

Resilient Landscapes Management Project

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

9579

Countries

Nicaragua

Project Name

Resilient Landscapes Management Project

Agencies

FAO

Date received by PM

12/4/2019

Review completed by PM

4/23/2020

Program Manager

Mark Zimsky

Focal Area

Biodiversity

Project Type

FSP

PIF

CEO Endorsement

Project Design and Financing

1. If there are any changes from that presented in the PIF, have justifications been provided?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

12/23/2019

No major changes presented. Cleared.

Response to Secretariat comments

Jan 2020

No response required

2. Is the project structure/ design appropriate to achieve the expected outcomes and outputs?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

12/23/2019

The project design and structure is consistent with what was approved at the PIF stage; hence it maintains an appropriate approach to achieve its ambitious outcomes. Cleared.

Response to Secretariat comments

Jan 2020

No response required

3. Is the financing adequate and does the project demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objective?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

12/23/2019

The GEF project financing is consistent with the PIF stage and is adequate; however, please note concerns raised by the absence of any cash cofinancing and the confusion about the presentation of cofinancing below.

Response to Secretariat comments

Jan 2020

Co-financing has been clarified below.

4. Does the project take into account potential major risks, including the consequences of climate change, and describes sufficient risk response measures? (e.g., measures to enhance climate resilience)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

12/23/2019

The project has identified all risks and proposed a sober and realistic risk mitigation strategy. Given the focus of the project's intervention, if it is successful in the target landscapes, it will increase socio-ecological resiliency and hence is very much a response to expected climate change in these ecosystems. Cleared.

Response to Secretariat comments

Jan 2020

No response required

5. Is co-financing confirmed and evidence provided?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

12/23/2019

The cofinancing presentation is confusing.

First, we note that the cofinancing package does not include any cash cofinancing and for a project of this ambition, this is a cause for concern given that the only cash financing from the project comes from the GEF grant which overall is quite modest given the level of ambition of the project intervention and its expected outcomes and deliverables (e.g, sustainable financing for nine protected areas, etc.)

Second, we note that the in-kind resources are identified as “investment mobilized”. Please note that in-kind contributions should be classified as recurrent costs and this includes things such as government staff salaries, office space, operating costs as recurrent expenditures but not investment mobilized.

In general, investments such as equity, capital investments, equipment purchase, costed activities on the ground can be considered investment mobilized.

The explanation provided for investment mobilized is not clear in this regard. First, for the bilateral aid, it is not clear if this money is guaranteed or if the bilateral donors will try to find this money. Second, with regards to the Government co-financing it appears that this is a description of ongoing government projects, which then would be part of your project baseline.

Please address the following issues on the cofinancing letter from the Government:

- 1) as noted above, in-kind contributions are not investment mobilized. Please revise.
- 2) the "bilateral" cofinancing should be supported by the bilateral donor in question, not the Government. It also appears that these investments are actually ongoing investments hence are not cofinance at all but part of the project's baseline that the GEF investment will complement.
- 3) With regards to the Government "investment mobilized" of \$ 7,174, 742 it also appears that these are existing projects and investments from bilaterals and development partners, not new resources.

Please clarify all of these issues and correct the endorsement letters appropriately.

3/4/2020

Cleared.

Response to Secretariat comments

3 April, 2020

No response required

Jan 2020

The government of Nicaragua has emitted new co-financing letters for loans and grants executed by MARENA and MEFCCA. Institutions providing the loans/grants (ie. FCPF, IFAD, Swiss Development Cooperation--SDC) to the government of Nicaragua are aware that these funds will co-finance the proposed GEF project and support their use as cofinancing.

Funds from the FCPF, SDC (COSUDE) represent new phases of programming of funds, and therefore are new. Funds from the IFAD loan will be allocated to municipalities in the area of intervention.

Co-financing from MEFCCA is now marked as "loan", while co-financing from MARENA is marked as "Grant". While GEF Policy defines "Investment mobilized" as "Co-Financing that excludes recurrent expenditures", the funds mentioned above will not be considered Investment Mobilized given that they are not "new resources" (i.e. we are working in the context of existing agreements).

The text below has been added to the PRODOC, under Table C.

