

# Conservation of Wetland Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Freshwater Ecosystems in the Western Dvina/Daugava Transboundary River Basin

Review PIF and Make a recommendation

## Basic project information

**GEF ID**

10462

**Countries**

Belarus

**Project Name**

Conservation of Wetland Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Freshwater Ecosystems in the Western Dvina/Daugava Transboundary River

Basin

**Agencies**

UNDP

**Date received by PM**

1/7/2020

**Review completed by PM**

4/15/2020

**Program Manager**

Steffen Hansen

**Focal Area**

Multi Focal Area

**Project Type**

FSP

## PIF

### Part I – Project Information

#### Focal area elements

1. Is the project/program aligned with the relevant GEF focal area elements in Table A, as defined by the GEF 7 Programming Directions?

## Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

SH (1.31.2020):

International Waters: Yes, the project is aligned with the IW objective 3 strategic action 6, which will enhance regional and national cooperation on shared freshwater surface and groundwater basins. .

CCM and LD funding: Based on the LoE, the project wants to use marginal adjustment and allocate CCM and LD funding to the BD focal area.

As designed, the project is an IW/BD project. We recommend to add an LD component in order to fund the proposed restoration activities. Please note that it is difficult to justify the use of scarce BD resources for restoration, which often will be expensive, not truly incremental, and provide little if any global BD benefits. Subsequently, BD resources cannot be used for the anticipated restoration activities. Restoration activities could however be funded via the LD STAR resources, provided that the restoration activities contribute to the national LDN targets. If Belarus wishes to use LD STAR for restoration activities, some STAR allocation would need to be retained under the LD focal area, reducing the marginal adjustment amount. Further, if the project would align with LD objectives, a reference to national strategies and the LDN concept is necessary through the relevant sections of the PIF.

Finally, the objectives and sources referring to CCM need to be removed from tables A, C and D in any case.

SH (2.20.2020): Comment cleared.

## Agency Response

18March2020

The LD component added to fund the restoration activities. The initial LD STAR allocation has been retained under the LD focal area, and the marginal adjustment has been applied to CC only.

Relevance of the planned restoration activities to the national LDN targets added in the section “Consistency with National priorities”.

Tables A, C, and D revised accordingly.

**Indicative project/program description summary**

**2. Are the components in Table B and as described in the PIF sound, appropriate, and sufficiently clear to achieve the project/program objectives and the core indicators?**

## Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

SH (1.31.2020):

Component 1:

- When looking at output 1.4, it is not clear that the project intends to produce a SAP signed at the relevant ministerial level. Please insert language to this effect. Alternatively, please consider if the ministerial signed SAP is best captured as part of a potential separate project output.

SH (2.20.2020): Comment not cleared. Please note that it is common for IW projects to encounter substantial differences in the national legal and regulatory frameworks. Across IW projects undergoing the TDA/SAP process, a ministerial level signed SAP is a key output, which acts to advance the subsequent implementation of soft and hard priority investments at the national/regional level. Unless strong reasoning or compelling arguments can be presented, the project should aim towards producing a ministerial level signed SAP.

SH (4.14.2020): Cleared. By CEO endorsement, please revise the Component 1 SAP output (and associated indicator) so that it is clear that the SAP will be signed at the level of the relevant ministers.

- In the barriers analysis sub section 1, it is stated that a monitoring data exchange system exists, however, it is also stated that “exchange and harmonization of monitoring results between the basin’s countries is essentially lacking”. Please explain if there is a need for the project to set up new and/or support existing data exchange protocols? If yes, then this should be listed as a separate output in table B.

SH (2.20.2020): Comment cleared.

SH (4.17.2020): The project only contains two components. Subsequently, there seems to be a mistake in Table B, which features four components (and with the components 2, 3 and 4 titles being repeated). Please revise and resubmit.

SH (4.20.2020): the revised table B Output names have not replaced the old Output names throughout the relevant PIF sections, including the Proposed Alternative Scenario PIF section and its component descriptions. Please edit the relevant PIF sections.

## **Agency Response**

18March2020

- The national Western Dvina River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) will be endorsed at the inter-ministerial Basin Council meeting. After the endorsement by the Basin Council, it will be submitted to the Vitebsk and Minsk regional executive committees for approval and subsequent implementation. It is not viable to plan for a regional SAP signed by the ministries of the two countries, due to the substantial differences in the national legal and regulatory frameworks. The project will promote SAP as a road-map for the implementation of the bilateral agreement. Subsequent clarification have been added to the project strategy description.

