

## Strengthening institutional capacities for securing biodiversity conservation commitments

### Basic Information

**GEF ID**

10776

**Countries**

India

**Project Title**

Strengthening institutional capacities for securing biodiversity conservation commitments

**GEF Agency(ies)**

UNDP

**Agency ID**

UNDP: 6593

**GEF Focal Area(s)**

Biodiversity

**Program Manager**

Jurgis Sapijanskas

# PIF

## Part I – Project Informatic

### 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

JS 10/4/2021 - Cleared, thank you.

JS 9/14/2021 - Thank you for the responses throughout this review sheet and the revisions in the submitted documents.

1- Several parts of the portal entry have not been updated and are thus different from the word version of the PIF attached with the resubmission (e.g. references to Puducherry are still included in the portal entry when they have been removed from the word file). Please recheck the portal entry and ensure it reflects the latest version.

B - Thank you. Please confirm that all PAs in the target landscape have adequate resources and that their long-term financial sustainability is already assured. Otherwise, following the landscape-scale approach the project has now embraced, please consider including interventions that would contribute to strengthen PAs long-term financial sustainability.

C- Thank you for the explanation, but even if the project is to support mainly 'soft' activities, providing the level of technical assistance and capacity building promised in the PIF to 400 parallel village-level planning processes seems logistically challenging with what will forcibly be a limited number of project staff and/or consultant. Please clarify in the PIF what mechanisms, tools and/or existing structures the project plans to rely upon to roll out adequate support in such a large number of villages?

All the rest is cleared, thank you.

JS 4/26/2021

Thank you for the revisions in the PIF and thorough responses throughout the review sheet.

1-2 - The scale of interventions has been clarified for the most part. However, the choice has been to reduce the project to interventions almost exclusively at the Gram Panchayat (GP)/village level and increase the number of GP targeted to 500 while maintaining the project financing request, which leads to comments A, B and C below.

3. Cleared. The addition of output 1.4 is noted, but we also recommend including intervention(s) towards bridging the funding gap of the

PAs in the target landscape.

A- Why is piloting in such a large number of GP (500) and with such a large investment (close to \$5 million project financing from the GEF) necessary? If the main objective of the project is indeed to pilot BD mainstreaming at the local level with later up-scaling, we recommend designing a smaller project (MSP) targeting a smaller number of GP and with a stronger strategy for replication and up-scaling built-in the project.

B- Otherwise, for the funding request of this proposal, the ambition should be to demonstrate and prepare up-scaling of biodiversity mainstreaming, including resource mobilization, at the landscape scale. This most likely requires the local-level work planned in this proposal but most probably also requires interventions at a higher-level.

One promising aspect of the first proposal was that it seemingly planned to articulate different scales of intervention to achieve global biodiversity benefits at the landscape scale, which is indeed a more relevant scale to address the most significant drivers of biodiversity loss. In the revised proposal, it is unclear how the "extrapolat[ion] to the landscape level" would take place, in particular how adequate long-term funding for PAs and other high biodiversity areas outside of GP jurisdictions would be secured in the target landscapes if component 2 is restricted to the GP level. Likewise, it is unclear whether State Biodiversity Boards would be able, without any support from this project, to coordinate GP-level action to ensure coherent conservation interventions and complement them in areas outside of GP jurisdictions to achieve significant results at the landscape scale.

Please revise accordingly, adding the necessary and sufficient interventions targeting higher level institutions than GP in components 1, 2 and 3 and explain in the PIF, most notably the ToC, the articulation between interventions at different scales to achieve biodiversity benefits at the landscape scale. Note that the remainder of the comments in this review are to be read with the understanding that option B is pursued.

C- Please clarify in the PIF how the project would be able to support many (here 500 are proposed) parallel PBR, GPDP and BIOFIN-like processes in practice?

D- The project is aligned with BD-1-1 and BD-2-7. However, the breakdown in table A plans for \$1.88 million devoted to BD-2-7, i.e. protected area work, when only output 1.4 seems relevant to BD-2-7 and corresponding underlying interventions are not commensurate with such a large budget. If the project contribution to PAs remains as currently foreseen, please revise the budget breakdown between BD-1-1 and BD-2-7, i.e. decrease the share of BD-2-7.

The type of interventions proposed and the target areas, which both host globally significant biodiversity, are eligible for GEF-7 BD funding. The project is aligned with BD-1-1 (mainstreaming) and is innovative, combining notably a systematic approach to resource mobilization and the strengthening of institutional capacities at multiple levels with a landscape multi-sectoral approach, that has the potential to scaling-up and generate significant global biodiversity benefits beyond what can be captured by core indicators.

However the PIF requires significant revisions:

1- The project, and especially many of its outputs, appear both overloaded and overly generic, and thus likely overpromising. Some outputs seem to promise to cover in themselves the scope of what could be an entire component (e.g. 2.1 *Resource gap assessed, and innovative/blended financial solutions and resource mobilisation strategy developed and tested in the two landscapes*) or even an entire project (e.g. 1.4 *Integrated strategies and action for transitioning towards a green and resilient Covid-19 recovery based on the 'One Health' approach developed and demonstrated*).

The project title, project objective and the logframe are so generic that they could apply to any country, when most of the project is to take place within two very specific landscapes (455,000 ha in total), calling for context-specific interventions that should be already reflected at PIF stage.

The description provided in the PIF lists many areas of interventions (e.g. ABS, human wildlife conflict, poaching, biodiversity budgeting, resource mobilization, IAS, PA management, OECMs, biodiversity-friendly enterprises, disease outbreak prevention and containment) with often times little information on how the project intends to concretely contribute in these areas (e.g. "*in addition, this output [2.3] will support measures to reduce and manage human-wildlife conflict (HWC) through innovative measures*" with no additional information). We understand the project may have many indirect effects in the various areas mentioned since it targets the institutional frameworks, upstream decision making and the enabling environment for biodiversity mainstreaming. However, the PIF, and especially its outputs, should be more precise and specific on its direct interventions/contribution.

Please revise, ensuring that all outputs are concrete, specific and realistic in scope, both in the logframe and throughout the PIF.

2 - The scale of the interventions and how interventions at different scales would articulate is unclear. Five levels are mentioned in the PIF (Gram Panchayat/village, landscape, district, State and national level), with many outputs and some outcomes silent on their target scale, as well as some inconsistencies for others (e.g. output 2.1 "*Resource gap assessed [...] developed and tested in the two landscapes*" but the description of component 2 mentions a "*funding gap analysis at the state level*".). The project is in particular not clear on how it would approach the landscape level, when there does not seem to be a landscape-level governing body, planning or budget mechanism. Please clarify throughout the PIF the scale of the interventions, making sure outputs and outcomes are scale-explicit. Please also explain in the theory of change how interventions at different scales articulate to generate the intended outcomes, notably at landscape scale, and to foster upscaling. Upscaling beyond awareness raising and increased availability of best practices is not explicit in the logframe or the ToC when the underlying description of the project mentions that an upscaling strategy is to be developed with many associated activities.

3- Alignment with BD-2-7 (Improving Financial Sustainability, Effective Management, and Ecosystem Coverage of the Global Protected Area Estate.) is unclear. The PIF sets targets on protected area management effectiveness (core indicator 1) but how the project would improve PA management, as captured by the METT, in practice remains unclear. Please explain, providing links to specific outputs and justifying that more than \$1.88 million are tagged on BD-2-7, and revise the PIF accordingly to make the contribution to PA management clearer.

## Agency Response

### UNDP Response, 4 October 2021

This has been corrected in the portal.

B - Thank you for the comment.

India is one of the few developing countries where there is substantial funding available to PAs through Centrally and state sponsored support. This will be further validated at PPG stage.

(i) The tiger reserves receive 60% of their annual funding from the central government sponsored Project Tiger Scheme that covers activities such as protection (including anti-poaching measures), habitat management, capacity development, research and monitoring, tourism management, village ecocodevelopment in buffer zones and some infrastructure. There are 2 tiger reserves in the Tamil Nadu landscape. Overall, the Project Tiger Scheme provides around USD 40 million on an annual basis to its 51 tiger reserves

(ii) The state government finance 40% of costs of tiger reserve budgets that is mainly for staff salaries, maintenance of reserve infrastructure and other assets and some development activities.

(iii) The centrally funded scheme for national parks and wildlife sanctuaries (other than tiger reserves) funds activities within these reserves amounting to USD 20 million annually

(iv) The centrally funded "integrated development of wildlife habitats" scheme funds habitat and related management activities in key species habitats (e.g. elephant, tiger, leopard and other species) in areas outside tiger reserves, national parks and sanctuaries

(v) In Meghalaya (being a tribal state), 90% of PA financing comes from the centrally funded schemes discussed under (iii) and (iv), including staff salaries

(vi) In addition, there is some funding available from a centrally funded scheme for biosphere reserves that benefit both TN and Meghalaya

sites.

As mentioned in our response to 2<sup>nd</sup> re-submission (September 2, 2021), the PAs and forest reserves functioned with their full complement of staff and development activities even during the COVID-19 period.

The intent of the additional GEF financing is not to finance the routine staffing, maintenance and development activities within the PAs (that is already covered by central and state schemes), but to introduce innovation in terms of using new spatial tools and approaches to broaden PA management approaches to integrate cooperative agreements with neighboring villages and their hierarchical institutional structures to enhance connectivity and viability of the PA network, strengthen participatory surveillance, monitoring and enforcement and improve community monitoring of biodiversity and species. The intent is also to strengthen linkages with OECMs. In this regard, there is no concern about long-term financing for the PAs because these are well covered through central and state financing programs and not dependent on the project.

Please refer to notes under Table C; Risk 8 in Table 3 (p. 53).

C - This is a pertinent question.

However, as discussed in our response (2<sup>nd</sup> re-submission of September 2), given that in the decentralized development village planning system, the higher level is an aggregate of a number of smaller units at the lower level (e.g. district Zila Parishad/District Panchayat is an aggregate of a number of block Panchayats, and the latter is an aggregate of a number of village/Gram Panchayats). In order to make an impact through these hierarchical systems, it necessitates interventions at a critical mass of GPs/Village Committees to be supported to get a reasonable cumulative impact at the higher (block and district) levels. Hence the selection of 400 village-level planning processes. This will be further evaluated at the PPG stage.

