Conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of a lowland forest mosaic landscape in Ogun, Edo, Delta and Ondo States

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

10990

Countries

Nigeria

Project Name

Conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of a lowland forest mosaic landscape in Ogun, Edo, Delta and Ondo States

Agencies

FAO

Date received by PM

9/28/2023

Review completed by PM

10/17/2023

Program Manager

Jurgis Sapijanskas
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
JS 12/7/2023 - Thank you for the revisions and responses throughout this review sheet.

Cleared.

JS 10/3/2023 - Please remove the Rio marker on Climate Change Adaptation as it does not correspond to any stated objective of the project.

Agency Response
11/27/23

The Rio marker on climate change adaptation has been removed.

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

JS 12/7/2023 - Cleared.

JS 10/3/2023 - Please see comments on unjustified changes to outputs compared to PIF stage in the comment box related to the alternative scenario and amend the "Summary of changes in alignment with the project design with the original PIF" accordingly.

Agency Response

11/27/23

The justification for changes made to outputs and targets has been expanded to better explain and clarify the modifications (see below).

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

JS 12/7/2023 - Cleared.

JS 10/3/2023 - We note with appreciation the increase in total expected co-financing compared to PIF stage, albeit with less investment mobilized.

1- Ondo, Delta, Ogun and Edo States: The co-financing letter provided is for a project called "Ondo State REDD+ project" and contains co-financed activities spanning period before 2024 when the project to be endorsed will start in 2024. Not all the cofinancing announced can thus be considered as cofunding this GEF project. Please provide a new supporting letter or revise the cofinancing amount to reflect only the funding from these cofinancers that will occur during the project lifetime.

2- National park services, SW/Niger Delata Forest Project, and FADU: The co-financing letters provided does not clarify the time span over which co-finance is to be provided. Please provide new letters or emails from the co-financer confirming the period over which their cofinance will be provided.

3- Africa Nature Investors: the cofinancer letter clarifies that it cofinance will be provided as grants. Please thus change the tag from "Other" to "grant" in Table C:

Civil Society Organization	Africa Nature Investors (ANI)	Other	Investment mobilized	816,000.00

4- The co-financer letter from FAO is for $300,000 when $200,000 are reported in table C. Also the co-financing letter mentions activities carried out in 2023 and can thus not cofinance this project, which will not start before 2024. Please explain and reflect in table C the amount that corresponds to activity that will take place during the time span of the project only.

Agency Response
12/7/23

New and revised co-financing letters have been provided.

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 JS 10/3/2023 - Cleared.

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 JS 10/3/2023 - Cleared.

Agency Response
Core indicators

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 12/8/2023 - Cleared.

JS 12/7/2023 -

2- Many thanks but the climate mitigation target seems to be a significant overestimate and we recommend revising to a conservative estimate.

We note that, according to the parameters included in EX-ACT, most of the target derives from the assumption that 260,612 ha of tropical rainforest would gain 3% of biomass over 20 years with the project compared to the scenario without project, with a reference level for above-ground C content for non degraded forest set at 165.76 tC/ha. However:

(i) the calculation assumes no biomass gain, i.e. no effect of the PA on forest degradation level, without the project.

(ii) the reference level for above-ground C content for non degraded forest is set at the unweighted average C-content of Omo Wildlife Area (42 tC/ha according to the EXACT spreadsheet), Omo FR (13.9 tC/ha) and Okomu NP (441.3 tC/ha), when Okomu NP represents only 20,240 ha out of the 260,612 ha. Given the strong differences in surface area and carbon content of the different PA, a weighted average, with the surface area as weights, should be used. Since half of the 260,612 ha is the Omo FR, which seems to have an extremely low C content per hectare, the mitigation benefits may indeed be significantly smaller than currently calculated.

The other comments are cleared.

