



# Promoting Circular Solutions to Single-Use Plastic Consumption in Lao PDR. (Plastics IP)

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

## Basic project information

**GEF ID**

11190

**Countries**

Lao PDR

**Project Name**

Promoting Circular Solutions to Single-Use Plastic Consumption in Lao PDR.  
(Plastics IP)

**Agencies**

WWF-US

**Date received by PM**

6/28/2024

**Review completed by PM**

11/18/2024

**Program Manager**

Evelyn Swain

**Focal Area**

Multi Focal Area

**Project Type**

FSP

## CEO

### Part I - General Project Information

**1. a) Is the Project Information table correctly filled, including specifying adequate executing partners?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Executing partners need to be updated to include WWF.

Please correct the region.

Please remove mixed & others this field is only for CCM.

ES, 11/10/24: Comments addressed.

Agency Response

WWF GEF Agency Response:

Thank you for these comments. The Region cannot be adjusted in the portal as it was set at PIF stage in the portal.

We have updated executing partners to include WWF. Additionally, ?mixed and others? has been removed.

**b) Are the Rio Markers for CCM, CCA, BD and LD correctly selected, if applicable?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Yes.

Agency Response

### 2. Project Summary.

**a) Does the project summary concisely describe the problem to be addressed, the project objective and the strategies to deliver the GEBs or adaptation benefits and other key expected outcomes?**

- b) Does the summary capture the essence of the project and is it within the max. of 250 words?
- c) [If a child project under a program] Does the project summary include adequate and substantive link with the parent program goal and approach?

#### Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Please add the GEB amounts to the last paragraph in the projects summary.

- a) Yes, the project summary is concise and well written, providing a good description of the SUP problem the project is addressing.
- b) No, the project summary is over 650 words, more than double the allowable limit.
- c) The project summary does not provide adequate and substantive links to the overall Plastics IP.

ES, 11/10/24: Comments addressed.

#### Agency Response

WWF GEF Agency Response:

Thank you for these comments. We have added all GEB amounts to the summary.

- b. We have reduced words to meet the word count (now 250 words).
- c. Keeping in mind the 250 word count, the following text has been added: ?This project aligns to the Plastic Reboot goals, with an upstream, circular economy approach to reduce SUPs by promoting sustainable alternatives.? And ?The project will participate in knowledge sharing, communications, and monitoring activities to align with Plastic Reboot?.

#### 3. Project Description Overview

- a) Is the project objective statement concise, clear and measurable?
- b) [If a child project under a program] Is there a project Theory of Change that is aligned and consistent with the overall program goal and approach?
- c) Are the components, outcomes, and outputs sound, appropriate and sufficiently clear to achieve the project objective and the core indicators per the stated Theory of Change?
- d) Are gender dimensions, knowledge management, and M&E included within the project components and budgeted for?
- e) Are the GEF Project Financing and Co-Financing contributions to PMC proportional?
- f) Is the PMC equal to or below 10% (for MSP) or 5% (for FSP)? If above, is the justification acceptable?

#### Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Gender should be built into the components.

- a) Yes, the project objective is concise.
- b) No, the Theory of Change is generic and does not closely align with the overall Plastics IP. The subfigures underneath the main ToC figure are blurry and unreadable. The logic/justification for

why the focus on tourism and hospitality sectors is weak. What is the logic for how addressing the problem in these sectors will spillover into other business sectors in Laos? Especially on the consumer side since many of the consumers in the tourism and hospitality sectors will be international and thus not adopting the practices over the long-term in Laos. Further, there does not seem to be any attention given towards Component 2 of the Plastics IP PFD on mobilizing finance.

c) No. It seems that much of the work for achieving Component 3 is based on work in Component 2. Why isn't Component 3 an outcome under Component 2? Also note the above ToC comment on Component 3's focus on only tourism and hospitality sectors.

d) Yes, KM and M&E are included, including the development of a Gender Impact Assessment under the M&E.

e) Generally, yes. The PMC cofinancing ratio is 1:8 while the overall project cofinancing ratio is 1:7

f) Yes, the PMC is 4.76% of the total GEF project cost and 5% of the project subtotal

On the description overview table: Please request the agency to avoid the usage of decimals in the financial values.

ES, 11/10/24: Please delete decimals in the overview table.

ES/11/11/24: The agency has tried to remove the decimals twice, but they are still showing up. This must be a portal glitch.

### Agency Response

WWF GEF Agency Response 11/15/24:

Thank you for this note. The portal is automatically adding decimal points to the end of round numbers. Please see the screenshot of the portal number entry section overlaying the decimal number that is generated.