In terms of the village planning processes, the institutional structures already exist (GPs and VECs) with clear mandated processes for planning and implementation, including defined facilitation support through existing technical institutions that operate at that level. Similarly, the State Institutes for Rural Development (SIRD) are mandated to provide training, capacity development and technical support for planning processes at the village level. Integrated within this system are the Biodiversity Management Committees (statutory committees of the GPs and VECs) to enable mainstreaming of biodiversity into the village planning systems. Similarly at the block and district level there are mandated hierarchical structures that facilitate the convergence of the village level planning processes. The institutional structures and processes already exist to facilitate the integration, and the roll out will be achieved through these existing structures. What is actually required is not additional manpower, but to provide the mechanisms and tools to be used by the existing planning processes to facilitate better integration of conservation outcomes. The project will provide some level of technical support to SIRDs to integrate the application of these new tools and mechanisms in their regular training curriculum (through training of trainers, curriculum development and development of training modules) for rural development institutions (including GPs and VECs), while the extension arms of the state forest and conservation institutions will facilitate this process during the implementation process, as these institutions are mandated to provide facilitation support to GP and VEC planning processes for integration purposes.

Refer to project description (p. 11) explaining the clustered hierarchical systems.

**UNDP Response, 21 April 2021**

1. Thank you for the comments to sharpen the focus of the outputs. We have relooked at the outputs and sharpened the focus of all the outputs specific to the scope of the project. The project will largely focus on mainstreaming biodiversity in the Gram Panchayat Development Planning (GPDP) process, and Outputs are now focused at this level. Resource assessment under Output 2.1 will now focus on identifying financial solutions (for integration of biodiversity outcomes) at the Gram Panchayat (GP) level. The results from the proposed assessment will be used to extrapolate at the landscape level as a basis to seek innovative financial solutions building on the work of BIOFIN already underway in India. Most of the activities, including the focus on “One Health’ approach will be at the GP level to improve collaboration between the key sectors (health, livestock, wildlife, etc.), for the interventions to be locale specific, small and manageable to generate lessons for replication and scaling up elsewhere.

As the major focus of the project is at GP level, issues related to IAS and HWC will be addressed through the GPDP process to the extent these are relevant to the communities, rather than as specific activities under the project. PA management will only focus on activities that will strengthen collaboration with OEMC and GPDP efforts to: (i) for improving connectivity between PAs and HCVA outside of the PA; (ii) strengthen collaboration between PA managers and local communities to enhance efforts at surveillance, monitoring and enforcement; (iii) development and implementation of MRVs (measurable, reportable and verification targets) for monitoring key threatened species across the landscape to inform management interventions; and (iv) strengthen PA management planning so as to integrate commensurate activities outside the PAs to strengthen the ecological viability of the PA network.

Please refer Table B and Project Alternative Strategy (section 3, from p.28

2. As mentioned in the response (1) above, the major focus of the project will be at the GP level - including resource gap assessment, biodiversity mainstreaming and integration, locale specific interventions, one-health approach, financial tools, etc. This is now reflected in the PIF.

Within the landscape (which is part of the recognized biogeographic space), there are different governance arrangements depending on the specific mandates of each of the institutions that operate within the landscape. The PAs, Forest Reserves and OEMCs have their own individual governance arrangements. The GPs are the lowest administrative governance structure that pertains to the village level. While it would be untenable to consider having a consolidated governance structure at the landscape level, activities within the landscape will be implemented through their existing governance structures as is a mandated practice in India.

No new governance structure is suggested at the landscape level. The State Biodiversity Boards (SBBs) are multi-institutional coordination structures established under the Biodiversity Act with a mandate to facilitate coordination of mainstreaming of biodiversity and ensure sustainable use of biodiversity resources. Based on this mandate, the SBBs will facilitate coordination across the different sectors and

...sustainable use of biodiversity resources. Based on the mandate, the GPs will facilitate coordination across the different sectors and administrative levels for effective delivery of project activities at each landscape.

A recent government circular mandates GP funds to be used for PBR and BMC activities and mainstream biodiversity and sustainable resource use into the GPDPs. The project aims to actively demonstrate this mainstreaming with a limited number of GPs. The project will ensure that lessons generated from the project interventions will be up-scaled through documentation and dissemination of lessons, exchange visits, training, integrating into the curriculum and training modules of the State institute for Rural Development (SIRD) which is a training institution that is entrusted for training of Gram Panchayat members.

Please refer Proposed Alternative Scenario section 3, from p.28

3. The project will focus on specific activities within the PAs, particularly activities that relate to PA management (under a new Output 1.4) as discussed below (6.2)

Please refer Table B and Output 1.4.

The reference to Program Areas and Output linkages are provided in Section 4, from p.37).

#### **UNDP Response, 2 September 2021**

Please see detailed response under A below.

The project approach has been revised to focus on a broad landscape approach, within which are embedded PAs, forest reserves, OECMs and village/Panchayat managed areas.

Just an additional note that we have revised the PIF to clarify that the village level institutional structures in the two states are slightly different in terminology, but have the same decentralized and functional structures at the village, block and district levels. They are responsible for economic/rural development and associated planning and development and that the BMCs are functional at all 3 levels of the decentralized structures. In Tamil Nadu, these are the GPs, Block Panchayats and Zila Parisads; and in Meghalaya it is the VECs, BECs and DEC. In addition, there are traditional institutional structures at the village level that are not directly involved in decentralized planning, but its members are represented in the VECs and their hierarchical structures.

Please refer to Table B of PIF, TOC (page 27) and Component 1 (p.31-36) and Annex G).

In terms of discussion of village institutions in 2 states refer Table 1 (p11)

A - Thank you for the comments. The project is now focused on a landscape approach (see response to previous comment).

The number of villages have been reduced to 400 (from 500) as it would require a critical mass of villages for testing the integration of biodiversity within the village planning process. This is premised on the roles that the apex district institutions (and intermediate block level institutions) have responsibilities for planning, financial management and budget programming, oversight, monitoring and coordination of all activities at the district level. The district institutions have a role in making critical decisions in terms of programs and budgeting for promotion of innovative and new approaches, including integration of conservation and sustainable resource management in the district level programs and its translation to the village level. The GEF grant will finance only strengthening of the village level planning process to facilitate mainstreaming of conservation and sustainable resource use outcomes, and actual investments will be financed from national and state level rural and economic development schemes that are at the disposal of the village, block and district institutions.

In terms of the landscape approach, coordinating mechanisms will be established at the landscape and state levels to facilitate landscape planning and convergence of budgetary resources between various institutions and sectors and for broader replication across the state. The landscape coordinating committee headed by the Additional Chief Secretary of the PRI/Rural Development with the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Convener) and with representatives of State Biodiversity Board, Representatives of key sector agencies (agriculture, animal husbandry, water resources, health, etc.), members of village administration etc. The State level coordination committee will facilitate coordination and scaling up at the landscape level and beyond; help in convergence of planning, financing and monitoring at that level. This committee will also have responsibility for supporting policy decisions in relation to scaling up, budgetary matters and coordination.

Refer Section 3) – p. 30 and 31

Coordination arrangement are discussed in Output 1.1 (P.32)

B- Please see response to A above.

This is now rectified. The project will focus on a landscape approach within which will be embedded PAs, forest reserves, OECMs and village level economic/rural development activities, all of which will be managed within a common agreed landscape framework.

Component 2 is also focused at the landscape level and test some of the financial solutions that BIOFIN has developed for the resource requirements and financial gaps at the landscape.

In terms of funding, it is worth mentioning that PAs and forest reserves are exclusively financed through national and state budgets and not dependent on external (including tourism) revenues. Even at the time of Covid-19, the PAs and forest reserves functioned with their full complement of staff and development activities. The intent of the additional GEF financing is to introduce innovation in terms of using new spatial tools and approaches to broaden PA management approaches to integrate cooperative agreements with neighboring villages and their hierarchical institutional structures to enhance connectivity and viability of the PA network, strengthen participatory surveillance, monitoring and enforcement and improve community monitoring of biodiversity and species. The intent also is to strengthen linkages with OECMs. program (similar to government support for PAs and Forest Reserves).

Coordination arrangements at state and landscape level are now revised.

Please refer Table B and Section 3), Output 1.2 (p. 33), Annex G

Outputs revised accordingly to reflect targeting interventions at higher-level. Option B is being pursued.

Please refer to Table B of PIF, TOC (page 27) and Component 1 (p.31-36) and Annex G).

C- The project will support 400 villages. GEF grant will be for developing new tools, manuals, capacity strengthening and planning and not for actual investments on-the-ground. The intent through this project is ensure the 'greening' of village, block and district plans (including management of forests and land for biodiversity benefit, soil and water conservation, etc.), that are self-supported through state and national development programs/schemes. Given that in the decentralized development planning system, the higher level is an aggregate of a number of smaller units at the lower level (e.g. district Zila Parishad/District Panchayat is an aggregate of a number of block Panchayats, and the latter is an aggregate of a number of village/Gram Panchayats) thus necessitating a critical mass of GPs/Village Committees to be supported to get a reasonable cumulative impact at the higher (block and district) levels.

Refer Table B, Output 1.3 (p.33)

D- This is revised accordingly. We also feel that OECMs would contribute towards achieving the country's Aichi target 11, although it is not part of the legally established PA network for the country.

Refer Table A

**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**

JS 10/4/2021 - Cleared, noting that many outputs are very high-level at this PIF stage and particular effort will be have to devoted during PPG to design more concrete outputs with specific, clearly-defined underlying activities. In particular, output 1.7 is very theoretical at this PIF stage and its added-value will be revisited at CEO endorsement stage.

JS 9/14/2021

A- The titles of many outputs and some components are different in the description alternative scenario compared to table B (e.g. 1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.7; component 2; 2.1; 2.2; component 3) in the portal entry. Please make sure they are identical and simplify, shorten the output titles in the process to make them as concrete as possible.

