such as those that seek to enhance alternative livelihoods were also screened. During implementation, screening of activities for social and environmental risks and the development of safeguards will continue to apply.

? The concerns expressed by Germany on the community-based management approach are valid. At the same time, during the PPG, there were intense consultations with communities. The process of engaging them was thoroughly documented. All communities consulted indicated to be committed to the project and its propositions.

STAP comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request Addressed.

Agency Response

Convention Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

Other Agencies comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

CSOs comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

Status of PPG utilization

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request Addressed.

Agency Response

Project maps and coordinates

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

November 29, 2023

Addressed.

July 31, 2023

- In Annex D on Project Map and Coordinates, please consider inserting the geographic location of the site directly under the dedicated 'GEO Location' data entry field in the portal.

Agency Response

UNDP response - 16-Nov-2023

Spatial coordinates of central project are:

| Landscape | Geospatial Coordinates |
|--------------|----------------------------------|
| Day Forest | 11°45'46.7208"N; 42°29' 5.2152"E |
| Mabla Forest | 11°55'33.59"N; 42°58'51.95"E |

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

NA

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

GEFSEC DECISION

RECOMMENDATION

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

December 4, 2023

All points are addressed. The project is recommended for Council consultation. We understand that the remaining time before cancellation is not enough. A request for extension was joined to this last submission.

November 29, 2023

Thanks for the thorough adjustments. Please see the pending comments above - about the budget and the need for a revised letter of endorsement reflecting the new project title (and removing the Mabla Mountains).

July 31, 2023

The project cannot be recommended. There are deep concerns of eligibility. We recommend the Agency coming back with a project document closer to the PIF approved by the Council. We also recommend referring to the GEF7 LD and BD strategy and providing the expected targets for a LD and BD project.

Review Dates

| | Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement | Response to Secretariat comments |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| First Review | 7/31/2023 | 11/16/2023 |
| Additional Review (as necessary) | 11/29/2023 | 12/1/2023 |
| Additional Review (as necessary) | 12/4/2023 | |
| Additional Review (as necessary) | | |
| Additional Review (as necessary) | | |

CEO Recommendation

Brief reasoning for CEO Recommendations