- Data exchange issues will be addressed as part of the activities under the bilateral agreement between the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus and the Ministry of Environment and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia. The project will not establish new and / or support for existing data exchange protocols. The environmental status of surface water bodies of the Western Dvina river basin within the territory of Belarus will be evaluated within the project using the initial monitoring data from both the Belarusian and the Latvian approaches. This is due to the fact that the systems for assessing the quality of surface water bodies by hydrochemical indicators in the Republic of Belarus and in the Republic of Latvia have significant differences. In Belarus, the chemical (hydrochemical) state of surface water bodies is determined by the main hydrochemical indicators. In Latvia, as in other EU countries, hydrochemical indicators are taken into account when assessing the ecological status of water bodies (physicochemical elements) along with hydromorphological, hydrobiological and biological elements. The approaches for assessing the state (status) of aquatic ecosystems by biological (hydrobiological) indicators in the respective countries also differ significantly both in the list of hydrobiological indicators and in the methods of sampling and their analysis.

14 April 2020:

After a round of consultations, the project team agreed to be aiming for the SAP signed by Ministries of Environment of both countries. Corresponding amendments have been made in the PIF.

20 April 2020:

The formatting for Table B has been fixed in the PIF; the portal however shows a different presentation of the same figures (aggregated within two outcomes). The project outcomes and outputs have been re-numbered to avoid confusion in the future.

21 April 2020:

Thank you, we have addressed the comment in the revised PIF

#### **Co-financing**

**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, with a description on how the breakdown of co-financing was identified and meets the definition of investment mobilized?**

#### **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

SH (1.31.2020): Yes, cleared.

SH (4.17.2020):

In the "Name of Co-Financier" field, please provide the name of the entity that provides the co-financing, rather than the name of the project with which it is associated (e.g. European Union). Moreover, please refrain from using "public investment" for co-financing from sources other than national and sub-national government authorities (not from CSOs or private sector). In-kind co-financing from Government of Latvia should be source "government", not "other". For further details, please refer to the Co-Financing Guidelines.

SH (4.20.2020): Please note that the investment mobilized description (featuring below the PIF table C) should only include co-finance which has been categorized as investment mobilized in table C.

### **Agency Response**

20 April 2020:

Thank you for this point. The co-financing table was fixed accordingly, and additional clarifications offered in the pIF narrative below the Table C.

Regarding classification of the Government of Latvia, please note that while working in the PIF template (<https://www.thegef.org/documents/1-project-identification-form-pif-march-2019>) it was only possible to select "Recipient Country Government" or "other". Since Latvia is not eligible for GEF funds, we did not dare selecting "Recipient Country Government". However, working on this issue, we realized that in the GEF Portal, the classification is marked as "Government" (i.e. without "recipient"), so therefore we legitimately, and following your recommendation, changed the classification to "Government", but would, however, point to this discrepancy between the PIF template / co-financing guidelines and the Portal.

21 April 2020:

Thank you, we have addressed the comment in the revised PIF

### **GEF Resource Availability**

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

### **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

SH (1.31.2020): Yes, however, please note comments in box 1.

SH (2.20.2020): Comment cleared.

### **Agency Response**

18March2020

Table D revised accordingly

**The STAR allocation?**

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

SH (1.31.2020): Yes, however, please note comments in box 1.

SH (2.20.2020): Comment cleared.

**Agency Response**

18March2020

STAR allocation request revised accordingly.

**The focal area allocation?**

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

SH (3.31.2020): Yes, however, please note comments in box 1.

SH (2.20.2020): Comment cleared.

**Agency Response**

18March2020

LD focal area allocation added.

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

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

SH (1.31.2020): not applicable.

**Agency Response**

The SCCF (Adaptation or Technology Transfer)?

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

SH (1.31.2020): not applicable

**Agency Response**

Focal area set-aside?

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

SH (1.31.2020): not applicable

**Agency Response**

Impact Program Incentive?

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

SH (1.31.2020): not applicable

**Agency Response**

Project Preparation Grant

5. Is PPG requested in Table E within the allowable cap? Has an exception (e.g. for regional projects) been sufficiently substantiated? (not applicable to PFD)



### **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

SH (1.31.2020): PPG requested is within the allowable cap. Cleared.

