

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

**Review PIF 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

**Agenices**

FAO

**Date received by PM**

4/7/2019

**Review completed by PM**

**Program Manager**

Jaime Cavelier

**Focal Area**

Biodiversity

**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**

4-08-19

1. The proposed project is aligned to the GEF-7 objective for the Biodiversity focal area “Mainstream biodiversity across sectors as well as landscapes and seascapes through Biodiversity Mainstreaming in Priority Sectors” (BD-1-1). Is this the best fit with the GEF-7 Strategies, considering the type of interventions and the GEBs that this project aims at delivering? The areas to be affected by the project suggest that the project is more about SLM than BD. "The project will focus on the riverine forest landscape in the Gezira, Northern and Karthoum States which includes 33 riverine forests (5 878 ha), over 200 villages and 45 000 ha of agricultural land".

10-9-19

The Land Degradation outcomes are clear but the Global Biodiversity Benefits are not. What are the GEBs of the Forest Reserves that are being targeted for participatory sustainable management plans? According to the PIF, these 33 unique forest reserves are dominated by *Acacia nilotica*. While these forest appear to render services for the surrounding areas, could they be considered of Global Importance? Do they really generate Global Biodiversity Benefits? If there are no Global Biodiversity Benefits, why not using the Marginal Adjustment and develop an LD project only? The project could still work in the conservation of the forest reserves for them to render the environmental services need by the local population and agriculture.

11-05-19

Cleared

## **Agency Response**

October 2019

Please, consider the adjustments proposed in the PIF. Additional language on global significance of the proposed riparian ecosystem has been added in part II.1 of the PIF. Also, the results matrix has been revised to more explicitly feature biodiversity and ecosystem conservation.

The Sudanese riverine forest ecosystems are a globally recognised Key Biodiversity Area, providing a habitat for many plant and animal species. In particular, it helps sustain large populations of many different resident and migratory bird species. The project proposes to tackle the threats to these riverine forest ecosystems by mainstreaming BD conservation and sustainable use into the forest and agriculture sector plans. This is coherent with the main threats and barriers, i.e. outdated forest management plans (not considering the ecosystem and ecosystem services but only focusing on 1 tree species), and unsustainable agricultural production practices and agricultural encroachment. The project is aligned to BD programme 1.1 of the GEF-7 programming directions.

September 2019

The project adopts a landscape approach. Within the riverine forest landscapes, there are multiple land uses. The key feature of the landscape are the riverine forest reserves, while the area is dominated by intensively farmed croplands, crisscrossed with networks of irrigation channels, and grasslands. In the PIF, both are addressed, as they interact, are inter-dependent and strongly connected land uses.

Indeed, the areas selected for project intervention have been described and include forest ecosystems (i.e. riverine forest reserves that represent habitats for migratory bird species, but also provide important ecosystem services) and forest landscapes (the wider landscape beyond the forest ecosystem that directly interacts, negatively or positively, with the forest reserves and is mostly agriculture land and grassland). The emphasis of the project is on restoring and sustainably utilizing the ecosystem services provided by the riverine forest ecosystems, and this cannot be done working in the forest ecosystems/reserves only. Also the surrounding production land needs to be managed differently in order to protect the reserves from further degradation.

Therefore, the purpose of introducing sustainable land management (SLM) practices on production land is to sustainably intensify production and put a hold onto the continued forest encroachment and decline of fragile ecosystems, biodiversity erosion and ecosystem services decline.

#### **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**

4-08-19

##### Component 1

1. It is not clear why the project wants to spend \$900,00 in preparing 33 integrate and participatory sustainable management plans for riverine forest landscapes, ensuring conservation of biodiversity if it plans to implement only 6 CAPs in Component 2. What is the difference between the two concepts?

2. Far too many soft targets activities on TA (Mapping and analysis, Assessments, Operational guidelines, Community Action Plans, Sustainable financing strategy, Local and national sector policies and plans assessed and amendments proposed). It is not clear that it is necessary to spend \$900,000 in soft target TA activities when the budget for Implementation for 6 pilots is GEF \$1.2 Million. What about reducing the "desk jobs" and increase the number of pilot sites or the investment for the selected pilot sites?

3. Local institutions equipped. Please provide names of institutions. Names must be known by now.

#### Component 2

3. It is difficult to envision the size and position of the pilot sites. If the total area of these 6 pilots is 50,878.00 ha, the proposed investment in this component would be \$23/ha. That is a significant investment.

4. Is the project going to be able to measure the indicator "Productivity on production land surrounding the 6 pilot riverine forest reserves increased" (% increase TBC during PPG)? How and how much is that going to cost?

5. What ecosystem services the local communities are suppose to measure?

6. If all co-financing in the project is Recurrent Costs, who is going to cover the implementation of these new management plans?

7. What is the difference between the "integrated and participatory sustainable management plans for riverine forest landscapes" of Component 1 and the Community Action Plans?

