

# Supporting Land Degradation Neutrality in St. Kitts and Nevis

Review PIF and Make a recommendation

## Basic project information

**GEF ID**

11889

**Countries**

St. Kitts and Nevis

**Project Name**

Supporting Land Degradation Neutrality in St. Kitts and Nevis

**Agencies**

FAO

**Date received by PM**

3/6/2025

**Review completed by PM**

5/6/2025

**Program Manager**

Asha Bobb-Semple

**Focal Area**

Land Degradation

**Project Type**

## GEF-8 PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF) REVIEW SHEET

### 1. General Project Information / Eligibility

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

b) Is the General Project Information table correctly populated?

### Secretariat's Comments

5/6/2025

Cleared.

3/24/2016

a) An LD project on LDN is very welcome, however please see below recommendations re the alignment of the project with the LDFA strategy.

i) The project as written has identified alignment with the LD focal area only, which means it is a single focal area project. There needs to be a greater effort to put LDFA objectives (i.e. avoiding, reducing and reversing degraded (productive) landscapes as the main focus of the project with the primary aim to deliver GEBs especially related to land, in productive landscapes, and improved capacities for sustainability. There are aspects of the project on adaptation, disaster risk management, urban resilience which do not align with the LDFA strategy and should be delivered with co-financing.

ii) Only LD-1 was selected, however based on the upstream activities planned and additional potential activities which could be incorporated, LD 1-4 could be an additional objective to be considered.

### Agency's Comments

**24 April 2025**

i. The objective has been edited for increased consistency with the LDFA. The items on adaptation, disaster risk management and urban resilience have been reformulated (please see also responses to comments in section 5.1. Project Description) and results in that regard are now co-benefits from LDN.

ii. LD 1-4 has been selected as an additional objective.

## 2. Project Summary

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

Secretariat's Comments

5/6/2025

Cleared

3/24/2025

The description of the problem is very broad with more of an overall focus on sustainable development. Please specify the specific problem which is being addressed which is related to land degradation.

Agency's Comments

**24 April 2025**

The description of the problem has been narrowed down and now has a stronger focus on land degradation.

## 3 Indicative Project Overview

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

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

Secretariat's Comments

5/21/2025

Cleared.

5/12/2025

Please to complete the outcome(s) and output(s) for the component M&E, which has an allocation of \$179,638.

3/24/2025

a) Not fully.

i) Similar to the point above the project objective is very broad with less of a focus on rehabilitating degraded landscapes.

- The meaning of 'improved land-use and management for increased sustainable development' is unclear,

- The notion of 'increased sustainable development' is unknown to us.

- We would recommend a formulation more specific and more focused on LDN

- 'provides livelihoods against impending climate change' is very adaptation oriented, while LDN is lost at the end of the formulation.

Please revise the project objective.

b) In keeping with the comments under question 1, we recommend focusing more on the LDN targets and the engagement of St Kitts and Nevis in UNCCD and less on adaptation, National Adaptation Plans, urban issues, markets, and activities out of the range of GEF financing. The process of the LDN Target Setting Programme in the country led to clear and actionable recommendations. We suggest utilizing these recommendations on LDN and focus on the institutional framework, the need for more intersectoral collaboration, multistakeholder platform, and associated mechanisms.

## Agency's Comments

**21 May 2025**

Noted, Outcomes and outputs of the M&E component are now listed in the overview table. The M&E approach and actions are explained in the Agency project document (p.30).

**24 April 2025**

a)

i. The objective has been reformulated to 'To strengthen the enabling environment for the incorporation of the LDN framework into land use plans in SKN and their effective implementation'.

a) Consistency of the project's outcomes and outputs with the LDN-TSP recommendations has been reviewed and edits made accordingly (please see also responses to comments in 5.1). Resilience centered activities have been reformulated, and adaptation and resilience are now seen as co-benefit from LDN. Actions to improve market access are kept under component 3,

since they are one of the project's vehicles to scale SLM out (consistently with features D and F of the UNCCD Checklist for Land Degradation Neutrality Transformative Projects and Programmes) Provide economic incentives that benefit both men and women to improve livelihoods (e.g., creation of green jobs and enhanced access to inclusive credit lines). The focus on LDN has nonetheless been strengthened.