### **Agency Response**

Core indicators

**6. Are the identified core indicators in Table F calculated using the methodology included in the correspondent Guidelines? (GEF/C.54/11/Rev.01)**

### **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

SH (1.31.2020):

- Please note that when counting direct beneficiaries as part of an IW intervention, the message to agencies has been to count real, direct and quantifiable (countable and verifiable) numbers of beneficiaries and to avoid basin wide large numbers. It is recommended that the agency count the number of direct beneficiaries narrowly and as those that are directly (physically/income) impacted by the project – so this would usually be participants in pilots such as communities/families living in pilot (watershed mmgt etc.), people living in floodplains (for flood early warning systems), and so on. Consequently, please consider if the anticipated 1 million direct beneficiaries is the correct number? Also, please insert a para in the Portal Indicator section, which explains the methodology used when calculating indicator 11 /number of direct project beneficiaries.

SH (2.20.2020): Comment cleared.

### **Agency Response**

18March2020

The preliminary assessment is that at least 15,000 people (of whom 7,000 are women) derive direct benefits from implementation of targeted measures adopted within the Western Dvina River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) and specifically those living in the vicinity of freshwater habitats that will receive improved protection/management status. A more comprehensive assessment and a corresponding description of the methodology will be available at the PPG stage.

#### **Project/Program taxonomy**

#### **7. Is the project/ program properly tagged with the appropriate keywords as requested in Table G?**

#### **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

SH (1.31.2020): Yes, however, please note that the Rio CCM and CCA Markers are listed as 0. Considering the expected climate benefits derived from the IW investment, please consider changing the Rio CCA marker.

SH (2.20.2020): Comment cleared.

#### **Agency Response**

18March2020

Rio CCA marker 1 added.

#### **Part II – Project Justification**

#### **1. Has the project/program described the global environmental / adaptation problems, including the root causes and barriers that need to be addressed?**

#### **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

SH (1.31.2020):

- In the threats and problems section, please expand the parts of the text which speaks to the main drivers of degradation, including issues related to direct runoff from livestock farms and enterprises and non-point runoff from agricultural fields etc. This information helps underpin the need for an inclusive TDA/SAP approach, and the need for developing cross sectoral planning frameworks.

- In the barriers section 1, please expand the text dealing with transboundary water management (including harmonization of RBMPs) and make sure that the text is specific on the direct links between transboundary interventions and the long term preservation and management of key wetland areas in Belarus (but also in Latvia). Please also be more specific re the links between the TDA/SAP and that of a climate secure future for the sub-basin.
- In the barriers section 1, please include text which points to the necessity of having the right institutions in place, such as the Dvina Advisory Council in Belarus and the joint Western Dvina/Daugava Basin Commission.

SH (2.20.2020): Comment cleared.

### **Agency Response**

18March2020

Thank you indeed for a very instrumental guidance. The corresponding paragraphs have been added to the problems and barrier statements, and formed part of the narrative for the draft Theory of Change.

**2. Is the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects appropriately described?**

### **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

SH (1.31.2020):

- The component two description should include text on how the project will address degradation related to anthropogenic eutrophication.

SH (2.20.2020): Comment cleared.

### **Agency Response**

18March2020

The following explanation has been added:

In order to reduce the anthropogenic eutrophication by drainage water from agricultural lands and peat extraction, the project will test the following two methods: construction of settling tanks before discharge of water into natural water bodies and establishment of water protection zones along drainage channels (increasing the filtration of water from fields to channels). In some cases, re-wetted and inefficiently used peat bogs will serve as sedimentation tanks/basins.

### **3. Does the proposed alternative scenario describe the expected outcomes and components of the project/program?**

#### **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

SH (1.31.2020):

- Please structure the proposed alternative scenario section so that it follows the same structure as table B with a better rationale and how components complement each other. This means that the section should include headings (and associated text) specific to the envisioned components, outcomes and the main outputs associated with each outcome. When possible, the different activities per output should be described. Note that currently the outcome 3 description fails to mention some of the key species supported by the project, and little detail is provided as to the envisioned 15,000 hectares of wetlands/peatlands restoration, reduced non point pollution etc. Likewise, the outcome 4 description lacks detail regarding e.g. development of technical regulations for fisheries, stocking standards, inventory of spawning grounds etc.