1 - Thank you for the revisions to table B to better align the logframe with a true landscape approach. However please consider including an outcome indicator related to landscape-scale impact, especially on connectivity.

3- Thank you for the revisions. But see comment on component 2 in the comment box related to the alternative scenario.

The rest is cleared, thank you.

JS 4/27/2021

1- Please translate in table B the revisions called for by comment B in the first comment box of this review sheet.

2- **Output 1.5:** Please revise the formulation of the output to reflect that the project would pilot such strategies in a few GP only. Please also clarify to what extent this output is to contribute to "recovery" or even "greening recovery" when the underlying description seems to indicate that it is entirely dedicated to promote a One Health approach and zoonotic disease control at the local level. Please consider reformulating to match the much more restricted (but relevant) content of the output.

3- **Component 2:** the articulation between the different underlying outputs of component 2 remains unclear. In particular output 2.1 is supposed to go all the way from resource gap assessment to the testing of resource mobilization strategy. In our understanding, the

development and testing of a resource mobilization strategy would include the identification of financing sources and the demonstration of finance solutions, which yet is supposed to be carried out through output 2.2. It is also not clear what output 2.4, which is about "testing and promotion", brings in addition to 2.1 to 2.3. Please revise the formulations of output 2.1, 2.2 and 2.4 to make clear their distinct contributions. This includes, among other things, clarifying the scale of output 2.2 in its title. (Note its description in the alternative scenario includes references to both the state level - "for testing at state-level", "state finance departments will be engaged"- and also to the village level - "at village and extrapolated to the landscape level").

**Component 3:**

4 - Please note that there is no output for project M&E when it is described as part of component 3 in the alternative scenario.

5 - Output 3.3: Please reformulate to reflect that the output is to contribute to replication and is not limited to results/experience sharing or consider devoting an output to replication.

JS 4/1/2021

Please address in table B relevant comments of the previous comment box and of the comment box on the alternative scenario further down in this review sheet.

**Agency Response**

**UNDP Response, 11 October 2021**

Thanks. This is well noted and will be further refined at the PPG stage

**UNDP Response, 4 October 2021**

This has been corrected in the portal.

1- Thank you for the comment. A landscape outcome indicator has been included.

Table B, Outcome indicator v (p.3).

2- Please responses to comments to component 2.

### **UNDP Response, 21 April 2021**

Revised accordingly in Table B and alternative scenario.

Please refer Table B and Proposed Alternative Scenario The (section 3, from p.37)

### **UNDP Response, 2 September 2021**

1. This has been done as suggested. Please refer to Table B

2- This is now reflected in Output 1.7. It is anticipated that such an approach can facilitate green recovery contributing to achieving better health outcomes for human, livestock and natural environment, and would be evaluated during the PPG stage. Also at PPG stage, the nature and content of this activity will be further assessed to identify an appropriate scale for action.

Refer Section 3) Output 1.7 (P 36)

3- Thank you for the comments. We have accordingly revised the Outputs under Component 2 to make it clearer as advised.

Previous Output 2.1 and 2.2 are now combined into a single Output 2.1 for testing financial solutions already identified through BIOFIN for India. Output 2.4 is also covered under revised Output 2.1.

The financial testing will be undertaken at the landscape level.

Refer Table B and Section 3) Component 2 (P 36-38)

4- Separate new Output 3.5 included for M&E. Table B and Section 3) Output 3.5 (P. 40)

5- A new Output 3.4 has been added in terms of focusing on tangible actions for replication. Table B and Section 3) Output 3.4 (P. 39-40)

## 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

JS 10/12/2021 - Cleared.

JS 10/4/2021 Thank you but the co-funding from donor agencies (World bank, GIZ, JICA, etc.) has disappeared from table C when it is still referred to in the notes under table C. It seems their co-financing was attributed in table C to the States where the corresponding projects are taking place. Please make sure that all co-financing is properly attributed in table C, and notably that co-funding from donor agencies is properly reflected.

Please also consolidate co-financing during PPG, and especially leverage co-financing from the private sector given the project's focus on innovative and blended finance solutions.

JS 9/14/2021

A- "GIZ, JICA, World Bank, ADB" are still tagged as "private sector" when they should be "Donor Agency" in the portal entry. Please correct.

Private Sector	GIZ, JICA, World Bank, ADB	Grant	Investment mobilized	300,000.00
GEF Agency	UNDP	In-kind	Recurrent	100,000.00

JS 4/22/2021

1-Cleared.

2-"GIZ, JICA, World Bank, ADB" are still tagged as "private sector" when they should be "Donor Agency" in the portal entry. Please correct.

government		expenditures		
Private Sector	GIZ, JICA, World Bank, ADB	Grant	Investment mobilized	300,000.00
GEF Agency	UNDP	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	100,000.00
Total Project Cost(\$)				29,280,000.00

JS 4/1/2021

1- Please clarify why recurrent expenditures from government institutions are classified as grants when the description under table C ("staff time, resources and travel costs") seem to point to in-kind contribution, or revise.

2- "GIZ, JICA, World Bank, ADB" are tagged as "private sector" when they should be "Donor Agency". Please correct.

## Agency Response

### UNDP Response, 11 October 2021

Thank you for the comment. The reference to donor projects under the states have been removed and specific programs supported by the state governments are included. During PPG stage, the co-financing from donors will be further assessed and included to the extent these programs are operational during the project period. Private sector partnership and co-financing will be confirmed during the PPG. Table C notes (p.7)

### UNDP Response, 21 April 2021

1. Some portion of co-finance from MOEFCC and Ministry of Panchayati Raj has been shown as in-kind contribution after consulting with the respective agencies.

Refer Table C

2. This has been revised.

Please refer Table C

UNDP Response, 2 September 2021

2- This has been corrected in the portal.

**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 JS 3/25/2021 - Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

**The STAR allocation?**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion JS 3/25/2021 - Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

**The focal area allocation?**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion JS 3/25/2021 - Yes, 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

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 JS 3/25/2021 - Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

### Core indicators

6. Are the identified core indicators in Table F calculated using the methodology included in the corresponding Guidelines? (GEF/C.54/11/Rev.01)

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

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JS 10/12/2021 - Cleared, thank you. The assumptions for CI 6 are 4,000 ha of forest restoration (brought up from moderate to low degradation) and 17,871 ha of avoided forest loss.

JS 10/4/2021

B- Thank you for the target on core indicator 6 and for making assumptions explicit. However, the target is likely an overestimate, most notably what pertains to mitigation benefits from improved PA management. According to annex H, we understand the estimate related to PAs assumes 5% vs 0% forest loss over project duration (which is most likely 20 year accounting period) in the scenario without vs with the project. Please check this assumption against the baseline forest loss rate in these PAs and what the project will actually deliver on PA management, and consider deriving a more conservative estimate at this PIF stage. If no adequate baseline for deforestation in the PAs can be found, it would be acceptable to assume zero mitigation benefits from enhanced PA management at PIF stage and work during PPG on a proper target. The other part of the target (mitigation from restoration and from reduced forest degradation outside PAs seems reasonable at this PIF stage).

Please provide the EX-ACT spreadsheet with the next submission,

During PPG, please also investigate the possibility of reporting some results on core indicator 4.4 (loss of HCVF avoided).

The rest is cleared, thank you.

JS 9/14/2021

Thank you for the revisions, the scale of the targets are now more in line with that of the funding request. Please make sure to consolidate during PPG and at least maintain this level of impact at CEO endorsement request.

In addition, please:

A- confirm in the PIF that for the hectares reported under core indicator 4, the project will go beyond integration of biodiversity and ecosystem considerations in plans (whether forest management plans or village plans) and actually support implementation of these improved plans, e.g. through technical assistance/capacity building, and direct funding, co-finance or contribution to resource mobilization under component 2.

B-add a target on core indicator 6: at least the restoration activities and perhaps other activities in the areas reported under core indicators 1 and 4 should yield significant mitigation benefits in the AFOLU sector.

JS 4/22/21 -

The confirmation that all the PAs within the project landscapes will be registered as part of the project is well noted.

All cleared with respect to the use of core indicators' methodology, thank you. However:

A- While we understand that part of the resource mobilization and institutional work the project proposes to carry out is difficult to translate in hectares, targets appear small for a \$4.88 million project with \$29.28 million in co-finance. Please revise the target under core indicator 4, which seems too low. We notably understand that only part of the hectares covered through GP planning processes (GPDP) are accounted for in the 40,000 ha target. The project also proposes to work on OECM outside of GP's jurisdiction and for which only 4,000 ha of

restoration under core indicator 3 have been set but no target under core indicator 4.1.

JS 4/1/2021

1- Please add the WDPA ID for all PAs reported in core indicator 1. For PAs not yet registered in the WDPA, please confirm that these will duly registered as part of the project.

2- Please clarify how the project is to improve in practice the management effectiveness of target PAs, as measured by the METT?

3- We note that "restoration activities will be financed with non-GEF financing". Please clarify nonetheless which output is to support the restoration of 4,000 ha of forest and be explicit in the PIF. Currently, restoration is mentioned neither in the alternative scenario, nor in outputs.

4- We understand improved practices for biodiversity over 40,000 ha are to be obtained through OECMs that will be defined under output 1.3. Please confirm and clarify in the PIF that the project will go beyond the definition of the OECM area and support actual implementation measures. The description of output 1.3 indeed states "investment support for implementation of OECM activities (to be demonstrated in Component 2)" but OECMs are not mentioned in component 2.

5- Please add under table F the methodology/assumptions used to derive the target number of direct beneficiaries (core indicator 11).

## **Agency Response**

### **UNDP Response, 11 October 2021**

Thank you for the comments and guidance.

We agree that the target was over ambitious. We have consulted again with the stakeholders and UNDP CO staff and have revised some assumptions:

- The interventions within PA areas are predominantly related to improved management to reduce forest cover loss (deforestation), and not so much related to land degradation neutrality. Thus, we have moved most of areas from "Management" module to "LUC" module on the Ex-ACT Tool spreadsheet.
- Only 4,000 ha of degraded forest land will be targeted for land restoration-related interventions (hence, "Management" module of the Ex-ACT Tool).
- Deforestation reduction target has been reduced from 50% to 35%, which is India's emission reduction target by 2030.