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

**Secretariat's Comments**

5/6/2025

Cleared

3/24/2025

i) Please provide more information on how gender is incorporated in the project (interventions, governance mechanisms, trainings, awareness, or recruitments) in particular given the 50% GEB beneficiary target.

ii) In Component 4, please ensure that knowledge produced on best practices and lessons learned capture key gender equality results and impacts and are widely disseminated. Please ensure to include relevant gender-specific indicators in the RF; 2) In the development of the Gender Action Plan, please include specific budget lines, as appropriate and plans for monitoring and reporting on the GAP. Under M&E, please reflect that reports submitted (MTR and TE) include gender-specific results and progress in the implementation of the gender action.

**Agency's Comments**

**24 April 2025**

i. A full Gender Action Plan (GAP) will be developed during the Project Preparation Grant (PPG), once this PIF receives technical clearance and approval. At this moment, the targets on gender agreed with the country are a 50% for actions addressed to government technical staff and to the general population, while a 30% of women is targeted in actions addressed to producers (given that the majority of producers are male). This means that the project will seek that half of the individuals participating in, e.g., the participatory processes towards ILUP will be women. Engagement strategies will be in place that have into account gender specificities in each area and sector of activity and participation mechanisms designed accordingly, the details of which will be included in the project's stakeholder engagement plan (also to be prepared during the PPG). Women empowerment and their increased capacity to participate in decision-making will be specifically promoted and tracked, the exact mechanisms and indicators to be designed under the GAP.

ii. Explicit mention to gender equality is now made in outputs 4.1.2 and 4.1.3. The project's Gender Action Plan and Results Framework will be prepared during the PPG. It will be ensured that all gender indicators included in the GAP are integrated in the results framework and project's monitoring and evaluation strategy. There is a mention to the gender aspects of the project's M&E plan in p 27, as well as in section B, subsection Monitoring and Evaluation.

**3.3 a) Are the components adequately funded?**

**b) Are the GEF Project Financing and Co-Financing contributions to PMC proportional?**

**c) Is the PMC equal to or below 5% of the total GEF grant for FSPs or 10% for MSPs? If the requested PMC is above the caps, has an exception (e.g. for regional projects) been sufficiently substantiated?**

Secretariat's Comments

5/6/2025

Cleared

3/24/2025

a) Yes, however please note in reference to the activities which are outside of the scope of the LDFA and which should be covered by co-financing.

b) No, please revise the co-financing portion of the PMC

c) Yes

Agency's Comments

**24 April 2025**

a) The project activities that had a specific focus on adaptation have been reformulated to make them LD centered, and adaptation is now a co-benefit from LDN.

b) Noted. Project cofinancing proportion has been revised

#### **4 Project Outline**

##### **A. Project Rationale**

##### **4.1 SITUATION ANALYSIS**

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

**b) Are the key barriers and enablers identified?**

Secretariat's Comments

3/24/2025

a) Yes

b) Yes

Agency's Comments

#### **4.2 JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT**

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

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

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

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

Secretariat's Comments

5/6/2025

Cleared

3/ 24/2025

a) Not explicitly, please include.

b) Please include.

c) Yes

d) Yes

Agency's Comments

**24 April 2025**

a) Details on why this specific approach has been taken over other options has been added to the rationale

- b) Considerations regarding resilience of the project approach to changes in drivers have been added in the Project alternative subsection. Details on foreseeable changes that may threaten this project's capacity for delivering outcomes are included in the Risk subsection of the PIF section C. The project's response options have been designed to be robust to future uncertainty, as per STAP's recommendations in the Achieving enduring outcomes from GEF investments, A STAP Advisory Document (Stafford Smith, M. 2019, <https://cdn.unenvironment.org/stagef/public/2021-07/55025%20UNEP%20STAP%20Durability%20paper%20final%20web.pdf>). Adaptive modes of implementation will be pursued and embedded in the project's M&E so the anticipated intervention can be shaped to new scenarios if needed while by keeping capacity for impact.

## 5 B. Project Description

### 5.1 THEORY OF CHANGE

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

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

Secretariat's Comments

5/6/2025

Cleared.

