

# Strengthening in-situ Biodiversity Conservation in the Yangtze River Economic Belt

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

## Basic project information

**GEF ID**

10754

**Countries**

China

**Project Name**

Strengthening in-situ Biodiversity Conservation in the Yangtze River  
Economic Belt

**Agencies**

IUCN

**Date received by PM**

12/8/2021

**Review completed by PM**

11/4/2022

**Program Manager**

Hannah Fairbank

**Focal Area**

Biodiversity

**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

October 21, 2022 HF:

All comments cleared.

October 5, 2022 HF:

1.) Comment cleared.

2.) 2-7 on mainstreaming is still selected in Table A, rather than 1-1 on terrestrial PAs. Please address per original comment below.

January 26, 2022 HF:

1.) Project duration shows as 12 months in Portal. Please correct.

2.) BD 2-7 on 'biodiversity mainstreaming' is selected in Table A of the Portal entry as the focal area element, whereas the child project title, objective and indicators are all focused on PA effectiveness/management/coverage. Please revise to 1-1 on terrestrial PAs.

Agency Response

October 20, 2022, IUCN

2) This is now revised as per your advice in Table A of the CER

1) This is now revised in the CEO Endorsement Request (CER) on the 1st page of the Part 1 table.

2) This now revised as per your advice in Table A of the CER

**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

November 2, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared.

October 28, 2022 HF:

Expected Implementation Start date has already past ? please amend to a future date

January 26, 2022 HF:

1.) Project objective in CER in Portal is focused on "integrating biodiversity considerations in the productive sectors and municipal development" which is identical to the Project Objective for the other MEE child project. I assume this to be incorrect given the objective/scope of the NFGA child project is focused on PAs in the YRB. If so, please revise/correct.

Agency Response

November 2, 2022 IUCN

This is now revised in the CER as per your advice

This has now been corrected in Table B of the CER

**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

October 21, 2022 HF:

All comments cleared.

October 5, 2022 HF:

1.) Annex 15 (IUCN co-finance letter) seems to still be missing from the documents list. Please include.

2.)-4.) Comments cleared.

January 25, 2022 HF:

1.) Please upload and submit a co-financing letter from IUCN.

2.) Co-financing amount from NFGA is different from the co-financing letter and the Table C. Please correct.

3.) Please further elaborate on the investment mobilized under Table C.

4.) Given the work at the local/provincial level, co-financing at those levels would be expected. Can we expect to see further co-financing from sub-national government or other actors?

## Agency Response

October 20, 2022 IUCN

1) We apologise for the oversight. The co-financing letter from IUCN is now uploaded as Annex 15

1) The co-financing letter from IUCN is now uploaded as Annex 15

2) The co-financing amount from NFGA is now corrected to reflect the co-financing amount in the co-financing letter in Table A, B, C of the CER and Annex 8.

3) This is now elaborated in the relevant section

4) The co-financing from the target provinces are included in the co-financing provided by NFGA and also referred to in the co-financing letter from NFGA and reflected in the Table of the CER

**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

January 25, 2022 HF;

Yes

Agency Response

**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 8, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared.

November 7, 2022 HF:

Comment on PPG: Although a greater level of detail was provided, some of the listed activities are ineligible, including: fianc? charges (?); Global Corporate Costs (looks like overhead); GEF Grant to implementing partner (who?s this partner? What is the purpose of the grant?); Regional Corporate Costs (looks like overhead but at regional level); Seed funding (totally incomprehensible). Please review the list of eligible items in Tables 1 and 2 ? pages 10 and 11 of the GEF Guidelines (accessible here:

[https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN\\_GEF\\_C.59\\_Inf.03\\_Guidelines%20on%20the%20Project%20and%20Program%20Cycle%20Policy.pdf](https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF_C.59_Inf.03_Guidelines%20on%20the%20Project%20and%20Program%20Cycle%20Policy.pdf)).

October 28, 2022 HF:

Please provide additional/sufficient details in the PPG report on expenditure categories as it is requested. Please list the eligible activities/expenditures (i.e. meetings, consultants, etc.) per the content included in Guidelines and provide the figures in each column (budgeted amount ? amount spent ? amount committed).