- Theory of Change: While the PIF includes a good specification of measurable outcomes (table B), the PIF should also include a Theory of Change. This can be in the form of a figure with a good narrative of an initial theory of change, with important recognition of sequencing and underlying assumptions. In the case of this project, the ToC should make clear how the underlying long-term water management approach (factoring in intersectoral connections) can help frame and advance the objectives of the other STAR Focal Areas (and visa versa). By doing this the ToC will help explain how the project presents a clear recognition of the need for transformational change and long-term approach. It is also recommended that the ToR include elements on how the project will help catalyze financing for restoration well beyond the period of project implementation. The ToC sub-section could be inserted at the beginning/the end of the proposed alternative section.

STAP documents specific to ToC:

<http://stapef.org/theory-change-primer>

SH (3.20.2020): Comments cleared. As part of the project ToC, it is understood that the IW interventions specific to the Latvian/Belorussian part of the basin will help frame and reinforce the subset of STAR investments. Visa versa, the STAR interventions will help support the long term health of shared water resources.

#### **Agency Response**

18March2020

- Revisions to the alternative scenario sections have been made to streamline the logic of the proposed intervention. Further details regarding the concrete outputs and activities will be added after a detailed feasibility(incl.financial) analysis at the PPG stage
- Draft ToC is presented as Annex E

#### **4. Is the project/program aligned with focal area and/or Impact Program strategies?**

##### **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

SH (1.31.2020):

- Note that the "Alignment with GEF focal area strategy" section does not include any text speaking to LD focal area alignment. Further, the "Global Environmental Benefits" section does not include text specific to the LD focal area. Such text should be added to both sections in order to justify LD funding if the project includes LD activities. As mentioned above there is sufficient justification to include LD focal area activities provided that a link to national strategies and targets related to UNCCD / LDN can be made.

- Note that for establishment of new protected areas (Lebediny Mokh, 15,000 ha), a requirement for funding is that it is a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA). Please clarify if that is the case.

SH (3.20.2020): Comments cleared.

##### **Agency Response**

18March2020

- LD focal area alignment added
- Confirmed (<http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/liebiadziny-moch-iba-belarus>).

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

##### **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

SH (1.31.2020):

- Only partly. Per component/outcome description, please provide a more elaborate baseline and co-financing description. The goal should be to show how e.g. the project is firmly anchored (and set up for replication) through government sponsored/other programmes.

SH (3.20.2020): Comment cleared.

### **Agency Response**

18March2020

Incremental cost analysis section revised to the extent possible for the current level of detail and linkage developed for the project strategy. More elaborate analysis will be available after the PPG analyses.

**6. Are the project's/program's indicative targeted contributions to global environmental benefits (measured through core indicators) reasonable and achievable? Or for adaptation benefits?**

### **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

SH (1.31.2020): Yes, cleared.

### **Agency Response**

**7. Is there potential for innovation, sustainability and scaling up in this project?**

### **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

SH (1.31.2020): yes, cleared.

### **Agency Response**

**Project/Program Map and Coordinates**

**Is there a preliminary geo-reference to the project's/program's intended location?**

### **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

SH (1.31.2020): yes, however, the picture resolution of the annex A figure is poor. Please provide a new figure. In addition, and as part of a revised figure, please consider if the left corner basin map can be removed or revised. As the left corner map reads now it looks as if the IW intervention is specific to only Belarus, while in reality it addresses a key need for increased transboundary cooperation between Latvia, Lithuania and Belarus.

## Agency Response

### Stakeholders

Does the PIF/PFD include indicative information on Stakeholders engagement to date? If not, is the justification provided appropriate? Does the PIF/PFD include information about the proposed means of future engagement?

## Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

SH (1.31.2020): No, per GEF policy this section should include a description of the stakeholder engagements conducted to date. Please include this information.

SH (3.20.2020): Not cleared. Please note that the information included in the resubmitted PIF is insufficient in terms of the requirements of the Policy on Stakeholder Engagement at PIF stage. Given the particular nature of the project, where cooperation and engagement of stakeholders is key, the following 2 requirements are missing (as per the Policy):

- UNDP has ticked the boxes of those stakeholders that were consulted (CSOs and private sector entities), but have yet to provide a **description** of those consultations (as mandated by the Policy) that happened in the formulation of the PIF. Citing the Policy: 'Agencies provide a description of any consultations conducted during project development...'
- UNDP has provided a table with stakeholders future role in the project, but have yet to describe how those stakeholders will be engaged (through which means). Citing the policy: "Agencies provide... as well as information on how Stakeholders will be engaged in the proposed project activity and means of engagement throughout the project/program cycle".

