

Climate Smart Agriculture alternatives for upland production systems in Lao PDR

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

Yuki Shiga

GEF ID

10187
Countries

Lao PDR
Project Name

Climate Smart Agriculture alternatives for upland production systems in Lao PDR
Agencies

FAO
Date received by PM

12/8/2020
Review completed by PM

5/14/2021
Program Manager

	rotai Arta
	Climate Change
	Project Type
	FSP
	1 51
P	
C	EO 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 Yes.
	i es.
	Agency Response
	Project description summary
	2. Is the project structure/design appropriate to achieve the expected outcomes and outputs as in Table B and described in the project document?
	• •
	Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
	2021.02.03: Cleared. Earlier comment(s) are appropriately addressed.

Seems sufficient; however, please provide further explanation on structural change in Components/ Outcomes / Outputs in Section B, from that in the PIF. This should be explained along with the change in the budget allocation, particularly that of co-

financing (Part I ? 4). Section 1.a.8 explains this partially, but not along with the budget.

Agency Response

Well noted. Please see additional text under prodoc Section 1.a.8. and newly created table (embedded document; also uploaded in the roadmap section) with side-by-side comparisons of the PIF and prodoc logical frameworks, LDCF budgets, and co-financing, budgets, including explanations.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

Co-financing

4. Are the confirmed expected amounts, sources and types of co-financing adequately documented, with supporting evidence and a description on how the breakdown of co-financing was identified and meets the definition of investment mobilized, and a description of any major changes from PIF, consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 2021.05.10:

Cleared. Earlier comment(s) are appropriately addressed.

2021.02.03:

In-kind co-financing from IFAD is identified as investment mobilized. However, where co-financing truly meets the definition of "in-kind", it should typically be classified as "recurrent expenditures" rather than "investment mobilized". For further details, please refer to the Co-Financing Guidelines.

--

Please provide further explanation on the below:

Change in co-financing allocation for four components indicated in Section B.
 Particularly, Components 2 and 3 seem to have increased co-financing resource
 allocation by approximately \$2 million and \$3 million, respectively, while co financing for Component 4 appear to be reduced by nearly \$3 million. Please
 provide rational for this change along with the explanation for structural
 change in Components / Outcomes /Outputs (Part I - 2).

- 2. Although the total co-financing amount remain more or less at the level indicated at the PIF stage, ?type? of co-financing has changed drastically (e.g., about \$15 million ?grants? are gone, now fully ?loans?). Please provide rational for this change and possible impacts to the proposed project.
- 3. Table 7 in the project document seems to list co-financing from co-financiers other than IFAD and World Bank; whereas Section C in the CEOER is limited to those from these two institutions. Please provide sufficient explanation to this or update the Table 7 and/or Section C.
- 4. IFAD contribution, according to the letter (?evidence?), seems to state that their con-financing is ?in-kind?, not ?loans? as indicated in Section C.
- 5. There is no evidence provided for World Bank co-financing. (Letter from Ministry of Agriculture is attached, without explanation.)

Recommended action: Please address the above points.

Agency Response

Well noted. We have now reclassified the co-finance from IFAD as ?recurrent expenditures".

- 1. Please refer to the text and table (uploaded in the roadmap section) added in response to the prior comment, above, available in section 1.a.8 of project document/ CEO ER.
- 2. Please note that we have reclassified the type of co-finance to public investment (as well as in in-kind? please refer to the response to comment 4 below). The shift from grant-based to public investment-based co-financing is an artifact of aligning the project?s activities more directly with activities undertaken directly by the government. Whereas grant resources are largely administered via international organizations, public investments are administered via governmental ministries. Therefore, closely aligning this LDCF?s project?s activities with governmentally delivered initiatives (in terms of technical capacities and operational execution) best aligned with public investment co-financing.
- 3. Thank you for pointing this out. Table 7 illustrated activities that, based on consultations with a number of governmental departments, were identified as recurrent expenditures. However, they were not included in Section C as we do not have co-finance letters for those recurrent expenditures. In order to ensure consistency in the prodoc, Table 7 has been revised and ?recurrent expenditure activities? have now been moved to Table 8.