3/24/2025

a) Not fully. The four components leading to the proposed outcomes are noted and we welcome those components focusing on LDN, R2R, livelihoods, and KM. However there are outputs out of the scope of the LDN agenda (see the comments on the result framework and the different outputs). Please revise. Please also refer to two guides- UNCCD LDN Transformative Projects and Programs checklist <https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/LDN%20TPP%20checklist%20final%20draft%20040918.pdf>; and STAP LDN Guideline for GEF projects [https://stagef.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/STAP%20LDN%20Guidelines%2016-pager%20web%20version%20%281%29\\_0.pdf](https://stagef.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/STAP%20LDN%20Guidelines%2016-pager%20web%20version%20%281%29_0.pdf)

ii) Please include assumptions for the TOC.

iii) Please include a Legend for the ToC- eg. what is the significance of A1, B1 etc.



b) Yes, however please see comments below with some including recommended revisions.

i) All outputs that both highlight the added value of the GEF and are aligned with the LDN targets and its recommendations are welcome. We understand there is a need for harmonization, intersectoral collaboration, and integration of LDN targets in plans, mechanisms, and processes: 1.1.1, 1.1.5, 2.1.1, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 3.1.2.

ii) We note the inclusion of interventions to update planning frameworks and strengthen the institutional capacity to implement integrated and sustainable land use planning. However please also consider the 'how'. What mechanisms will be put in place to enable national and local government to incorporate LDN in decision making. There could be options for a LDN decision support system for target-setting, planning and strengthening of governance arrangements together with national and local stakeholders and efforts to strengthen intersectoral coordination mechanisms at two levels: national level, and between the national level and local decision makers and farmer groups.

iii) Some outputs are seemingly baseline activities which should ideally be covered by other funds, however they could be covered by the GEF if there is a rationale and options for long-term financing (e.g. domestic finance: 1.1.3: GIS infrastructure- how will this be maintained by the government? ; 2.2.3 pollution monitoring. Please, clarify and/or modify.

iv) The additionality of the GEF to the existing efforts and co-financing opportunities should be well established for some outputs that may go beyond the GEF's mandate:

o *2.1.2. Watershed scale Local Area Development Plans designed for Mansion, St Paul and New River watersheds through ILUP, incorporating DRM and urban resilience aspects:* It is difficult to consider the GEF as the sole financier of such ambitious outputs for three watersheds: full watershed development plans + Disaster Risk Management + integrating urban resilience aspects are far beyond the mandate of the GEF and should be financed by the government, partners, and adaptation funds. Based on the LDN targets and its recommendations, the focus of GEF resources should be to integrate LDN into such watershed scale Development Plans. Please, clarify and confirm.

o *1.1.2. Land uses in NPDP's Management Areas? in Saint Kitts and in Nevis defined and watersheds and ghauts demarcated in both islands:* similar comment than the previous one: what is the added value of the GEF for this output which is seemingly a baseline activity? Please, clarify

v) Output 1.1.4 -resilience against natural disasters in urban areas is not eligible for GEF financing under the LDFA and is primarily suitable for adaptation funding.

vi) Please clarify the following outputs (3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.4) in the context of the GEF with a focus on the clarifying the baseline/the starting point; the added value of the GEF; the expected Global Environment Benefits

vii) Component 4 includes Monitoring ? however, in the Indicative Project Overview Table includes an stand-alone M&E component. Please revise.

## Agency's Comments

**24 April 2025**

a)

i. The activities have been revised to exclude activities focused on adaptation and resilience which are now included as co-benefits from LDN. The Theory of Change has been edited accordingly. The UNCCD LDN Transformative Projects and Programs checklist and the STAP LDN Guideline for GEF projects have been considered in the design of this PIF, and elements have been added to the project's Theory of Change for increased consistency with their recommendations.

i. Assumptions have been included

ii. A1-9 are assumptions 1 to 9; B1-4 are barriers 1 to 4. This has now been added to the ToC graph

b) i. N/A

ii. The design and development of a decision support tool for LDN is foreseen under Component 1, output 1.1.3. It is expected to support not only the LDN target setting process, but also decision making at all stakeholder levels, including grassroots level, planning (including support to the ILUP process as well as developmental planning,) and be a mechanism to strengthen institutional and intersectoral coordination, as it will be fed with the information from the impact indicators framework, created also under Component 4.

i. The country counts already with a GIS that is hosted by the Department of Physical Planning. Efforts are currently addressed to create the necessary infrastructures that enable data sharing across governmental departments and towards a centralized harmonized data repository. That is one of the identified barriers for LDN and the project will provide technical support in that regard and develop and implement a decision support tool including LDN indicators among others, that will enable multicriteria analysis towards LDN. These details have been added to the output explanation in PIF.