JS 10/3/2023 -

1- Core indicator 1:

1a -The table summarizing changes compared to PIF states that core indicator 1 decreased from 599,547 ha to 182,763 ha, when this CEO endorsement request is presented with a target of 269,612 ha. Likewise the GEB section states that the target is 182,763 ha. Please confirm Okomu Forest Reserve is targeted by the project in addition to the Okumu NP and revise the table and GEB section accordingly:

Core indicators	1 – Terrestrial PAs created or under improved management: reduced from 599,457 ha in PIF[59] to 182,763 at CEO submission. 3 – Area of land restored – No change 4 – Area of landscape under improved practices – increased from 10,000 to 50,000 ha, reflecting opportunities identified within the priority landscapes

Core indicator 1: Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use (Hectares)

Three protected areas, covering a combined area of 182,763 ha, are being targeted for improved management for conservation and sustainable use. These are:

- Okomu National Park (21,251 ha);
- Omo Forest Reserve (130,500 ha), which includes a proposed elephant conservation area (55,000 ha) and a Strict Nature Reserve (640 ha);
- Gilli-Gilli Forest Reserve (31,012 ha).

1b - The strong decrease in Core indicator 1 target is justified by "the STAP comments and the findings of the PPG field-level consultations", with little additional details when the STAP review assessed on the contrary that the scale of impact anticipated at PIF stage was "plausible". Please provide a thorough justification for the removal of part of the initially targeted landscape and the corresponding decrease in core indicator targets.

1c- WDPA IDs: Please double check all the WDPA IDs. In the WDPA:

-WDPA ID 36979 is for "Okomu" forest reserve with a surface area of 18,100ha in the DWPA, when it is used here for the National Park reported with 20,240 ha.

-WDPA ID 36989 should be for the Gilli-Gilli forest reserve when it is used here for the Okomu forest reserve.

-WDPA ID 36988 is the Ekenwan forest reserve when it is used here for the Gilli Gilli forest reserve.

Several protected areas targeted by this project do not have their surface area reported to the WDPA. Please confirm that the WDPA entries of these protected areas will be updated as part of the project.

2- Core indicator 6:

2a-Please include a target on core indicator 6 in the portal entry and provide the main underlying assumptions under the core indicators table and the detailed methodology used (e.g. EX-ACT calculations):

Indicator 6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)
Expected metric tons of CO_2e (direct)	4344013	0
Expected metric tons of CO_2e (indirect)	0	0

2b- We note that training to generate revenues for biodiversity benefits through carbon credits is included in the project, and that REDD+ initiatives in the targeted States are mentioned. Please discount from the target on core indicator 6 any emission reduction that would ultimately be sold as a C credit that may be used as offsets by credit buyers. This is to avoid double counting and because Core Indicator 6, as per the GEF mandate, is to capture only global environmental benefits, that is net sequestration or emission reductions, when credits used as offset do not produce net reduction in GHG emission to the atmosphere.

3- Please confirm the areas targeted for restoration and reported under core indicator 3 is outside of the protected areas reported under core indicator 1. If they are inside, they cannot be reported under GEF core indicator 3 (it would be double counting) and target on CI3 must be deleted but the 10,000 ha restoration target should be kept as a distinct outcome indicator part of the project`s results framework.

4- The PIF review sheet requested that the possibility of adding a target under core indicator 4.4 (avoided loss of HCV forest) be investigated during PPG. Please explain why it was not possible to include such a target.

Agency Response

12/8/23

Agreed. We have modified the assumptions and revised the climate mitigation target to a conservative estimate.

11/27/23

1. Core indicator 1:

1a - The correct figure is 269,612 ha. Corrections have been made to this effect, confirming that Okomu Forest Reserve is targeted by the project, in addition to Okomu National Park.

1b - Indeed, with careful consideration of the STAP review, they did find the scale of impact plausible. The PIF identified a total of 13 protected areas (mainly forest reserves) covering 599,457 ha within an overall mosaic landscape area of approximately 950,000 ha. This area, within Nigeria?s lowland forest biome, covered portions of four states. However, there was uncertainty regarding the current status of many of these areas. For this reason, the PIF stated that: ?During the PPG phase, the condition and viability of the forest reserves? will be examined in greater detail than was possible at concept stage. As a result, some of the reserves listed here may not be included in the final project, which would cause this total area figure to be reduced.? This was also reflected in the PIF output 2.1.1 text.

During PPG, a team of consultants gathered information and data and undertook a series of consultations with stakeholders from the four referenced states. This ground truthing exercise highlighted the widespread extent of conversion and degradation to which a number of the originally identified protected areas has been subject. In addition to site-related issues, an overall limited state-level engagement was noted in the case of Delta State.