MEFCCA offered to mobilize resources to support the GEF donation through its public financing (IFAD loans). MEFCCA will work with municipalities in the areas targeted by the proposed GEF project to access resources in these loans. These resources will complement components 1 and 2. The projects are:

- i) The Sustainable Media Development project of Rural Family Life in the Dry Corridor of Nicaragua (NICAVIDA, Project No. 2000001242), which will finance the execution of family and territorial plans for natural resource management and climate change adaptation. This co-financing is now marked as "loan" in Table C of the CEO Endorsement request.
- ii) The project that will support small coffee and cocoa producers adapt to climate change in suitable agroclimatic areas (NICADAPTA, Project No. 1100001683). This project will finance the execution of investment plans for the management of shade for semi-perennial species (coffee and cocoa), as well as soil and water conservation works following agroforestry systems that allow the implementation of resilient landscapes while contributing to the habitat and transit of local species of flora and fauna.

In addition, MARENA offered to mobilize resources to support the GEF grant through its public financing via a project that it executes using the second phase of a grant from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC or COSUDE in Spanish). This grant is implemented in project intervention area in the Dipilto Jalapa Nature Reserve and complements component 1: Management Program Community in the Dipilto River Basin / phase 2- 2020-2024. The grant will finance the execution of investment plans for agroforestry systems that allow the implementation of resilient landscapes, contributing to the habitat of local species of flora and fauna.

6. Are relevant tracking tools completed?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

12/23/2019

There appears to be some confusion in what is presented in the core indicators which impacts the submission of the METT score. The core indicators are completed as if all of the nine protected areas are newly created; however, our understanding all along with this project was that these are existing protected areas with defined buffer zones. Please clarify and adjust the core indicators and include the METT scores if indeed these are existing protected areas.

3/4/2020

Under core indicator 1.2, 32,493.7 hectares are listed, without a METT score, as "biological corridors". If these hectares are not subject to the METT, please include them in a listed PA, or, include them under core indicator 4.

Response to Secretariat comments

May 2020

No response required

March 2020

We have updated core indicators again. Please note the following changes:

Core indicator 1.2 now lists only the areas with METT scores. We have deleted from there the biological corridors. In the previous version we made a mistake on the size of biological corridors. After careful review and consultation with the government, the area for biological corridors was adjusted to 20,000 ha divided into Core indicators 3 and 4 (10,000 ha each). These changes are now adjusted and reflected in the portal.

The corrected version of the indicators is now consistent with description of the Global Environmental Benefits in the description of the project. The new revised version of GEBs includes 161,355 ha to generate GEB divided in 141,355 ha (C.I 1), 10,000 (C.I. 3) and 10,000 (C.I. 4) plus mitigation of GHG and beneficiaries (same as before).

Jan 2020

The Core Indicators have been updated. The project will work on existing protected areas and their buffer zones. METT scores have been included for existing areas.

7. Only for Non-Grant Instrument: Has a reflow calendar been presented?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

12/23/2019

NA

Response to Secretariat comments N/A

8. Is the project coordinated with other related initiatives and national/regional plans in the country or in the region?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

12/23/2019

Yes. Cleared.

Response to Secretariat comments

Jan 2020

No response required

9. Does the project include a budgeted M&E Plan that monitors and measures results with indicators and targets?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

12/23/2019

Yes, however, please revise indicator 12 under component four. The project must establish more than just "presence" of the bird and pine species, but must include a measure that allows for assessing the total population of individuals of each bird species and the extent of cover of the two pine species over time, during the life of the project and beyond.

Please also correct the core indicator presentation in the portal which indicates that the nine protected areas are all new.

Please also note that in the text, para 127 the project document identifies that the project is contributing to a restoration target of 141,335 which is the area of the protected areas. Please clarify given that only 10,000 hectares is listed as the restoration target in Table F.

Please revise the project logframe under Component one, outcome 1.2 which also lists the investment under the protected area component covering an area that is either "conserved or restored". Please commit to an area for conservation and an area for restoration and maintain consistency throughout the documentation and in the core indicators with regards to the condition of the area that will receive the GEF investment.

3/4/2020

Cleared.

Response to Secretariat comments

May 2020

No response required

Jan 2020

1- Indicator 12 under component four was revised as follows:

- * Population of each bird species
- * Extent of cover of two pine species, in ha (baseline: xxx ha, Year 6: xxx)

2- Core indicator has been corrected to indicate that the project will work on existing PAs.