### Agency Response

November 8, 2022, IUCN

This is now revised to reflect accurate amounts. The agency fee which had been erroneously added has now been removed

November 2, 2022 IUCN

This is now revised in the CER in the relevant Annex

### 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 8, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared. Noting that the ExAct spreadsheet is still in the documents tab but will leave for record keeping purposes.

November 7, 2022 HF:

Given the continuing issues and impending cancellation deadline, please redact the target for Core Indicator 6 and all associated reference and documentation (including ExAct) regarding GHG emission reductions. If, during the course of the project, the GHG emission reduction can be accurately measured and reported we encourage The Agency to do so.

Feedback/assessment of the current calculations: The estimate is now much too high to be considered as realistic (137 Mt of CO<sub>2</sub>eq) and represent by itself almost 10% of our GEF-7 GHG emissions mitigation target for the whole 4-year cycle (1500 Mt of CO<sub>2</sub>eq), for a project not including a primary objective on CCM nor any direct mitigation output. The agency did not only adjust the parameter on impact of burning to reflect a reduction of 10% (which is in line with its initial description), it also:

- modified the input data to reduce the frequency of fire by half with compared to without the project (from once every year to once every two year),

- while multiplying the baseline frequency by 10 (the initial spreadsheet and related description mentioned a fire every 10 years),
- also indicated a reduction of forest degradation levels from moderate to low (which results in an immense impact given the area covered ? it would mean that the agency considers that 100% of the area sees an improvement, which seems bold),
- switched the soil type from organic to low activity clay soils and the global warming potentials from with to without climate change feedbacks;
- all of which without clear justification (although the switch to LAC soils is in line with the soil type reported in the Yangtze River Basin).

If a GHG mitigation benefit is calculated in the future, the parameters must be adjusted as follows for a more conservative approach and more in line with the initial qualitative description in the first submission (based on the assumption that this description was based on data that is supported by evidence ? but there are no sources to verify this in the current submission):

- Start from the previously submitted ExAct spreadsheet
- In the Management tab
- Forest degradation level unchanged at moderate level
- Fire periodicity of 10 years, with and without
- Impact of burning 1% without and 0.9% with
- In the Description tab
- LAC soils and warm temperate moist settings
- Revert back to GWP setting considering AR5 values with CC feedback.

October 28, 2022 HF:

1.) Please include the core indicators in the results framework (annex A). Core Indicators targets need to be aligned with Results Framework (Annex A). GEF Core Indicators should be explicitly mentioned in the Results Framework in Annex A.

3.) Currently the project emits more than 190 Mt of CO2.

The first reason, which concerns the order of magnitude of the estimate, is that the agency has used in the ?Description? tab calendar years instead of periods in the project duration input, based on the understanding that the project implementation starts in 2022 and capitalization in 2027. This has resulted in the total project duration being estimated at 4049 years (2022+2027). This in turn results in a very high estimate of emissions due to the long duration considered.

- o *Instead, the agency should compute 5 years as the implementation period and 15 years as the capitalization period, for a total of 20 years. **Please revise.***

? The second reason, which concerns the direction and value of the estimate, is that the numbers computed in the ?Management? tab are inversed. The current computing indicates that the area is not subject to fire occurrence without project and would be subject to fire occurrence with the project, which would imply that the project is likely to result in the apparition of this new hazard. In terms of frequency, the sheet then indicates that the frequency of fire is of once every 10 years without the project and once every 2 years with the project, which translates into an increase by a factor of 5 of the frequency of fire instead of a decrease as indicated in the description. Finally, the sheet indicates that the share of forest subject to burning is reduced by half (from 1% to 0.5%) with the project.

- o *In order to fit with the description made by the agency, the value for fire occurrence without project should first be changed to "yes". **Please correct.***
- o *Then, depending on what is meant by reduction of impact by 10%, the agency should adjust the values for frequency of occurrence and impact (% burning) accordingly (see below for clarification on this point). **Please adjust.***

? The third issue, in connection with the value of the estimate, relates to the description itself. Fire occurrence is the hazard, that the forest area is exposed to every 10 years. When it occurs, 1% of the forest area burns, which leads to an impact in terms of emissions of GHG. This impact can be reduced either by reducing the frequency of occurrence of this hazard, or by reducing the share of forest subject to burning as a result of this project.