Child Project Outputs

1.1.1 Develop national policies that:

- Disincentivise and phase out key problematic SUPs
- Incentivize substitute materials/products

Trust Fund: GEF Trust Fund

GEF Child Project Financing(\$): 1144066

Confirmed Co-Financing(\$): 1960642

642.00

Save Cancel

1.1.3 Develop and

- 
- WWF GEF Agency Response 11/12/24:

Thank you for this comment. The overview table now has decimals removed from the table.

WWF GEF Agency Response:

b) The TOC has been revised to be in line with what the GEF is seeking in terms of a simple diagram that shows the links between barriers, levers, and components, as well as alignment with the ToC of the IP. Noting the text limitations in the main document a detailed ToC on each of the main project focus areas is provided in Annex 13.

Justification for focus on tourism and hospitality sector: Under the project rationale, we provide the justification for concentrating on the tourism and hospitality sectors, which is based on the 2021 World Bank study that found that 95% of plastic pollution in Laos is attributed to 10 items, of which 50% are food and beverage items. The study identified restaurants, cafes, bars, and tourist activities as major contributors to plastic pollution hotspots. Domestic tourists make up about 40% of the tourists in Laos and beyond tourism, dining in restaurants and bars is a significant aspect of daily life in Laos. According to the Ministry of Tourism, Information and Culture (MICT) tourism is also important to the green growth of other sectors, including agri-food and textiles/handicrafts. The NPAP also focuses on plastic generated by the tourism and hospitality sectors. This rationale has now been added to the ToC, as well as the justification section. There is no major plastic production in Laos, with most products being imported from neighbouring countries.

Mobilization of Finance: As recently noted by SWITCH-Asia: "Lao PDR does not yet have a sustainable finance policy to support green or sustainable enterprises. Lao PDR has two SME-focused programmes, yet not a specific focus on sustainability. One key issue: enterprises are almost exclusively informal micro enterprises. There are only a few options for SMEs - none of the financing options are dedicated to Sustainable Consumption and Production or even the broad green sector". As such, there is a reliance on development funds in Laos. As noted by Plan International, the investment climate is very limited due to the small population size and low GDP, meaning that Laos has been viewed as too small for financial service providers and other investors to implement green financing instruments.

Details on these limitations are provided under the 'cause of problems' under A. PROJECT RATIONALE in the ProDoc.

The Project seeks to make the businesses financially viable within the timeframe of the project by developing the products and the businesses themselves through technical and initial financial support via the FFEM. Furthermore, the project will seek opportunities via the international project for financing.

c) Component 2 focuses on the enterprises that develop alternative products and services, while Component 3 focuses on the tourism and hospitality businesses. These components are connected through the trialing of products and services and the fact that the tourism and hospitality businesses will be the primary business customers of the enterprises. The two components (Swisscontact C 2; Plan International C3) will be delivered by two separate development partners, continuing work that has already been commenced at a small scale. Component 2 will not just focus on these new products and services but will include support to develop wider sustainability practices (including downstream waste management under the FFEM), as well as achieve certification under Lasting Laos.

We have consulted extensively on this approach, and all development partners are in agreement that the split is logical based on implementation and sub-grant perspectives.

See the rationale above, which gives a robust argument for focusing on the tourism and hospitality sectors.

#### **4. Project Outline**

##### **A. Project Rationale**

- a) Is the current situation (including global environmental problems, key drivers of environmental degradation, climate vulnerability) clearly and adequately described from a systems perspective and adequately addressed by the project design?**
- b) Have the role of stakeholders, incl. the private sector and local actors in the system been described and how they will contribute to GEBs and/or adaptation benefits and other project outcomes? Is the private sector seen mainly as a stakeholder or as financier?**
- c) If this is an NGI project, is there a description of how the project and its financial structure are addressing financial barriers?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Great to have a certification scheme backed by the companies in Lao PDR. Could there be collaboration with Cambodia on such approaches?

Very good to see Coca-Cola Foundation now included in the list of co-finance.

a) Yes, the project takes an upstream approach towards addressing SUPs, leveraging a number of existing national baseline programs already underway. However, as noted above, the project could be improved to have better alignment with the overall Plastics IP ToC, such as a focus on mobilizing finance, especially private investment and innovative financing in Laos.

b) Partly. While there is evidence of good government and NGO participation in the project, there does not appear to be strong private sector buy-in. The project notes 'local enterprises' and 'local businesses' but it does not specify which were consulted during project preparation. It is also noted that none are provided letters of cofinancing. Why are national industry trade groups and national and international businesses not being engaged? What about other international private sector actors that play a role in SUPs in Laos from neighboring countries? One of the added benefits of participating in the Plastics IP is to leverage the global reach of the IP working with industry platforms and international corporations that have a plastics footprint in the child project countries. The project should evaluate how the IP's GCP can play a role in connecting private sector actors for policy change.

c) N/A

ES, 11/10/24: Comments addressed.