The co-finance from IFAD has now been re-classified as ?in-kind?.	
5. We have noticed that by mistake, the wrong document was uploaded as supporting evidence (a co-finance letter for Zambia?). This has now been corrected and the co-	
financier has also been revised accordingly (please also see our response to comment 2., above).	
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 Yes.	
·	
Agency Response	
Project Preparation Grant	
6. Is the status and utilization of the PPG reported in Annex C in the document?	
Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes.	
Agency Response	
Core indicators	
7. Are there changes/adjustments made in the core indicator targets indicated in Table E?	
Do they remain realistic?	
Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request	
2021.05.14: Cleared. Earlier comment(s) are appropriately addressed.	
2021.05.10	

Numbers do not seem to still match. For example, area of land managed for climate resilience is 72,600 ha in the ?CCA Indicator Framework? excel; however, 50,000 ha is mentioned in the ToC (under Adaptation Benefit). Please check.

2021.02.03

Core Indicator targets in the ?CCA Indicator Framework? do not match with those in the Adaptation Benefits identified in the Theory of Change. Please provide sufficient explanation and/or update the relevant section of the project document.

--

Please include Core Indicators indicated at the PIF stage as these seem to be missing from ?CCA Indicator Framework? excel attached to the CEOER.

Agency Response

May 2021

Apologies, the correct CCA indicator has been uploaded.

We have revised the CCA Indicator Framework to ensure that targets are corresponding with those identified in the Theory of Change.

The CCA indicator framework has been revised accordingly and uploaded in the roadmap section.

Thank you for noting this. The adaptation benefits identified in the ToC were based on the Core Indicator targets at PIF stage. The ToC has been revised to reflect the updated CCA indicators.

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 2021.05.14:

Cleared. Earlier comment(s) are appropriately addressed.

2021.05.10:

Please refer to review in Section I-7.

2021.02.03:

- 1. Core Indicator targets in the ?CCA Indicator Framework? do not match with those in the Adaptation Benefits identified in the Theory of Change. Please provide sufficient explanation and/or update the relevant section of the project document.
- 2. Thank you for updating some figures. However, some images are still difficult to read (e.g., Figure 1,2, 3). For those figures that byte size is too big to upload directly in the Portal, please at least replace them with clearer figures in the attached project document.

--

- 1. Items in ToC seem to be too ?coarse?. Please disaggregate each bullet pointed item under risks/barriers/outputs/outcomes/impacts and depict linkage/flow between each item.
- 2. In addition, please replace some figures with better resolutions/size as some are difficult to read (e.g., low resolutions: Figures 1 and 2; too large in size: Images 1 and 2) and fulfil those incomplete (?Annex XX?).)

Agency Response

- 1. As mentioned in the above, we have now revised the numbers in CCA Indicator Framework (uploaded in the Roadmap section) to ensure that targets are corresponding.
- 2. Duly noted. However, due to the file sizes which have caused issues with the Portal it is not possible to upload higher resolution maps. Therefore, a number of figures (mostly maps) have now been removed.

- 1. The ToC has been revised and updated accordingly.
- 2. About half of the images/maps have been replaced. However, due to the large size, unfortunately the Portal does not allow for all of them to be re-uploaded.

The annex letters have now been corrected.

NB: We also note the final comment to this review (below, in the end) informing that the "document entitled ?CEO Endorsement Letter? attached to CEOER seems to be prodoc, not CEO Endorsement Letter. ". This appears to be to an error generated by the system.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 2021.02.03:

Cleared.
Seems sufficient; however, depends on any further updates from comments on Part I ? 2 etc.
Agency Response
3. Is the proposed alternative scenario as described in PIF/PFD sound and adequate? Is there sufficient clarity on the expected outcomes and components of the project and a description on the project is aiming to achieve them?
Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion 2021.02.03: Cleared.
Seems sufficient; however, depends on any further updates from comments on Part I ? 2 etc.
Agency Response
4. Is there further elaboration on how the project is aligned with focal area/impact program strategies?
Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 2021.02.03: Cleared.
Seems sufficient; however, depends on any further updates from comments on Part I ? 2 etc.
Agency Response
5. Is the incremental reasoning, contribution from the baseline, and co-financing clearly elaborated?
Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 2021.02.03:

Cleared.
Cicured.
Seems sufficient; however, depends on any further updates from comments on Part I ? 2
etc.

