

Achieving biodiversity conservation through effective management and enhanced resilience to climate change in the existing protected area of the North Albanian Mountainous Region

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

10839

Countries

Albania

Project Name

Achieving biodiversity conservation through effective management and enhanced resilience to climate change in the existing protected area of the North Albanian Mountainous Region

Agencies

UNEP

Date received by PM

6/20/2022

Review completed by PM

7/7/2022

Program Manager

Mark Zimsky

Focal Area

Biodiversity

Project Type

MSP

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

7/6/2022

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

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

7/6/2022

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

3. If this is a non-grant instrument, has a reflow calendar been presented in Annex D?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

7/6/2022

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

7/20/2022

Please correct the name of one co-financier (from Recipient Country Government to Ministry of Tourism and Environment). In addition, the co-financing from PONT, as per the letter, seems to be in cash and not in-kind. Please review and correct in Table C as necessary.

9/7/2022

Cleared.

Agency Response

We corrected co-financier name for the Ministry of Tourism and Environment. The type of co-financing of PONT in Table C has been revised.

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

7/6/2022

Yes, 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

7/6/2022

Yes, 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

7/6/2022

Yes, cleared.

Please note that during project implementation, we encourage the project to get a WDPA ID number for AANP and then to also classify it per the IUCN categories. Please include this information in the midterm and final evaluation.

7/20/2022

Please include the core indicator 11 and its target in the results framework.

9/7/2022

We note that a METT score was not submitted of the AANP to establish a baseline. Can you please clarify why this was not completed during project preparation or if this was just an oversight? Please clarify.

10/3/2022

Cleared as this has now been included.

Agency Response

Included in the revised log-frame.

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

7/6/2022

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

7/6/2022

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

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

7/6/2022

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

7/6/2022

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

7/6/2022

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

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

7/6/2022

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

7. Is there further and better elaboration to show that the project is innovative and sustainable including the potential for scaling up?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

7/6/2022

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

Project Map and Coordinates

Is there an accurate and confirmed geo-referenced information where the project intervention will take place?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

7/6/2022

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

Child Project

If this is a child project, is there an adequate reflection of how it contributes to the overall program impact?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

7/6/2022

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

7/6/2022

Yes, cleared.

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

7/6/2022

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

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

7/6/2022

Yes, 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

7/6/2022

Yes, 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

7/6/2022

Yes, 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

7/6/2022

Yes, 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

7/6/2022

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

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

7/20/2022

On ESS: We note that the project overall ESS risk is classified as moderate, and UNEP attached Safeguard Risk Identification Form. SRIF mentioned that "[t]his is a moderate risk project with some potential risks in the resettlement issue. Resettlement can include economic restriction as well as physical relocation of the local community members." It is, however, not clear whether the project has a plan for further assessment on economic restriction as well as physical relocation of the local community members and how the project will avoid physical relocation of the local community members by the project. Please clarify and elaborate further on these two points.

9/7/2022

Cleared.

Agency Response

We clarified those points in the SRFI form as:

6.1 full or partial physical displacement or relocation of people (whether temporary or permanent)?

Not anticipated. The PA has already been declared, and draft core zones have been identified keeping in mind the location of current settlements. There are 110 small, traditional, and scattered rural settlements occurring within the National Park, located mainly in the valleys and slopes, where there are more opportunities for arable land. The villages are not included in the core zone and thus no relocation will take place. This will be further verified and mapped through Output 1.2.1: Comprehensive ecosystem services valuation of the Albanian Alps landscape and assessment of potential options and opportunities for sustainable financing of the Albanian Alps NP as well as from the socio-economic and habitat assessments under outcome 1. Further, stakeholder engagement is embedded in every outcome of the project in particular, local community participation and consultation will be sought for several key activities including the verification, finalization and awareness of the zonation plan.

6.2 economic displacement (e.g. loss of assets or access to assets affecting for example crops, businesses, income generation sources)?

6.2 involuntary restrictions on land/water use that deny a community the use of resources to which they have traditional or recognizable use rights?