SH (4.9.2020): Comments cleared.

## Agency Response

18March2020

Details have been added to the stakeholder table, to link it to the description of the planned co-financing arrangements for the project (section C). The specific mechanisms of stakeholder engagement, the confirmation of the co-financing commitments, and the linkages and relevance to specific project sites/project activities will be developed and agreed at the PPG stage.

#### For **Project/Program Map and Coordinates**

18March2020

The left corner basin map has been removed, and the picture resolution fixed.

06 April 2020

- A table with a summary of the stakeholder consultations during the formulation of this PIF has been annexed to the PIF.

- We have added clarification on engagement in order to provide outright clarity on the mode of engagement at this stage, i.e. the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus will be the implementing agency responsible for the project and chair the steering committee. Some research organizations can be engaged as executing partners/responsible parties. We have mentioned this possible role where relevant. However, the confirmation of this depends on targeted capacity assessments that are done at the PPG stage, and cannot be done at the PIF stage as they take time and financial resources. Some of the NGOs can be involved as subcontractors. However, again, in line with UNDP procurement rules, it is not possible to give agreement on contractual engagement of any entities without due selection process, which can only be done either at the PPG or indeed at the implementation stage. The details on the means of engagement will be elaborated via comprehensive stakeholder consultations during the PPG phase.

#### **Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment**

**Is the articulation of gender context and indicative information on the importance and need to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, adequate?**

#### **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

SH (1.31.2020):

No, please, and as available, include indicative information regarding women's socio-economic standing, associated barriers and measures to address these. Please also include text stating that by CEO endorsement, an elaborate gender strategy will have been produced, and which builds on a gender analysis or equivalent socio-economic assessment and which considers the need to mainstream gender measures via the strategic documents produced by the project.

SH (3.20.2020): Comment cleared. However, please consider also "ticking" the following boxes and choosing a category from the drop down menu associated with each box:



**Box: improving women's participation and decision-making; and/or**

**Box: generating socio-economic benefits or services for women.**

## **Agency Response**

18March2020

“Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment” section has been revised as requested.

06 April 2020

We have clicked the “generating socio-economic benefits or services for women” as relevant. However, we’re not sure yet if the cited impacts are of full relevance to the proposed intervention. The project deals with sectors where women are vastly underrepresented due to long-standing social traditions. A detailed gender analysis will be carried out during the PPG phase to fully consider the different needs, roles, benefits, impacts, risks, differential access to and control over resources of women and men given a project’s context, and to identify appropriate measures to address these and promote gender equality and equal sharing of benefits. The Gender Action Plan will include definition of possible impacts and will define the extent to which the project will be able to close gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources, or influence the socio-economic benefits/services for women and women’s participation in decision-making.

**Additional clarification with respect to the Social and Environmental Safeguards Protocol:**

In line with the established protocol, at the PIF stage, the SESP is produced by the project team (agency, Government, key stakeholders), reviewed by the Regional Technical Advisor of UNDP (RTA), Principal Technical Advisor (PTA), and cleared by the SESP Focal point electronically in the Project Information Management System before submission to GEF Secretariat. During the PPG phase, the SESP is revised based on the findings of the PPG, revised by UNDP RTA and PTA, and signed by the UNDP Country Office senior management

## **Private Sector Engagement**

**Is the case made for private sector engagement consistent with the proposed approach?**

## **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

SH (1.31.2020):

- With the hydroelectric dam structure playing a key role in the overall basin water management, please consider to what extent such actors should play an active role in the project?

SH (3.20.2020): Comment cleared.

## **Agency Response**

18March2020

The hydroelectric dam construction will be under the oversight of the Ministry of Energy. An agreement was reached with the Ministry of Energy on the implementation of special measures during the construction of the dam (providing for construction of a fish ladder), which allows for the possibility of fish migration, as well as arrangement of special spawning grounds on the river. The Comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement Plan for the project will include a mechanism for interaction with the construction process, a fish ladder work schedule will be developed to ensure fish migration, and an assessment will be made of its performance. The Stakeholder Engagement Plan will also describe other actions required by the project and the Ministry of Energy to coordinate the parallel co-financing, that includes construction of a fish ladder, purification plants, creating conditions for fish spawning and other fish conservation activities.