Agency Response

6. Is there further and better elaboration on the project?s expected contribution to global environmental benefits or adaptation benefits?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 2021.02.03:

Cleared.

__

Seems sufficient; however, depends on any further updates from comments on Part I ? 2 etc.

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 2021.02.03:

Cleared. Earlier comment(s) are appropriately addressed.

--

Further elaboration requested.

- •- CEOER mentions ?innovative business model?; however, details of this business model need to be elaborated further, particularly on how this is innovative from the conventional business models.
- Sustainability of the project is not explicitly elaborated.

Recommended action: Please address the above points.

Agency Response

- A text box (Box 3) has been added to that phrase in Section 1.a.7. to explain the concept in more detail. In short, the project will produce numerous locally appropriate business models through participatory approaches; it is not advocating the replication of pre-set business models. The process of building local capacities to generate these models (of which local communities will have a sense of ownership) is at least as important as the production of the models during the project itself. The footnote provides examples of such models, but emphasizes that the prodoc is not preordaining what the models will be.

- Please note that ?sustainability? is referred to as ?durability? in the prodoc.[1]¹ Durability is discussed explicitly in prodoc Section 1.a.7: *Innovativeness, capacity development, potential for scaling up, and durability*.

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 Yes.
Agency Response
Child Project
If this is a child project, is there an adequate reflection of how it contributes to the overall program impact?
Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA
Agency Response
Stakeholders
Does the project include detailed report on stakeholders engaged during the design phase? Is there an adequate stakeholder engagement plan or equivalent documentation for the implementation phase, with information on Stakeholders who will be engaged, the means of engagement, and dissemination of information?
Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes.
Agency Response
Gender Equality and Women?s Empowerment
Has the gender analysis been completed? Did the gender analysis identify any gender differences, gaps or opportunities linked to project/program objectives and activities? If so, does the project/program include gender-responsive activities, gender-sensitive indicators and expected results?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 2021.05.25:

Cleared.

2021.05.19:

It is well noted that the a gender assessment/action plan has been attached. The project has ticked that it expects to closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources but the project submission does not include any measures or sex-disaggregated indictors that clearly suggest that this project will contribute to doing this. Please review and provide additional justification/information that this is the case and or revise the gender tag.

2021.02.03:

?PIF Gender Stuff? and ?Gender Action Plan and Budget? sections are listed in the ToC of the Gender Action Plan, but seem to be missing in the content.

Agency Response

Response to comment made on 2021.05.19

The project's gender tag has been revised, and the tag for closing gender gaps in access and control over NR has been unticked. However, the project will endeavor to do that during project implementation.

Response to earlier comment

Thank you for pointing this out - a revised Gender Action Plan has been uploaded.

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 2021.02.03:

Cleared. Earlier comment(s) are appropriately addressed.

--

From the project sustainability point of view, please elaborate further on how to ensure strong and continuous engagement from private sectors beyond the project timeframe without external grants to fund them.

Agency Response

The role of markets and the private sector in ensuring durability/sustainability of results is discussed in prodoc Section 1.a.7: *Innovativeness, capacity development,*

potential for scaling up, and durability. Please see the paragraph beginning ?These innovative, locally specific approaches will be supported by innovative options for blended financing. Moreover, whereas agricultural and rural investments in Lao PDR have historically been centrally planned with primary reliance on public funding, the project?s financing options will be integrated into a cascade-based approach that prioritizes private-sector investments, facilitative policy reforms, and the judicious use of public resources to ?prime the pump? for longer-term, market-sustained durability.? The cascade-based approach is explained under Outcome 1.1.

- In the same section, please also see the paragraph that begins ?The primary drivers of the project?s up-scaling and durability are: (i) local relevance and (ii) **market-based incentives**, ? and continues, ?Therefore, rather than relying on significant, sustained public investment, the project supports investments that generate market-based momentum (e.g., linking adaptive supplies with demands, linking climate-adaptive land-uses with improved livelihoods, etc.). The project?s targeted capacity-development efforts are aimed at facilitating these aspects.?

That section has now been expanded to offer further explanation of this connection.

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 2021.02.03:

Cleared. Earlier comment(s) are appropriately addressed.