Therefore, the revised GHG estimate (CI 6) is: **5,994,373 tCO<sub>2</sub>e**

It is to be noted that the figures and assumptions will be validated during PPG.

As for Sub-Core Indicator 4.4, well noted with thanks. We indeed will assess the potential for avoided deforestation especially in non-PA

areas during the PPG.

Please refer Table F and the note on CI 6 (p.8)

#### **UNDP Response, 4 October 2021**

This is well noted. The core indicator targets provided in the PIF will be further validated/consolidated during the PPG.

A-The intent is to ensure that the core indicator 4 target in terms of integration of biodiversity and ecosystem considerations will go beyond the technical support, capacity development, new guidelines and protocols to actual implementation through co-financing (under central and state level financing mechanisms). At PPG phase, the means to measuring this outcome will be defined and co-financing confirmed. Refer footnote 2 under Table B ( p.2) and “notes’ under Table F (p.8)

B-The mitigation benefit from the activities have now been estimated under CI 6. Refer Table F (p.8) and Annex H (p.94)

#### **UNDP Response, 21 April 2021**

1. India has provided polygons and coordinates to update WDPA for PAs and 20 OECMs as of December 2020. The process of validation for database update is being undertaken by WCMC. The intent is to have all the PAs within the project landscapes registered as part of the project. Except for Nokrek National Park, the others don't have WDPA ID as of now.

2. A new Output 1.4 has been added to strengthen PA management effectiveness and improve connectivity.

Under this new Output, the project will support a focused effort at enhancing PA management measures. Management measures that will be implemented include:

- Updated mapping of PAs to identify hotspots for conservation to enhance connectivity with surrounding HCVMs (OECMs and Forested areas);
- Enhance SMART patrols including collaboration with local communities to improve surveillance, monitoring and enforcement.
- Development and implementation of MRVs (Measurable, reportable and verification targets) and protocols for monitoring of key threatened species and their habitats in PAs to inform management.
- Strengthening law enforcement to address illegal hunting and monitor and enforce infringements to PA regimes; and
- Capacity building for PA wardens and staff to improve species monitoring.

Please refer Table B, Output 1.4

3. The planned conservation and rehabilitation/restoration activities will be implemented as part of Output 1.3 mainly in OECM areas. Overall, 4000 ha of OECM areas have been targeted in the PIF that will be validated and even increased at the PPG stage.

Rehabilitation/Restoration activities will be planned and implemented for areas such as - resource use areas, medicinal plant reserves, community forest reserves, sacred groves, agro-biodiversity rich areas, etc.). The intent is to cover on an average about 8-10 hectares/GP area. The efforts in OECMs will include: (i) identification and mapping of OECMs in the landscape; (ii) strengthening management planning and/or management practices; (iii) capacity building to enhance conservation, management and monitoring of biodiversity within OECMs; and (iv) seeking innovative public and private financing for OECM management and benefit sharing. Criteria will be established for identifying OECMs for project support namely, biological value, opportunities that enhance connectivity, management interest and opportunities for revenue generation.

Refer Table F and Output 1.3

4. The project will actually support implementation in the landscape as defined in Output 1.3. The reference to demonstration in Component 2 was a mistake and is now corrected. The improved practices in 40,000 hectares will be achieved through integration of conservation and environmental friendly practices in key sectors through the GP development planning process and supported with the normal budgeting process of the Gram Panchayats which is the key vehicle for delivery of development activities at the local level. It will also seek resources through additional financial instruments envisaged under Outputs 2.1 and 2.2.

Refer Table F and Output 1.3 narrative under Section 3, from p.32

5. Indicator 11 – Increased to 5,000 direct beneficiaries which calculated at a modest 10 direct beneficiaries/GP (where benefits can be monetized) i.e. 10 beneficiaries x 500 GPs . This figure will be validated at PPG stage.

Refer Table F

### **UNDP Response, 2 September 2021**

6. The PAs will be registered in WDPA database as part of project output.

A. While the physical area of a GP/VEC varies, on an average in India, each GP/VEC covers around 1,000 -1,500 hectares, which includes housing and settlement areas, infrastructure works, agricultural lands, common property resources etc. Given that we have reduced the number of GPs/VECs from 500 to 400, we feel that we might be able to extent the area to around 60,000 ha (to be validated at PPG stage) or more, given that significant amount of forests are found within the village area in Meghalaya and village planning would focus on introducing biodiversity-friendly forest and land management approaches. We can relook at this figure at PPG stage to see if this extent can be increased further, as well as relook at the target of 4,000 ha for OECMs. Additionally, around 320,000 ha of land within forest reserves in the landscape will come under improved management for biodiversity conservation through integration of conservation outcomes in the forest working plans.

Refer Section 3) Output 1.6 (P. 35-36)

Refer Table F and notes (P.8)

## **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**

JS 4/22/2021 - Cleared, thank you.

JS 4/1/2021

1- Please clarify why the project is given a Rio marker 1 on adaptation and consider rating 0.

2- Please tag the project for Indigenous peoples.

#### **Agency Response**

##### **UNDP Response, 21 April 2021**

This has been revised.

## **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**

JS 10/4/2021 - Cleared, thank you.

JS 9/14/2021 - Please clarify in the PIF how many districts do the two targeted landscape cover, i.e. how many districts will be involved in

the project.

The rest is cleared thank you.

JS 4/26/2021 - All cleared for what relates the local/GP level, thank you. However, the barriers analysis needs to be refined to include barriers to achieving biodiversity outcomes at the landscape level.

JS 4/1/2021

1- Please consider updating the figures and discussion on the global biodiversity finance gap with the many recent report released on the topic, most notably the recent CBD-mandated expert panel report on resource mobilization (<https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/c3f7/163d/b1f2c136506037842cebc521/sbi-03-05-add2-en.pdf>).

2- While they are grouped in 4 main "barriers" categories, the project describes a total of 20 barriers, some overlapping (e.g. 1d *capacity to integrate [...] into planning*, 1e *capacity and tools to integrate [...]* and 3a *capacity for mainstreaming [...] into sector and [...] plans*) and some not related to the broad categories they have been assigned to (1f on the appreciation of the value of BD or 1g on the promotion of integrated planning approaches seem largely independent of the *lack of effective strategies, mechanisms and successful models*). Please streamline the barrier analysis down to a reasonable number of specific, non-overlapping barriers that the project is to address. Please ensure that barriers are specific, e.g. 3(a) *limited capacity for mainstreaming BD into sector and sub-national plan* is too generic: what crucial type of capacity for what dimension of mainstreaming is missing?

3-Please clarify why there is a need for subnational biodiversity finance gaps assessments and which subnational level (we understand state-level and/or landscape-level are targeted) is necessary and why. In particular, what is the role of states in biodiversity resource mobilization. Our understanding is that the BIOFIN exercise in India was carried out at national level and in two states, and results from these two states were extrapolated to all the others. With the State mandates on biodiversity, it would thus make sense to refine the results at the target state level that were not part of the previous BIOFIN exercise. However, does landscape-level work on financing gaps and resource mobilization make sense when there does not seem to be a governing body at that scale? Against what biodiversity plans / politically agreed targets at landscape scale the gaps would be assessed?

4- The biodiversity relevance of the target landscapes is clearly presented but, as the project aims at institutional capacity building at the landscape scale, the institutional setting needs to be clarified. Please clarify how the geographic boundaries of the target landscapes have been defined. Are they biogeographical or administrative boundaries? Is there already a governing body or other planning document/mechanism at the scale of the target landscapes? Please also clarify the number of Gram Panchayat in the target landscapes and the aggregated surface area their jurisdiction cover.

## Agency Response

### UNDP Response, 4 October 2021

This has been now added

The Meghalaya Landscape is located in 2 districts (South Garo Hills district and West Garo Hills district)

The Tamil Nadu landscape is located mainly in 2 districts, namely the Nilgiris and Erode districts. A very small part of Coimbatore and Salem districts fall within the fringes of the landscape

Refer Section titled 'Project Geographical focus' (from p.18-19)

### UNDP Response, 21 April 2021

#### 1. Please find below relevant excerpts from two reports:

**Report 1-** CBDs report on estimation of resources needed for implementing the post-2020 global biodiversity framework preliminary second report of the panel of experts on resource mobilization.

"The current level of ambition for conserving biodiversity and using it sustainably is clearly not sufficient. All analyses reviewed indicate that failure to raise adequate resources for effectively implementing an ambitious new framework and not being able to use these resources efficiently will have significant global economic costs. Purely from an economic standpoint, continuing at current levels of conservation funding will lead to economic losses.

The WWF Global Futures report estimates conservatively that more than US\$ 500 billion are lost annually in terms of reduced economic growth (0.67 per cent of global GDP annually). In contrast, just investing in expanding protected areas to 30 per cent by 2030, it is estimated that future global revenues from the agriculture, fisheries, and nature tourism sectors would be larger than the necessary global investments. Even with the limited information and data available at this stage, there is thus a compelling economic argument to allocate more resources for biodiversity conservation. Implementing an ambitious framework will produce not only a potential change in rates of biodiversity loss (i.e. bending the curve on biodiversity loss) but will generate significant economic net benefits for current and future generations.

Recent estimates on future funding needs differ significantly, varying from lower estimates of US\$ 103 billion to US\$ 178 billion to higher estimates of US\$ 613 billion to US\$ 895 billion annually.

Despite the current work to understand the costs, benefits and funding needs for biodiversity conservation, more data and research is needed to provide accurate assessments of resource mobilization and its benefits.

A preliminary estimate under an unpublished work (as given in this CBD's report) highlights that In terms of financial benefits, the protected areas expansion would generate annual gross revenues (not considering any opportunity costs) between US\$ 100 billion and US\$ 312 billion from the three sectors considered: nature tourism, agricultural, and fisheries. In terms of costs of implementation, the investment needed is estimated in the range of US\$ 112 billion to US\$ 390 billion annually.

While no new Protected area will be developed under the proposed project, it will include demonstration of financial solutions and resource mobilization for implementation of Other Effective Area Based Conservation Measures in sectors like fisheries, agriculture and tourism, among others, which will demonstrate best practice and scalable models in the above context of mobilizing resources for PAs.