As a result of these findings, as well as consideration of incremental budgetary needs facing the sites, it was decided to intensify the project?s efforts on two priority landscapes, while also maintaining the broader, core ecoregion level elements of the project. This decision reflected the degree of challenge facing biodiversity across the ecoregion and led to the reduced ambition of several core and project indicators. However, it is anticipated that this emphasis on quality over quantity, with clear emphasis on broader uptake and replication, will lead to greater long-term impacts from the project.

1c - WDPA ID #s have been revised. However, areas have been left as previously, given that these are latest figures reported by Government and national stakeholders. WDPA information for all protected areas within the project landscapes will be updated as part of the project.

2- Core indicator 6:

2a-Core indicator 6 has been included along with results of the EX-ACT calculations.

2b-The project?s activities related to carbon credit are aimed at building capacity in this area as well as serving as a potential source of revenues for protected areas (see Component 2). Given that these activities remain at the planning stage, it is difficult to estimate sold credits at this stage. However, the project team will remain aware of this issue going forward, particularly as core indicators are reviewed at the time of MTE and TE and, if need be, the core indicator will be adjusted.

3 - Of the overall 10,000 ha target, 9,000 ha are within protected areas, while 1,000 ha are within buffer zones and corridors. The document has been revised in line with the comment and to reflect this breakdown.

4-Based on consultations with local stakeholders and expert review of satellite imagery, it does not appear that HCV forest remains at the priority landscapes outside of protected areas and thus eligible for counting under Core Indicator 4.4.

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

JS 12/7/2023 - Cleared.

JS 10/3/2023 -

1) Table 1: Please see comment 1 in previous comment box on WDPA IDs and surface area and revise as necessary table 1.

2) The number of barriers, or rather categories of barriers, to be addressed by this project has increased from 3 at PIF stage to 9, when the project design has not changed. From the log-frame and theory of change, the project does not seemed designed to address barriers related to, for instance, outdated legal frameworks or land tenure insecurity. Please revise to make clear what are the barriers to be addressed by the project vs what pertains to root causes or drivers that are out of scope of the project`s interventions and why it is considered the latter won`t undermine the intended outcomes of the project. Please also ensure that the barriers listed in this section are aligned with that shown in the ToC diagram.

Agency Response

11/27/23

1) WDPA IDs revised.

2) Barriers to be addressed by the project clarified. The ToC has also been refined accordingly. Thanks.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 12/7/2023 - Cleared.

JS 10/3/2023 -

1) While we note the GEF-7 FOLUR child project ("Promoting Integrated Landscape Management and Sustainable Food Systems in the Niger Delta Region in Nigeria", total GEF financing $5,836,500, to be executed over 2022-2026) is mentioned in other sections, please include a detailed description in the baseline, clarifying the thematic and geographic overlap.

Agency Response

11/27/23

1) A description of the GEF-7 FOLUR child project, including thematic complementarity and partial geographic overlap, has been added to the baseline section. An additional reference to FOLUR linkages has also been added to the description of Component 4, emphasizing the planned knowledge management - related exchanges between the projects.

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

JS 12/8/2023 - Cleared.

JS 12/7/2023

4b - Activity 3.1.2.4 has not been deleted in the portal entry. Please correct.

The rest is cleared.

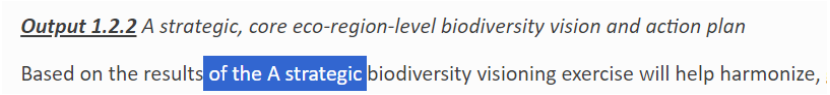
JS 10/3/2023 -

1- Please include the ToC assumption in the portal entry. The ToC diagram shows that 12 assumptions (represented by arrows A1-A12) have been identified, but these have not been spelled out.

2- Component 1:

2a- Output 1.2 (State-level policies strengthened in Ogun, Edo and Delta states to support ILM implementation and to incentivize biodiversity conservation and sustainable practices) of the PIF has disappeared with no justification. The PIF identified strengthened state-level policies as an important part of the ToC and stated that "specific local and state-level policies that may be acting as barriers to enhanced landscape-level management will be identified during the PPG and specifically targeted in the project design." Please justify in the portal entry why policy work has been removed from the project design.