The project will verify and finalize the zoning of the protected area therefore some people may be affected, however significant consultation with stakeholders and the community will be organized during project implementation. Through collaboration with users, consensus will be sought to identify sustainable use zones and limits as well as identifying key areas for sustainable financing and livelihood opportunities. In addition, ecosystem services valuation of the Albanian Alps landscape and assessment of potential financing options and opportunities, along with baseline and socio-economic surveys, will help identify those likely to be most affected by resource use restrictions and these will be considered, where feasible, as a priority for livelihood development interventions (outcome 2) . Through better understanding NP resources? use by communities, participatory and collaboration consultations for key interventions, and comprehensive awareness and outreach activities, the project aims to minimize any potential negative effects users may incur as a result of zonation and restricted resource use. A bottom up approach will ensure that stakeholder needs are given appropriate consideration and incorporated when defining zones and resource use limits.

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

7/6/2022

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

Benefits

Are the socioeconomic benefits at the national and local levels sufficiently described resulting from the project? Is there an elaboration on how these benefits translate in supporting the achievement of GEBs or adaptation benefits?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

7/6/2022

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

Annexes

Are all the required annexes attached and adequately responded to?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

7/6/2022

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

Project Results Framework

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

7/6/2022

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

GEF Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

7/6/2022

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

Council comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

7/6/2022

NA

Agency Response

STAP comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
7/6/2022

NA

Agency Response
Convention Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
7/6/2022

NA

Agency Response
Other Agencies comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
7/6/2022

NA

Agency Response
CSOs comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
7/6/2022

NA

Agency Response
Status of PPG utilization

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
7/6/2022

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

Project maps and coordinates

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

7/6/2022

Yes, cleared.

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

7/6/2022

NA

Agency Response

Do the Reflow Table Annex G and the Trustee Excel Sheet for reflows provide accurate reflow expectations of the project submitted? Assumptions for Reflows can be submitted to explain expected reflows. (For NGI Only)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

7/6/2022

NA

Agency Response

Did the agency Annex H provided with information to assess the Agency Capacity to generate and manage reflows? (For NGI Only)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

7/6/2022

NA

Agency Response

We have addressed all the queries listed below in the CEO Approval document.

30/09/2022

?We entered the METT score on core indicator 1.2. We uploaded the METT score sheet on the document depository.?

GEFSEC DECISION

RECOMMENDATION

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

7/20/2022

Please address the following issues and resubmit:

1. On project information: include the missing expected implementation/completion dates.
2. On co-financing: correct the name of one co-financier (from Recipient Country Government to Ministry of Tourism and Environment). In addition, the co-financing from PONT, as per the letter, seems to be in cash and not in-kind. Please review and correct in Table C.
3. On core-indicators: Please include the core indicator 11 and its target in the results framework.
4. On ESS: We note that the project overall ESS risk is classified as moderate, and UNEP attached Safeguard Risk Identification Form. SRIF mentioned that "[t]his is a moderate risk project with some potential risks in the resettlement issue. Resettlement can include economic restriction as well as physical relocation of the local community members." It is, however, not clear whether the project has a plan for further assessment on economic restriction as well as physical relocation of the local community members and how the project will avoid physical relocation of the local community members by the project. Please clarify and elaborate further on these two points.

9/7/2022

One last issue related to the METT remains to be resolved prior to clearance. We note that a METT score was not submitted of the AANP to establish a baseline. Can you please clarify why this was not completed during project preparation or if this was just an oversight? Please clarify.

10/3/2022

All issues have now been addressed, CEO approval is recommended.

Review Dates

	Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review	7/6/2022	
Additional Review (as necessary)	7/20/2022	
Additional Review (as necessary)	9/7/2022	
Additional Review (as necessary)	10/3/2022	
Additional Review (as necessary)		

CEO Recommendation

Brief reasoning for CEO Recommendations

The project will reach its objective *?To achieve biodiversity conservation through effective management and enhanced resilience to climate change in the North Albanian Alps Mountainous Region?* through the following three components: 1) Establishing an enabling environment for effective management of the Albanian Alps National Park, 2) Strengthening the practical experience and *?know-how?* of the Albanian Alps NP stakeholders to address threats, and 3) Supporting national level adoption and upscaling of sustainable PA management practices. The global environmental benefit of the project is 82,844 hectares of terrestrial protected areas under improved management for conservation and sustainable use.

An adequate COVID-19 mitigation strategy will be employed during project implementation.