## Report 2: The Little Book of Investing in Nature, 2021

Current annual biodiversity conservation financing assessment indicates a biodiversity financing gap of USD 598–824 billion per year by 2030. The estimated USD 75–78 billion in governments' domestic budgets is the main source of financing for biodiversity conservation, representing 54–60% of total funding (Deutz et al. 2020).

The project will not only demonstrate financial models to leverage public finance by way of mainstreaming biodiversity actions into local level developmental finance but will also demonstrate other blended financial models to be covered, among others under the broad heading of natural infrastructure, green financial products, natural climate solutions, private/public-private finance including sustainable supply chain, Corporate Social Responsibility/Philanthropy and will also be engaging with Financial sector for deployment of Financial technologies for biodiversity.

Please refer to barrier 2 description, p. 14.

2. Thanks for the comments. The barrier section has been revised to ensure that they are aligned with the project component/outcomes.

Please refer barrier Section, from p.13.

3. Please refer to previous response under part 1, question 2.

The financial gap assessment will focus at the lowest level of GP in the two landscapes to enable mobilizing new resources and increasing flows from existing sources to implement the integrated GPDPs in select natural resource sectors (e.g. agriculture, forestry, fisheries, animal husbandry and tourism) through innovative/blended financial solutions. The governing body for the GPDPs are the GPs and the higher level is Zila Panchayats (district level).

Refer Table B and Outputs 2.1 and 2.2.

4. The two landscapes are part of recognized bio-geographic zones (Eastern Ghats and North East biogeographic zones), which are of high biodiversity significance locations. Within these landscapes (bio-geographic zones) the boundaries of the landscape are defined based on the location of important PAs, connecting forest reserves and OECMs so as to provide for a viable biological unit. Intermingled within the above-defined biological units are the Gram Panchayats (village level institutions) that occupies defined land areas that are managed by their respective governance structures for productive economic activities. Effective management of the biological landscape would require that the GPs that occupy areas within the landscape are also managed in a manner to enhance the conservation outcomes of the landscape as a whole. The PAs, Forest Reserves and OECMs have their own administrative structures. It would be untenable within the context of the Indian administrative systems to introduce a new governance structure at the landscape level. However, for purposes of coordination and ensuring complementarity of activities within the landscape, the State Biodiversity Boards (based on their current mandate) can serve this purpose, given that activities in the different parcels of land within the landscape would be planned and implemented by the different administrations that are mandated to do so.

The project will work with about 20% of the GPs that are located within the two landscapes. The GPs will be selected based on the following criteria: (i) GPs located within the vicinity of a designated PAs or high biodiversity area where opportunities for enhanced conservation outcomes and connective are high; (ii) these GP areas have reasonable genetic resources that can support sustainable resource use (through ABS and other relevant mechanisms: (iii) Potential to cluster GPs to provide a critical mass in selected biodiversity

locations.

Refer Section 3 - Proposed Alternative Scenario, p.28; and Component 1, p.30.

**UNDP Response, 2 September 2021**

Thank you for the comments. This is now reflected under barrier 1. Refer Barrier Section (Pages 13-16)

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

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

JS 10/12/2021 - Cleared.

JS 10/4/2021 -

A - Thank you, but the project "Climate Change Adaptation, North Eastern Region of India – GIZ" is still reflected under table C as co-funding this PIF proposal. Please correct.

The rest is cleared, thank you.

JS 9/14/2021

A- The project "Climate Change Adaptation, North Eastern Region of India – GIZ (EUR 79 million) 2011-2019" is closed. Please either remove it from the baseline or explain the lessons learnt that have been incorporated in the design.

B- Please add in the baseline a simple cross-reference to the other GEF projects listed in section II.6 of this PIF.

JS 4/27/2021 -

1-2-3-5- Cleared, thank you.

4 - For the GEF-7 projects that were added (ID 10204, 10125, 10385) please provide a little more details on how they relate to the proposal and add a cross-reference to the other GEF projects listed in section II.6 on coordination.

JS 4/1/2021

1- This section mentions a table C (*Other baseline rural development projects that are relevant to the GEF project are provided in Table C*) that we failed to locate. Please correct.

2- The baseline contains a very long list of projects, policies and initiatives, the relevance of which for the current project is not always clear (e.g. elaborations on PES in Himachal Pradesh or the *Eco-restoration of Pallikaranai Marshland* do not seem relevant as they concern other geographies, some initiative mentioned are small in scale). Please consider streamlining this section to retain only projects/initiatives that are directly relevant to this proposal's interventions, and explain the link with the proposal (e.g. why is the *Rejuvenation of Vaigai and Novayyal rivers* relevant for this project).

3- Please provide, when appropriate, the dates and amounts of the project (eg. JICA and GIZ's projects in Meghalaya). For past projects (e.g. Tamil Nadul Biodiversity and Greening project) please provide lessons learnt that have been/ will be used in the design of the project.

4- As only the title are provided in section II.6 Coordination, please also add relevant GEF projects in the baseline. This includes projects listed in section II.6 but also:

- GEF 7 project ID 10204, Transforming agricultural systems and strengthening local economies in high biodiversity areas of India through sustainable landscape management and public-private finance, UNEP: While there is a priori no geographic overlap, this mainstreaming project also includes multistakeholder coordination and plans to work with Gram Panchayat as a prominent feature.

- GEF 7 project ID 10125 Seventh Operational Phase of the GEF Small Grants Programme in India, UNDP; which plans to have interventions in both States targeted by this proposal and notably in Khasi Hills, nearby one of the target landscape.

- GEF 7 project ID 10385 Mainstreaming Natural Capital Values into Planning and Implementation for Sustainable Blue Economic Growth in Indian Coastal Districts, UNEP: There a priori no geographic overlap but the project is also a BD mainstreaming one. If the dimension related to the recognition of biodiversity values is retained in the current proposal, it might be worth exploring coordination.

5) The projects plans to develop blended finance instruments. Please provide any baseline, reference or past experience relevant to target landscape that the project will build upon.

## **Agency Response**

### **UNDP Response, 11 October 2021**

This reference has been removed from Table C. Table C note (p.7)

### **UNDP Response, 4 October 2021**

Thank you, the reference to this project is removed from the baseline section.

This has been now added.

Refer Section 2 (p.21-24)

**UNDP Response, 21 April 2021**

1. This is an error and has been corrected. Please refer to section 2, p.20
2. Thank you for the comments. This has been corrected. Please refer to section 2 – baseline, from p.20
3. Added as suggested. Refer baseline section, from p.20.
4. Projects are included as suggested. Please refer section 2 – baseline, from p.20.
5. Public financing is the main source of finance in the project landscape with funds flowing for development and implementation of local level development plans as well as plans for agriculture development, fisheries, tourism and overall rural development. There is limited evidence of blended finance instruments in project landscapes. The project will build on the methodology being developed under the BIOFIN project and will identify and implement locale specific blended finance mechanisms to reduce the finance gap for priority actions for landscape level conservation actions.

However, as per the ongoing discussions with different stakeholders, JICA and the Royal Bank of Scotland has shown interest in developing and implementing projects to support conservation initiatives in critical landscapes of Tamil Nadu and Meghalaya. Similar and other partnerships will be explored to develop and implement locale specific blended financial solutions.

Please refer Component 2, p.34.

**UNDP Response, 2 September 2021**

Additional information project in terms of the GEF 7 projects and is also reflected in Part II, Section 2. Refer Part II, Section 2 (p.23-24)

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

## Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 10/12/2021: Cleared.

JS 10/5/2021 - Thank you for the streamlining effort on the description of the alternative scenario. However:

1- The ToC diagram is not readable in the portal entry (the font is too small), the text in some boxes under "development challenges" is cut and the box related to "Project impacts" is empty. Please provide the ToC diagram as a separate file to ensure its readability and make sure all boxes are complete in the next submission and the description of the assumption is included.

The narrative accompanying the ToC diagram of this submission is not adequate. Please remove it in the next submission and make sure that a proper ToC is developed during PPG (see specific STAP guidance on the ToC: <https://www.stapgef.org/resources/advisory-documents/theory-change-primer>).

3:

- 3.1 : output 1.3 . Please remove the last sentence of output 1.3 (*The integrated strategies will inter-alia include action plans, targets, budgeting, monitoring frameworks, implementation and resource mobilization strategies for mainstreaming of biodiversity concerns into plans, policies, programs and socio-economic and developmental targets of rural development and local governance in each proposed landscape.*) since the output does not mention integrated strategies anymore and this sentence goes beyond the scope of the new version of 1.3, which focusses on tools and procedures.

- 3.2: output 1.4: As we understand that this output is now dedicated to training and capacity building, please remove the first two sentences (*"This will entail implementing [...] in the two landscapes".*) since they relate to implementation and their content is already covered in output 1.5.

5- Output 2.1 now states "*The district level resource gap assessment will define biodiversity goals and targets*" without explaining how this new (and apparently additional) goal and target setting exercise articulates with the other objective/ priority setting exercise included in the project (landscape level management strategies of output 1.2 and the village-level budgeted conservation planning instruments, OECM and forest management plans of output 1.5). Please be explicit in the description of output 2.1 on how the project plans to articulate the biodiversity goals and priorities defined in the strategic planning exercises supported under component 1 with the resource mobilization work carried out under component 2. The description of output 2.1 must make clear how the it will ensure that the biodiversity finance work and the work of component 1 are fully coherent and integrated with one another.

The rest is cleared, thank you.

JS 9/16/2021

A- Thank you, cleared. But see comment on output 1.5 below.

B-C: Thank you, but see comment on component 2 below.

D- Cleared. thank you.