Regarding output 2.2.3 (pollution monitoring), a framework of indicators to track excess of nutrients (e.g. Nitrogen and Phosphorus) in water derived from agriculture and their effects on coastal areas biodiversity (soil and water bodies) will be designed and implemented, integrated into the existing St. Kitts and Nevis Bureau of Standards (SKNBS). Laboratories of the SKNBS will be strengthened in that regard, with SOPs and training, also in collaboration with the GEF-8 SOILCARE Phase 2 that is expected to start next year. This

activity is consistent with the recommendations on LDN implementation as per the Checklist for Land Degradation Neutrality Transformative Projects and Programmes (LDN TPP)

(<https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/LDN%20TPP%20checklist%20final%20draft%20040918.pdf>), in particular regarding *‘Ensure there are mitigating measures for potential leakage (negative offsite effects as opposed to positive spillover effects) beyond the project area?’* (page 2).

On output 2.1.2: Yes, the efforts of the project are focused on the incorporation of the LDN principles into the NPDP and its local implementation. For that, the project will support the development of the instruments for the watershed scale application of the NPDP including the definition of the areas to avoid, reduce and reverse land degradation after land potential assessments and the incorporation of the counterbalancing principle. Disaster Risk Management and resilience of urban areas are now explicitly mentioned as co-benefits. Nonetheless, coordination of this project and of its LDN approach with current and upcoming country actions on DRM and resilience will be sought, and information on those aspects is expected to inform the elaboration of the watershed scale planning instruments, as they are one of the governmental priorities regarding sustainable land use goals. This is consistent with the objectives of LDN as listed in the UNCCD LDN Transformative Projects and Programs checklist:

*‘maintain or improve the sustainable delivery of ecosystem services;*

*‘maintain or improve productivity, in order to enhance food security;*

*‘increase resilience of the land and populations dependent on the land;*

*‘seek synergies with other social, economic and environmental objectives; and*

*‘reinforce responsible and inclusive governance of land. (Orr et al. 2017: 3)*

Regarding output 1.1.2, it has been reformulated to: *Technical support delivered to the incorporation of the LDN approach into Saint Kitts PDP’s ‘Management Areas’*. The project will support the incorporation of the LDN view and the avoid-reduce-reverse LD in the *‘Management Areas’* defined in the NPDP.

Activities in Nevis are now under output 1.1.3: *Support provided to the integration of the LDN principles at the watershed scale in the Nevis PDP*. The Nevis draft PDP is currently being revised, and the project will assist in the adoption of the watershed scale approach and the definition of the areas to avoid, reduce and reverse land degradation in lands below 300 m asl.

The development and implementation of a decision support tool within the country’s GIS is under output 1.1.4: *LDN-based decision support tools integrated within SKN GIS infrastructure* (please see response to comment above).

iv. Resilience against natural disasters in urban areas is now explicitly considered as a co-benefit of the application of the LDN approach, actions on adaptation will be not directly funded by the project but benefits that will result from the application of the LDN framework.

v. Regarding baseline for outputs 3.1.1 and 3.1.2, the GoSKN counts with a Co-operatives Department (CoOD), created under the Co-operative Societies Act, 2011, which intends to develop the business acumen of the rural enterprises through increasing capacities and skills of the members. Specifically, the following outputs are listed under the CoOD strategic plan: ?Members trained in record keeping and financial management?, ?Business/Strategic Plans? and ?Members trained in area of expertise?. The project will support existing efforts at the CoOD and promote coordination with the Department of Agriculture to create a stable training program on those topics, addressed to SLM-based MSMEs, as a vehicle to expand the LDN approach. This will be accompanied by the assessment of value chains for sustainably produced priority commodities and a proposal for their gender-sensitive optimization under 3.1.4, also building on the CoOD infrastructure, since improving market access for sustainably produced crops is one of the CoOD lines of work. This is expected to lead to increased adoption of SLM and decreased disadoption, Clarification on these aspects has been added to outcome 3.1.