#### Component 3.

7. Is it necessary to use \$414,025 for KM? What would be the most cost-effective mechanism, rooted in the river culture, to do the dissemination of knowledge? What are these "multi-stakeholder fora"

10-9-19

1. It is the understanding of the GEF, that the 6 areas where the Community Action Plans will be implemented, also contain forest reserves that will benefit from participatory sustainable management plans. Is that correct?

There are three issued related to this matter:

A) Why to do participatory sustainable management plans for 33 forest reserves when there is no funding associated with the implementation of these plans? Or is the co-financing provided by BRIDGES for the restoration of 5,000 ha going to be used for the implementation of all these plans?

B) Please clarify the funding provided by the co-financiers. There are different numbers throughout the project. In addition, it is not clear if BRIDGES is co-financing the project. Appears with \$10.3 million (Component 1 + 2 +3) in the section 5) Incremental/additional cost reasoning...., and \$3.6 million or \$1.5 million (not clear) in 2) The baseline scenario. Nevertheless, it does not appear in the co-financing table. Please square the numbers.

c) Has FAO and the Government consider concentrating planning and investment in only the 6 areas that have CAPs and Forest Reserves?

2) What is the budget for the Natural Capital Assessment in Component 1? Some countries are using an entire MSP to work on the NCA. Please clarify the scope of the work (what ecosystems will be assessed).

11-05-19

Cleared

## **Agency Response**

November 2019

1. Yes, that is correct. The management plans for the Forest Reserves will be revisited, and aligned with the CAPs. The CAPs have a wider scope and include other land uses at the margins of the forest reserves. They provide a real opportunity to integrate land uses, while considering the carrying capacity of the ecosystem and the needs and priorities of the local population depending on the ecosystem services and goods.

A. The language used is confusing. Therefore, the PIF has now opted for simplified language. The results matrix in table B has been revised and it is explicitly mentioned what outputs contribute to either the revision of the forest reserve management plans or the development of Community Action Plans. Also the text in Part II.1 has been complemented.

B) Numbers have been double-checked and are coherent with the calculations that were done and included in the PIF. Please, see the summary table of the co-financing:

	Butana Dvlp Agency BIRDP	FNC BRIDGES	IFAD SNRLP	FAO TCP	FNC in-kind	TOTAL
Comp 1		\$1,100,000	\$1,500,000	\$250,000	\$100,000	<b>\$2,950,000</b>
Comp 2	\$8,900,000		\$2,000,000		\$200,000	<b>\$11,100,000</b>
Comp 3		\$400,000				<b>\$400,000</b>
PMC	\$100,000			\$50,000	\$50,000	<b>\$200,000</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$9,000,000</b>	<b>\$1,500,000</b>	<b>\$3,500,000</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>	<b>\$350,000</b>	<b>\$14,650,000</b>

This table has also been added, as a summary in Part II.5 of the PIF.

C) The link between the management plans of the riverine forest reserves and the CAPs have been clarified in table B of the PIF.

2. Some additional language has been provided in the PIF in table B and in Part II.1, mentioning an initial list of ecosystem services.

The cost of NCAA needs to be specified during PPG, and will depend on data available, the complexity and need for re-alignment of the national framework to the international framework, the number and nature of accounts proposed and the needs for capacity development within the FNC (primarily) to manage these accounts. An envelope of about USD300,000 has been foreseen at PIF stage. Please, note that it is not the ambition of the project to carry out a full-fledged SEEA-AFF. Rather, the project will focus on selecting a number of priority SEEA accounts that enable an analysis of the ecosystem services delivered by the riverine forests in integration with relevant land uses and sectors, and attempt to cost them. This will enable a more evidence-based and data-fed management and financial planning exercise of the FNC, and allow the FNC to mobilise other actors and sectors in support of conservation and sustainable management of these ecosystems, at the national and local levels.

**September 2019**

## **Component 1**

1. Please, allow us to clarify how the 2 concepts are related. The ‘integrated and participatory sustainable management plans’ refer to the plans for forest reserves, as they are under the responsibility of the FNC only. The concept emphasizes the novelty introduced by the project, and that is informed decision-making which involves communities living from, in and around riverine forest ecosystems. With 33 riverine forest reserves in the country, the PIF proposes to develop shared principles that define management plans, anchored in information and data on BD status, and cultural, social, economic, and environmental values and uses. Information and data will be collected and made available for the whole of the riverine forest reserves, 33 in total, and not just for the 6 pilot reserves and their wider landscapes. In sum, the integrated and participatory sustainable management plans propose amendments to the existing forest management plans of the FNC, which have limited scope and are largely outdated.

Still, FNC does not have the mandate and authority to manage the land surrounding the forest reserves. Aiming to integrating the forest reserves into their wider landscapes, a proposal is made to embed these integrated and participatory sustainable management plans into Community Action Plans that go beyond the forest reserves, and includes the production land as well. CAPs are roadmaps that describe community needs (and how to accomplish them), the activities required during specific periods of time and resources (funds, workforce and equipment) needed in order to be successful. CAPs are designed at community level and are fully aligned with the riverine forest management plans under the purview and responsibility of the FNC. Furthermore, this concept also includes the financial plan to implement the CAP, therefore exploring different public and private funding opportunities.