## Agency Response

WWF GEF Agency Response:

Thank you for these comments. The Lasting Laos scheme is only for Laos but is based on the broader Travelife Certification (Lasting Laos is less onerous). But, the lessons learned from this approach can and will be shared with Cambodia. The project could host a delegation from Cambodia to learn about the results (Cambodia covering their travel costs). A note on this has been added in the description of 1.1.3.

a) As mentioned above there are no innovative finance mechanisms in Laos with respect to sustainability. Laos is a Least Developed Country with substantial debt and a continuing reliance on development funds that are either grants or low-interest loans. During implementation, the project team will collaborate with the Plastic Reboot Global Project to see if there are opportunities for engaging in this area, but discussions during PPG did not raise potential. Note also that under Component 1 there will be improved regulatory instruments, including potential economic instruments (e.g., taxes/subsidies).

b)

- ? The stakeholder engagement strategy in Annex 5 provides details on the extensive consultation undertaken with the private sector (including Appendix 2 that provides documentation of the extensive meetings held already).
- ? This engagement included workshops in each of the three cities, bilateral meetings, and transect walks where the project development team consulted with business on a more informal basis, including numerous hotels and food and beverage businesses in the 3 cities. There is widespread buy in for the project (see appendix 2 of Annex 5 and note that in the transect walks we spent many days consulting with business).
- ? The project development team have consulted with industry bodies such as the Laos National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI), who are a key part of the project ? particularly under C1 where they will be provided with capacity strengthening and under C3 with regarding to tourism and hospitality businesses. The LNCCI, the Lao Hotel and Restaurant Association and the Lao Tourism Association will all sit on the National Project Steering Committee.
- ? We have also extensively engaged with innovation hubs like Lao Makerbox and business sustainability groups like Econo, who may be subcontracted under the project subject to procurement rules of partner organizations (Lao Makerbox would be key with respect to the Eco-Challenge in C2 under Swisscontact; and Econox may provide the support to businesses in C3 under Plan International (both parties are in agreement to support)).
- ? Regarding leverage from the IP, we have added text on private sector engagement to the document in the Project Rationale section under ?Strategic Approach?. During implementation the Laos project will scope out any potential involvement with global corporates.

## **5 B. Project Description**

**5.1 a) Is there a concise theory of change (narrative and an optional schematic) that describes the project logic, including how the project design elements are contributing to the objective, the identified causal pathways, the focus and basis (including scientific) of the proposed solutions, how they provide a robust approach? Are underlying key assumptions listed?**

**b) [If a child project under a program] Is the Theory of change aligned with and consistent with the overall program goal and approach?**

**c) Is there a description of how the GEF alternative will build on ongoing/previous investments (GEF and non-GEF), lessons and experiences in the country/region? [If a child project under a program] Does the description include how the alternative aligns with and contributes to the overall program goal and approach?**

**d) Are the project components (interventions and activities) described and proposed solutions and critical assumptions and risks properly justified? Is there an indication of why the project approach has been selected over other potential options?**

**e) Incremental/additional cost reasoning: Is the incremental/additional cost reasoning properly described as per the Guidelines provided in GEF/C.31/12? Has the baseline scenario and/or associated baseline projects been described? Is the project incremental reasoning provisioned (including the role of the GEF)? Are the global environmental benefits and/or adaptation benefits identified?**

**f) Other Benefits: Are the socioeconomic benefits resulting from the project at the national and local levels sufficiently described?**

**g) Is the financing presented in the annexed financing table adequate and demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objectives? Are items charged to the PMC reasonable according to the GEF guidelines?**

**h) How does the project design ensure resilience to future changes in the drivers and adaptive management needs and options (as applicable for this FSP/MSP)?**

**i) Are the relevant stakeholders (including women, private sector, CSO, e.g.) and their roles adequately described within the components?**

**j) Gender: Does the gender analysis identify any gender differences, gaps or opportunities linked to project/program objectives and activities and have these been taken up in component design and description/s?**

**k) Are the proposed elements to capture and disseminate knowledge and learning outputs and strategic communication adequately described?**

**l) Policy Coherence: Have any policies, regulations or subsidies been identified that could counteract the intended project outcomes and how will that be addressed?**

**m) Transformation and/or innovation: Is the project going to be transformative or innovative? [If a child project under an integrated program] Are the specific levers of transformation identified and described? Does it explain scaling up opportunities?**

#### Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Component 4.1.1 should not generate its own branding materials, including logos, and websites. All branding materials will be generated by the global project and the country projects should use the program branding, not generate their own. Please remove these components.