2b - Please correct the following typo (missing words):



2c- Please clarify in the portal entry how the project will ensure the institutionalization and the sustainability beyond the project`s lifetime of the Eco-region-level information and monitoring system developed under output 1.2.3. At PIF stage, the information and monitoring system was supposed to be only at landscape-level and thus directly linked to project on the ground activities. It is now proposed to use GEF funds to do an ecological assessment and build a monitoring and information system for the whole Ecoregion when there are no on-the-ground activities or anticipated GEBs to be generated under the project at that scale, and there is no guarantee that there will be specific activities on the ground post-project as a result of the yet to be developed and adopted vision and action plan. Please justify the change in scale, clarify the partners for institutionalization and the role of co-financing for outputs 1.2.1 and 1.2.3.

3- At PIF stage, output 2.3 was to pilot finance solutions for up to 3 protected areas and develop a financial sustainability plan for ONP and component 3 was to deal with innovative financing mechanisms for sustainable use outside of protected areas. Output 2.1.3 now deals with the development of a financial strategy for the landscapes at large when there is an output 3.1.4 already devoted to "Innovative financing mechanisms for sustainable use" in areas around protected areas. Please explain what is a financial sustainability strategy for a landscape means in the context of this project (to whom revenue are to be channeled as there is no single landscape manager? For what purpose(s)?). In any case, please revise to make clear that this output would include the explicit goal to foster financial sustainability of the protected areas (in line with the BD-2-7 entry point of the BD Focal area strategy used by this project) and how it articulates with output 3.1.4. Please also reinclude the development of a financial sustainability plan for ONP as promised at PIF stage.

4- Component 3

4a- Output 3.1.2: Please clarify how the support is to be provided in practice. What does "input" provision and market access facilitation (activity 3.1.2.5) mean in concrete terms in the context of this project? How beneficiaries will be selected to ensure fairness and transparency? What are the selection criteria on beneficiaries and on the type of activities supported to ensure the delivery of biodiversity benefits through reduction of pressures on ecosystems as per the project Theory of change?

4b- Please revise activity 3.1.2.4, the language of which is not appropriate, and which is not specific enough to qualify as an activity. Please be more specific and action-oriented.

4c - output 3.1.4: Please clarify how the partnership with Sterling Bank Plc is to deliver biodiversity benefits. If the criteria to be applied are to be linked to biodiversity-friendly practices to enable more favorable terms for the borrower, please state so explicitly in the portal entry.

Agency Response
12/8/23

Activity 3.1.2.4 has been deleted in the portal entry.

11/27/23

1- Assumptions have been spelled out.

2a- Indeed, policy work is important and therefore has not been removed from project design. PIF Outputs 1.2 and 1.3 have been combined in order to ensure that policy work (PIF Output 1.2) would be fully integrated within the objectives and strategies being developed under the integrated landscape management plans. Policy work has been placed under Activity 1.1.2.7, ?Support updating/revision of policies, regulations and guidelines on lands, agriculture, forestry, environment, trade, and gender needed to remove barriers to ILM, sustainable livelihoods, and biodiversity conservation.?

2b- The typo has been corrected.

2c- The PIF had envisaged a ?Landscape level information and monitoring system? covering approximately 950,000 ha area of the four states. The final estimated combined landscape area, including priority and replication landscapes, is only slightly larger, at 1.26 million ha.

Long-term sustainability will be ensured through the following state-level entities providing co-financing to the project working in partnership: Edo State Forestry Commission in Edo, Ogun State Ministry of Forestry in Ogun, and Forestry Department in Ondo State Ministry of Agriculture & Natural Resources and the Ministry of Environment in Delta State. Details regarding institutional roles will be incorporated into the strategic action plan being developed under Output 1.2.2.