CAPs therefore complement and embed the integrated and participatory sustainable management plans.

2. The budget for component 1 was reduced to accommodate the concern raised. Still, considering the costs of investments under component 2, increasing the number of pilot sites is not possible at this moment in time. During PPG, a more detailed costing of project activities will be carried out, and the lion share of the GEF grant will be allocated to lasting investments in pilot sites rather than technical assistance work. It is recalled though that this assessment work, considered soft targets, is equally important, as it supports behavioural change, the creation of an enabling environment for policy change (influencing decision making and policy instruments), the potential increase of financing for natural capital management, and therefore the sustainability of project results achieved through demonstration activities (the direct GEBs achieved). It is also very much aligned with the programming directions for BD mainstreaming projects, which see a three-pronged approach (spatial and land-use planning, improving and changing production practices, and developing policy and regulatory frameworks and financial mechanisms). This is necessarily in part TA, and in the Sudanese context where over the years resources for public services have become scarcer, an important share of the GEF grant.

Having said this, the project design team will assure, as this is a guiding principle, the best and most cost-effective use of GEF grants is being made, limiting TA, and maximizing direct achievement of GEBs, through fieldwork in demonstration sites with the involvement of local stakeholders.



3. The targeted institutions are FNC, Farmer unions, Women unions, village development committees and the Environmental Conservation Society. These have been added in table B of the PIF.

## **Component 2**

3. Please, allow us to explain the figure identified under core indicator 4.1. Indeed, the aim of the project is to conserve and sustainably manage the ecosystem services provided by the Sudanese riverine forest ecosystems, and this through improved practices in and around these forest ecosystems. Adopting a landscape approach, both the production land (totaling 45,000 ha of land in total) and the forest reserves (5,878 ha of fragmented and degraded forest strands in the Gezira State) will see the management improved, through improved management plans, structures and implementation of concrete sustainable management practices. Sub-indicator 4.1 is the selected indicator, as it better reflects the ultimate expected benefit of conserving a fragile yet important ecosystem from an ecological point of view (classified habitat), and a socio-economic and cultural point of view. Co-benefits, as important to the local communities, are the improved soil and water health from the improved management practices, the sustainably intensified production, and therefore improved access to food, energy, water, livelihoods, etc.

4. The productivity metric proposed goes beyond the yield per hectare or per animal. It allows aggregation of various agricultural products, reflecting integrated farming systems, such as the ones found in the targeted areas of the project. The method proposed is based on the one of SDG indicator 2.4.1 and in particular sub-Indicator 1 (Farm output value per ha).

The farm output corresponds to the volume of agricultural output at farm level taking into account production of multiple outputs, e.g. crop and livestock. Since the volume of agricultural outputs is not measured in commensurate units (e.g. not all outputs are measured in tons, and tons of different outputs represent different products), outputs are aggregated in terms of value (i.e. quantity multiplied by prices). The value of the (gross) production is calculated in local currency and converted to PPP\$ (Purchasing power parity).

A survey collects data (quantity produced, the quantity sold, and the price at the gate) about the top 10 most important crops, the 10 most important animal products, and the 10 most important activities/services within the system at farm level. The cost to monitor this indicator is therefore the cost of the survey of a sample group in target communities (baseline survey to be covered through PPG). Furthermore, survey data can be complemented by proxies (vegetation cover, NDI index, ...) monitored remotely, available at no cost through FAO's Open Foris toolbox.

5. Great emphasis is placed on participation from local stakeholders, not only in the planning, but also the management and this includes monitoring and evaluation. In this task, stakeholders are receiving expert support from FNC, and other extension service providers. The Natural Capital Assessment exercise foreseen in component 1 will help fine-tune and cost the ecosystem services, but the key services (as mentioned in the PIF under Threats and Barriers, first paragraph) are erosion control, and soil quality.

6. The sustainability and replicability of the project results, which include management plans, depends on the support received locally and nationally (behavioral change and changed attitudes) but more importantly financing made available to sustain, monitor, evaluate, perpetuate the management of the key ecosystem services provided by riverine forest landscapes. Therefore, the project component 1 assesses financing sources, public and private, and proposes financial strategies for CAP implementation and multi-stakeholder platform functioning in the medium-long term. One important source of funding is the FNC, where its regular budget spending will be providing continued support, as the management plans are to be amended and mainstream biodiversity conservation for instance. The private sector investments made by the Sudan Charcoal Producers Association will be catalyzed as well, through the amendments put forth by the integrated and participatory sustainable management plans for the forest reserves. Other private investments into driving value chains for NWFPs of the riverine forest ecosystems will be valued and ensure continuity.