1- Thank you for the revisions on the theory of change but the diagram and narrative remain too difficult to understand and to reconcile with the rest of the description of the project. In particular, it is confusing that what are presented as the main project strategies in the first paragraphs of the alternative scenario ("the proposed project strategy is to facilitate coordination between these two decentralized institutional structures..."; "the project's strategy is to also mainstream conservation action within the landscape in areas that lie beyond the jurisdiction of the local community institutions..."; "The overall strategy of the project is to thus galvanize the already existing participatory and democratic governance structures that operate at the village and district levels to...") do not appear as such in the theory of change. Please thus:

- simplify the ToC diagram, and notably reduce the number of boxes and arrows, to illustrate only the project's major causal pathways. Please also ensure that all outputs and outcomes are represented with their number. On the assumptions outlined in the current ToC diagram, it is our understanding that A5 (availability of tools and ease of application and uptake by users) and to some extent A3 (public finance better targeted to achieve biodiversity outcomes in their programs) are to be delivered by the project. They should thus not be underlying assumptions.

-revise the ToC narrative, aiming, at this PIF stage, for one solid paragraph of narrative that describes, at a high level, the project's major causal pathways, including the assumptions underlying the causal chain of outcomes. Importantly, please justify that these causal pathways are collectively necessary and sufficient to achieve the desired biodiversity outcomes at the landscape scale.

-Please streamline the introductory part of the alternative scenario to ensure it is consistent with the theory of change and remove repetitions (e.g. paragraphs 3 and 4 are largely redundant on OECMs), including repetitions with what is presented in the components (e.g. paragraph 8 on state-level coordination committees and LLCC with output 1.1).

Please see STAP guidance on the ToC: <https://www.stagef.org/resources/advisory-documents/theory-change-primer>

2- Output 1.1: Please clarify whether the Landscape Level Coordination Committee (LLCC) and State-level Coordination Committees (SCCs) are meant to persist beyond the project's lifetime. If not, how are project's results related to State and landscape level coordination supposed to be sustained after its closure?

During PPG, please determine the best format and positioning for the LLCCs and SCCs to ensure proper functioning and legitimacy vis-à-vis existing institutional arrangement / structures.

3- output 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5: The description of the alternative scenario for these outputs is still confusing. There is still some apparent overlap among them and there is content that does not correspond to the outputs' titles.

We understand from the output titles that 1.3 works on the tools and frameworks for biodiversity mainstreaming, 1.4 provides the capacity building, and 1.5 is the support to actual mainstreaming in plans and implementation. But the description of 1.5 includes some training and provision of tools "Under this output, [...] the project will provide training, technical support and planning tools to ..." and 1.4 includes "This will entail implementing priority biodiversity actions identified and recorded in the People's Biodiversity Registers", when we understand

actual implementation is supposed to be under 1.5.

Please revise the title of the outputs, using plain language, to make sure they reflect what they will actually deliver. In particular revise the title of output 1.5, which remains too vague.

Please also revise the description of the outputs to ensure that there is no apparent overlap and the content is aligned with the output's title.

To do so, please consider having one output by activity type (tools; capacity building; implementation).

4- Component 2 -Please clarify in the PIF the scale at which component 2 will work and ensure that the different parts of the PIF are consistent in that respect. The title of output 2.1 indeed mentions the landscape level but the introductory paragraph of component 2 states that "The project will support a very targeted biodiversity funding gap analysis at the district level...".

- If output 2.1 is at the district level only, please explain why, to achieve lasting results at the landscape scale, it is not deemed necessary to work on resource mobilization at the State level and that the district level is sufficient to ensure adequate funding to support biodiversity outcomes in the full landscape, including PAs, OECMs and Forest reserves ?

-If output 2.1 is also at the State level, please clarify why output 2.3 is only at District and village levels.

5- Output 2.1:

The title of output 2.1 announces that the resource gap will be assessed and a resource mobilization strategy will be developed in each landscape. i.e. a comprehensive approach to biodiversity financing. However, the underlying description of output 2.1 is entirely devoted to the testing of specific financial solutions with no information on resource gap assessment and resource mobilization strategy (their scope, scale, methodology).

Please correct. In particular, assessing resources gaps requires the identification of resource needs, which in turn requires defining a reference to be achieved, i.e. political biodiversity goals, targets or plan, such as the NBSAP at the national level. Please be explicit in the PIF on the political goals / targets or plan will be used at the landscape level (district level?) as the reference to assess resource requirements in this output 2.1.

JS 4/27/2021

1- Thank you for the improved theory of change. However, it is difficult to review as outputs are not explicitly mapped in the diagram provided and it is unclear how certain "Result" boxes relate to the project (e.g. "Setting up an institutional mechanism to bring convergence in planning ... at the landscape scale" or "the creation of centralized databases for informed decision at regional and national level" do not seem to be included in the project). Please revise to make sure outputs are mapped/reflected in the diagram and all elements shown in the diagram are part of the proposal as described. Please also ensure the ToC explains how interventions at different scale would combine to produce outcomes at the landscape level.

2-Thank you for the clarification on the training. however :

2a-output 1.1 includes "resource mobilization strategies" when it is the purpose of component 2.

2b - output 1.2 is to "support training to improve capacity of GP committee members and GPPFTs on the revised GPDP manual for integration of PBRs into the GPDP process" and 1.3 is also to provide training to the Gram Panchayat management committee to facilitate the integration of the People's Biodiversity Registers. The development of training by SIRI is both in 3.3 and 1.2.

2c - Please see comments on component 2 in the second comment box of this review sheet.  
Please revise the PIF to make clear that there is no overlap.

3-9. Thank you for the clarifications, cleared.

A- Output 1.3, as per its title, is supposedly at the GP level but description has an entire paragraph starting by "The second approach at the landscape level". Please clarify.

B - See comments on component 2 in the 2nd comment box of this review sheet and address them in the description of the alternative scenario.

C - output 2.1: Please clarify in the PIF against which biodiversity plans/targets the resource gap assessment at GP level would be carried out. Is it against the biodiversity targets that would be integrated in the GPDP thanks to component 1?

D- Output 3.3: We welcome the additions on the up-scaling strategy and note it is proposed to be refined at PPG stage. However, we would like to see a clearer pathway to replication that goes beyond a subactivity in an output designated to knowledge/experience sharing. Please consider adding a specific output on replication / up-scaling that outlines a mechanisms for feedback to policy and institutions and levers to foster replication. Please also clarify in 3.3 what MPI refers to ("*share lessons on SBB and MPI institution websites*").

JS 4/2/2021

The description of the alternative scenario requires significant revisions to address the comments of the first comment box and to provide a convincing theory of change.

1) Thank you for providing a theory of change diagram. However,

1a - we fail to reconcile the diagram with the general description of the alternative scenario, which, as we understand it, is describing the main causal pathways through which the project is to achieve its intended outcomes. The alternative scenario describes (1) leveraging Gram Panchayat and their development planning processes for biodiversity mainstreaming in areas under their jurisdictions, (2) other approaches outside their jurisdictions (PA management and OECMs are notably mentioned there), (3) the use of digital tools to facilitate integration, and (4) "One health" as the main project strategies. But all (2) and (3) are at best implicit in the theory change and, reciprocally, components 2 and 3 seem unrelated to the main project strategies. Please revise so that the ToC diagram and accompanying narrative are consistent.

1b - while there remains diverse ways of displaying a ToC, the current diagram is rather a graphical representation of the logframe than a ToC with added intermediate outcomes that are not always well related to their outputs (e.g. intermediate outcome 1.4 seems weakly related and less ambitious to an output than promises strategies and action towards a green and resilient recovery; 2.3 is the same as its underlying output; 2.4 only identifies financing option and is less ambitious than its underlying output). More importantly, it fails to describe the causal pathways by which interventions are expected to have the desired effect and the justification that these causal pathways are necessary and *sufficient*. Please refer to STAP's guidance <https://www.stapgef.org/theory-change-primer> Please refer to STAP's guidance (<https://www.stapgef.org/theory-change-primer>).

2) Many outputs are overloaded (in particular 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, and 2.1) and there is significant overlap among them. For example, capacity building and training on similar topics seem to be included in output 1.1 ("*institutional strengthening and tailored training for strengthening capacity and skills of the Biodiversity Management Committees*"), output 1.2 ("*will also aim to enhance capacities of stakeholders in the rural development sector and key biodiversity institutions like the State Biodiversity Boards and Biodiversity Management Committees*"), output 1.3 ("*At the local level, the project will provide training, technical support [...] to integrate BD in decision making processes*) and output 1.4 ("*Under this output, the project will help strengthen capacity, provide technical support*" related to multisector integration). Similarly, the "*technical support and training for assessing finance gaps*" of output 2.1 seems similar to the one under output 2.5 for biodiversity expenditures tracking and tagging. All interventions at landscape scale in 2.2 and 2.4 seem redundant with 2.1 that is to go all the way to the development and testing of a resource mobilization strategy at landscape scale. "Learning and experiences from pilot sites will be disseminated at local, subnational and national level" in output 3.2 when output 3.3 is "*Results from project sites documented and disseminated, learning and experiences shared in national and international fora*". Please streamline the outputs, addressing overlap.

While addressing the above, please consider the following points:

3) GPDPs: Please clarify the planning cycles and scope of the GPDPs, which seem to be one of the main entry points for BD mainstreaming in the project. Please clarify what biodiversity mainstreaming in a GPDP means in practice, i.e. how would one assess that biodiversity has been mainstreamed in a GPDP? In particular, do GPDPs include land-use plans and/or budgets for biodiversity-relevant actions? Please confirm that their development / revision is compatible with the time frame of the project. Are they synchronized across the target landscapes?

4) The description of component 1 mentions the creation of an interagency coordination and implementation committee with members from sector departments. However, it does not appear in the outputs. At what scale is that committee to be created and how does it relate to other existing institutions, notably the State Biodiversity and the Gram Panchayat?

6) PBRs:

6a - Our understanding is that PBRs contain information on the local biological resources, their medicinal or any other use or any other traditional knowledge associated with them but are not planning tools. Please thus clarify how the project would "support the conversion of the PBRs of around 200 BMCs in the two landscapes into **costed conservation planning instruments**" in output 1.3.

6b - The project propose the digitization of PBRs but not to support their development. Please confirm that PBRs already exist widely in the

target landscapes. Please also confirm that it is considered that PBR contain the necessary and sufficient information to adequately inform biodiversity mainstreaming at the local scale as it seems to be assumed in the project.