- o *In order to make sure that the right numbers are computed, the agency should first clarify what would be reduced by 10%.*

? *If it refers to the share of the forest subject to burning, than the periodicity should be computed as unchanged with and without the project (once every 10 years) and instead the ?impact? cell value should be adjusted to 0.9% with the project (to reflect a decrease of 10%). It seems that this is what was meant in the description but it is unclear. **Please clarify.***

? *If it refers the frequency of fire occurrence (or probability of occurrence as mentioned in the description), then the fire periodicity should be higher with the project (around 11%) to reflect a decrease of 10% of the frequency of fire occurrence. The end result would be the same as the option above but through a different mechanism.*

? *If it refers to the overall impact, it would mean that there should be 10% less GHG emissions with the project than without as an output of the calculation (but it seems that this is not what is meant by the agency as it relates to the output of the EXACT calculation while the description mostly present input data).*

? *The estimate seems conservative and further documentation of how the input data was derived and how it relates to project activities would be useful. **Please address.***

October 5, 2022 HF:

1.) The initial targets (as contained in the PFD) are still missing from the Core Indicators table of the CER. Please input.



2.) METT scores and targets seem to still be missing from the core indicators section of the CER. Please input.

3.) Under further review

January 25, 2022 HF

1.) Please populate targets expected at PIF (child project concept)-in addition to targets at CER.

2.) Please upload the completed METT scores and targets for each of the project target PAs.

3.) Please include a GHG reduction estimate based on the improved PA management hectarage.

### Agency Response

November 8, 2022, IUCN

As advised, due to the impending cancellation deadline, we have redacted the target for Core Indicator 6

November 2, 2022 IUCN

1) The Core Indicators have been added to the results framework in the ProDoc and CER.

3) This is now revised in the Results Framework, CER, Annex 9 and Annex 17

October 20, 22 IUCN

1) As clarified by GEF IT, we will not be able to include the initial targets in the online template

2) The completed METT scores and targets are entered for each of the project PAs in Annex 9 and also in the relevant section of the CER online version.

1) The targets have been populated as requested at the end of the section E in the CER

2) The completed METT scores and targets are entered for each of the project PAs in the core indicators section of the CER as well as uploaded as Annex 16

3) The GHG reduction estimate is now provided using FAO EX-Ante Carbon-balance Tool v9.3.1 and uploaded as Annex 17 and section E of the CER.

## **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

October 4, 2022 HF:

Comments cleared. Please remove yellow highlights from CER and ProDoc text throughout.

January 25, 2022 HF:

1.) Please further elaborate this in the CER. Currently it does not adequately describe the global environmental/adaptation problems, including the root causes and barriers (in the Project Justification section), and how they are going to be addressed-more of this is contained in ProDoc but needs to be more complete in CER.

2.) As this is a child project of a program, please provide a brief introduction of a program and how this project is contributing to the program.

Agency Response

October 20, 2022 IUCN

The yellow highlights from the CER and ProDoc have been removed

1) This is now further elaborated in the CER.

2) This is now revised. This is now revised in the related section of the CER. The programme objectives is to enhance and mainstream biodiversity conservation in the development of the Yangtze River Economic Belt of China. The programme is divided into 2 child projects, one is Protecting globally important habitats in the Yangtze River Basin, the other is Mainstreaming biodiversity in the Yangtze River Economic Belt. According to the TOC, this child project will contribute to the improved protection of habitats of globally important biodiversity sites in the YRB through improving the coverage, management, and financing of PA networks. Expected impact to ensure the sustainability of protected area networks will be achieved through activities in target provinces, KBAs, and PAs, as well as development of legislation at the national level,

specifically the new national PA legislation. The project will also contribute to improved knowledge and information base as well as enhanced capacity of the stakeholders? working in close coordination with the MEE project.

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

#### Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

October 4, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared.