3- The text in para. 127 and 128 has been edited as follows:

127. Biodiversity habitats will have been improved through the conservation of 82,279 hectares (natural regeneration, reforestation and agroforestry and silvopastoral systems), with a view to increasing resilience, protection and connectivity between the nine protected areas and the remaining forests of the genus Pinus and Quercus; Pinus patula sub. sp. tecunumanii and Pinus caribaeae, with an additional approximate area of 59,076 hectares (buffer areas), bringing the total conservation area to 141,355 hectares (Components 1, 2, 3). Habitats for endemic and endangered or endangered species (CITES I and II) were improved.

128. At least 10,000 hectares of landscapes will be restored under improved practices in biological corridors restored by local women and men to improve connectivity between existing protected areas in the northern area and deforestation and forest degradation will be avoided in at least 10,000 hectares under the pilot test of payment for results in the north Caribbean coast of the country. In addition to the above, that will bring a total of 161,355 hectares under management.

4-We have reviewed the logical framework of the project to delimit conservation and restoration indicators:

• Indicator 4: Area (ha) under habitat conservation for biodiversity, adaptation and livelihoods in protected areas, with the participation of indigenous and non-indigenous men and women: Target of 141,355 hectares (82,279 hectares of the core zone and 59,076 ha of the buffer zone or the nine protected areas)

• Indicator 7: Total number of hectares under restoration and conservation through the GEF ENDE-REDD + pilot incentive project over a period of five years: Target of 10,000 ha (in areas of Caribbean pine in the municipality of Prinzapolka, RACCN).

• Indicator 8: Area (ha) of landscapes under improved practices in biological corridors restored by local women and men to improve connectivity between existing protected areas: Target of 10,000 ha (in the Pinus oocarpa Corridor and Pinus patula sub. Sp. Tecunumanii en the north zone).

10. Does the project have descriptions of a knowledge management plan?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

12/23/2019

Yes. Cleared.

Response to Secretariat comments

Jan 2020

No response required

Agency Responses

11. Has the Agency adequately responded to comments at the PIF stage from:

GEFSEC

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

12/23/2019

Yes. Cleared.

Response to Secretariat comments

Jan 2020

No response required

STAP

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

12/23/2019

STAP concurred at the PIF stage with the project design and did not recommend any changes or adjustments. Cleared.

Response to Secretariat comments

Jan 2020

No response required

GEF Council

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

12/23/2019

No. Germany provided extensive comments and requests for the CEO endorsement package and there is no response or indication on how the project actually addressed these comments. Please provide a full response.

Response to Secretariat comments

MAy 2020

No response required.

Jan 2020

The following text has been included in the portal and the Project Document:

Comment 1: Germany suggests that the final project document elaborates clearly how the proposed project activities contribute to strengthening the institutional structures and coordination as well as policy and economic instruments for the implementation of this national strategy.

Project activities contribute to strengthening institutional structures and coordination, as well as political and economic instruments for the implementation of the National Biodiversity Strategy:

The project will support the work sessions for the start-up of the Technical Committee of Biological Diversity - CT-BIO that approves the Regulation of LAW N °. 807, CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY, PRESIDENTIAL DECREE N °. 24-2019, approved on October 16, 2019 and Published in La Gaceta, Official Gazette No. 203 of October 24, 2019. The creation of the CT-BIO will strengthen the collaboration of all public and private institutions to provide any existing information generated by them, in relation to biodiversity and its components and promote with governments local and regional, private actors, cooperative associations, collaboration agreements, alliances, which strengthen the monitoring and control activities of biodiversity and its components.

Comment 2. The project aims to work in a rather large area with a high number of very different and distant protected areas, which is likely to pose logistical and budgetary challenges. The full proposal should clearly identify how these challenges will be tackled and the outputs achieved with the available resources.

The logistical and budgetary challenges to work in a fairly large area with a large number of very different and distant protected areas will be addressed through the model for the management of protected areas that is oriented to the organization, participation and strategic local alliances under agreements of collaborative management and joint management agreements in the case of the Caribbean Coast, generating local capacities that integrate local governments, Indigenous Territorial Governments, NGOs and community organizations that share responsibilities in the management of protected areas.

Comment 3. Germany suggests that the final project document gives a more detailed and balanced assessment of the capacity gaps among the implementing actors and lay out how the project will contribute to bridge those.