7. This point has been clarified above.

### **Component 3**

7. In order to accommodate this concern, the budget for knowledge management, though considered fundamental for behavioural change, learning and replication, has been reduced, and USD100,000 from the GEF grant has been transferred to component 2. The total grant allocated to component 3 is now USD314,025, which covers both the M&E of the project (roughly USD120,000) and the communication strategy and its application (roughly USD 200,000). For this latter, the project will adopt the Communication for Development approach. This is a tried and tested approach believed to be a key driver in agriculture and rural development, as it plays a strategic role in facilitating knowledge generation and sharing, while fostering the active engagement of concerned actors in development initiatives through dialogue and participatory decision making. It is a results oriented communication process based on dialogue and participation, that allows rural people to voice their opinions, share knowledge and actively engage in their own development. The application of the ComDev approach is, understandably, not limited to component 3, but it is integrated throughout the project components, with component 3 delivering on the main elements of this approach, including communication assessment and strategy design, participatory planning and part of the implementation (complementing some activities already foreseen in components 1 and 2).

A broad range of methods and tools is applied throughout the ComDev process, including local media and ICTs, and the selection of the media and channels is part of the strategic design phase of the process. A number of communication tools and channels will be analysed, including: traditional print and broadcast media, social media and ICTs, advisory and information service providers, local institutions and social networks, opinion leaders, knowledge brokers and role models (such as community leaders, traditional healers, ...), etc.

The question regarding the multi-stakeholder fora has been addressed below, responding to the questions on Knowledge Management.

## 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**

4-09-19

The co-financing is significant assuming it becomes effective during project execution. The only issue is that if all co-financing is in Recurrent Costs, how is the implementation of either the "integrate and participatory sustainable management plans for riverine forest landscapes" or CAPs going to take place? With the \$2.6 M from GEF?

10-9-19

Please ensure that the co-financing figures that appear in the text add up to the numbers in the co-financing table. See comment under item 2.

11-05-19

Cleared

### **Agency Response**

November 2019

Numbers have been cross-checked.

September 2019

The PIF has been amended in order to address this concern. I.e. the definition of investment mobilized (since, better understood and definitions standardized agency-wide) has been revisited. Fully aligned with GEF’s co-financing policy, the updated definition better values investments made by partners (in particular the Butana Development Agency and IFAD) in support of the project objective and outcomes. A detailed description of the contribution of each of these investments to the achievement of project results is available under point 5 (Incremental/additional cost reasoning) in Part II (Project Justification), Question 1.a (Project Description). The table is reported here below for ease of reference.

Component	Baseline and co-financing	<i>GEF support and financing</i>
1	<p>As the FNC is currently in charge of the management of riverine forest reserves, the baseline is the in-kind support of FNC. FNC’s contribution is about USD 100 000, which includes the provision of staff, office space (central of State-based) and consultation activities over the full duration of the project.</p> <p>Moreover, the BRIDGES investment planned restoration of 5,000 hectares of dryland forests and landscapes will be of interest for the production of guidelines and involvement of local farmers, stakeholders and communities under component 1. USD1,100,000 of the BRIDGES investment is accounted as co-finance here.</p> <p>Component 1 of the IFAD SNRLP project will support community NRM planning in the same region, and USD1,500,000 is considered grant co-financing.</p> <p>Also a dedicated FAO TCP project will be designed so as to complement assessment work under component 1 to the tune of USD250,000.</p> <p>Total co-finance component 1: USD2,950,000</p>	<p>The GEF project will provide capacity development support and help particularly the FNC and the MoA in the development of a solid landscape restoration and management planning framework. The GEF grant is USD 800 000.</p>

2	<p>Collaboration will be established with the BIRDP project listed in the baseline to ensure complementarity, avoid duplication and ensure the out-scaling of results. The grant contribution to this component is USD 8,900,000. Also component 1 of the IFAD SNRLP project will support implementation of community NRM and livelihood investment plans, and USD2,000,000 is considered grant co-financing. Total grant contribution to this component 2 is USD10,900,000.</p> <p>In addition, the provision of staff, facilities, materials, mapping, consultation and training activities, support to infrastructure and engineering interventions in the sites will be the in-kind contribution of FNC, as well as the management plans and the expertise of FNC with riverine forest ecosystems, time/labour of local communities, trained forest guards and individuals involved in the agroforestry initiatives. In-kind contribution by FNC is estimated at roughly USD 200 000</p>	<p>This component is the most resource-intensive: USD 1,400,000 The GEF project will cover the cost of demonstration on the ground of solid technical natural resource management options based on integrating different competing land uses.</p>
3	<p>The project will build a communication strategy based on previous activities of FNC and projects listed in the baseline (BRIDGES - compilation, management and sharing of knowledge and good practices, promoting communications and visibility) and coordination sections. The communication will be streamlined at local, national and international levels, using State, Government and FAO's channels.</p> <p>Grant contribution from BRIDGES is estimated to be USD400,000.</p>	<p>The project will focus on local community involvement and raising awareness on the importance of riverine forest landscapes for biodiversity conservation and provision of ecosystems services. Best practices, lessons learnt and the outreach material will be disseminated through the collaboration with the projects listed in the baseline and coordination section. The project will also cover the cost of project monitoring and evaluation. The cost of this component is about USD 314,025</p>
4	<p>FNC, FAO and BIRDP will also contribute to the management costs of the project for an estimated amount of USD200,000.</p>	

**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**

4-09-19

Sudan has BD \$3,000,000 in STAR and it is using \$2,890,500. Agency Fee is 9.5%.