Component 4.2.1 key aspects of coordinating with the global project are missing. For example, contributing data on program indicators for the annual report. Please coordinate with the lead agencies, UNEP and WWF to ensure that you capture all necessary activities. There is a google doc checklist that should be used to develop this component.

Please explain how this project will coordinate with the Global Plastic Action Partnership (GPAP) activities that are ongoing in the country? The project should build off and integrate with ongoing initiative such as GPAP.

Private sector engagement needs to be elaborated in the project.

Will the project address mobilizing financing?

- a) Answered in Project Description Overview above
- b) Answered in Project Description Overview above
- c) Yes, the GEF alternative is well presented and builds on a well-established baseline
- d) Answered in Project Description Overview above
- e) Yes, the GEF alternative is well presented and builds on a well-established baseline
- f) The section on socioeconomic benefits is generic and poorly presented. It lacks any detail about what the impact will be specifically as a result of the project interventions.
- g) Yes, project financing seems adequate.
- h) There is no presentation of how the project was designed to ensure long-term sustainability in terms of impact and resilience to future changes.
- i) Partly. As noted above, the role of the private is poorly incorporated into the design of the project.
- j) Yes, activities promoting gender mainstreaming and woman's empowerment are well integrated into the project design.

k) Partly. The KM output 4.1.2 does not mention the specific knowledge products that will be developed by the project across the other components. Since much of the project is focused on behavior change and capacity spillover from one sector to others across Laos, it would suggest there is a lot more strategic thought behind KM for this project. There also does not seem to be any specific two-way sharing of KM with the GCP. How will this child project use KM from other child projects and globally to help achieve its own project outcomes?

l) The project seems to propose to do this analysis during project implementation.

m) The project is aiming to achieve transformation by working on SUPs up and mid-stream, versus past and current projects that have all focused on downstream post-consumer activities. If successful, the project could have a substantial impact on SUP in Laos. As noted elsewhere in this review, the project could however, benefit from more careful thinking on mobilizing private finance, including innovative financing tools and incentives, to be closer aligned with the overall Plastics IP.

ES, 11/10/24: Comments addressed.

## Agency Response

WWF GEF Agency Response:

Thank you for these questions and comments.

**4.1.1.:** The text has been updated to show that branding from the global project will be utilised.

**4.2.1.:** Further details have been provided.

The host secretariat for the GPAP in Laos has recently been announced by the World Economic Forum as UNDP. The GPAP will have similar stakeholders to this project, so there will need to be strong links with the PMU to ensure alignment with meeting synergies and shared resources, consultation workshops.

Regarding private sector engagement, we have added text to the document in the Project Rationale section under 'Strategic Approach'. During implementation the Laos project will scope out any potential involvement with global corporates

f) These aspects have been updated. It is challenging under the wordcount to cover everything off to a level that we would have liked. Additional text is now added to A. PROJECT RATIONALE, including the impacts of pollution (socio-economic) and under the strategic approach (private sector and livelihood support), with impacts of project interventions covered under the TOC.

h) Under the strategic approach, details are included on how the approach seeks to make the businesses themselves financially sustainable through technical and financial (FFEM) support. It is acknowledged that while policies will be developed, they are unlikely to be passed during the project timeframe due to the nature of the government in Laos. So, business sustainability is seen as the best chance.

- i) The majority of the project is about the private sector ? all of components 2 and 3 are focused on the private sector. Component 1 will improve the enabling environment, not just with respect to policy but also certification for private sector businesses.
- k) The products have been detailed throughout the document, but for word count, reasons were omitted from 4.1.2. However, a specific list of all knowledge products has now been provided in this section.

The two-way sharing with the Global Project and national projects has now been further articulated under 4.2.

- m) See previous responses on finance mobilization.

## **5.2 Institutional Arrangements and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Project**

- a) Are the institutional arrangements, including potential executing partners, outlined on regional, national/local levels and a rationale provided? Has an organogram and/or funds flow diagram been included?**
- b) Comment on proposed agency execution support (if agency expects to request exception). Is GEF in support of the request?**
- c) Is there a description of coordination and cooperation with ongoing GEF and non-GEF financed projects/programs (such as government and/or other bilateral/multilateral supported initiatives in the project area, e.g.).**
- d) [If a child project under an integrated program] Does the framework for coordination and collaboration demonstrate consistency with overall ambition of the program for transformative change?**

### Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

- a) Yes the institutional arrangements are presented, including a flow diagram.
- b) WWF is the Implementing Agency. WWF-Laos is proposing to provide support to the government that will host the PMU. Based on the WWF-Laos roles described in the proposal, this review believes what is being proposed is acceptable.
- c) Yes, the key baseline initiative that the project is leveraging include Swisscontact Laos, PLAN International Laos, and Coca-Cola Foundation.
- d) Partly. There is no real description in this section of how this child project is coordinating with the GCP or other child projects.