## **Risks**

**Does the project/program consider potential major risks, including the consequences of climate change, that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved or may be resulting from project/program implementation, and propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the project design?**

## **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

SH (1.31.2020):

- Please also note that the project would benefit from a more focused description of climate risks and associated actions, which should be incorporated into the risk section. Please see the following STAP guidelines specific to climate risk screenings:

STAP climate risk screening guidelines:

<http://stapgef.org/sites/default/files/publications/Climate%20Risk%20Screening%20web%20posting.pdf>

SH (3.20.2020): Comment cleared.

## **Agency Response**

18March2020

Details to the climate risk description were added in the risk section. A more comprehensive analysis will be available during PPG stage.

### **Coordination**

**Is the institutional arrangement for project/program coordination including management, monitoring and evaluation outlined? Is there a description of possible coordination with relevant GEF-financed projects/programs and other bilateral/multilateral initiatives in the project/program area?**

## **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

SH (1.31.2020): yes, cleared. Please note the following standard guidance:

As the agency is well aware of, the implementation and execution roles on GEF projects are meant to be separate as per GEF policy and guidelines. The GEFSEC will analyze any requests for dual role playing by an agency at the time of CEO endorsement and only approve those cases that it deems warranted on an “exceptional” basis, based on country requests. We strongly encourage the project proponents to look at third party options as a preferred way forward.

## **Agency Response**

18March2020

The guidance is clear and will be followed in the PPG stage. The project will be implemented by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection (NIM modality). At the PPG stage, the additional consultations on the details of the NIM modality application to a particular case will be further discussed and supported with the respective capacity assessments. Several options for a project Responsible Party to implement finance and administrative support will be considered.

### **Consistency with National Priorities**

**Has the project/program cited alignment with any of the recipient country’s national strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions?**

## **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

SH (1.31.2020): Please refer to earlier comments in case the project aligns itself with LD focal area objectives.

SH (3.20.2020): Comment cleared.

### **Agency Response**

18March2020

Addressed as requested earlier.

### **Knowledge Management**

**Is the proposed “knowledge management (KM) approach” in line with GEF requirements to foster learning and sharing from relevant projects/programs, initiatives and evaluations; and contribute to the project’s/program’s overall impact and sustainability?**

### **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

SH (1.31.2020): Yes, however, please specify that 1 % of the IW grant will be used for IW learn activities, including the production of project experience notes and for the project to participate in regional/global level events with direct benefits for the envisioned basin management approach.

SH (3.20.2020): Comment cleared.

### **Agency Response**

18March2020

Noted, included - thank you for the guidance.

### **Part III – Country Endorsements**

**Has the project/program been endorsed by the country’s GEF Operational Focal Point and has the name and position been checked against the GEF data base?**

### **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

SH (1.31.2020): Yes, however, the letter includes a reference to project execution arrangements that are not in line with GEF policy and regulations. Requests for execution support have to be made by the OFP to GEF Secretariat separately and fully in line with respective guidelines. Please remove LoE text which precedes potential discussions on agency implementation/execution arrangements between GEFSEC and the OFP, and submit a new LoE.

SH (3.20.2020): Please address the comment in review sheet part I box 2 and resubmit.

## **Agency Response**

18March2020

We would like to note that the expectations of the NFP regarding the UNDP support services had been expressed half a year before the new policies were communicated. Since April 2018, when the original LoE was signed, the GEF OFP for Belarus has been changed; the new OFP is now aware of the policy changes and the respective implications to the PIF. The LoE has been revised as requested (including STAR distribution) and is currently being internally cleared by the Ministry for signature.

### **Termsheet, reflow table and agency capacity in NGI Projects**

**Does the project provide sufficient detail in Annex A (indicative termsheet) 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 in Annex B to assess the project capacity of generating reflows? If not, please provide comments. After reading the questionnaire in Annex C, is the Partner Agency eligible to administer concessional finance? If not, please provide comments.**

## **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

SH 1.31.2020: none applicable.