Cleared

NOTE:

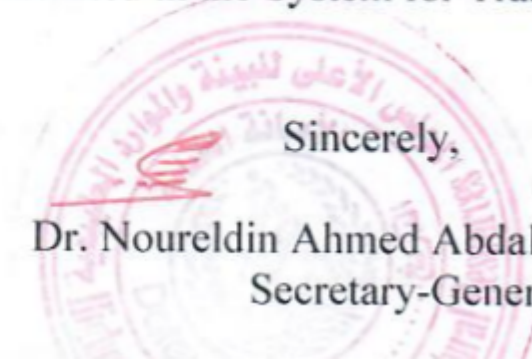
The Project amount in the letter (\$2,589,726) is different from the amount in the Portal (\$2,639,726). Please ensure the amounts are the same.

Source of Funds	GEF Agency	Focal Area	Amount (in US\$)			
			Project Preparation	Project	Fee	Total
GEFTF	FAO	Biodiversit	150,000	2,589,726	260,274	3,000,000
(select)	(select)	(select)				0
(select)	(select)	(select)				0
(select)	(select)	(select)				0
<b>Total GEF Resources</b>			150,000	2,589,726	260,274	3,000,000

I consent to the utilization of Sudan's allocations in GEF-7 as defined in the System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR).]

Sincerely,

Dr. Nouredin Ahmed Abdalla  
Secretary-General



## A. Indicative Focal/Non-Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Amount(\$)
BD-1-1	GET	2,639,726
	<b>Total Project Cost (\$)</b>	<b>2,639,726</b>

Please also take into account that the Agency Fee for the Project and PPG must come from the Agency fee in the LoEs.

Thus, the Agency Fee for the Project should be \$246,024 and the Agency Fee for the PPG should be \$14,250. Please recalculate and resubmit.

11-05-19

Cleared

**Agency Response** The amounts have been adjusted in order to assure coherency with the LOE.

The STAR allocation?

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

4-09-19

Sudan has BD \$3,000,000 in STAR and it is using \$2,890,500.

Cleared

**Agency Response**

**The focal area allocation?**

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

4-09-19

Sudan has BD \$3,000,000 in STAR and it is using \$2,890,500.

Cleared

**Agency Response**

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

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

NA

**Agency Response**

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

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

NA



**Agency Response**

Focal area set-aside?

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

NA

**Agency Response**

Impact Program Incentive?

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

NA

**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**

4-8-19

PPG is \$100,000, the upper limit for FSP up to \$3M

Cleared

Please also notice that the amount for the PPG in the LoE (\$150,000) is different from the amount in the Portal (\$100,000).

Source of Funds	GEF Agency	Focal Area	Amount (in US\$)			
			Project Preparation	Project	Fee	Total
GEFTF	FAO	Biodiversit	150,000	2,589,726	260,274	3,000,000
(select)	(select)	(select)				0
(select)	(select)	(select)				0
(select)	(select)	(select)				0
<b>Total GEF Resources</b>			150,000	2,589,726	260,274	3,000,000

## E. Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

PPG Amount (\$)                  PPG Agency Fee (\$)  
100,000                              9,500

Agency	Trust Fund	Country	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Amount(\$)	Fee(\$)	Total(\$)
FAO	GET	Sudan	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	100,000	9,500	109,500
<b>Total Project Costs(\$)</b>					100,000	9,500	109,500

Please also take into account that the Agency Fee for the Project and PPG must come from the Agency fee in the LoEs.

Thus, the Agency Fee for the Project should be \$246,024 and the Agency Fee for the PPG should be \$14,250. Please recalculate and resubmit.

11-05-19

Cleared

**Agency Response** The adjustment has been made in the Portal, and coherency has been assured with the LOE.

**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**

4-8-19

Indicator 4.1: Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (hectares, qualitative assessment, non-certified) 50,878.00 ha

Cleared

**Agency Response**

**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**

4-9-19

Yes.

Cleared

## **Agency Response**

### **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**

4-17-19

The main environmental threat, as relates to the current BD project, is the degradation and destruction of riverine forests (*Acacia nilotica*) for the extraction of fire wood and production of charcoal.

1. It is not clear how the barriers listed in the PIF (i.e. Integrated land use approaches, lack of tool and instruments, and lack of awareness about sunut forest BD status and value") relate to the actual problem. the lack of alternatives of wood for fuel and charcoal? If the forests are being degraded and cleared for firewood and charcoal, what is the project going to do about it since restoration will take years to render tangible results on the ground?