ES, 11/10/24: Comments addressed.

### Agency Response

WWF GEF Agency Response:

Thank you for this comment. Please note the adjustments made below:

d) This is provided in an extended section under 4.2.1

### **5.3 Core indicators**

**a) Are the identified core indicators calculated using the methodology and adhering to the overarching principles included in the corresponding Guidelines (GEF/C.62/Inf.12/Rev.01)? [If a child project under a program] Is the choice of core indicators consistent with those prioritized under the parent program?**

**b) Are the project's targeted contributions to GEBs (measured through core indicators and additional listed outcome indicators) /adaptation benefits reasonable and achievable? Are the GEF Climate Change adaptation indicators and sub-indicators for LDCF and SCCF properly documented?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Will UPOPs (Indicator 10) be achieved through the reduction of burning plastics?

ES, 11/10/24: Comments addressed.

### **Agency Response**

WWF GEF Agency Response:

Thank you for this question-

Yes, the burning of plastics will produce POPs from incomplete combustion and chlorinated plastics (note most PET water bottles have PVC labels).

### **5.4 Risks**

**a) Is there a well-articulated assessment of risk to outcomes and identification of mitigation measures under each relevant risk category? Are mitigation measures clearly identified and realistic? Is there any omission?**

**b) Is the rating provided reflecting the residual risk to the likely achievement of intended outcomes after accounting for the expected implementation of mitigation measures?**

**c) Are environmental and social risks, impacts and management measures adequately assessed and rated and consistent with requirements set out in SD/PL/03?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

The risks section is blank. Please update.

ES, 11/10/24: Comments addressed.

### **Agency Response**

WWF GEF Agency Response:

The Risk section is fully populated.

**5.5 For NGI Only: Is there a justification of the financial structure and of the use of financial instrument with concessionality levels?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

**6 C. Alignment with GEF-8 Programming Strategies and Country/Regional Priorities**

**6.1 a) Is the project adequately aligned with Focal Area objectives, and/or the LDCF/SCCF strategy?**

**b) [If a child project under an integrated program] Is the project adequately aligned with the program objective in the GEF-8 programming directions?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes, this project is in line with the Plastics IP.

Agency Response

**6.2 Is the project alignment/coherent with country and regional priorities, policies, strategies and plans (including those related to the MEAs and to relevant sectors).**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes.

Agency Response

**6.3 For projects aiming to generate biodiversity benefits (regardless of what the source of the resources is - i.e., BD, CC or LD), does the project clearly identify which of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework the project contributes to and how it contributes to the identified target(s)?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes, target 7, 15, 16, and 20.

Agency Response

**7 D. Policy Requirements**

**7.1 Are the Policy Requirement sections completed?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes.

Agency Response

**7.2 Is the Gender Action Plan uploaded?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

We request the Agency to upload the developed GAP. To strengthen the consideration of gender equality, please ensure that under outcome 2.2, women and women's groups are actively targeted and

supported. The Eco-Challenge Strategy, Annex 12, does not have gender-specific considerations. Please amend. Please ensure that women and women-led businesses are also targeted in Outputs 3.1.1,3.1.2 and 3.1.3. During project implementation, the PIRs, the MTE and the TE should include a review and reporting of the GAP and relevant gender dimensions of the project.

ES, 11/15/24: On Gender (comment provided by Uxue): The Eco-Challenge Strategy, Annex 12, does not have gender-specific considerations. Please amend. If the project is supporting women-led businesses and creation of jobs, Generating socio-economic benefits or services for women marker should be ticked.

ES, 11/17/24: Please add a description below in the agency response section on if and how the comment has been addressed.

ES, 11/18/24: Comment addressed.

## Agency Response

11/18/2024

WWF GEF Agency Response:

Thank you for flagging this. Specific actions to engage women in the Eco-Challenge have been added in the process stages in Annex 12.

The generating socio-economic benefits or services for women marker has now been checked

WWF GEF Agency Response:

Thank you for this comment. The Gender Action plan has been uploaded as ANNEX 6 and actively targets women and women's groups.