vi. Component 4 includes the design of an institutional framework to track impact of projects and programs. It is intended to track country efforts and serve to stimulate coordination and complementarity at the national scale, rather than project implementation monitoring and evaluation, so its objectives and shape are totally different from the project's M&E component. It is expected that this project is the first one in providing information to be included in the institutionalized impact tracking system.

## **5.2 INCREMENTAL/ADDITIONAL COST REASONING**

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

Secretariat's Comments

5/6/2025

Cleared.

3/24/2025

Please consider the comments above to be added to the narrative already presented.

Agency's Comments

**24 April 2025**

The elements mentioned in comments and suggestions above have been added to the narrative (please see responses to comments in section 5.1)

### **5.3 IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK**

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

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

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

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

Secretariat's Comments

5/6/2025

Noted that the Executing partner on the project is UWI Mona Campus.

3/24/2025

a) This is not evident, please include

b) N/A

c) Yes

d)

Agency's Comments

**24 April 2025**

a) The Saint Kitts and Nevis GEF Operational Focal Point has identified the University of the West Indies (Mona Campus, Jamaica) as potential Operational Partner for this project (mention to that has been added to the PIF in the Rationale section, page 18), but this end will be further elaborated upon during Project Preparation Grant phase.

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

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

## Secretariat's Comments

5/21/2025

Cleared.

5/6/2025

Thank you for the responses so far. Please see follow up comment below.

ii) There are specific activities which are required to account for reporting on GEF sub-indicator 1.2. These protected area management activities have not been detailed within the project description nor has there been a discussion on the issues or challenges around protected areas in the project rationale. If there is an intent to deliver BD co-benefits for the project, we recommend to record all of those results under sub-indicator 4.1. OR there is the option to change the project to an MFA and apply funding to the relevant BDFA objective, expand on the protected area rationale of the project in relation to productive landscapes as well as include a description on the activities to be undertaken to improve protected area management.

Please adjust as needed.

3/24/2025

Not fully.

i) It is unclear why Sub-indicator 4.3 has not been selected given this is an LDFA and LDN project, focused on LD-1 (SLM). Please ensure this indicator is utilized as well.

ii) As this is an LDFA project, support is focused on productive landscapes (ideally outside of PAs). Based on this the use of and activities focused on protected areas are not aligned. If there are to be activities within PAs then the project would have to be rescoped to an MFA focused on BD and LD.

iii) There is nearly a 50%-50% ratio of male and female beneficiaries. Please clarify how beneficiaries are being defined.

## Agency's Comments

**21 May 2025**

ii) Duly noted. Since Core indicator 4 explicitly excludes protected areas (as per the GEF *Guidelines on Core Indicators and Sub-Indicators*), acreages corresponding to PA management in project watersheds have been accounted towards Core indicator 1.2: Terrestrial protected areas under improved management effectiveness.

As explained in the Core Indicators section, the activity of the project will result in the inclusion of existing approaches to rainforest protection and PA regulations into watershed scale land use plans for Mansion and Saint Paul watersheds. This will not involve the elaboration of new instruments nor changes in existing ones but is rather seen as a vehicle for their application, thus improving management effectiveness. The project will thus not focus on any specific management issue of the PAs beyond facilitating implementation of existing regulations through land use planning. The main issues regarding PAs management as identified in the Central Forest Reserve Management Plan 2007-2011 are nonetheless now discussed in the project rationale (p 10-11). The METT analysis will be done within the PPG phase.

An account of the biodiversity co-benefits obtained is included in p.37 (Agency Project Document), in relation to the corresponding Kunming-Montreal targets.