10-9-19

The answer provided does not respond to the question: If the forests are being degraded and cleared for firewood and charcoal, what is the project going to do about it since restoration will take years to render tangible results on the ground?

11-05-19

Cleared

## **Agency Response**

November 2019

Please, consider that illegal woodfuel and charcoal collection and production, as mentioned and documented earlier, is not the greatest threat to the riverine forest ecosystems. However, the project will build this threat into the management plans and aim at proposing sustainable alternatives to the current practices of collection and production to meet local needs.

The immediate actions to tackle the pressure caused by wood collection for woodfuel and charcoal production have been provided as an example in the PIF

September 2019

The PIF lays out the multiple treats to the riverine forest ecosystems, which are not limited to illegal woodfuel and charcoal collection and production. Instead, there is a complex set of treats and root causes explaining the progressive degradation of these vulnerable ecosystems, including existing forest management plans and legal framework that neither involve nor benefit local communities and therefore poorly address - or omit altogether - basic needs of these communities, such as energy, grazing, land for agriculture, use of forest products for food, medicine, livelihood and other. These stressors, which have been documented, informed the project design, which puts a lot of emphasis on land use and natural resource planning and management at the landscape level in an integrated fashion (i.e. actively involving local communities and different land users) for biodiversity conservation. The CAPs (see above) are quite likely to include energy needs and carrying capacity of the ecosystem to sustainably produce woodfuel and charcoal, providing a shared, mutually understood and agreed alternative to illegal and unsustainable cutting. Firstly assessing the value of this specific ecosystem service provided by the riverine forests (applying SEEA AFF framework), alternatives for better management will be proposed, and these could include dedicated forest strands with multi-year plans for community use directly, where access is managed through licenses, permits, quotas, rights, ... or an umbrella concession with the Sudan Charcoal Producers Association, as hinted at in the PIF. In that sense, the project can learn, adopt, replicate and scale-up best practices and lessons learnt from planned and sustainable charcoal production experiences in the country.

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

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

4-17-19

1. There are 4 large projects totaling over \$117 million listed as baseline. What are these baselines investments and will be invested in the target areas? Not clear what the GEF can add in the space if this is the case.

10-9-19

Cleared

## **Agency Response**

The incremental cost reasoning section had hoped to convincingly respond to this question. In addition, addressing the concern raised of GEF additionality, please consider the following:

- Butana Integrated Rural Development Project focuses on livelihoods of rural poor pastoralist households, improving their resilience in the face of drought. Therefore, along capacity development of key actors at multiple scales, the project makes large investments in market infrastructure, and governance structures for water and range resources mainly. Component 2 of the GEF project greatly benefits from these investments made directly in the same geography, and other parts of Butana (which cuts across a number of administrative borders, and is larger than the GEF project area, hence the reason for valuing only part of the investments as co-finance).
- BRIDGES is a fairly small project, only in part operating in the same geography as the GEF project. Still, it invests in restoration activities and identification and demonstration of 'good' practices that can be integrated in some GEF project outputs (see PIF for description of baseline projects) to be used more systematically throughout the riverine forest landscapes.
- Sustainable Natural Resources and Livelihoods Programme operates in Butana, but also in the Kordofan area, and therefore not the full USD62.94 million has been valued as co-finance. A lot can be learnt from the approaches, practices, and principles the SNRLP promotes, but the GEF project can be catalytic. Through a partnership with the SNRLP, aspects not considered systematically by the latter, such as biodiversity conservation, habitat protection, woodfuel and charcoal production (main elements of the GEF project), are hoped to be embedded. The learning is mutual, and contribution complementary (SNRLP strongly focuses on water management and value chains considered for development are not linked directly to the riverine forest ecosystems).
- Sudan Sustainable Natural Resources Management Project is a multi-phase GEF investment focusing on different ecosystems, operating in different geographies (partial overlap only) and involving somewhat a different partnership. Some approaches are similar and therefore, the FAO-GEF project can benefit from its lessons, both for project design and implementation.

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

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

4-17-19

Comments on the Components and Outputs were presented above.

1. The alternative scenario reads more like a SLM project than one for BD conservation. The interventions on the actual riverine forests are very limited and other angles of BD conservation are barely mentioned (i.e. sedentary and migratory birds). The PIF is mute about them.

10-9-19

Still unresolved as pointed in item 1.

11-05-19

Cleared

### **Agency Response**

November 2019

Please, consider the new language provided. A vast number of plant and animal species would benefit positively from their habitat restoration, in particular the close to 90 resident and migratory bird species for which this riparian ecosystem, a Key Biodiversity Area and bird sanctuary, is critical.

September 2019

Please, allow us to provide arguments to object to this conclusion. The project addresses the main drivers of the biodiversity loss, which are habitat change (loss, degradation and fragmentation) and unsustainable use. Addressing these drivers requires revisiting the management plans and practices both within the considered ecosystems as well as on the surrounding production land, equally contributing to the disturbance of the ecosystems. As recalled in the PIF, 84% of the riverine forests suffer from unsustainable farming practices and agricultural encroachment. It is therefore impossible to conserve these forests and their ecosystem services focusing on management of the highly fragmented and degraded forest strands only.