3- The idea of a landscape-level financial strategy is based on the recognition?particularly in the case of the Okomu landscape?that the three protected areas in the landscape face analogous financial sustainability challenges and opportunities, despite their distinct management regimes (two forest reserves and a National Park). It also reflects the fact that spending within one of the PAs (e.g. on control of poaching) will have spill over effects on the other areas. Thus, at a strategic level, a geographically broader analysis and strategy could be helpful. However, this

does not imply that there would necessarily be a single financial channel through which revenues would pass within a landscape.

The number of pilot finance solutions has been reduced from 3 to 2 in line with the reduced number of protected areas being targeted overall. As noted, following the above assessments, pilot implementation under 2.1.3.3 will occur at the level of individual PAs.

A stand-alone financial sustainability plan for Okomu has been reincluded (see revised activity 2.1.3.3)

The link to Output 3.1.4 has been added.

4a - ?Input? here refers mainly to seedlings of indigenous tree species, non-availability of which has been identified as the leading barrier to community participation in restoration and agroforestry. In this context, the project will support training, financially empowering and mentoring young men and women in local communities to become ?seedling entrepreneurs?, raising and distributing the native tree seedlings, with the support of the State MDA in charge of Forestry.

?Market access facilitation? here refers to creating an enabling environment for product supply to medium-large scale buyers (aggregators, industrial off-takers, exporters, etc.) through contract development schemes. In this context, the project will support organizing smallholder value chain actors around the medium-large scale off-takers and developing frameworks, facilities, and logistics for produce aggregation, warehousing/ storage, transportation and supply to off-takers based on pre-agreed contracts and/or Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs).

To ensure fairness and transparency and support for biodiversity benefits, criteria for beneficiary selection and a framework for monitoring implementation will be developed in consultation with stakeholders during the project inception period and in a series of follow-up participatory value-chain development activities (consultations, meetings, negotiation, etc.).

The output description has been revised in line with the above.

4b - Yes, the language was not appropriate. The activity has been removed, as a range of specific and action-oriented activities are already included in the Gender Action Plan which outlines entry points under each output and specific activities that will be implemented in conjunction with those in the Provisional Work Plan.

4c - Output description has been expanded in order to clarify the types of criteria that will be considered and the possibility that other lenders may participate. Criteria may include one or more of the following:

1. Biodiversity-friendly practices: Requiring borrowers to implement sustainable farming methods that promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, e.g. using organic fertilizers, implementing agroforestry systems.

2. Women-focused lending: Offering specific loan products and programs targeting women borrowers to address gender disparities in sustainable agricultural finance.

3. Environmental impact assessments: Incorporating assessments into the loan application process to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of proposed agricultural activities.

4. Monitoring and compliance: Implement a robust monitoring and evaluation system to track the progress and impact of loans disbursed. Regularly assess borrowers' adherence to biodiversity-friendly practices, sustainable intensification methods, and compliance with land use policies.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 10/3/2023 - Cleared.

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 12/7/2023 - Cleared.

JS 10/17/2023 - Please clarify the increment provided by this project compared to the GEF-7 FOLUR child project. it should be at least as detailed as the elaboration included at the beginning of the PIF description of the alternative scenario.

Agency Response

11/27/23

A description has been added. It should be noted that the comparison is inevitably somewhat simpler than that provided at the time of PIF submission because the geographic overlap has been eliminated from Components 2 and 3 entirely and from Outcome 1.1, in line with the removal of Idanre forest cluster from the set of priority landscapes.

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

JS 12/8/2023 - Cleared.

JS 12/7/2023 - Please see remaining comments on core indicators and also address in this section as necessary.

JS 10/17/2023 - Please see comments on core indicators and also address in this section as necessary.

Agency Response

12/8/23

Core indicators have been revised accordingly.

11/27/23

The description of core indicators has been revised.

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

JS 12/7/2023 - Cleared.

JS 10/17/2023 - Please be more specific on the efforts to institutionalize trainings and capacity building to be developed under the project, as well as the Ecoregion-level information and monitoring system. At CEO endorsement stage the potential institutions to host and carry over this work after project closure should have been identified.

Agency Response

11/27/23

The potential for institutionalization and funding of the project objectives and ILM implementation within the REDD+ programme is quite high ? due to regular funding from the Government and pipeline investments. Key partners in this context are Edo State Forestry Commission in Edo, Ogun State Ministry of Forestry in Ogun, and Forestry Department in Ondo State Ministry of Agriculture & Natural Resources and the Ministry of Environment in Delta State.