In the design of the project were identified with representatives of Indigenous Peoples, Women, technical staff of MARENA or other actors, the capacity development needs that the project should support by being in the following topics: protection of pine and oak, biodiversity monitoring , gender and ethnicity, Prevention and management of forest fires, Restoration and protection of important habitats in pine and oak forests, Resilient landscapes and Sustainable Land Management and Biodiversity, sustainable use of non-timber (natural dyes, vines, logs and branches , feathers and others for crafts), production and marketing of medicinal plants and forest management of native forests, and wildlife management.

The beneficiaries of capacity development will be staff of 6 MARENA Territorial Delegations (composed of 45 technicians: 9 women and 36 men), 200 owners and 40 forest owners, members of 2 cooperatives and 6 forest companies in the core area, 100 owners and owners (20% women) of forests and producers in the buffer zone, members of 6 government institutions, 6 universities, RACCN Regional Government, 8 collaborative management committees, indigenous peoples authorities, forest owners, managers of cooperatives and forestry companies.

Comment 4: Germany agrees with the assessment that economic alternatives and incentives or mechanisms that can promote sustainable land-use practice are needed. Concerning testing and piloting initiatives in for example agroforestry or tourism, Germany suggests that the final proposal indicates how already existing experiences and their potential for upscaling will be considered.

How existing experiences on economic alternatives and incentives or mechanisms that can promote the sustainable practice of land use and its potential for expansion (for example, in agro forestry or tourism) will be considered:

Also as part of the knowledge management plan, the first year will document the experiences in Nicaragua and other countries about economic alternatives and incentives or mechanisms that can promote the sustainable practice of land use.

At the national level, tourism experiences will be documented through the Colonial Route and Volcanoes project (European Union, Luxembourg and the Nicaraguan Tourism Institute -INTUR) and the “Coffee Route” project as part of the national strategy "Tourist Routes of Nicaragua" implemented by the Tourism Institute and financed by the Cooperation of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

At the international level, it is planned in the first year of the project to develop an International Mexico-Nicaragua Workshop on experiences in Productive Systems (coffee, cocoa, honey, forestry, ecotourism) friendly to Biodiversity with a landscape approach, which will be coordinated between the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT), through the National Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity of Mexico (CONABIO) and the Specific Directorate of the National System of Protected Areas (SINAP) of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MARENA) of Nicaragua.

Actions will be coordinated between MARENA and the Nicaraguan Tourism Institute (INTUR), to identify tourist routes and create and strengthen conditions as a visitor center, based on the experiences of the Somoto Canyon and Tisey La Estanzuela, since they are the only two areas protected from the intervention area that register a range of 10,000 to 14,000 visits per year. These activities will be combined with those developed in the subprojects of sustainable forest management, the use of non-timber by-products for the production of handicrafts, the production and sale of medicinal and other similar plants, which will be available to visitors.

Comment 5: The full proposal could benefit from laying out more clearly how the proposed project activities will be interlinked with the mentioned parallel projects within the project area such as or a new programme on Protection and Conservation in the upper basin of the Coco river focusing on adaptation to the climate change in community strategic alliances. In both projects, MARENA is the leading agency and the target groups are partly identical. The final project proposal should therefore outline clearly how the GEF project will interact synergistically with ongoing activities.

MARENA and MEFCCA will formalize a collaboration agreement to support the GEF donation through: i) The Sustainable Rural Family Life Development Project in the Dry Corridor of Nicaragua - NICAVIDA / Project No. 2000001242 financed by FIDA, supporting landscape restoration through the execution of family and territorial plans for the management of natural resources and adaptation to climate change. ii) The project to support small producers in adapting to climate change in the production of coffee and cocoa in suitable agroclimatic areas (NICADAPTA) / Project No. 1100001683 financed by IFAD, supporting the restoration of the landscape through the execution of plans for investment for the management of the shadow of semi-perennial species (coffee and cocoa) and soil and water conservation works, following agroforestry systems that allow the implementation of resilient landscapes, contributing to the habitat and transit of local species of flora and fauna.

Convention Secretariat

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

12/23/2019

NA.

Response to Secretariat comments N/A

Recommendation

12. Is CEO endorsement recommended?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

12/23/2019

No, not at this time. Please address all issues above and resubmit.