--

Please further elaborate on the below:

- opportunity from the COVID if any.
- •- Further climate risk analysis; for example:
- > elaboration on climate hazards and rating of the key ones to assess the level of exposure /vulnerability of the project.
- > Discuss mitigation options and how they have been considered and included (and if not, why) in the project design

Agency Response

- The implications of COVID-19 for the project were already discussed in prodoc Section 5.a.1. A paragraph has been added discussing the potential to identify and capitalize on opportunities arising from COVID-19.
- The prior version of the prodoc included some climate-related risks in the risk table in Section 5.a. These risks and their corresponding mitigation measures have been further explicated as separate risks in that risk table. For further supporting evidence, please refer to the climate rationale for the project, uploaded in the roadmap section.

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 2021.05

Cleared. Earlier comment(s) are appropriately addressed.

2021.02.03:

Please reconsider the role of FAO to play partial executing role. CERO ER states that FAO will augment governmental delivery for (i) administrative functions, including institutional capacity development as appropriate and permissible (in accordance with LDCF programming guidelines), (ii) operational coordination via engagement of additional execution partners (NGOs) that the government has limited tools to engage, procurement, and partial staffing of the project management unit (PMU), which will be located in governmental offices, and (iii) some technical aspects and capacity development (e.g., development of materials for training of trainers, though training will be delivered by relevant governmental agencies).

However, looking into the past GEF projects in the Lao, the Government of Lao and/or the local execution partners seem to be capable of such activities (e.g., GEFID: 8022). If the Government of Lao is not capable of doing the job, please select another third party to do or help to do the job.

Recommended action: Please address the above points.

The execution arrangement has been revised, and FAO will not be playing execution role in the project. In consultation with the government, SNV will be the lead executing agency for the project, and government agencies will also work with SNV for specific exection roles, in addition to steering the project through the project steering committee.

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 Yes.

Agency Response

Knowledge Management

Is the proposed ?Knowledge Management Approach? for the project adequately elaborated with a timeline and a set of deliverables?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes.

Agency Response

Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS)

Are environmental and social risks, impacts and management measures adequately documented at this stage and consistent with requirements set out in SD/PL/03?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 2021.05.25: Cleared.

2021.05.19:

We note that the project overall ESS risk is classified as moderate and that FAO

attached the Environmental and Social Risk Identification/screening checklist and Environmental and Social Risk Management Plan. The screening checklist, however, does not identify any risk related to indigenous peoples. The ProDoc, however, state that ?Lao PDR is home to at least 49 ethnic groups comprising at least 240 sub-groups? (page 98). It also mentions that the National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI) will harmonize its activities under output 2.1.2 with its other related activities and coordinate with other agencies involved in local consultations (notably via DAFOs and DTEAP) to ensure that local consultations capture relevant indigenous knowledge and practices for consideration for inclusion (page 48). In addition, the ProDoc states that the stakeholder engagement plan will also ensure that the project complies with guidance on Free Prior Informed Consent by, inter alia, documenting participating communities? early and on-going engagement and consent as a part of Output 4.1.2 (page 65). Implementation of consultation process needs to be identified in the ESS screening process and to be reported as a part of regular monitoring process of ESS. Please provide further clarification/information on the ESS screening with regards to indigenous peoples and any measures to address issues related in implementation.

Agency Response

Response to comment made on 2021.05.19

The ESS has been updated, and revised ESS has been uploaded. The project will fully include FPIC, as required by FAO and GEF policies.

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 Yes.

Agency Response

Benefits

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes.

Agency Response

Annexes

Are all the required annexes attached and adequately responded to?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 2021.05.26: Cleared.

2021.05.25:

i. Allocation has been revised and TOR has been uploaded. However, still more than 80% seems to be allocated towards Outcomes 1.1-4.1. Please clarify in the TOR how and what this position is delivering for each Outcomes. ii.-vi. are cleared.

2021.05.19:

Annex E: Project Budget Table

- i. National Project Coordinator is minimally charged (1.4%) to PMC? this has to be charged to PMC (the GEF and the co-financing portion allocated to PMC)
- ii. GEF Funds cannot cover Government costs such as the renovation of Governmental offices? please remove
- iii. Inception workshop have to be covered by M&E budget
- iv. MTE & TE seem to have been charged twice to both Outcome 4.1 and the M&E
- v. Furniture for project offices should be charged to PMC. Same for electronic equipment.
- vi. Please further provide justification on the purchase and maintenance of Motorbikes.