In response to what globally significant biodiversity the project helps conserve, indeed, the riverine forest ecosystems are a Key Biodiversity Area holding large congregations of global populations of different bird species. There are furthermore small mammals, but IUCN reports important data deficiency on status.

Aligned with the 2015 NBSAP of Sudan, and its BD vision to ‘*sustainably use of natural resources of Sudan, where biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and sustainably used to maintain ecosystem services, sustain health and deliver benefits essential for all people of Sudan, and hence contributing to the economic and social development in the country*’, the PIF oftentimes refers to the multiple ecosystem services provided by the riverine forest ecosystems, beyond a habitat for significant bird species. These are listed in the PIF, but it is also argued that data deficits require additional assessments, which are being proposed under component 1 of the project.

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

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

4-17-19

1. Although the project is aligned with BD-1-1, it is difficult to visualize the interventions on the ground (except forest restoration) when from space (Google Earth) the landscape along the Nile looks like all agriculture.

10-9-19

Back to the issue of the fit of this project with BD Global benefits.

11-05-19

Cleared

**Agency Response**

November 2019

Please, consider the suggested additional language in the PIF.

September 2019

The *Acacia nilotica* riverine forests are degraded and there are shreds left only. Riverine forest constitutes less than 2% of the area along the Blue Nile river, and are located mainly along the banks. Such conditions make them a unique niche and very important for the purpose of bank erosion control and biodiversity conservation



of fauna and flora. Small areas of riverine forest ranging from 100 to 400 ha are distributed in strip along banks of the river. This further justifies the need to restore connectivity before ecosystem restoration, but it also explains why these forests are difficult to visualize on Google Earth.

**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**

4-17-19

Since all the co-financing is coming from the Recurrent Costs associated with the ongoing activities of Government and IFAD (with the exception of \$300K from FAO as INV), the proposed activities are almost all incremental.

Cleared

**Agency Response**

**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**

4-17-19

The Core Indicators appear reasonable. Not clear if they can be achieved within time and budget.

Cleared

**Agency Response**

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

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

4-17-19

Not clear if there is much innovation in this project.

1. Is this the first time that local communities and producers engage in the management of the forests and agricultural lands utilizing the best practices available?
2. Who is going to provide the funds for sustaining the efforts once the project's funds and time run out (Forests will take longer to recover and will be used beyond this project). And who is going to provide the funds for replication?

10-9-19

The financial sustainability of the project is still in question. Please address at CEO Endorsement with concrete measures.

11-05-19

Cleared

### **Agency Response**

November 2019

During PPG, an extra effort will be made to address this concern in particular.

September 2019

1. Indeed, the innovation lays within the adoption of a landscape approach and participation of local communities in the conservation and sustainable use of forest ecosystem services. In the current context of transition, equitable access to natural resources by local communities is critical. The aim is to empower local communities and give them (and FNC) a more robust framework for active participation in forest and land management, one that can sustain new and diversified livelihoods for locals. Current agro-forestry practices in and around the forest reserves need to be improved (e.g. current permits for wood and NTFPs collection revised and streamlined with the need of local communities). At the same time, there will be a more structured dialogue between communities and FNC, training and sharing of experiences.

FNC already has some instruments to facilitate participatory approaches in forest management. The project can learn from a well documented success story in South Kordofan State, in which degraded Nabag Forest Reserves have been rehabilitated thanks to the adoption of agro-forestry systems in which *A. senegal* is inter-cropped with other crops by local communities. Participatory approaches have not been piloted in riverine forests though, and these have been managed since 1933 without

consideration of local community involvement. In the specific case of riverine forest reserves, local communities can ask for permits for dead wood, NTFP collection and grazing. A sensitive point is to raise awareness on the (cost/benefits sharing) responsibility that local communities can have in managing (and so protecting) forest reserves and at the same time perceiving an economic benefit from it.

2. This point has been touched upon in the co-financing question above. The sustainability of the project results is largely dependent on the financing made available to sustain, monitor, evaluate, and perpetuate the management of the key ecosystem services provided by riverine forest landscapes. Therefore, the project component 1 assesses financing sources, public and private, and proposes financial strategies for CAP implementation and multi-stakeholder platform functioning in the medium-long term. One important source of funding is the FNC, where its regular budget spending will be providing continued support, as the management plans are to be amended and mainstream biodiversity conservation for instance. The private sector investments made by the Sudan Charcoal Producers Association will be catalyzed as well, through the amendments put forth by the integrated and participatory sustainable management plans for the forest reserves. Other private investments into driving value chains for NWFPs of the riverine forest ecosystems will be valued and ensure continuity.

#### **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**

4-17-19

1. There is a map with the location of the 33 riverine sites. Need to provide the coordinates for the final sites at CEO Endorsement. Please acknowledge.