#### **24 April 2025**

i) Sub-indicator 4.3 is included. As explained in the core indicators section, On-the-ground actions towards soil recarbonization in croplands will be carried out in 319.78 ha (sub-indicator 4.3), and additional 812.2 ha of lands will be under improved management, benefitting biodiversity, as a result of the implementation of the watershed scale land use and management plans (sub-indicator 4.1). Sub-indicators are now identified in the Overview Table, for ease of reference.

ii) There are no activities planned in Protected Areas beyond their inclusion in watershed scale planning instruments (contributing to sub indicator 4.1: Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (qualitative assessment, non-certified)). Their inclusion in plans is obliged by the watershed scale and the R2R approach, given the specific geomorphological and biophysical setting of the country and the fact that Protected Areas are the headwaters of all the watersheds in the country. The existing laws and policies affecting and delineating PAs will be integrated in watershed scale plans. All on the ground actions will be outside of protected areas (this includes restoration activities under Core Indicator 3.2 and improved management under 4.3).

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

Secretariat's Comments N/A

Agency's Comments

#### **5.6 RISKS**

**a) Is there a well-articulated assessment of risk and identification of mitigation measures under each relevant risk category?**

**b) Is the rating provided reflecting the residual risk to the likely achievement of intended outcomes after accounting for the expected implementation of mitigation measures?**

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

#### Secretariat's Comments

5/21/2025

Cleared

5/12/2025

We understand that environmental and social risk in Annex D is Low. However, the environmental and social risk section of the Key Risk table in the Portal (page 40) remain Moderate. Please make these environmental and social risks consistent.

3/24/2025

a)

i) Please expand on the climate risk with more specific information.

ii) Please describe how the Overall risk rating was identified

b) Yes

c) Please adjust the rating under the "Environmental and Social" risk category in line with the ESS risk category. The ratings are not in line as is. Doing so would be in line with the description of the "Environmental and Social" risk category in Annex B of the GEF Risk Appetite document (GEF/C.66/13) stating that: "The rating reported by project under this category is identical to the Overall Safeguards Risk rating provided at PIF, CEO Endorsement, MTR and TE stage."

#### Agency's Comments

**21 May 2025**

Noted, the ESS risk rating has been corrected to Low in the GEF Portal

**24 April 2025**



a)

i) The information on climate risks has been expanded.

ii) The overall rating of the project risk has been identified according to the FAO Framework for Environmental and Social Management guidance note ESOP 1: SCREENING, ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL RISKS (<https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/89b27cf8-a5ae-4f89-9e87-96c04902f1a1/content>).

According to it, the FAO screening checklist:

<https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/556028f8-086b-49fa-b05d-fdbcb42066b3/content>

has been used to identify and rate individual risks. The risk screening checklist contains specific questions related to each safeguard standard and was completed by the project team. During the identification phase, each question was answered with 'yes', 'no' or 'to be determined'. Safeguard-specific questions were then rated for likelihood and impact (consequence). Likelihood is the probability or chance of a particular event occurring, and is rated as unlikely, likely or highly likely. Impact refers to the degree to which a risk event could affect individuals or the environment, and is rated as low, moderate or high. The completion of the Environmental and Social Risk Screening Checklist during the identification phase will automatically result in the project risk classification.

b) N/A

The rating of the "Environmental and Social" risk category has been adjusted to Low in line with the ESS category in Annex D

#### 5.7 Qualitative assessment

**a) Does the project intend to be well integrated, durable, and transformative?**

**b) Is there potential for innovation and scaling-up?**

**c) Will the project contribute to an improved alignment of national policies (policy coherence)?**

Secretariat's Comments

5/6/2025

Cleared.

3/24/2025

- a) Please indicate
- b) Please clarify the potential for innovation or not the innovative aspects of the project.
- c) Please indicate how the project can support or facilitate policy coherence

#### Agency's Comments

**24 April 2025**

- a) The project is intended to be transformative and sustainable, as per the details given in section B (the subsection on that has been renamed to "Project transformational capacity and sustainability of the results" for clarity).
- b) The project is specifically designed to be transformative. The approaches and methodologies proposed have been applied elsewhere and their effectiveness proved. Measures to enable transformation are embedded in project design, such as decision support tools, improvements of the enabling environment at the institutional (decision support and knowledge sharing tools), regulatory (land tenure, land use planning for LDN) and socio-economic (market access) level, demonstration of approaches on the ground and training and capacity development at different stakeholder levels. This is specified in section B, subsection "Project transformational capacity and sustainability of the results"

As stated in Section B, under subsection "Project transformational capacity and sustainability of the results", the project will support policy coherence and integrated decision-making through the activities of Component 1 regarding planning and regulatory frameworks, including improved land data, harmonization of tenure frameworks and instruments for effective implementation of the NPDP towards LDN.