### **7.3 Is the stakeholder engagement plan uploaded?**

#### Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

We failed to find the stakeholder engagement plan in the Portal. Please attach the stakeholder engagement plan.

ES, 11/10/24: Comments addressed.

## Agency Response

WWF GEF Agency Response:

Thank you for this comment. The Stakeholder Engagement plan has been uploaded as ANNEX 5.

**7.4 Have the required applicable safeguards documents been uploaded?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes.

Agency Response

**8 Annexes**

**Annex A: Financing Tables**

**8.1 GEF Financing Table and Focal Area Elements: Is the proposed GEF financing (including the Agency fee) in line with GEF policies and guidelines? Are they within the resources available from (mark all that apply):**

**STAR allocation?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes.

Agency Response

**Focal Area allocation?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes.

Agency Response

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

**SCCF A (SIDS)?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

**SCCF B (Tech Transfer, Innovation, Private Sector)?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

**Focal Area Set Aside?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

**8.2 Project Preparation Grant (PPG)**

**a) Is the use of PPG attached in Annex: Status of Utilization of Project Preparation Grant (PPG) properly itemized according to the guidelines?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes.

Agency Response

**8.3 Source of Funds**

**Does the sources of funds table match with the amounts in the OFP's LOE?**

**Note: the table only captures sources of funds from the country's STAR allocation**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes.

Agency Response

**8.4 Confirmed co-financing for the project, by name and type: Are the amounts, sources, and types of co-financing adequately documented and consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines?**

**e.g. Have letters of co-finance been submitted, correctly classified as investment mobilized or in-kind/recurring expenditures? If investment mobilized: is there an explanation below the table to describe the nature of co-finance? If letters are not in English, is a translation provided?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Co-financing is low and there is no co-financing from the private sector or other organizations outside of those identified as supporting with execution.

The nature of the in-kind contributions, amounting to USD 268,000 from WWF-Laos and USD 166,000 from Swiss Contact Laos, is unclear (e.g., wages, facilities). These details should be clarified in the GEF Portal's co-financing field. For future projects, please ensure this information is included in co-financing letters.

bThe co-financing letter from MONRE has not been uploaded. Please ensure it is provided.

ES, 11/10/24: Comments addressed.

Agency Response

WWF GEF Agency Response:

This is noted, and during project implementation, links to additional private sector will be explored in partnership with the Global Project, and efforts made to include additional co-finance. Please note

that in addition to the project partners, co-financing from Coca-Cola is included. An associated project proposal is moving through FFEM, and if successful will be reported on as co-financing.

**Annex B: Endorsements**

**8.5 a) If ? and only if - this is a global or regional project for which not all country-based interventions were known at PIF stage and, therefore, not all LOEs provided:**

**Has the project been endorsed by the GEF OFP/s of all GEF eligible participating countries and has the OFP name and position been checked against the GEF database at the time of submission?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes.

Agency Response

**b) Are the OFP endorsement letters uploaded to the GEF Portal (compiled as a single document, if applicable)?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes.

Agency Response

**c) Do the letters follow the correct format and are the endorsed amounts consistent with the amounts included in the Portal?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes.

Agency Response

**Annex C: Project Results Framework**

**8.6 a) Have the GEF core indicators been included?**

**b) Have SMART indicators been used; are means of verification well thought out; do the targets correspond/are appropriate in view of total project financing (too high? Too low?)**

**c) Are all relevant indicators sex disaggregated?**

**d) Is the Project Results Framework included in the Project Document pasted in the Template?**

**e) [If a regional/global coordination child project under an integrated program] Does the results framework reflect the program-wide result framework, inclusive of results from child projects and specific to the regional/global coordination child project? [If a country child project under an integrated program] Is the child project result framework inclusive of program-wide metrics monitored across child project by the Regional/Global Child project?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

a) Partly, not all the GEF CIs have been included. For example, CI 7 on IW:LEARN is noted by the project but not included in the RF.

b) Partly. The baseline for calculating some FR indicators is missing. For example, Objective Indicator 1 notes a % increase but lists a baseline of NA. How will a % be calculated

without a baseline? If this baseline will be established after the project starts as the note on the far right suggest, then it should not be listed as NA.

Further, I strongly suggest not having output level indicators. They are excessive and do not help with adaptive project management. This level of detail can be tracked as part of an internal workplan. RF indicators at the outcome level should be sufficient so long as what is being tracked more granularly by the PMU rolls up into the outcome level indicators. Similarly, it is unclear how the current output level indicators will roll up into the GEF CIs? The overall project level CIs should be informed by the RF, not separate from it.

- a) Yes, CI-11 is disaggregated by sex.
- b) Yes.
- c) Unclear. It would be helpful if the RF presented here has additional columns that identified which indicators are linked to the GCP.

