

# Integrating Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) into land use planning frameworks to strengthen national UNCCD enabling environments

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

## Basic project information

**GEF ID**

10909

**Countries**

Global

**Project Name**

Integrating Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) into land use planning frameworks to strengthen national UNCCD enabling environments

**Agencies**

IUCN

**Date received by PM**

12/23/2021

**Review completed by PM**

5/2/2022

**Program Manager**

Ulrich Apel

**Focal Area**

Land Degradation

**Project Type**

EA

## **Expedited Enabling Activity req (CEO)**

### **Part 1: Project Information**

#### **Focal area elements**

**Is the enabling activity aligned with the relevant GEF focal area elements as indicated in Table A and as defined by the GEF 7 Programming Directions?**

#### **Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request**

01/18/2022: Yes. However, please address:

- Part I: Complete empty fields, including submission date and an implementation start date. As the funding is requested from the EA budget, it needs to be linked to a convention report as appropriate.

04/20/2022: Not addressed.

Please enter the information provided into the portal. ALL PORTAL FIELDS AND DROP DOWN MENUS IN PART 1 MUST BE COMPLETED.

05/02/2022: Addressed.

Cleared

#### **Agency Response**

**IUCN Response to GEF Sec 4/20/2022 review:**

Incomplete Portal entries on Type of Report and reporting dates have now been filled in.

## Project description summary

**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

●01/18/2022: Not fully.

●

- Project Objective: Please provide a concise and specific project objective. Transfer the additional text in the explanations into the result framework or elsewhere in the project justification.

- This is a global project, but specific outcomes are expected at country level. Therefore, it would be helpful to understand how many countries are targeted among the countries with existing LDN targets and through which activities, especially how the capacity building component will be rolled out at regional/country level.

- As a general comment, throughout Table B the outputs are not always fully clear, they are currently formulated like outcomes and they would benefit from some tangible results / indicators.

●- Please clarify the capacity building component. It is our understanding that the main focus of the capacity building is on existing tools and how to use them. However, sometimes the text refers to "new tools". Which "new" tools are being developed, and how will the LUP4LDN be linked to Trends.Earth?

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●- Please consider expanding the more than 3 UN languages. As the LDN concept is global, it is difficult to justify that this EA will consider only 3 UN languages - if so, please explain which languages have been selected and why?

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●- Output 1.5: The link to new tools/soon to be developed tools such as the LUP4LDN in relation to Output 1.5 is absent or needs to be made more explicit (and brought in line with the project results framework).

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●- Component 2: The expression of outputs is not fully clear as they are expressed as outcomes (e.g. 2.1: ?countries are assisted?, 2.2 ?Completed, existing, and planned LDN, BD, and land-based climate change projects are documented?) and there is no quantification or numbers, no specific results. Therefore it is difficult to assess the value for money in this component. Please reformulate.

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- Output 2.2: Please elaborate in the respective text to this output: which projects? There must be thousands of projects that fall under this definition. How to select a number of most relevant projects for this purpose?
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- Output 2.3: Please consider as one step on this direction could be an analysis on the countries' commitments overlap. A similar exercise at national level to Sewell et al. 2020 'global overview of countries' restoration commitments under the Rio Conventions and other pledges' could be done, with the participation and validation of national stakeholders.
- 
- Collaboration with WOCAT should be sought in the capacity building component. It seems like a missed opportunity if this would not be the case, as WOCAT has already developed training modules on LDN tools and is actively working in this field. This may need to be reflected in the budget proposal as well, as appropriate.
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- 04/20/2022: Addressed.
- Cleared
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#### Agency Response

#### **IUCN Response to GEF Sec 1/18/2022 review:**

- Proposed revised objective: *Strengthen LDN governance and land use planning in a gender responsive manner*

- The project document refers to 15 countries that have set their targets. The project document includes preliminary elements about selection criteria: there will be a call for interest by countries and selection will be defined ensuring that criteria for selection follows a varied and balanced representation of participating countries. See Section B.

- The descriptive language in the outputs was reduced; The details are in the narrative section.

Note: The components were designed in a way that they do not work in silos; have an integrated approach. Example: some workshops in components 1 and 2 are made in one workshop.

- The project will build a new module in Trends.Earth that will allow the country users to model some scenario building with land use planning. This will build on what exists already on Trends.Earth because they already have indicators and the baseline information; in addition this work will connect with the work from the GEO LDN initiative (LDN tools developed through the GEO-LDN competition). These LDN tools are being piloted in some countries. By the time we start this project these LDN tools will have been refined and should therefore be ready to build a module in Trends.Earth. See section on *Group on Earth Observation Land Degradation Neutrality Initiative* where the above was explained.

The main languages included in the proposal are the 3 main UN working languages, English, French and Spanish. Arabic, Chinese and Russian will also be considered depending on the initial 15 countries and available budget.