Agency Response

Response to comment made on 2021.05.25

To clarify the TOR's technical role, the TOR is now "National Climate Change Adaptation Expert! Project Coordinator. It is hoped that this position will recruit someone with strong climate finance background, although expertise on this subject in Lao PDR is extremely low. The technical role of this position are clarified as below:

The National Climate Change Adaptation Expert/ project coordinator will play both a technical role and a management related role Under overall supervision of the executing partners, and technical guidance of the Chief Technical Advisor, and in close collaboration and coordination project partners, the National Project Coordinator will be responsible for daily supervision of the management and implementation of the project. The National Project Coordinator will have strong technical background on climate change adaptation in agricultural sector, and value chain development. Ideally, the person will have strong background on climate finance.

In terms of technical role, the expert will ensure that climate change adaptation is strongly built into all of project?s activities. The expert will support:

. Under Component 1, S/eh will:

- a. Play lead roles in working with senior policy makers and other national experts/ agencies in delivery of both Outputs 1.1.1 and 1.1.2. Specifically, s/he will ensure the following Outcome results are delivered: a. Published guidelines on participatory, gender-sensitive inter-sectoral planning and investment processes at national and sub-national levels; Number of inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms established., and A memorandum of understanding between relevant ministries?including MAF, MoIC, MoNRE, MPI, and LWU?detailing endorsement of the guidelines, including a cascade-based approach to blended financing.*
- b. Under Component 2: s/he will take significant role in Output 2.1.1, especially on *development / refinement of* Participatory climate risk and vulnerability assessments methodologies, building on international and national best practices. S/he will also ensure that actions under Component 1 on investment planning also strongly support *Output 2.2.3.*: Investment action plans..
- c. Under Component 3: similar to component 2, the role will be on ensuring strong links between all components on investment planning, in case of this component on *Output 3.1.2.*: Investments for resilient and sustainable value chains
- d. Under Component 4, the expert will be critical in collating, and disseminating results under Output 4.1.2 through knowledge networks and other methods, such as publications

- 1. The allocation of national project coordinator has been revised. Please note that the coordinator is expected to play both technical role and coordination role. This has been clarified in the TORs also uploaded.
- 2. Office renovation has been removed from the budget
- 3. Inception workshop is now under M&E
- 4. Duplication has been corrected
- 5. These are now charged to PMC
- 6. Given the remote locations of the project sites, extremely limited/unreliable and unsafe public transport and poor infrastructure (no roads), motorbikes are the most flexible and appropriate for access to communities that the project will work in. They are also relatively easier to maintain than larger vehicles and are also cheaper in purchase and maintenance.

Project Results Framework

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes.

Agency Response

GEF Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes.

Agency Response

Council comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes.

Agency Response

STAP comments

Agency Response
Convention Secretariat comments
Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA
Agency Response
Other Agencies comments
Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA
Agency Response
CSOs comments
Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA
Agency Response
Status of PPG utilization
Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes.
Agency Response
Project maps and coordinates
Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes.
Agency Response

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes.

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

NA

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

GEFSEC DECISION

RECOMMENDATION

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 2021.05.26:

Recommended for technical clearance.

2021.05.25:

Not yet. Please refer to the review item (Annex) and resubmit for consideration (please highlight the update).

2021.05.19:

Not yet. Please refer to the review items (gender, ESS and Annex) and resubmit for

consideration (please highlight the update).

2021.05.10 /2021.02.03:

Not yet. Please refer to the review items and resubmit for consideration (please highlight the update).

--

Not yet. Please refer to the review items and resubmit for consideration (please highlight the update).

Review Dates

Secretariat Comment at	Response to
CEO Endorsement	Secretariat
	comments

First Review	12/21/2020
Additional Review (as necessary)	2/3/2021
Additional Review (as necessary)	5/10/2021
Additional Review (as necessary)	5/14/2021
Additional Review (as necessary)	5/19/2021

CEO Recommendation

Brief reasoning for CEO Recommendations