8) OECMs: Please explain further in the PIF what OECM means in practice in the context of the project. Please notably expand on the criteria and guidelines developed by India and provide a link, if available, to *MOEFCC (2020). Criteria and Guidelines for identifying Other Effective Area Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) in India*. Please explain how the project would ensure that they are created in areas relevant for biodiversity of global significance.

9) Please clarify if the project is to carry out the full BIOFIN cycle (5 components: Policy and institutional review, expenditure review, needs assessment, finance plan, implementation) for each scale (to be also clarified) at which it plans to develop resource mobilization strategies and map these BIOFIN component to specific outputs. If not, please clarify why it could bypass some of these steps.

## **Agency Response**

### **UNDP Response, 11 October 2021**

There was an error while working on the TOC diagram in the word document and transferring into the PIF doc. The TOC diagram has been revised including the narrative as suggested. A brief TOC narrative is included in Section 3. A separate TOC diagram will be submitted.

Well noted on the suggestion to improve the TOC narrative and diagram during the PPG. A comprehensive TOC diagram and narrative will be prepared through consultation with the EA and the stakeholders.

Please refer Section 3 (p. 26-28)

3:

3.1 Thank you. This sentence has been removed. Refer Output 1.3 (p. 31-32)

3.2: Thank you. The two referenced sentences have been removed. Refer Output 1.4 (p.32)

5. Output 2.1 Thank you for the comment. The goal and target setting is intended to identify additional resource for the following new

activities: (i) continued engagement and dialogue with key stakeholders to monitor emerging threats to biodiversity within the landscape and design and implementation of adaptive measures to manage such threats (Output 1.2); (ii) (a) provision of technical support for mapping and planning of conservation activities in OECMs, support for targeted management of species and ecosystem within OECMs, monitoring status of species and ecosystems within OECMs, etc. (b) technical and NGO support to facilitation planning teams at GP and VEC level to improve integration of biodiversity information into village level planning, supporting technical oversight for implementation of conservation actions and monitoring outcomes; and (c) continued support for engagement of community teams for monitoring and surveillance (Output 1.5) and (iii) expanding opportunities for promotion of better health outcomes in multi-use landscapes and promotion of 'green' job creation (Output 1.7). Please refer Output 2.1 (p.35)

### **UNDP Response, 4 October 2021**

Thank you for the comments on the ToC and narrative.

The TOC is revised following STAP guidance. Reduced boxes and includes Outcome and Outputs.

Refer Figure 2 and associated narrative (p.26-28)

Revised (see above)

Revised to be consistent with TOC

Refer Section 3 (p. 29)

Well noted.

The discussion of sustainability of LLCCs and SCCs is provided. This will be further assessed and formalized at PPG stage

Refer Section 7 on innovation, sustainability and potential for scaling up (p. 43)

Thank you for the comments. Titles of all outputs have been revised as suggested.

Output 1.3 now specifically relates to tools and guidelines, Output 1.4 to capacity building and Outputs 1.5 and 1.6 to implementation. The description of Output 1.5 has been revised to focus on implementation actions. This will be further assessed at PPG stage.

Refer Table B and Section 3 (p. 29-34)

4- Output 2.1 will focus on - where the larger extent of the landscape (2 districts in each landscape) based on defined biodiversity goals and targets. This would lead to the extrapolation of a resource mobilization strategy at each landscape level in particular for activities where there is a deficiency of reliable funding.

Given that there are formal government administrative structures at district level through which central and state budget flow (and not at the

landscape) it is felt necessary that resource assessments should be at that level. The resource assessment would subsequently be extrapolated to the landscape level and resource mobilization strategies developed for each landscape in particular for activities where there is a gap of reliable funding. PAs and Forest reserves are adequately funded by central and state schemes and as reflected in response to Question 1 B above, additional funding is required to introduce innovation in terms of using new spatial tools and approaches to broaden PA management approaches to integrate cooperative agreements with neighboring villages and their hierarchical institutional structures to enhance connectivity and viability of the PA network, strengthen participatory surveillance, monitoring and enforcement and improve community monitoring of biodiversity and species. The intent is to strengthen linkages with OECMs and fund their initial surveys and planning. The expectation is that once OECMs are formalized as national PA category, there will be regular budgetary allocation from the government.

Refer Section 3 Component 2 and its Outputs (p. 35-36)

See above

### **UNDP Response, 21 April 2021**

1a) The ToC has been revised based on the comments.

Please refer Figure 1 (Conceptual Framework), p.17 and Figure 2 (ToC) including narrative, p.25-27.

1b) Please refer to the revised project ToC.

Please refer project ToC, p.25-27.

2. Thank you for the comments. The capacity building activities are specific to each output as reflected below:

- Output 1.1: focused on improving capacity of the BMCs to enable them to understand how the information collected by them in terms of BD and TK can be converted into specific on-the-ground actions, as well as improve their capacity in negotiation skills and tools to be able to influence the GPDP planning process (further elaborated in Output 1.1)

- Under Output 1.3: the training is specifically focused on GP committees to improve their understanding of conservation aspects related to development, how to integrate BMC information into conservation actions, developing measurable indicators for conservation, etc. See Output 1.3
- Output 1.4: The capacity building here is focused on the livestock, health and wildlife sectors to improve their understanding with respect to linkages with zoonotic diseases and integrated/collaborative measures among the sectors to identify process of change and early warning signs of deteriorating environmental conditions and relationship to disease management;
- Output 2.1: is specific to resource gap assessment and financial solutions and mainly targeted at financial/economic staff at key sectors;

Output 3.2: the reference to documentation and dissemination has been moved to Output 3.3.

Please refer Output description in the Alternative Scenario Section 3, from p.31.

3. Thank you for the feedback and suggestion to clarify the planning cycles and scope of GPDPs. The Constitution of India mandates the Gram Panchayats (GPs) to prepare and implement Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) for economic development and social justice by converging/ integrating all such programs of the Panchayat, State and Centre within their geographical area. While the plan provides a long-term (perspective plan) in nature (ideally five years plan), it is refined and implemented on annual basis. After implementation of annual plan, the perspective plan will be reviewed taking the performance/ feedback/impact of the annual plan implementation into account and making changes and reprioritizing the activities/projects for the coming financial year.

The preparation of the plan begins in May of each year and complete by December 31 for implementation in the following year. A Gram Panchayat Planning Facilitation team comprising representatives of key sector institutions are established at each GP division to help with community mobilization, data collection, situation analysis and development of the plan. The plan captures local needs, taps local potential, helps convergence at sector programs and budget at the ground level based on local needs. The plan enables mobilization of all segments of the population and integrates peoples knowledge, facilitates local resource mobilization and ensures direct accountability and local ownership.

The role and responsibilities of the different departments and agencies are defined in the plan. Once the GPDP is endorsed by the Gram Sabha (General Assembly of the village and approved by the District Planning Committee, sector agencies facilitate convergence of technical support and financing. The role and responsibilities of the different departments and agencies are defined in the plan.

Funding for the GPDPs are made available through the convergence of many programs including MGNREG, National Rural Livelihood mission, National Social Assistance Program, Schemes related to agriculture, Centrally Funded Schemes to Support Minor Forest Product Development, National mission for Green India etc.

In terms of environment, the GPs are responsible for ecological and environment aspects including integration of biodiversity conservation, addressing climate change and ecological aspects. The GPDPs have spatial planning tools and information and mandates for integration of

addressing climate change and ecological aspects. The GPDPs have spatial planning tools and information and mandates for integration of biodiversity, although the action has been limited so far. The project aims to help mainstream biodiversity into the GPDP as an innovative aspect. As part of this effort, the project will help develop a biodiversity mainstreaming index that will be used as part of the training and capacity building of GP members. The index will assess the presence or absence of a PBR, the quality of the PBR, the number and quality of actions integrated into the GPDP, expenditure incurred for such actions and benefits derived from such conservation actions (including benefits from ABS, sustainable resource uses including minor forest products, etc.). As the GPDPs are prepared each year, it is compatible with the timeframe of the project.

For details of GPDP process, please refer Annex E of the PIF and the “Guidelines for Preparation of Gram Panchayat Development Plan 2018” Ministry of Panchayat Raj. <https://www.panchayat.gov.in/documents/20126/0/GPDP.pdf/4aab2585-3fd4-0990-c2ae-fb53ec638ba5?t=1554891827998>

Please refer Annex F for planning process of GPDP, p.83

Assessing mainstreaming effectiveness in GPDP is included in Output 1.1 description, p.31.

4. No inter-agency coordination committee will be created through the project. Coordination happens at two levels through the existing mechanisms:

1) As mentioned in response to previous questions, the State Biodiversity Boards (SBBs) which represents multi-institutional coordination structures and established under the Biodiversity Act are mandated to facilitate coordination of mainstreaming of biodiversity and sustainable use of biodiversity resources. Based on this mandate, the SBBs will facilitate coordination across the different sector and administrative levels for delivery of project activities at each landscape. The project will make an effort to include the Ministry of Panchayat Raj Institution to represent in the SBB.

2) At the GP level, the GPDP planning process includes facilitation support from a Gram Panchayat Planning Facilitation Team (GPPFT) that comprises representatives of key sectors to help with community mobilization, planning and provision of support for implementation of the approved GPDPs. This mechanism helps in coordination and convergence of technical support and budgetary resources for GPDP implementation.

Refer Component 1, p.30.

6a) The PBRs contain information on biodiversity and TK, however quality varies. This needs to be addressed under the project. While a template exists for completing PBRs, there is a need to enhance capacity of BMCs for collection of relevant information that can be used for planning of GPDPs. The project will help develop tools and provide training to BMCs to facilitate the conversion/use of PBRs as planning tools for integration into GPDPs. This will be an innovative approach that the project is going to test in that it will move beyond the

collection of information to promote the use of PBRs as a planning tool.

Please refer Output 1.1 narrative, p.31.

6b) While data used by GPs for GPDP are all available in spatial planning format, the PBRs are not so hence, the biodiversity layer is missing in the digitized format for integration into the GPDPs. The innovative aspect of the project is that it will support the digitization of the PBRs and conversion to ePBRs so that this information can be easily integrated into the spatial planning layers available for GPDP planning.