January 25, 2022 HF:

1.) The baseline scenario in the ProDoc and the baseline scenario in the CER are very different, but unfortunately neither adequately describe the baseline scenario that is relevant to the scope of this Child Project. Please revise to fully explain the relevant baseline-both the baseline scenario and baseline projects (which are not yet included) for this child project.

#### Agency Response

1) . This is now revised in the related section of the CER and p36 of the ProDoc., Baseline scenarios for project provinces, KBAs and protected areas have been added in CER.

**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

October 21, 2022 HF:

All comments cleared.

October 12, 2022 HF:

1.) & 2.) Comments cleared.

3.) Regardless of the geographic/species differences in the focus of these two projects (this one and GEFID: 10701), please include in the documentation a clear explanation of how the digital monitoring technology activities in this project and GEFID: 10701 relate to each other, will be coordinated and/or are differentiated based on the consultations with UNDP during PPG.

4.)& 5.) Comments cleared.

January 25, 2022 HF:

1.) The alternative scenario and description of project outcomes, components and how the project plans to achieve them remains under developed in the CER document. Please revise to fully describe the proposed alternative scenario and outcomes/components of project making clear how this project investment will achieve them. In this, please also include the project TOC in the CER, both narrative and graphic format.

2.) How will this project, particularly Outputs 1.2 and 1.3 have National Park System-level impacts- in addition to the benefits from working on management effectiveness and financing in the target PAs? The GEF-7 BD Strategy is seeking to support system-wide approaches to protected area financing rather than a park-by-park approach. Please address and revise CER/ProDoc.

3.) Activities 1.2.4 through 1.2.7 are all focused on applications, capacities, software and information management systems for use of digital technology for wildlife and PA monitoring. It seems that nearly identical activities are included in GEFID: 10701 Transformational Wildlife Management through UNDP with NFGA. Currently it is unclear how the digital monitoring technology activities in this project and that project relate to each other, will be coordinated and are differentiated. Please coordinate with relevant GEF and executing agencies to clarify and avoid redundancy or overlapping support for these activities, revise and resubmit.

4.) Output 2.2: The ProDoc and results framework seem to reflect that this Output is informational in nature, basic assessment work without a concrete policy reform or result. Please revise this output and related activities to clearly demonstrate the action-oriented policy work that will be undertaken in pursuit of this output. GEF resources are not intended to fund basic assessment activities. Further please see previous comments regarding redundancy between various Outputs on PAs with the MEE Child Project 10753.

5.) Component 3 please remove any activities/budget focused on project management or coordination given they fall under PMC (see PMC definition) and shouldn't come out of budget for components, but rather should be captured under PMC. Please revise Component and budget accordingly.

Agency Response

October 20, 2022, IUCN

3) This is now revised in section 3 of the CER and page 69 of the ProDoc.

1) This is now revised in the CER including the TOC in narrative format

2) This is now revised in the CER and p46 - p48 of ProDoc. Output 1.2 Governance and management capacity of selected protected areas in Sichuan, Jiangxi and Anhui enhanced as per international PA standard and supported by digital technology applications, will provide demonstration for the Yangtze River Basin

Output 1.3 Mechanisms to diversify PA financing through actualizing the values and benefits of natural capital explored and demonstrated, provide financing models and ecological product value realization mechanisms for YRB .

3) This is now revised in the section 3 of the CER and p47-48 of the ProDoc.. This part of the project design has been modified. As a whole, this project focuses on the intelligent monitoring and supervision of biodiversity in protected areas and its human interference, and focuses on the establishment of an intelligent monitoring and supervision model for protected areas. Another project focuses on the investigation of pandas and their companion animals, which is significantly different from the work content and objectives of this project

4) This is now revised on p50 of the ProDoc and CER documents. The focus is mainly to demonstrate KBA assessment technology, promote the systematic protection and overall conservation of biodiversity, and introduce KBA conservation into the Protected Area Law and the Yangtze River Conservation Project, the redundancy has also been deleted in the MEE ProDoc.

5) All activities/budget focused on project management or coordination are removed given they fall under PMC.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

January 25, 2022 HF

Yes

## Agency Response

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

### Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

October 21, 2022 HF:

All comments cleared.

October 13, 2022 HF:

1.) Comment cleared.