In addition, we do not accept the rationale presented as a separate document on the proposed implementation arrangement proposed by FAO and MARENA wherein FAO will manage \$101,430 to hire international expertise particularly since MARENA will be hiring all other technical expertise. In addition, we would encourage FAO to identify national experts to support "field activities and biodiversity monitoring" and thus continue to build capacity within the country as opposed to seeking international experts. Please revise the implementation arrangements to be consistent with GEF policy given that FAO is operating as the GEF agency for the project with a specific role in that capacity.

3/4/2020

Please address issues highlighted above.

Please delete these paragraphs in the document given that the response to GEFSEC comments states the issue of FAO execution has been addressed:

7. The financial execution of the project will be carried out in compliance with the management instruments approved for the project (ProDoc, POA, Budget, Procurement and Purchase Plan and Monitoring and Follow-up Plan), and using a combination of two FAO working modalities in the first year of the project: (i) FAO's direct implementation modality for activities agreed with MARENA, based on operational efficiency and best value for money for the timely delivery of project results, and (ii) the letter of agreement modality for FAO to transfer financial resources to implementing partners for the administration and direct financial execution of activities according to the budget agreed in the ProDoc.

8. In its second year, the project will move forward to working with the FAO operational partners implementation modality, known as OPIM. This modality requires an external evaluation in the first year of the project, to understand the level of risk. The purpose of this evaluation is to assess a partner's financial management capacity, including accounting, procurement, reporting quality, internal controls, etc., with a view to determining the overall risk rating and safeguarding activities. The cost of evaluating and implementing the OPIM must be covered by the project budget.

3/31/2020

Please address these issues and resubmit:

1- On Co-financing letters: a ll co-financing letters are in Spanish with no accompanying English translation. Please request the Agency to translate them.

2- On M & E Budget: Audits are not eligible as a line item. Please ask Agency to remove this item in the M&E Budget and to include it in PMC.

3- On project's staff: one project's staff (Project Coordinator) is paid by the PMC and by component 3 – however, the TOR's in the Project Document do not reflect the contribution of this position to Component 3 (see the budget – the position is titled differently in Project document) – we need to understand what the GEF is paying for (same for the other positions).

4- On procurement of vehicles: the guidelines indicate that purchase of vehicles, motorcycles and tires are meant to be covered by co-financing resources of the PMC. Please inquire with the Agency to charge under co-financing.

5- On Council comments: in the review sheet it is shown that the Agency provided responses to Germany's Council comments, but there is no evidence of the response to US and Canada's comments (we could not find those answers in Portal or in the attached documents). Please ask Agency to provide responses in Annex B in the Portal (kindly note that at the Joint Summary of the Chairs we only found comments from Germany and Canada. The lengthy US comments may have been provided as an upstream comments that is logged into PMIS.

<https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/work-program-documents/Compilation%20of%20Council%20Comments%20-%20May%202017%20Work%20Program.pdf>).

May 12, 2020

CEO endorsement is not recommended due to the following:

On comment 2 - M&E budget - comment provided on March 26: not addressed – Audits and spot check are still included in M&E budget in Portal and in ProDoc – please amend.

On comment 3 - project's staff - comment provided on March 26: not addressed – the Project Coordinator is now charged to the 4 components + to the PMC. However, the TORs (page 62 of ProDoc) do not reflect the contribution of this position to Components 1, 2, 3 and 4. Please provide more detail in the TORs as it relates to the role of the Project Coordinator in the coordination and execution of the four components.

Additionally, there are no TORs for other positions charged to the Project's components (see budget), which amount to \$870,000 (removing the costs assumed by PMC). Please include all of the TORs for the positions charged to the project's components.

May 22, 2020

No. The revised documents did not address the comments provided related to the TORs.

First, we asked that the TOR for the Project Coordinator reflect the contribution of this position to Components 1, 2, 3 and 4. Please provide more detail in the TORs as it relates to the role of the Project Coordinator in the coordination and execution of the four components. You may wish to develop a table that maps the

coordinator's contributions to the execution of the four components. For example, the first column could be the list of actions and outputs to be undertaken by the coordinator and the subsequent columns could be each component and you could simply tick each cell that is relevant for each component.