## **Agency Response**

**GEFSEC DECISION**

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Is the PIF/PFD recommended for technical clearance? Is the PPG (if requested) being recommended for clearance?**

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

SH (1.31.2020): please address comments and re-submit.

SH (3.20.2020): please address comments and re-submit.

SH (4.10.2020): please address the comment in review sheet part I box 2 and resubmit.

SH 4.17.2020): Please address comments in review sheet part I box 2 and 3 and resubmit.

SH 4.20.2020): Please address comments in review sheet part I box 2 and 3 and resubmit.

SH (4.21.2020): Project is recommended for technical clearance.

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

**Additional recommendations to be considered by Agency at the time of CEO endorsement/approval.**

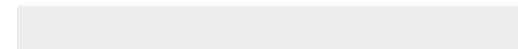
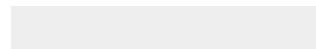
**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

**Review Dates**

**PIF Review**

**Agency Response**

**First Review**



	PIF Review	Agency Response
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>		
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>		
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>		
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>		

**PIF Recommendation to CEO**

**Brief reasoning for recommendations to CEO for PIF Approval**

**Background:** The Western Dvina River (Daugava in Latvia) with a basin area of 87.9 thousand square kilometers is a major European river basin. The area of the Western Dvina (Daugava) Basin exceeds an area equal to that of the entire country of Austria and is comparable in area to such river basins as the Neman, Rona, or Dniester. The Western Dvina (Daugava) is a transboundary river flowing through Russia and Belarus and then going into the Gulf of Riga and the Baltic Sea in Latvia. Water bodies of the Western Dvina Basin are subject to considerable anthropogenic pressure, from various activities such as industry, transportation and agriculture. The chemical composition of surface and groundwater are significantly affected in almost all regions where intensive economic activity is conducted. Direct runoff from livestock farms and enterprises and non-point runoff from agricultural fields remain the main sources of water pollution and the direct drivers of man-induced eutrophication and degradation of aquatic and wetland habitats. The increase in organic matter content in water comes from its inflow from adjacent territories that are prone to water and/or wind soil erosion. In general, the reason for the deterioration of the living conditions for most of the aboriginal species of animals and plants (inhabitants freshwater ecosystems) is a complex destruction of aquatic ecosystems. Passive protection measures (the formal introduction of prohibitions and restrictions, giving protection status, etc.) do not seem to solve the problems that have arisen. In this regard, an expedient integrated approach to solving these problems is the development and implementation of a set of active measures to complement the passive measures.

**The project:** The project will apply the International Waters Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA)/Strategic Actions Plan (SAP) approach, which will help Belarus and Latvia reach a common understanding of their shared water resources, and to secure buy-in towards needed institutional, legal and policy reforms to move towards joint planning and management. The planned water related activities will advance the impact and sustainability of the LD and BD project activities focused on conservation, restoration and sustainable management of wetlands and associated freshwater ecosystems in the Western Dvina Basin, which, amongst other elements, will advance the protected area coverage in Belarus, in accordance with the National Sustainable Development Strategy. The project will a) produce a ministerial

signed SAP b) bring 179,512 hectares of terrestrial protected areas under improved management c) help create 15,000 hectares of terrestrial protected areas d) help restore 15,000 hectares of wetland area (incl. estuaries, mangroves) and e) bring 5,000 hectares of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity.

**Innovation, sustainability and scaling up:** The Project is aimed at the conservation and sustainable use of freshwater ecosystems of international importance. The project will feature new technologies to reduce non-point pollution of aquatic ecosystems from agricultural and peat development; new approaches related to degraded lake restoration technology and; a technology for restoration and creation of artificial spawning grounds in order to enhance fish stocks, including clearing the shoreline of the lakes, using summer polders and areas formerly used for peat production. Importantly, the TDA/SAP, which will enable the adoption and implementation of new and fully aligned River Basin Management Plans, will advance the impact and sustainability of the LD and BD project activities focused on conservation, restoration and sustainable management of wetlands and associated freshwater ecosystems. Sustainability and scaling up of project activities will be secured via uptake in various national plans, private sector support towards project Outputs, and the country endorsement of a new bilateral water agreement, the ministerial endorsed TDA/SAP, and the setting up of a fully functional river basin commission, which will facilitate legal, regulatory and policy cross-sectoral reforms across the basin.