10-9-19

Cleared

#### **Agency Response**

The Coordinates are:

x 30,500428E

x 19,375839N

x 33,600148E

x 13,771841

**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**

4-17-19

Cleared

**Agency Response**

**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**

4-17-19

1. There is a good gender assessment in the PIF. For CEO Endorsement, please follow the requirements on Gender published in "Guidance to Advance Gender Equality IN GEF PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS". Please acknowledge.

10-9-19

Cleared

### **Agency Response**

This point is well taken and very much welcomed.

Indeed, during the PIF development phase, women have been consulted with specifically, sometimes in separate and targeted sessions. For instance, in the area in and around the Dallawt Forest, women have been consulted with as they play an important role in sunut thinning operations and woodfuel collection.

Women and Women Associations will remain involved in the consultation process throughout the PPG, and a full-fledged gender analysis will be carried out, using some sunshine tools FAO has developed over the past few years such as gender-sensitive value chains assessment tools. The proposed project approach will make sure that women/youth are targeted and given voice in the design process of management plans, in capacity development as well as investment activities. Objective and outcome indicators will be further refined to become gender sensitive.

### **Private Sector Engagement**

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

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

4-17-19

Cleared

### **Agency Response**

**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**

4-17-19

1. Please revisit the Risks and Mitigation measures in light of recent developments. Please elaborate on the feasibility of delivering TA and INV.

10-9-19

Cleared

**Agency Response** A risk was added, as suggested. Though a high-risk to timely project delivery, please be aware that the project will be mostly executed in rural areas somehow more remote from the unrest in the cities. At that level, local branches of FNC will take a leading role in project execution, delegating large part of it to local stakeholders (NGOs/CSOs, Farmer Unions). This highly decentralized approach not only helps mitigate political risk factors, but creates opportunities for meaningful stakeholder engagement, i.e. participation in public debates, direct involvement in sustainable forest management.

**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**

4-17-19

1. For CEO Endorsement, please explain on HOW this project will coordinate for the WB and UNDP projects cited in the PIF. Please acknowledge.

10-9-19

Cleared

**Agency Response** The Agency takes note of the comment and will include a description in the CEO Endorsement Request.

**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**

4-17-19

1. Please only cite the country's action plans that are relevant to this BD project. Unless the emphasis of the project is really with other UN Convention and it is not reflected in the structure of the project.

10-9-19

Cleared

**Agency Response** Even though this is a BD project, the project is not only contributing to the achievement of the CBD NBSAP priorities and targets. Nevertheless, as suggested, the language in the relevant section has been amended in order to de-emphasize the other convention (UNCCD and UNFCCC) strategies and plans. Still, taking these linkages out altogether would be a missed opportunity to recognize how landscape and ecosystem management approaches can deliver multiple environment benefits as well as social and economic benefits.

### **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**

4-17-19

1. What funds will be used to upscale and replicated across riverine forest landscapes?
2. What are these "Multi-stakeholders fora"? Is this really necessary and the best way to spread the knowledge in a riverine culture?

10-91-19

Cleared

### **Agency Response**

1. For all project activities within the forest reserves, for which the FNC has the mandate and responsibility, FNC's annual budget will be mobilized in order to ensure sustainability of project activities. FNC investments help support the replication of project successes in the other forest reserves present in the country.

Activities in the forest buffer zones, i.e. the surrounding production land are believed to be perpetuated and replicated if economic benefits are substantial. Profitable production systems and secured livelihoods are sustained by local forest dwellers and riverine forest communities and smallholders (agro-pastoralists). Private investments are therefore expected in these buffer zones.

2. In order to catalyze cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder coordination for the management, restoration and conservation of the forest landscapes, an improved mechanism for collaboration and advocacy is put in place, which has been called multi-stakeholder forum. At central level, the project will facilitate the cross-sectoral taskforce, a cornerstone in defining new ways of collaboration on issues cutting across agriculture and natural resources. At District level, work will focus on integrated landscape management and land use planning for which cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder collaboration are critical. In addition, the fora will play an advocacy role by supporting the identification of success stories highlighting the importance and benefits of past restoration and sustainable land management investments.

Please, note that these fora will not be the only mechanism to disseminate knowledge. The ComDev process will identify complementary channels to do so. By explicitly mentioning multi-stakeholder fora in the results matrix though, emphasis is put on the nature of the partnerships that need to be put in place and be functional in order for the project's intervention logic to be successful (multi-stakeholder, multi-sector and multi-level).

### **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**

4-17-19

Yes. The LoE was signed by the OFP that appears in the GEF website.

Cleared



## **Agency Response**

**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**

### **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**

4-17-19

No. Please address outstanding issues. The GEF is available for consultation on this review.

10-9-19

No. Please address outstanding issues. The GEF remains available for consultation in case a conference call may facilitate the understanding of the project and to address the questions put forward in this review.

11-4-19

No. Please address the financial issues items 4 & 5 (Project, PPG and Agency Fees) and resubmit.

11-05-19

This PIF 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**

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

PIF Review

Agency Response

Additional Review (as necessary)