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

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

#### Secretariat's Comments

5/6/2025

Cleared

3/24/2025

Please see comments above re the LDFA strategy alignment.

#### Agency's Comments

**24 April 2025**

The project's objective has been reformulated as per the suggestions above to make it more aligned with the LDFA, explicitly mentioning the LDN hierarchy of actions. The project description has been modified accordingly, and it now includes details on how the project activities link with the LDN-TSP recommendations and measures. Disaster risk management and resilience are now considered co-benefits of the LDN framework implementation, and no project funds will be allocated to actions addressed directly to that (please see also responses to comments in section 1, 3 and 5.1).

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

#### Secretariat's Comments

5/6/2025

Cleared

3/24/2025

Please provide specific details on how the project is aligned with UNCCD and SKN's LDN targets.

#### Agency's Comments

**24 April 2025**

Details on the alignment of the project with the country's LDN-TSP target and sub-targets are provided in section C

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

Secretariat's Comments

5/6/2025

Cleared

3/24/2025

Please indicate how the project aligns with the targets identified.

Agency's Comments

**24 April 2025**

The contribution to the different project actions to the KMF targets is now explained in section C

**7 D. Policy Requirements**

**7.1 Is the Policy Requirements section completed?**

Secretariat's Comments

3/24/2025

Yes

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments

3/24/2025

Yes

Agency's Comments

**8 Annexes**

**Annex A: Financing Tables**

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

**STAR allocation?**

Secretariat's Comments

3/24/2025

Yes

Agency's Comments

**Focal Area allocation?**

Secretariat's Comments

3/24/2025

Yes

Agency's Comments

**LDCF under the principle of equitable access?**

Secretariat's CommentsN/A

Agency's Comments

**SCCF A (SIDS)?**

Secretariat's CommentsN/A

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's CommentsN/A

Agency's Comments

**Focal Area Set Aside?**

Secretariat's CommentsN/A

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments

3/24/2025

Yes

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments

3/24/2025

Yes

Agency's Comments

**Annex B: Endorsements**

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

Secretariat's Comments

3/24/2025

Yes

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments

3/24/2025

Yes

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments

3/24/2025

Yes

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's CommentsN/A

Agency's Comments

**Annex C: Project Location**

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

Secretariat's Comments

3/24/2025

Yes

Agency's Comments

**Annex D: Safeguards Screen and Rating**

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

Secretariat's Comments

3/24/2025

Yes

Agency's Comments

**Annex E: Rio Markers**

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

Secretariat's Comments

5/6/2025

Cleared.

3/24/2025

Please reconsider the rating selected for Mitigation and Adaption as this is not a climate change mitigation or adaptation project as described in the GEF-8 programming directions nor is it a multi-focal area project.

Agency's Comments

**24 April 2025**

Noted. CCM and CCA Rio Markers have been readjusted to *?Significant Objective 1?*:

**Annex F: Taxonomy Worksheet**

**8.9 Is the project properly tagged with the appropriate keywords?**

Secretariat's Comments

5/6/2025

Cleared.

3/24/2025

Not fully, please include many other applicable tags for this project.



Agency's Comments

**24 April 2025**

Duly noted. Additional, relevant key words have been inserted under the Taxonomy list in the portal

**Annex G: NGI Relevant Annexes**

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

Secretariat's CommentsN/A

Agency's Comments

## **9 GEFSEC Decision**

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

Secretariat's Comments

5/21/2025

The project is technically cleared and recommended for PIF approval.

5/6/2025

Not at this time. Please address the comments above.

3/24/2025

Not at this time. Please address the comments above.

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

Review Dates

	PIF Review	Agency Response
<b>First Review</b>	<b>3/17/2025</b>	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>3/24/2025</b>	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>5/6/2025</b>	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>5/21/2025</b>	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>		