Second, as requested previously, please present the TORs for each consultant to be hired:

Financial Specialist
Procurement Specialist
Protected Area Technicians (10)
Protected Area Promoters (5)
Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist / Official in charge of Subprojects
Information Systems Expert
ENDE-REDD+ Incentives Specialist / Pilot Project Coordinator
Methodology, Gender and Indigenous Peoples Specialist
Biodiversity Specialist
Technical advice in biodiversity M&E
Biodiversity and Agriculture Expert

We understand that these may be revised subsequently in collaboration with MARENA.

June 3, 2020

The TORs have been included in this revised submission. CEO endorsement is recommended.

Response to Secretariat comments

Feb. 2020

Issues above have been addressed.

Regarding the International Experts mentioned in GEFSEC's comment above, we have discussed and agreed with the government that these funds (\$101,430) will be executed by MARENA.

March 2020

Please note that we have deleted paragraphs 7 and 8 (described above) and rephrased accordingly to reflect that MARENA will execute the project and FAO will act as implementing agency.

April 2020

1- On Co-financing letters: all co-financing letters are in Spanish with no accompanying English translation. Please request the Agency to translate them.

Translation of co-financing letters was uploaded to the portal. We keep the original versions in Spanish and complement with the translation.

2- On M & E Budget: Audits are not eligible as a line item. Please ask Agency to remove this item in the M&E Budget and to include it in PMC.

The budget was updated with the following changes: Audits and Spot Checks were transferred to PMC, all relevant tables in the portal and project document have been updated to reflect this change in the budget.

3- On project's staff: one project's staff (Project Coordinator) is paid by the PMC and by component 3 – however, the TOR's in the Project Document do not reflect the contribution of this position to Component 3 (see the budget – the position is titled differently in Project document) – we need to understand what the GEF is paying for (same for the other positions).

We have updated the budget in the line of the Project Coordinator. The cost is divided in the different components of the project and in the PMC. The Project Coordinator will have both technical and management responsibilities. In the project description we mention the following:

The National Project Coordinator will be in charge of the daily implementation, administration and technical supervision of the project, on behalf of the operational partner and within the framework outlined by the Project Steering Committee. He or she will be responsible, among other things, for:

Including:

Providing technical support and evaluating the results of national project consultants contracted with GEF funds, along with the outputs generated through implementation of the project;

In the Budget we put the name of Lead Technical Advisor and in Parenthesis “National Project Coordinator” that coincides with the description in the Project Document.

4- On procurement of vehicles: the guidelines indicate that purchase of vehicles, motorcycles and tires are meant to be covered by co-financing resources of the PMC. Please inquire with the Agency to charge under co-financing.

These purchases are proposed in order to equip park rangers from the 9 protected areas to be served by the project. An additional motorcycle and pickup truck are proposed for the Directorate General of Protected Areas that provides attention to all the protected areas of the project.

The purchase of the vehicle and motorcycles would be more cost effective over time, guaranteeing an estimated 150 monitoring, sessions and workshops per month, versus the rental of vehicles to monitor the areas according to the project activities. Below the analysis of cost-effectiveness:

No.	Protected area	Municipality/ Department/Region	Amount of monthly monitoring in protected areas	Number of monthly visits to the farms of each producer to prepare their restoration plans and monitor their implementation	Number of monthly visits to the farms of each participant of the ENDE REDD + pilot project	Number of monthly visits to beneficiaries participating in community projects	TOTAL
1	Serranía Dipilto and Jalapa Natural Reserve	Dipilto, Jalapa, San Fernando, Mosonte in the Department of Nueva Segovia	8	12		12	32

2	Somoto Canyon National Monument	San Lucas in the Department of Madriz	2	4		4	42
3	Tepesomoto – Pataste Natural Reserve	Somoto, San Lucas, Las Sabanas, San José de Cusmapa in the Department of Madriz	8	12		12	
4	Cerro Quiabuc – Las Brisas Natural Reserve	Estelí, La Trinidad, in the Department of Estelí	4	6		6	42
5	Cerro Tisey - Estanzuela Natural Reserve	Estelí y San Nicolas in the Department of Estelí and El Sauce in the Department of León	4	6		6	
6	Cerro Tomabú Natural Reserve	Estelí in the Department of Estelí	2	4		4	
7	Yúcul Genetic Resources Reserve	San Ramón in the Department of Matagalpa	2	4		4	10
8	Cerro Alamikamba Natural Reserve	Prinzapolka in RACCN	8		4		24
9	Limbaika Natural Reserve	Prinzapolka in RACCN	8		4		
TOTAL			46	48	8	48	150

Vehicle rental costs

- The cost of renting a pickup truck is US\$52 per day.
- It would be required to rent 5 trucks for 150 monthly trips: Esteli (42), Madriz (42), Nueva Segovia (32), Matagalpa (10) and RACCN (24).
- The estimated total monthly rental cost would be US\$7,800 and annual cost of US\$93,600.
- The investment of a truck and 10 motorcycles is US\$85,200.

