

Landscape Approach to Riverine Forest Restoration, Biodiversity Conservation and Livelihood Improvement

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

10162

Countries

Sudan

Project Name

Landscape Approach to Riverine Forest Restoration, Biodiversity
Conservation and Livelihood Improvement

Agencies

FAO

Date received by PM

6/16/2021

Review completed by PM

7/27/2021

Program Manager

Adriana Moreira

Focal Area

Biodiversity

Project Type

FSP

PIF
CEO Endorsement

Part I ? Project Information

Focal area elements

1. Does the project remain aligned with the relevant GEF focal area elements as presented in PIF (as indicated in table A)?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

6-28-21: The project is aligned with the focal areas elements in LD and BD.

Agency Response

Noted

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 6-28-21: The project design is appropriate.

Agency Response

Noted

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

Noted

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 6-28-2021: Co-financing is significant and the investment mobilized is described in detail and consistent with the guidelines. It will important to ensure the timing and effectiveness of the different co-financing sources during project execution.

Agency Response

Noted

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 6-28-21: Proposed financing presented is adequate.

Agency Response

Noted

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 6-28-21: Status of utilization of PPG is adequately reported in Annex C. Please take the word "false" under item "F. PPG Grant"

Agency Response

Noted

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

6-28-21: Core indicators remain within the targets defined at PIF stage. Please, notice that the target of Core Indicator 4 (50,878 ha) is reported three times in the results framework in Annex A. Please consider mentioning it only once. Kindly add also "Core Indicator 4" to easily cross-reference the fact it's a Core Indicator in both the Results Framework and Table B.

Agency Response

Noted.

The figure of 50,878 is targeted for three unique indicators:

1. Objective: BD
2. Component 1: Spatial Planning
3. Component 3: Active Monitoring

Although the number is slightly repetitive and all three could be rolled into a single, it may become cumbersome to track and perhaps more useful to make certain project implementation team is aware of and tracking each indicator.

The mention "Core Indicator 4" was added in the Results Framework and under Table B.

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

7-19-2021: The proposal has improved significantly from PIF stage presenting substantial elaboration on threats, root causes and impacts of environmental degradation. The document also provides a better identification of the main barriers for adoption of integrated landscape approaches.

Agency Response

Noted

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

7-19-21: Baseline scenario and associated projects are well described.

Agency Response

Noted

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

7-19-21: Components and proposed outcomes are adequately described.

Agency Response

Noted

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

7-19-21: Project aims at addressing the main drivers of biodiversity loss in a KBA (riverine forest ecosystem). The alignment with the strategies of the BD and LD focal areas is satisfactory.

Agency Response

Noted

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

19-7-21: Incremental reasoning is satisfactory.

Agency Response

Noted

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

7-19-21: The proposed project design has improved meaningfully from PIF stage and represents a good opportunity for addressing key drivers of degradation of riverine forest ecosystems in Sudan and securing important global environmental benefits.

Agency Response

Noted

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

7-20-21: Description of innovation, sustainability and scaling up aspects is adequate.

Agency Response

Noted

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

7-20-21: Document provided detailed geo-referenced maps of project areas, including satellite imagery.

Agency Response

Noted

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

N/A

Agency Response

Noted

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

7-20-21: The project includes a detailed annex on the stakeholder engagement conducted during the PPG phase. Despite the COVID-19 limitations, the engagement process included national and state level consultations, household surveys, focus group discussions and site visits.

Agency Response

Noted

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

7-20-21: The project conducted extensive gender analysis and includes gender-sensitive activities and indicators linked with project objectives.

Agency Response

Noted

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

7-20-21: Project presents a stakeholder analysis of potential private sector engagement including local (agricultural cooperatives, service providers) and national (companies, finance institutions) level entities.

Agency Response

Noted

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

7-28-21: While it is rewarding to see Covid19 related risks listed under the Risk to Achieving Project Objectives, most of the mitigation strategies described both in the Risk assessment table and listed under Covid19 are not risk mitigation measures per se, but project descriptions, or issues and bottlenecks with very little information/assessment of the specific risk and mitigation measures provided under the description of each Risk. Please consider revising this section.

Agency Response

The CV-19 situation is constantly evolving.

As noted:

The project design was effectively carried out in the midst of the CV-19 pandemic. This included video conferences with multiple stakeholders and a project design support team located on several continents.

The project at inception will integrate COVID-19 considerations within the implementation strategy and action framework. This will include prioritizing implementation activities and adjusting the timing of these activities to address existing

and potential COVID-19 considerations and concerns. This will include an elucidation of such concerns and a well-reasoned strategic response. The approach will integrate these concerns within associated risk analysis, taking into consideration issues such as availability of technical expertise, impacts to stakeholder engagement, effects upon enabling environments, and financing issues.

FAO at both the national and international levels has designed and adopted a number of Covid-19 coping strategies to make certain projects are able to move forward.

For field-based activities, the project is designed to rely primarily upon Sudanese national staff and government staff. This will limit requirements and constraints associated with international travel.

FAO and Government partners are constantly monitoring the situation and will determine the best approaches to mitigate potential issues as things move forward. The PPG phase has allowed us to consider potential COVID-19 restrictions within the design phase. This includes front-loading the project's components with activities that can more easily be accomplished through remote technical support and/or by locally placed government staff able to move freely within identified zones. These partners are following the guidance and input of GEF as it evolves. As noted, the use of remote support has been quite effective to date linking international, regional, and national technical staff together.

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

7-21-21: Proposed institutional arrangements are adequate.