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

JS 12/7/2023 -Cleared.

JS 10/17/2023 - Please consider inserting the geographic location of the site directly under the dedicated data entry field ?GEO LOCATION INFORMATION?.

Agency Response

11/27/23

Done, thanks.

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

JS 10/17/2023 - Cleared. We note Annex I2 to the ProDoc providing a detailed stakeholder Engagement Matrix.

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

JS 12/7/2023- Cleared.

JS 10/17/2023 - We note the comprehensive Gender Action Plan provided as annex K of the ProDoc.

1- Please confirm that all activities of the GAP will be carried out and have been budgeted for as none of the activities listed in the GAP are explicitly included in the activities described in the alternative section.

Agency Response

11/27/23

We confirm that all activities of the GAP will be carried out and have been budgeted. The activities will be implemented in conjunction with the work plan activities, supported by budgeted gender experts. Most are actually embedded within the overall workplan.

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

JS 10/17/2023 - Cleared.

Agency Response

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

JS 10/17/2023 - Cleared.

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

JS 10/17/2023 - Cleared.

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

JS 10/17/2023 - Cleared.

Agency Response

Knowledge Management

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 12/7/2023 - Cleared.

JS 10/17/2023 - Please provide the timeline for the envisaged set of KM deliverables. The work plan provided in the ProDoc (Annex A2) does not include any indications on timing for activity 4.1.1.2, and the suggested timing of 4.1.1.3 at the end or year 1 seems early for any lessons learnt to be available.

Agency Response

11/27/23

Done, thanks.

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

JS 12/7/2023 - Cleared.

JS 10/17/2023 - Please provide updated ESS supporting documents. We failed to find an updated document beyond the PIF ESS Screening.

Agency Response

11/27/23

Updated documents, including clearance from the FAO ESM Unit, provided.

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

JS 12/8/2023 - Cleared.

JS 12/7/2023

As a BD-funded project, the project should report, as is done in this submission, under 4.1, not under 4.3 as suggested in the response below, because 4.3 is related to the LD focal area. For all hectares reported under 4.1, the project should explain how it will measure improved practices to benefit biodiversity in practice for its specific context. It is unclear how any of the proposed FAO tools would be able to measure progress towards the target under core indicator 4.1. Please explain.

JS 10/17/2023 - While we note the information provided in the Results Framework, we failed to find a detailed monitoring plan clarifying the methodology and responsible entities for each indicator. The RF points to "project reporting" as a means of verification for many indicators and we did not find any information on how the project is supposed to report on these indicators. In particular, how core indicator *4.1 Area of landscapes under improved practices to benefit biodiversity* will be measured in practice in the context of this project should be clarified.

Agency Response

12/8/23

We have corrected the indicator from 4.3 to 4.1. The target has been revised accordingly also in line with the original PIF.

In previously moving from Indicator 4.1 to 4.3, the PPG Team had proposed to expand the project?s ambition from 10,000 ha (in the PIF) to 50,000 ha in the full project proposal. Given that the project will now be measuring Indicator 4.1, as first proposed, it is more appropriate to revert to the original figure of 10,000 ha.

The achievement of Indicator 4.1 will be measured through multiple and complementary methods that will be part of the M&E system to be set-up in the first 6 months of project implementation.

These will include including geospatial, social and wildlife surveys (to also capture behavioral change, adoption of improved practices and impact) associated with B-Intact, PILA and other FAO tools, and adapted to the project context.

11/27/23

As noted in the M&E section 9, a detailed M&E system, which builds on the results matrix and defines specific requirements for each indicator (data collection methods, frequency, responsibilities for data collection and analysis, etc.) will be developed during project inception by the project M&E Officer.

Core Indicators will be monitored and assessed using a combination of FAO tools. Among the tools being evaluated are: (i) B-Intact, which assesses impacts on biodiversity from land use changes, habitat fragmentation and human encroachment; (ii) FAO?s Participatory Informed Landscape Approach (PILA), which has been proposed for the Nigeria GEF-7 FOLUR project ; (iii) the Adaptation, Biodiversity and Carbon Mapping Tool (ABC-Map). A final decision on which tool(s) to employ as part of the project M&E system will be done with project stakeholders at project inception.