2.) Please include this clarification/description of the interaction with the legislation in the CER and ProDoc, and directly address in the documentation complementarity/active coordination with UNDP on the CPAR suite of projects to maximize benefits and eliminate overlap. This issue was also raised by STAP but not sufficiently addressed directly in the CER nor STAP table.

January 25, 2022 HF:

1.) Please revise this section to clearly state a well-developed incremental reasoning that justifies the use of GEF funds to achieve critical GEBs above and beyond what would otherwise be achieved for the Global Environment/globally significant biodiversity. Both the ProDoc and CER incremental reasoning sections include how the project "will fill the gaps of Chinese government initiatives, funding and programs". This is not strong incremental reasoning/GEF additionality for this investment nor the intended use of GEF resources.

2.) Throughout the CER "the new national PA legislation" is referred to-please provide further information about this legislation, its relevance and how, specifically, this project will contribute, while referencing coordination and differentiation from ongoing GEF investments in National Park system reform through CPAR and others.

## Agency Response

20 October 2022, IUCN

2?This is now directly addressed in the incremental reasoning section of the CER, page 59 of the ProDoc, and STAP table.

1) This is now elaborated on section 5 of the CER and p59-61 of the ProDoc. The relevant content has been revised to emphasize the complementarity and facilitation of

the different components in terms of incremental reasoning, fill the gaps of Chinese government initiatives, funding and programs

2?. The Law on Natural Protected Areas is the basic law of the construction of the national nature reserve system, which will provide legal support for the establishment of a natural protected area system with national parks as the main body in China, and is still in the process of being formulated, and this project will promote new concepts such as green list standards, KBA conservation practices, financing mechanisms, and ecological product realization mechanisms into the law in the CER and p58 of ProDoc.

**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

January 25, 2022 HF:

Yes

Agency Response

**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

January 25, 2022 HF:

Yes

Agency Response

**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

January 25, 2022 HF:

Yes, although detail of maps are difficult to read in portal. If there are higher resolution insets that can be added that would be helpful.

Agency Response  
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

October 13, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared

January 25, 2022 HF:

1.) Please further describe how this project contributes to overall program impact.

Agency Response This is now revised in the CER under section 7-1c  
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

October 13, 2022 HF:

All comments cleared.

January 25, 2022 HF:

1.) Please provide a summary on how stakeholders will be consulted in project execution, the means and timing of engagement, how information will be disseminated, and an explanation of any resource requirements throughout the project/program cycle to ensure proper and meaningful stakeholder engagement.

2.) Other GEF Agencies with related investments in the YRB should be included in the stakeholder engagement plan. Please revise to include.

3.) Please revise/correct the Table in the CER (and ProDoc) that depicts "Stakeholders and their potential role in project implementation" given that several of the "Local Agency and Local Enterprise" stakeholders are included that don't seem to have a clear



or relevant role in the project (hydropower, titanium industry, wetland monitoring center etc)-and are maybe mistakenly included in this CP.

#### Agency Response

1? The requested summary is now provided in section 7-2 of the CER.

2?This is now revised in the CER and the ProDoc. Reference to other GEF agencies with related investments in the YRB is now included in the stakeholder engagement plan. (section 7-2 of CER, and p74 of the ProDoc)

3?This is now revised in the CER and ProDoc. in section 7-2 and p73 respectively.

#### **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

October 13, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared. Please reference Annex 4 in the CER text on gender.

January 25, 2022 HF:

1.) Please include a complete gender Analysis that addresses the required elements in the questions in the section above and in GEF's gender guidance and is customized to the specific needs for gender equality and women's empowerment in the project's target sectors and geographies. Please summarize results in the CER document and the project's approach to gender. The gender action plan provided contains male to female ratio and percentage participation targets. This is only a partial view of what is needed.

#### Agency Response

October 20, 2022, IUCN

This now revised as per your advice in the CER text on gender.

This is now revised and the updated version of Annex 4 is uploaded along with changes made to the CER section 7-3.

## **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

October 13, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared.

January 25, 2022 HF:

Please more fully develop and describe the project's approach to private sector engagement and what engagement has take place to date.