Need for vehicles:

- The project will strengthen MARENA's capacity in the use of the territory's monitoring systems to evaluate the effectiveness of the application of standards and policies in the areas of intervention.
- To strengthen its presence and response capacity for planning, managing and management of the protected area, it will support the teams involved by providing them with the necessary means and basic tools.
- Means of transport are one of these basic tools, since park rangers and the Directorate of Protected Areas will develop the capacities of the population and regional and local authorities, indigenous and non-indigenous, men and women, who will participate in periodic monitoring activities and will form part of collaborative management committees in protected areas in the north central part of the country.
- The means of transport also facilitate covering the actions during the project, mainly those that guarantee the conservation of biodiversity in more than 59,076.10 ha of core areas and the conservation of 141,355.88 ha in buffer zones. All of this, in the nine protected areas located in the north central region of the country (more specifically in the dry corridor and on the North Caribbean Coast).
- In particular, the project will carry out a pilot ENDE-REDD + incentive project for the conservation and restoration of the 10,000 ha tropical rainforest in the protected areas of Alamikamba and Limbaika, and its interconnection corridor in the municipality of Prinzapolka, located in the Autonomous Region of the North Caribbean Coast. The park ranger located in the RACCN and the vehicle of the Directorate of Protected Areas will be used for these activities in Prinzapolka.
- At the end of the five years, it is estimated that work will be carried out with at least 200 producers who will be involved in sustainable land management actions across 15 municipalities, all located in the northern part of the country (more specifically, in the departments of Esteli, Madriz, Nueva Segovia, Matagalpa and León). In order to do this, the farms of each producer must be visited to prepare their restoration plans and monitor their implementation.
- Finally, these means of transportation will also be used in the implementation of subprojects to promote sustainable community entrepreneurship activities.

5- On Council comments: in the review sheet it is shown that the Agency provided responses to Germany's Council comments, but there is no evidence of the response to US and Canada's comments (we could not find those answers in Portal or in the attached documents). Please ask Agency to provide responses in Annex B in the Portal (kindly note that at the Joint Summary of the Chairs we only found comments from Germany and Canada. The lengthy US comments may have been provided as an upstream comments that is logged into PMIS. <https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/work-program-documents/Compilation%20of%20Council%20Comments%20-%20May%202017%20Work%20Program.pdf>).

Please find responses to the comments from all the countries in Annex B. As mentioned answer to Germany's comments has been provided earlier. Regarding Canada, these comments are asserting that this will be a relevant project for the country. We thank Canada for the comments and confirm that MARENA will execute the project and that it will strengthen government efforts to tackle climate change. Full answer to US comments is provided as well in Annex B. These concerns can be addressed with the detailed description of the project that he have in the Project Document and portal.

May 2020

GEFSEC Comment: On comment 2 - M&E budget - comment provided on March 26: not addressed – Audits and spot check are still included in M&E budget in Portal and in ProDoc – please amend.

R/Audits and spot checks have been removed from the M&E Budget. They will be covered by the PMC as indicated in the attached budget and the table describing the budget in the Project document and portal.

GEFSEC Comment: On comment 3 - project's staff - comment provided on March 26: not addressed – the Project Coordinator is now charged to the 4 components + to the PMC. However, the TORs (page 62 of ProDoc) do not reflect the contribution of this position to Components 1, 2, 3 and 4. Please provide more detail in the TORs as it relates to the role of the Project Coordinator in the coordination and execution of the four components.

Additionally, there are no TORs for other positions charged to the Project's components (see budget), which amount to \$870,000 (removing the costs assumed by PMC). Please include all of the TORs for the positions charged to the project's components.