In the case of Core Indicator 4, an error in the PIF was continued in the initial submission, namely, the allocation of ha. to indicator 4.1 rather than 4.3, where it in fact was intended. This indicator better reflects the project?s intention under Component 3, as indicated in the description of Global Environmental Benefits.

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

JS 10/17/2023 - Cleared.

Agency Response

Annexes

Are all the required annexes attached and adequately responded to?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 12/8/2023 - Cleared. The purchase of the motorbikes is well justified and cleared.

JS 12/7/2023

1a the justification for the vehicles to be purchased is well noted. Please, however, justify that co-financing, including the significant amount of investment mobilized, cannot cover this purchase.

The rest is cleared.

JS 10/17/2023

1- Budget

1a- We note $24,000 are planned for the purchase of vehicles. Motorized vehicles may be purchased with GEF financing only under specific conditions and should instead generally be covered by co-financing. Please justify the need for vehicles and that co-finance cannot cover this purchase.

1b- $150,000 are planned for PMU working space improvement. Such expense does not seem to be incremental and should be covered by co-finance. Please delete.

1c- There is no clear justification provided for separating the roles of the Chief Technical Advisor (UD$70,080 charged to project?s components) and National Project Coordinator (US$60,000 charged to PMC) ? from the information provided in the ProDoc, it seems both functions could be carried-out by one person, which would then need to be fully charged to PMC ? please revise accordingly or justify the need to separate both roles.

Agency Response

12/8/23

The issue of vehicles was discussed thoroughly with partners during PPG. And it was understood that vehicles should be covered by co-financing. Hence, as a commitment from the National Park Services, the NPS will make available cars for use by the project management unit and personnel for project monitoring. In addition, the mobilized co-financing will cover the cost of maintenance and fueling of the motorized vehicles.

As mentioned, the motorized vehicles in the budget, are not the commonly known four-wheel-drive vehicles but are motorbikes locally referred to as ?okada? used to navigate difficult terrains.

11/27/23

1a - Please note that these funds are needed for the purchase of three-wheel motorcycles (and not cars) that will be used for transport of seedlings and other agricultural inputs. The incremental need for such equipment was identified during the PPG. They will be essential in reaching communities that are otherwise difficult to reach given poor road conditions.

1b - This item was inaccurately described in the budget. In fact, the purpose of the budget line is to build infrastructural capacity of protected area facilities, including offices (which are also expected to be utilized by embedded PMU staff). Locations are: (i) the National Park Service office at Okomu National Park (near Udo / entrance to NP and Forest Reserve), and (ii) Edo Camp, which is located within the wildlife sanctuary in Omo Forest reserve. The budget line description has been revised accordingly.

1c - Both CTA and NPC roles are essential. The CTA will provide substantial technical inputs to the implementation and delivery of specific project outputs while the National Project Coordinator (NPC) will be responsible for day-to-day planning and coordination of project activities with all national and state institutions and project partners involved in the different project components. Individuals with different, specialized profiles will be identified for each of these roles. The scope of this project is quite wide and complex, in terms of the technical and partnership aspects (across multiple states and landscapes). We are also learning and experience this level of complexity with the GEF-7 FOLUR project in Nigeria. Draft terms of reference clarifying these roles have been added to the project document (Annex J). Thank you.

Project Results Framework

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 12/7/2023 - Cleared.

JS 10/17/2023 - Results Framework (RF)

1a- The RF includes an indicator related to updated legal and policy framework when the corresponding output (output 1.2 of the PIF) has been removed. Please explain how the target "At least six updates / revisions of local and/or state policies, regulations and guidelines on lands, agriculture, forestry, environment, trade, and gender remove barriers to ILM, sustainable livelihoods, and biodiversity conservation in the landscape" is to be achieved?