ES, 11/10/24: Comments addressed.

## Agency Response

WWF GEF Agency Response:

Thank you for these comments on the results and indicators.

- a) The indicator on IW:LEARN has now been included in the RF under indicator 7.4.
- b) ? The entire results framework has been updated, taking into account the recommendation to remove all output indicators (these will be used in internal workplans during project implementation). All indicators are now outcome-based.
- ? The baseline for indicators is 0 for most indicators.
- ? On the GEF CIs, details have been provided on the links between these and the outcome indicators. The CIs are impacted as a result of shifts from SUPs to substitutes that are more environmentally-friendly (reduced GHG), as well as changed practices by tourism and hospitality businesses and end consumers, which in turn result in a reduction in pollution from improper waste management (impacting all indicators). An explanation is provided on this above the results framework table.
- c) A column has been added showing links to the draft Global Project indicators

### **Annex E: Project map and coordinates**

**8.7 Have geographic coordinates of project locations been entered in the dedicated table? Are relevant illustrative maps included?**

### Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

The GeoName ID do not seem to be available under the <https://www.geonames.org/> platform. Please update as appropriate.

ES, 11/10/24: Comments addressed.

### Agency Response

WWF GEF Agency Response:

Thank you for this comment- There are no GEO Names added for these locations now

### **Annex F: Environmental and Social Safeguards Documentation and Rating**

**8.8 Have the relevant safeguard documents been uploaded to the GEF Portal? Has the safeguards rating been provided and filled out in the ER field below the risk table?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes.

### Agency Response

#### **Annex G: GEF Budget template**

**8.9 a) Is the GEF budget template attached and appropriately filled out incl. items such as the executing partner for each budget line?**

**b) Are the activities / expenditures reasonably and accurately charged to the three identified sources (Components, M&E and PMC)?**

**c) Are TORs for key project staff funded by GEF grant and/or co-finance attached?**

### Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

The table is too small to read in the portal document but visible in the uploaded documents.

- a) Yes, budget is included.
- b) No, there are some questions about the budget:
  - i. Why is the WWF Conservation Director being charged to PMC? This seems excessive for administrative backstopping to MONRE/DOE.
  - j. The WWF Finance and procurement officer charges towards PMC are also quite high.
  - k. The subaward to SWISSCONTACT is nearly \$1 million, which is more than 25% of the full project budget. It has difficult to understand how this is justifiable.
- c) No, TORs have not been included for key project staff.

The table presented in the Portal view (which is the document that is circulated and webposted) is unreadable. We request the agency to use the template provided in the Guidelines on the Project Cycle and remove the output columns so that there is more margin for the details on the activities

implemented. We will review the budget once it is uploaded in the section ANNEX G: BUDGET TABLE in a readable format and provide comments as appropriated.

ES, 11/15/24: Please address the following comments on budget.

- a. PMU operating cost should be charged to the PMC rather than to the project components
- b. A Project Manager and a Procurement Officer are charged across components and the PMC. Per Guidelines, the costs associated with the project's execution have to be covered by the GEF portion and the co-financing portion allocated to PMC. When the situation merits (i.e. not enough co-financing funds), the project's staff could be charged to the project's components with "clear Terms of Reference describing unique outputs linked to the respective component" (paragraph 4 ? page 42 of the Guidelines).

ES, 11/17/24: Please add to the comments section below on if and how you addressed the comment on PMU above.

ES, 11/19/24: Please address the following comments:

1. The Terms of Reference for the Project Manager (pages 1 and 2 of the attached document) show that the responsibilities / deliverables for this position are mainly managerial ? however, only 5% (\$19,892 out of \$397,845) of the salary for this position is charged to PMC ? please ask the Agency to amend.
2. Like the above, the Terms of Reference of the Procurement Officer (pages 7 and 8 of the attached document) show that the responsibilities / deliverables for this position are mainly managerial ? however, only 10% (\$9,946 out of \$99,461) of the salary for this position is charged to PMC ? please ask the Agency to amend.
3. Please ensure that the amended TORs are part of the Project Document.

ES, 11/19/24: Comments addressed.

## Agency Response

11/19/24

WWF GEF Agency Response:

Thank you for these comments.

- a. The budget has been adjusted to remove Operating costs from the project components.

1. Thank you for this comment. There are significant technical responsibilities and deliverables for the Project Manager. The position title has been revised (to Project Manager and Circular Solutions Advisor) and the TOR re-drafted to reflect this, and we apologize that the revised TORs did not seem to upload or save in the last re-submission. Please do find the revised word document uploaded as 'FINAL ANNEX 8 Key Staff TORs' under the Roadmap section. In particular, the PM will deliver outputs that are tasked with MONRE, under components 1, 3, 4 and M&E.