Agency Response

Noted

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

7-21-21: Project is well aligned with national strategies.

Agency Response

Noted

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

7-21-21: Project includes a comprehensive Knowledge strategy integrated with the monitoring/evaluation and communication activities, including specific deliverables and timeline.

Agency Response

Noted

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

7-21-21: The project includes an environmental and social management plan, where risks, impacts and mitigation measures are adequately described.

Agency Response

Noted

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

7-28-21: The ProDoc states that A Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) specialist will develop a detailed M&E plan, which is based on the results matrix and defines the specific requirements for each indicator (data collection methods, frequency,

responsibilities for data collection and analysis, etc.)? The M&E Plan is in fact requested at the CEO Endorsement submission stage, as per the Monitoring Policy requirements. Annex 12 of the Project and Program Cycle Policy Guidelines also state in Annex 12: ?To assess the quality of the M&E plan, the evaluators will assess: Was the M&E plan at the point of CEO Endorsement practical and sufficient? Did it include baseline data? Did it: specify clear targets and appropriate (SMART158) indicators to track environmental, gender, and socio economic results; a proper methodological approach; specify practical organization and logistics of the M&E activities including schedule and responsibilities for data collection; and, budget adequate funds for M&E activities??

Agency Response

The Project Document embeds a Monitoring and Evaluation strategy. This follows the standard approach used by FAO during the project design phase. The M&E process will benefit from a specific specialist who will assist with refining and supporting the implementation of the embedded M&E Framework. This will be accompanied by PIRs and other project activities as described in the implementation arrangements. The project has also integrated mid-term and final evaluation processes based upon accepted FAO-GEF unit approaches.

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

7-21-21: Social and economic benefits are adequately described.

Agency Response

Noted

Annexes

Are all the required annexes attached and adequately responded to?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

7-21-21: All required annexes are attached.

Agency Response

Noted

Project Results Framework

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

7-21-21: In relation to the Project Results Framework, please consider the following points:

- Consider rephrasing the indicator under Outcome 2, as it is hard to grasp the direct project contribution ? Hectares of riverine ecosystems inside and outside of Forest Reserves with native species forest cover, including *Acacia nilotica*?. Is it newly created or restored areas?
- consider refining the language of the indicator under Outcome 3. Ecosystem-based riverine monitoring and knowledge management program?. Is it launched, established, provided, other?
- The indicator under Outcome 2 is not an outcome indicator, it's an output: 40 FNC Forest Reserve managers and staff participating in pro-biodiversity conservation training programs?.
- The indicator: "33 Forest Reserves adopting pro-biodiversity conservation practices and reporting stable or increased revenue generation" is not clear. What specifically is being proposed to be measured ? adoption of pro-biodiversity conservation practices or increased revenue generation? Each of those would, in fact, require different targets or metrics.
- Please consider revising the following indicator (or target, as mentioned in the Results Framework) under Outcome 2 ? 20,000 agriculturalists, livestock herders, and forest users participating in training programs and adopting on-farm riverine forest biodiversity conservation strategies resulting in stable or increased production values.? The language used to construct this indicator is confusing. Does this mean that the indicator measures (or the target is set for) 20,000 agriculturalists, livestock herders and forest users who (a) participated in the training program, (b) adopted on-farm riverine forest biodiversity conservation strategies (as a result of trainings), or (c) increased production values (as a result of trainings)?? The requirement to use specific and measurable results is stipulated by GEF Evaluation Policy - The objectives and intended results of GEF-financed activities should be specific and measurable, so as to make it possible to monitor and evaluate the project and program effectively?.

Agency Response

- There are no "newly created" Forest Reserves foreseen by this project. The project will work at a landscape level inclusive of established Forest Reserves and surrounding productive riverine areas.

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- The ecosystem-based riverine monitoring and knowledge program will be launched by the project under Outcome 3.

-This indicator is important as both a process and impact indicator. The intended impact is to have 40 FNC managers with capacity to apply pro-conservation management approaches and, presumably, applying these lessons to improve BD effectiveness. The indicator could be deleted, but it is useful for both MTR and TE purposes. The indicator was refined as follows "Number of FNC Forest Reserve managers participating in pro-biodiversity conservation training programs and reporting lessons learned reflected in improved management practices"

-Both. Forest Reserves are for profit entities. The critical concept is that by applying BD conservation strategies, Forest Reserves are not at risk of losing production values but can show that they are increasing production values. It is very important that the project be able to prove that adoption of BD conservation practices does not lower production value. These two indicators should be linked.

-As above. The indicator was used to track that stakeholders who engaged in training and applied that training are benefitting from stable or increased production values.

GEF Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 7-30-21: Please revise comments provided above and resubmit. Thanks!

Agency Response

Noted with many thanks

Council comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

Noted

STAP comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

Noted

Convention Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

Noted

Other Agencies comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

Noted

CSOs comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

Noted

Status of PPG utilization

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 7-21-21: Status of PPG utilization is reported in Annex C. To date 72% of the resources have been spent and the remaining 28% are already committed.

Agency Response

Noted

Project maps and coordinates

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 7-20-21: Maps and coordinates of project sites are satisfactory.

Agency Response

Noted

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

N/A

Agency Response

Noted

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 N/A

Agency Response

Noted

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 N/A

Agency Response

Noted

GEFSEC DECISION

RECOMMENDATION

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

9-9-21: Proposed project is technically cleared.

Review Dates

**Secretariat Comment at
CEO Endorsement**

**Response to
Secretariat
comments**

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

CEO Recommendation

Brief reasoning for CEO Recommendations