1b- A total of 24,000 ha are target for restoration in the RF when the target under Core indicator 3 is limited to 10,000 ha please explain:

Total area of forest / forest land under restoration	4,000 ha	7,000 ha forest l and under resto ration with nativ e species and in prioritized locati ons to benefit bi odiversity	14,000 ha forest land under resto ration with nativ e species and in prioritized locati ons to benefit bi odiversity	Independent fi eld surveys co nducted by pro ject	Selection of locations and spec ies for restoration is science-b ased and reflects connectivity i ssues
Site-level species re	0	2	4	Project reporti	Sustainability of financing for i
Forest area rehabil itated / restored	0	5,000 ha	10,000 ha	Project monito ring	Areas and species are selected based, in part, on potential to deliver biodiversity benefits
Access to small-sc	Limited to no	1,000 new loans	2,000 new loans	Project and len	BD criteria are closely followe

Agency Response

11/27/23

1a - As noted above, PIF Outputs 1.2 and 1.3 have been combined in order to ensure that policy work (PIF Output 1.2) would be fully integrated and subsumed within the objectives and strategies being developed under the integrated landscape management plans. Policy work has been placed under Activity 1.1.2.7, ?Support updating/revision of policies, regulations and guidelines on lands, agriculture, forestry, environment, trade, and gender needed to remove barriers to ILM, sustainable livelihoods, and biodiversity conservation.?

1b - The correct figure is now given and, as discussed above, is correctly allocated between 9,000 ha inside protected areas and 1,000 ha in buffer zones.

GEF Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 12/7/2023 - Cleared.

JS 10/17/2023 - Please provide a matrix explaining how GEFSEC comments included in the

PIF review sheet at the time of clearance to guide PPG work have been addressed. These comments were:

During PPG, please pay special attention to:

- the project's approach to connectivity, and notably explore robust ways to support functional connectivity;

- refining the barrier analysis and corresponding project interventions related to illegal or unsustainable hunting and logging;

- the theory of change. Please refer to STAP's guidance: https://www.stapgef.org/resources/advisory-documents/theory-change-primer.

- the complementarity and synergies with the FOLUR child project in Nigeria.

- strengthening the upscaling/replication strategy of the project to better foster uptake at the scale of the full Nigerian lowland forests eco-region.

Please also investigate the possibility of adding a target under core indicator 4.4 (avoided loss of HCV forest).

Agency Response

11/27/23

A matrix explaining how GEFSEC comments have been addressed is provided.

Council comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 12/7/2023 - Cleared.

JS 10/17/2023 -

1- Comment from Germany: Please see related comments in the review sheet and reproduce the corresponding portal additions clarifying the complementarity with the FOLUR child project in the response to the Council member comment. Currently the response merely states that there is complementarity without providing evidence.

2- Comment from UK: While it states that FAO will ensure coordination between the two projects, the response does not explain how this project differs from ?Integrated management

of mangrove ecosystem and expansion of social protection for fisheries and forest dependents in the coastal communities of Cross Rivers State, Nigeria? under UK PACT. Please explain.

Agency Response
11/27/23

1- The response has been expanded to clarify complementarity with the FOLUR project.

2 - The project ?Integrated management of mangrove ecosystem and expansion of social protection for fisheries and forest dependents in the coastal communities of Cross Rivers State, Nigeria? is one of the UK PACT flagship projects in Nigeria. The PACT project is operating in a different ecosystem (mangroves vs. lowland forests) and in a state (Cross River) not covered by the present GEF project.

STAP comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
JS 12/7/2023 - Cleared.

JS 10/17/2023 - STAP Comments that have not been fully addressed have been included throughout the review sheet.

Agency Response
11/27/23

STAP comments have been reviewed and addressed.

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 JS 10/14/2023 - Cleared.

Agency Response

Project maps and coordinates

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 12/7/2023 - Cleared.

JS 10/14/2023 - Please consider providing geolocalisation information.

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

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

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

Agency Response

GEFSEC DECISION

RECOMMENDATION

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

JS 12/8/2023 - The project is recommended for endorsement.

JS 12/7/2023 - Not at this stage. Please address comments included in this review sheet and resubmit.

JS 10/17/2023 - Not at this stage. Please address comments included in this review sheet and resubmit.

Review Dates

	Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review	**10/17/2023**	
Additional Review (as necessary)	**12/7/2023**	
Additional Review (as necessary)	**12/8/2023**	
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		

CEO Recommendation

Brief reasoning for CEO Recommendations