The Budget has been adjusted so that 18% of the Project Manager & Circular Solutions Expert position is charged to PMC.

2. The Procurement Officer has responsibilities related to delivering some outputs under the components. Adjustments have been made to the Terms of Reference for this position to specify the outputs that the Procurement and Sub-Grant Compliant Officer will be delivering, including outputs under Components 1, 3, 4 and Monitoring and Evaluation.

To address the limited PMC available, the Procurement Officer role has been reduced to 25% FTE.

Of the total GEF budget for this role, now \$50,000, 15% is charged to PMC. Adjustments have been made across the budget in each outcome and in the PMC to reflect this.

3. The Amended Annex 8-TORs have been uploaded a project document annex in the roadmap section, labeled 'FINAL ANNEX 8 Key Staff TORs.'

11/18/2024

WWF GEF Agency Response:

a. Thank you for the comment. Please note that the Procurement/Sub-Grant Officer and the Finance officer are 50% charged to the GEF project, and will be co-financed for the other 50% of their time, for example through an aligned FFEM project that is in preparation. The 50% Finance officer is fully budgeted under PMC. The Project Manager and the Procurement/Sub-grants specialist is part under PMC and part under the components, as even with that co-finance, there are limits on the amount of co-finance available from WWF Laos and the Department of Environment for project management and administration. As such the project manager and procurement staff have been charged in part to PMC and also to components that they are directly delivering.

b. Thank you for this comment. Both the Procurement Officer and the The Project Manager are budgeted across the components because these individuals are directly responsible for achieving the results under the specified components in the budget.

Clear Terms of Reference describing outputs linked to the respective components that the Procurement and Sub-Grant Compliant Officer and the Project Manager will be delivering have been uploaded as Annex 8: TORs for Key Project Staff.

WWF GEF Agency Response:

Thank you for these questions, please see the below notes on adjustments made to the budget;

i. Conservation Director removed.

j. Across 5 years these are competitive market rates for quality resourcing and hiring. Note also that this is 50% funded by GEF and the other 50% will be co-financed.

k. There are 4 components, thus on average it is around 25% per component. The Swisscontact component is the core and critical work lasting 3.5 years, including market research, material flow analysis, and the Eco-Challenge, which includes the business incubator, Eco-Challenge competition, Accelerator Programme and trialing of products with tourism and hospitality businesses. Working through partnerships is a key part of the project approach, with Swisscontact being an important partner.

c) The TORs for key project staff and the National Project Steering Committee were included in the first submission as [ANNEX 8. TORs for Project Staff](#) and [ANNEX 9. TORs for Project Steering Committee](#)

Thank you for this note on the budget. The uploaded budget has output level columns removed, showing only outcomes and components. The portal does not allow for an excel budget file uploaded and therefore the budget appears condensed in the required word document including the outcome-level detail. To allow for a clearer view, the attached annex G Budget includes the Component level budget as well as the outcome-level budget.

**Annex H: NGI Relevant Annexes**

**8.10 a) Does the project provide sufficient detail (indicative term sheet) to assess the following criteria: co-financing ratios, financial terms and conditions, and financial additionality? If not, please provide comments.**

**b) Does the project provide a detailed reflow table to assess the project capacity of generating reflows? If not, please provide comments.**

**c) Is the Agency eligible to administer concessional finance? If not, please provide comments.**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

**Additional Annexes**

**9. GEFSEC DECISION**

**9.1.GEFSEC Recommendation**

**Is the project recommended for approval**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Not at this time. Some issues remain.

ES, 11/10/24: Not at this time. Some issues remain.

ES, 11/15/24: Please address the comments on gender and budget.

ES, 11/15/24: Not at this time. There is insufficient information on if the comments on gender and budget have been addressed.

ES, 11/18/24: Not at this time. There are 3 comments on budget remaining.

ES, 11/19/24: Comments addressed. CEO Endorsement is recommended.

**9.2 Additional Comments to be considered by the Agency during the inception and implementation phase**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

**9.3 Review Dates**

	<b>CEO Approval</b>	<b>Response to Secretariat comments</b>
<b>First Review</b>	<b>8/16/2024</b>	<b>11/1/2024</b>
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>11/10/2024</b>	<b>11/11/2024</b>
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>11/11/2024</b>	<b>11/15/2024</b>
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>11/15/2024</b>	<b>11/18/2024</b>
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>11/19/2024</b>	<b>11/19/2024</b>