Agency Response This is now revised in the CER in section 7-4.

### **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

October 21, 2022 HF:

All comments cleared.

October 13, 2022 HF:

1.) Comment cleared.

2.) This comment was not addressed and in fact the risk of "low participation" seems to have been removed. Please revise and address.

3 & 4.) Comments cleared.

January 25, 2022 HF:

1.) Please review the risk table and ensure that the proposed "mitigation measures" include measures the project will take to mitigate the potential risk identified. As an example, the first risk is difficulty in reaching consensus, therefore the risk mitigation measure should presumably address how the project will proactively support consensus building and conflict prevention/mitigation. Please revise the table/section.

2.) FPIC should be included as an additional risk mitigation measure for the risk of 'low participation' of indigenous people in project activities.

3.) The risk of low inter-ministerial/inter-agency cooperation and potential for conflict (and commensurate explicit risk mitigation measures) seem to be missing from this risk table. Please revise.

4.) Please integrate main risks and mitigation measures/summary from the safeguards review in a table here.

### Agency Response

20 October 2022, IUCN

2) This is now revised as per your advice in section 7.5 of the CER and 3.4 of the ProDoc.

1~4) The risk table has been modified and this section has been revised under section 7-5 of the CER

### 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

October 13, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared.

January 25, 2022 HF:

Very good to see plans for the "TACC" included in the institutional arrangement and coordination.

Please include a graphic that depicts the institutional arrangement for this project, and the program as a whole, including all relevant institutions and committees.

Agency Response This is now revised in CER & ProDoc fig 4.1

**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

October 13, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared.

January 25, 2022 HF:

Please describe how the project relates to, contributes to, works toward each of the national priorities presented in the table.

Agency Response This is now revised in the CER under section 7-7.

**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

January 25, 2022 HF:

Yes

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

January 25, 2022 HF:

Yes

Agency Response

**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

January 25, 2022 HF:

Yes, though suggest considering and describing potential ecosystem service benefits to accrue from conservation investment.

Agency Response

**Annexes**

**Are all the required annexes attached and adequately responded to?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

November 8, 2022 HF:

Comments i, ii, iii cleared.

November 7, 2022 HF:

Budget: Although in the Review Sheet says that all comments were addressed, the budget included in Portal remains the same as in the previous submission. Please revise the budget submission and address i. ii. iii. below (including the need to get a final figure in the M&E Budget table).

October 28, 2022 HF:

Budget table:

i. Account Assistant is charged to project components. Per guidelines, project's staff should be charged to the GEF and co-financing portions allocated to PMC. Please review/revise.

ii. Please explain if ?Vehicle and related? cover vehicle purchase or rent/lease? And justification therein.

iii. Please include M&E budget as applicable in the M&E column, whose totals have to match the totals in M&E budget ? please also include totals in M&E budget table.

October 13, 2022 HF:

1.) ESMS reviewed. Based on the ESMS an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) needs to be prepared that will incorporate the three safeguard tools (IPPF, Process Framework and guidance for a law enforcement risk assessment) as dedicated chapters. What is the plan/timeline for developing those safeguards critical assesses and plans? Please clearly articulate in the CER and Prodoc.

2.) Please explain the changes that were made to address this GEFSEC comment. Additionally, line 8 in the GEF budget refers to BD monitoring equipment, but the amount charged to the components (\$15,000) doesn't equal the sub-total (\$555,000), please clarify/correct.

3.) Budget does not seem to contain the requested clear justification for vehicle procurement for GEFSEC review and consideration. Please revise so PM can approve purchase.

January 25, 2022 HF:

1.) Please upload the ESMS/Annex 6 for review and please include a table that summarizes the review and outcome of main safeguards triggered by the project and proposed mitigation measures.

2.) Project budget: Please note previous comment regarding potentially overlapping digital technology activities and revise budget accordingly. Further, please note GEF funds should not be used for the procurement of this hardware but rather could support institutionalization of technology capacity, use and systems or the soft-side of technology application with PAs, and 'citizen science' with communities and south-south engagement etc. Please revise budget and activities accordingly.

3.) Please provide clear justification for vehicle procurement for GEFSEC review and consideration.