- As indicated in the project document and clarified above, LUP4LDN will be integrated into a new module of Trends.Earth
- Reformulated. Please see Outputs 2.1 and 2.2
- We clarified how identification of synergies will be done in Section C under component 2: the most relevant projects will be based on the assessment results. For example at country level: a consultation process with national consultants will conduct an LDN mapping exercise to identify LDN targets, NBSAPs, NDCs, etc and generate an assessment in terms of policy coherence and complementarity but also in terms of overlap. From the implementation side, this process will inform on gaps and therefore prioritization. The number of projects to be reviewed in each country will depend on national circumstances and past and current projects
- Analysis of commitments overlap is considered already as a part of the mapping exercise and assessment of policy coherence between LDN Targets, NBSAPs and NAPs (refer to Output 2.1 and 2.2)
- Projects that WOCAT lead on are mentioned, e.g. GEO LDN initiative, LUP4LDN. The project connects with key WOCAT participating initiatives. If there is a WOCAT process in the countries the project will build on this process.

**Co-financing**

**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  
01/18/2022: No co-financing is included (not required for EA).

Cleared.

**Agency Response**  
**GEF Resource Availability**

**Is the proposed GEF financing in Table D (including the Agency fee) in line with GEF policies and guidelines?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
01/18/2022: Yes.

Cleared

**Agency Response**  
**Are they within the resources available from:**  
**The STAR allocation?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request n/a

**Agency Response**  
**The focal area allocation?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request n/a

**Agency Response**  
**The LDCF under the principle of equitable access**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request n/a

Agency Response

**The SCCF (Adaptation or Technology Transfer)?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request n/a

Agency Response

**Focal area set-aside?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

01/18/2022: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

**Is the financing presented adequate and demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objectives?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

01/18/2022: Not fully.

The assessment of cost-effectiveness will be mainly done through an assessment of the project budget. However, the budget table will need to be refined.

- Please include a budget table in line with the GEF budget table template as per GEF project cycle & policy guidelines. The budget table should be presented in a way that it fits into the margin of the portal for better readability.

Preliminary comments on the presented budget are as follows:

- PMC are not an overhead but a budget category that will need to be included into the budget with a breakdown and may require justification / budget notes as needed.

04/20/2022: Not fully addressed.

The provided budget table doesn't follow the GEF template, it lacks the column for responsible entity. Please use the GEF template, address inconsistencies, and provide details on PMC. Further, please fit into portal margins.

05/02/2022: Addressed.

Cleared

## Agency Response

IUCN Response to GEF Sec 4/20/2022 review:

Budget table now uses the GEF template, with column provided for responsible entity, and detail on PMC expenditures. M&E expenditures of \$48,709 match budgeted M&E table in the body of the CEO Request.

## Part 2: Enabling Activity Justification

### Background and Context.

**Are the achievements of previously implemented enabling activities cited since the country(ies) became a party to the Convention?**

### Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

01/18/2022: General comments on the context:

The proposed project includes capacity building aspects recommended in several COP decisions (Decision 2, Decision 12, Decision 16, and Decision 18/COP14).

We welcome the collaboration with CI and Trends.Earth creating synergy with other EA projects. Collaboration with WOCAT should be sought in the capacity building component.

We also welcome the collaboration with the Science Policy Interface for future operational guidance.

We appreciate the coordination and synergy with the LDN-TSP (128 countries engaged, 106 with LDN targets), the GSP III (GEFID 10806), the GEF7 Trends.Earth project (GEFID 10230), as well as non GEF-projects (Finland/IUCN project, WOCAT, GEO-LDN, LandPKS, GIZ project on data integration into land-use planning.

The proposed project contributes to responses to the decision 9/COP14 requesting the Global Mechanism to continue its collaboration with the GEF, establish new partnerships, and support countries to access GEF resources, and several LDN related decisions (Decision 13 on the implementation of voluntary LDN targets.

04/20/2022: Addressed.

Cleared

## Agency Response

**IUCN Response to GEF Sec 1/18/2022 review:**

These elements are included in the current proposal:



- Capacity building aspects recommended in COP decisions (Decision 2, Decision 12, Decision 16, and Decision 18/COP14 have been included in the section **B. ENABLING ACTIVITY GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIVITIES**
- Refer to the above Agency response: the project will build on several WOCAT-led initiatives

**Goals, Objectives, and Activities.**

**Is the project framework sufficiently described?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

01/18/2022: Yes, however, some restructuring of the text is needed:

- In the portal, some of the text provided under the B. Enabling Activity goals, objectives, and activities should be transferred to the A. Background and context.
- Most of the text available under C. Describe the enabling activity and institutional framework for project implementation should be transferred to the section C. Enabling Activity goals, objectives, and activities to justify and describe the result framework.
- The section B. Enabling Activity goals, objectives, and activities should start with the text justifying the specific objective of this EA.
- The section C. ?Describe the enabling activity and institutional framework for project implementation? should be limited to the text provided under ?project management?.

04/20/2022: Not addressed (no agency response provided below - please clarify if the comments have been addressed and how).