A/The TORs for the Project Coordinator have been modified to reflect the expected technical contribution. In addition, Terms of Reference for this position are provided in the attached documentation and project annexes. We provide an English translation for this Terms of Reference.

Kindly note that given that this project will be executed by MARENA, it will be the responsibility of the Project Coordinator and the National Project Director to develop the TORs for the national and international consultants to be hired during project implementation, in line with recommendations from the Project Steering Committee and any technical advisory groups established to support project implementation. Therefore, the TORs for the following consultants have not been included with the PRODOC:

- Financial Specialist
- Procurement Specialist
- Protected Area Technicians (10)
- Protected Area Promoters (5)
- Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist / Official in charge of Subprojects
- Information Systems Expert
- ENDE-REDD+ Incentives Specialist / Pilot Project Coordinator
- Methodology, Gender and Indigenous Peoples Specialist
- Biodiversity Specialist
- Technical advice in biodiversity M&E
- Biodiversity and Agriculture Expert

May 29, 2020

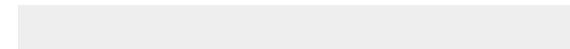
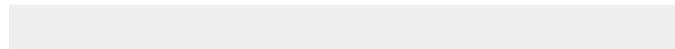
Action taken accordingly. We now provide draft terms of reference for all positions under the project documentation. As suggested, we have written the Terms of Reference for the National Coordinator and other positions to map their outputs across componentes. We provide the Spanish version of each ToR to be used by the government of Nicaragua and an English translation for each.

Review Dates

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

Response to Secretariat comments

First Review



Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

Response to Secretariat comments

Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		

CEO Recommendation

Brief Reasoning for CEO Recommendations

The project aims to reduce the degradation and fragmentation of strategic ecosystems by implementing a landscape management framework that strengthens the management and protection of the protected areas and responds to the needs of landowners by improving their income and livelihoods, in exchange for the strengthening of conservation and natural resource management activities on their land.

The project’s stated objective is: "To strengthen the national system of protected areas and to support sustainable land use and restoration practices in selected areas of the Dry Corridor and the northern Caribbean coastal regions of Nicaragua, with a view to promoting the conservation of biodiversity, resilient landscapes and local livelihoods".

The project will be implemented through the following components:

- Component 1: Strengthening the systems for protected area management and biodiversity conservation;
- Component 2: Landscape restoration for biodiversity, resilience and local livelihoods;
- Component 3: Incorporation of biodiversity and resilient landscapes into the institutional and development sectors;
- Component 4: System for the monitoring and evaluation of biodiversity.

Expected results include the following:

- (i) Habitats improved for biodiversity through the conservation of 82,279 hectares (implementation of pine forest management and conservation, administration of planned silvicultural treatments and natural regeneration), with the aim of boosting the resilience, protection and connectivity between the nine remaining protected

areas of the forest genera *Pinus* and *Quercus*; *Pinus patula sub. sp. tecunumanii* and *Pinus caribaea*, achieving forest repopulation and sustainable forest management over an additional area of some 59,076 hectares (buffer areas), bringing the total conservation area to 141,355 hectares;

(ii) More effective management of nine protected areas (core areas) of a total of 82,279 hectares;

(iii) Contribution to at least five strategic thrusts of the 2015–2020 National Biodiversity Strategy and tracking of follow-up by the biodiversity monitoring system that will be developed under the project.

(iv) At least 10,000 hectares of landscapes will be restored under improved practices in biological corridors restored by local women and men to improve connectivity between existing protected areas in the northern area and deforestation and forest degradation will be avoided in at least 10,000 hectares under the pilot test of payment for results in the north Caribbean coast of the country;

(v) 0.86 Mt reduction of CO₂-e in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the avoidance of deforestation.

(vi) Monitoring of species of interest or indicators of ecosystem health.

As such, the project is a key contribution of GEF to the sustainable management of the pine-oak ecoregion, which is a regional and global priority from a biodiversity perspective.

The project will be inclusive and equitable; it will follow a gender and intercultural approach, supporting three indigenous peoples (two in the north-central region and one in the north Caribbean coastal region of the country) and providing space for indigenous and non-indigenous women to participate in the activities and have access to the project's goods and services, in accordance with their practical and strategic needs. It will coordinate its activities with various central government institutions, 14 municipalities in 6 departments, universities, cooperatives and forestry companies, owners and producers.