## Agency Response

November 8, 2022, IUCN

The updated corrected budget is uploaded in the relevant Annex in the CER and also in Annex 8. i) The project assistant reference was erroneous and has now been removed and only staff included in the ProDoc are mentioned; ii) The vehicle budget line that was erroneously included has now been redacted; iii) the M&E budget is reflected in the relevant column and the totals included in Annex 8, CER M&E section and CER Budget Annex.

November 2, 2022 IUCN

- i) This is now revised in Annex 8 to align with the CPMO staff arrangement
- ii) This is now removed in Annex 8
- iii) This is now revised in Annex 8 as well as the relevant section of the CER

October 20, 2022, IUCN

- 1) We're in the process of developing the necessary tools that were triggered at the ESMS screening stage. We have hired a consultant to carry out the work and are now working to finalise the documents. We intend to have them ready at the time of CEO approval so that they can then be applied at the inception of the project.
- 2) This is now revised as per your advice in the Annex 8 budget file, USD 15,000 is the correct figure.
- 3) This is now revised in the Annex 8 budget file

1) The preliminary ESMS has been uploaded as Annex 6 and will be finalised along with the ESMF in the next iteration

2&3) The project budget and corresponding activities have been adjusted  
**Project Results Framework**

#### Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

October 13, 2022 HF:  
Comments cleared.

January 25, 2022 HF:

- 1.) Please revise per comments on Components and resubmit for review.
- 2.) All the Indicators in the project results framework seem to be outputs (# of plans, reports, PAs etc). How will outcomes and impacts of this project and the program overall be measured? And please integrate the GEF Core Indicators into the project results framework to make clear the relationship between these levels/sets of indicators.

Agency Response 1) This is now revised as per comments 2) This is now revised in the results framework in the ProDoc and the relevant Annexure of the CER  
**GEF Secretariat comments**

### Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

October 13, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared.

January 25, 2022 HF:

Yes, a climate risk analysis has been submitted but it lacks a description of how the project will take into account risks as identified given the scope of the activities. Please update analysis accordingly and include relevant points in the risk table.

**Agency Response** The revised climate risk analysis is provided in Annex 14

#### **Council comments**

### Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

October 13, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared.

January 25, 2022 HF:

1.) Please respond to the GEF Council comments and include in Portal submission.

**Agency Response** The Council comment will be addressed in the MEE CER.

#### **STAP comments**

### Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

October 21, 2022 HF:

All comments cleared.

October 13, 2022 HF:

Please ensure full descriptions of responses and/or changes to the documentation based on STAP comments, for example, in several places "This is now elaborated in the PPG phase" was included as a response to specific STAP comments, which does not provide sufficient clarity regarding whether or how STAP comment was addressed (if it was). Please elaborate those responses.

January 25, 2022 HF:

1.) Please respond to STAP's review of this program overall and in particular comments on this Child Project and include in Portal submission.



Agency Response

October 20, 2022, IUCN

The responses to STAP comments are now elaborated and included in Annex 18 as well as the relevant section of the CER.

The STAP comments have been responded and uploaded as Annex 18

**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

January 25, 2022 HF:

Yes, please note that the remaining PPG should be utilized in the first year of the project implementation.

Agency Response Noted

**Project maps and coordinates**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

January 25, 2022 HF:

OK

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

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

November 8, 2022 HF:

Yes.

November 2, 2022 HF:

Yes.

October 28, 2022 HF:

No, not at this time. Please see the remaining highlighted comments.

October 21, 2022 HF:

Yes, PM recommends this project for CEO endorsement once it has cleared the 4-week Council review period. Please note the 2nd cancellation date (as extended) for this project is December 31, 2022. This project needs to go for Council review as soon as possible to avoid cancellation.

January 25, 2022 HF:

No, not at this time. Please address the comments in the review sheet and resubmit.

**Review Dates**

	<b>Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement</b>	<b>Response to Secretariat comments</b>
<b>First Review</b>	1/25/2022	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	10/13/2022	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	10/21/2022	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	10/28/2022	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	11/2/2022	

**CEO Recommendation**

**Brief reasoning for CEO Recommendations**