05/02/2022: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

**IUCN response to GEF Sec 4/20/2022 review:**

Sections of the text were shifted to address GEF comments, including:

- The portion of text that starts with *??The project is embedded in the UNCCD strategy Framework2018-2010??* and ends with *??Where possible, the outcomes of the project will inform activities related to GEF country allocations or GEF impact programs?? (page 9-11)* under B. Enabling Activity goals, objectives and activities **was transferred to A. Background and context under the sub section ??Background??**

- All the text before ??Project management?? under C. Describe the enabling activity and institutional framework for project implementation (page 12-21) **was transferred to B. Enabling Activity goals, objectives and activities**
- The section B. Enabling Activity goals, objectives and activities now start with the following: *??The project aims to taking COP14 Decisions (see Section A) and ongoing work forward in the three components: (1) Enhancing capacity for improved land use planning that integrates LDN, (2) Assessing LDN implementation status and gaps and (3) Facilitating gender transformative LDN investments??* followed by the description of the components
- The section C. Describe the enabling activity and institutional framework for project implementation is now limited to the Paragraph under ??Project management?? and all the text before was transferred to section B. Enabling Activity goals, objectives and activities (see response above)

A track changes version of the CEO Approval Request has been uploaded where the above changes are visible.

#### **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

01/18/2022: Not fully.

The submission indicates that the main stakeholders at the national level will be the UNCCD focal points and at the regional level -specialized regional organizations. At both levels targeted collaboration with national and regional learning and training institutions may also be useful to support sustained capacity building activities.

04/20/2022: Addressed.

Cleared

#### Agency Response

##### **IUCN Response to GEF Sec 1/18/2022 review:**

Each country will be building on what they have developed already, i.e. existing committees or working groups, cross-ministerial committees, any platform established to coordinate the Rio conventions.

The national LDN working groups include national level relevant institutions that contribute like academia, universities, etc

**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

01/18/2022: Not fully.

We note the well written gender section. However, please elaborate on the above question on whether a gender analysis has been completed and in which way gender has been taken into account in the design of the EA.

04/20/2022: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

**IUCN Response to GEF Sec 1/18/2022 review:**

Although a specific gender analysis was not completed during the elaboration of this enabling activity proposal, gender is well mainstreamed across the proposal and gender responsiveness is strengthened across the actions.

When the project starts, part of the national process assessment will include guidance on strengthening the gender aspect in the proposal. This is covered in the national work.

**Monitoring and Evaluation.**

**Does the project include a budgeted M&E Plan?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

01/18/2022: Yes. However, please clarify:

- The M&E budget includes costs on Knowledge Management that should be included into the project component 4, especially as there is a specific KM output 4.2.

- Please clarify that no MTR is planned? (It is not required for an EA, however, please clarify).

- The final project report that is mentioned in the text is not included in the budget table.

04/20/2022: Addressed.

However, please make sure that figures for M&E budget in the M&E table and the Budget table are consistent.

05/02/2022: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

**IUCN response to GEF Sec 4/20/2022 review:**

Financing figures for M&E are now consistent in the project budget table and the M&E table.

**Cost Effectiveness.**

**Is the project cost effective?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

01/18/2022: Please refer to comments on the budget.

04/20/2022: Final comments on budget will be provided when the revised table is re-submitted.

05/02/2022: Budget considered adequate.

Cleared

Agency Response

**Cost Ranges**

**If there was a deviation in the cost range, was this explained?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request n/a

Agency Response

**Part III. Endorsement/Approval by OFP**

**Country endorsement**

**Has the project been endorsed by the country's GEF Operational Focal Point and has the name and position been checked against the GEF database?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
n/a for a global EA.

Cleared

Agency Response  
**Response to Comments**

**Are all the comments adequately responded to? (only as applicable)**

GEF Secretariat Comment n/a

Agency Response  
**Other Agencies comments?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request n/a - none received

Agency Response  
**Council comments**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request n/a for an EA

Agency Response  
**STAP Comments**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request n/a for an EA

Agency Response  
**Convention Secretariat comments**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request n/a - none received

Agency Response  
**CSOs comments**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request n/a - none received

Agency Response

**GEFSEC DECISION**

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Is CEO Endorsement/approval recommended?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

01/18/2022: No. Please address comments made in this review.

04/20/2022: No. Please address outstanding comments.

05/02/2022: Additional request: The submission does not include Social and Environmental Screening information. If the EA project is exception of ESS policy in IUCN procedure, please provide information about exception in the portal.

06/03/2022: ESS information has been uploaded. Program manager recommends the EA for CEO approval.

**Review Dates**

	<b>Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement</b>	<b>Response to Secretariat comments</b>
<b>First Review</b>	<b>1/18/2022</b>	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>4/20/2022</b>	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>5/2/2022</b>	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>6/3/2022</b>	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>		

**CEO Recommendation**

**Brief reasoning for CEO Recommendations**