Refer Output 3.1 description, p.36.

8. There are 12 OECMs defined for India based on CBD criteria. These OECMs already exists and the project will provide support to (i) map and link these OECMs in strategic manner to enhance connectivity, improve conservation outcomes and promote conservation; (ii) enhance community capacity to improve their effective management and protection; (iii) where relevant help to prepare management plans or prescriptions and (iv) support efforts to attract financing mechanisms.

The project will not create OECMs but will help map the existing OECMs in the landscape, support the development of management prescriptions for these OECMs, enhance capacity for strengthening the protection and management effectiveness of them.

The criteria and guidelines for identifying OECMs in India has been included as an Annex E in the PIF.

Please refer to Output 1.3 narrative, p. 32, and Annex E, p.81.

9. The project will carry out full BIOFIN cycle for developing resource mobilization strategy/finance plan for implementing GPDPs that will be developed in both landscapes. And will demonstrate scalable financial solutions for implementation of priority conservation actions .

Refer Output 2.2 description, p.34.

### **UNDP Response, 2 September 2021**

The Conceptual framework and ToC has been revised to reflect the institutional structures that will support convergence and replication. The Conceptual framework and ToC will be further developed and strengthened at the PPG stage. Please refer to Figure 1 (p.17) and ToC and narrative (p.25-27).

2- 2- Training in Output 1.1 removed to avoid overlap.

Training in Output 1.4 specifically relates to integration of biodiversity into village development planning for tools and guidelines developed under Output 1.3.

Training under Output 1.5 (limited) relates specifically for improving effectiveness of PBRs.

Training in Output 2.5 (now Output 2.3) is specifically related to financial solutions, including tracking of biodiversity expenditures, budgeting, etc.

Refer Section 3) P 33-38

A - This is revised to the landscape level (now Output 1.5), so as to be able to ensure scalable solutions that go beyond the local level to also include areas outside the domain of the GP and VEC institutions, such as PAs, OECMs and Forest reserves so as to demonstrate an integrated approach to manage the range of different elements of the landscape. Table B and Section 3) P. 34-35

B - These changes are reflected in Section 3) under Component 2, which is now streamlined as suggested to combine some of the Outputs. Section 3) P. 36-38

C - Financial solutions will be tested at the landscape level and targets will be mostly applied under Outputs 1.5, 2.2 and 3.4. This will be confirmed at PPG stage. Refer Table B and Section 3) Output 2.1 (Page 36-37)

D - New separate output (3.4) added for replication with clear activities/targets for broader application across the country. Refer Table B and Section 3) Output 3.4 (P 39-40).

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

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

JS 9/14/2021 - All cleared, thank you.

JS 4/27/2021

1-Cleared.

2- As BD-2-7 is dedicated to PAs, please restrain the elaboration to what is relevant to protected areas, i.e. consider deleting the sentences related to GPDP.

JS 4/2/2021

1- The project is aligned with BD-1-1 but should more clearly elaborate on its alignment with the subentry points of BD-1-1: (i) Spatial and land-use planning, (ii) Improving and changing production practices in priority sectors, (iii) Developing policy and regulatory frameworks that remove perverse subsidies and provide incentives for biodiversity-positive land and resource use.

2- While targets on PA management have been set, the alignment with BD-2-7 (improving Financial Sustainability, Effective Management, and Ecosystem Coverage of the Global Protected Area Estate) is unclear. Please note that most of the elaboration on alignment with BD-2-7 provided is actually related to the BD-1-1 mainstreaming entry point ("lack of integrated local and sectoral planning and mainstreaming, unproductive and unsustainable production activities in agriculture, mining and grazing, illegal logging, illegal taking of wildlife, loss of forest landscape intactness, and habitat degradation", "OECMs", etc.). Please revise.

##### Agency Response

UNDP Response, 21 April 2021

1. Thank you for the feedback. This has been revised.

Please refer section 4, p.37.

2. This is now revised to elaborate the priorities of BD-2-7 and BD-1-1.

Refer Section 4, p.37.

**UNDP Response, 2 September 2021**

Thank you for the suggestion. Revised to focus on PAs and measures to enhance collaboration with partners to enhance connectivity and improve protection of PAs. Refer Section 4, (P 40-41)

**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**

JS 10/5/2021 - Cleared, thank you.

JS 9/15/2021-

While the project has evolved towards a landscape approach, increments specific to the landscape scale have not been added. Please correct. The project should notably aim for improved multistakeholder coordination at landscape scale (process goal) and improved connectivity (outcome goal).

JS 4/1/2021 - To be revisited once other comments are addressed.

**Agency Response**

**UNDP Response, 4 October 2021**

This has been added. Refer Table in Section 5 (p.39-40)

**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**

JS 4/1/2021 - Please address comments in comment box 1.6 of this review sheet.

**Agency Response**

UNDP Response, 21 April 2021

Please refer response provided for question 1.6 above

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

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

JS 10/5/2021 - Cleared.

JS 9/15/2021

1- Thank you but what was suggested was the deletion of the whole paragraph. Only its first sentence was deleted. Please consider deleting the first paragraph of the innovation section, as the rest of the elaboration underscores the truly innovative parts of the proposal.

JS 4/26/2021:

1- Thank you for the revisions. Please delete the first paragraph of this section ("*The project will focus on ... SDGs.*"), as the rest of the

elaboration underscores the truly innovative parts of the proposal.

2-6 Cleared, thank you.

JS 4/2/2021 - Yes, but current elaboration must be revised:

1- Please consider focusing the elaboration on the most innovative elements of the project. Please consider in particular removing the first paragraph on innovation.

2- Please clarify to which output corresponds the "multi-pronged approach to controlling unsustainable and illegal activities, including using and marrying a combination of advanced technologies, hotspot identification, enforcement training, and economic development has also not been attempted at a large scale."

3- The elaboration on sustainability contains many elements related to scaling-up rather than sustainability / durability. Please revise.

4- Please clarify how the project intends to institutionalize the trainings and other capacity building activities that it will provide. A good share of the project targets Gram Panchayat that may suffer from regular turnover with their 5-year election cycle.

6- Please clarify and align the description of output 3.3 with the development provided here on scaling-up. Output 3.3 focusses on a communication strategy when it is mentioned here that a replication and/or scaling-up strategy will be developed. Please clarify what the replication and/or scaling-up strategy would attempt to replicate / upscale, provide the tentative ingredients of this strategy (to be refined during PPG), confirm that it is to be implemented as part of the project and consider dedicating an output to it.

## **Agency Response**

### **UNDP Response, 4 October 2021**

The reference paragraph has been removed. Refer Section 7 (p. 41-42)

### **UNDP Response, 21 April 2021**

1. Thank you for the comments. This has now been revised as suggested.

Refer Section 7, p.40.

2. The section on innovation is revised to demonstrate innovative elements of the project.

2. The section on implementation needs to demonstrate interactive elements of the project.

Refer Section 7, p.40.

3. This has been revised as commented.

Refer Section 7, p.40.

4. Training for GPs are mandated through the State Institute for Rural Development (SIRD). SIRD offers programs on Capacity building that includes- training, research and consultancy services.

The project will enhance training of staff of SIRD on means to integrate PBRs into the GPDP planning process. The project will support strengthening of existing curriculum, development of training modules and materials to facilitate integration of biodiversity aspects into the GPDPs.

In addition, District Administrations provide technical support to GPs during the GPDP planning process. The project will work towards enhancing capacity of district sectoral staff to better integrate environmental and sustainable development principles into sector development plans and programs at GP level.

Refer Output 1.2 narrative, p.32.

6. Thank you for the feedback.

Output 3.3 has been strengthened by including key elements that might be taken into consideration in developing the strategy. It will be further discussed at PPG stage if this should be a separate output.

Refer Output 3.3 narrative, p.37.

### **UNDP Response, 2 September 2021**

Deleted as suggested. Refer Section 7, (P.43-45)

## 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

JS 4/26/2021 - Cleared. Coordinates appear on the maps.

JS 3/31/2021 - Adequate maps are provided. However, please provide coordinates.

**Agency Response Done**

## 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

JS 10/5/2021 - Cleared.

JS 9/15/2021 -

1- Cleared.

A- The first paragraph of this section and the stakeholder table in the portal entry still include stakeholders from Puducherry (5 occurrences in total) when it is not related to any of the two target landscapes. Please revise and make sure the section in the portal entry is up to date:

<p>Biodiversity Management Committees (Tamil Nadu and Meghalaya) and Biodiversity Council (Puducherry)</p>	<p>The Biodiversity Management Committees are entrusted with the preparation of People's Biodiversity Registers and conservation plans for sustainable management of resources and area under their jurisdiction.</p> <p>The project will work through the Biodiversity Management Committees in Tamil Nadu and Meghalaya and the Biodiversity Council in Puducherry for planning, implementation and execution of activities under the project at the landscape level. This would include resource and traditional knowledge documentation, preparation of People's Biodiversity Registers and Biocultural protocols and facilitating ABS agreements. BMCs and Biodiversity Councils will work closely with the Gram Panchayats (constitutional bodies for local self-governance) and with traditional institutions in Tamil Nadu, Meghalaya and Puducherry for developing and implementing integrated conservation and development plans.</p>
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JS 4/26/2021 -

1-5. Cleared, thank you.

6- Thank you, but the sentence "*Specific outputs will be further developed and integrated into the project design to strengthen inter-agency coordination, and to build partnerships and platforms for discussion and coordination between government, private sector and communities.*" is still included in the PIF. Please correct.

A- The stakeholder table includes stakeholders from Puducherry when it is not related to any of the two target landscapes. Please clarify or revise.

JS 4/2/2021 - We note that consultations with local communities and IPs in the two target landscapes were limited given the Covid-19 situation.

1- Please be more explicit on the extent of the stakeholder engagement carried out to date, specifying which administrations, NGO etc. were consulted.

2- Given the project relies in good part on very local activities (Gam Panchayats are one of the main entry point), please confirm the feasibility of the project in the chosen landscapes and the anticipated buy-in of local stakeholders despite the limited consultations undertaken.

3- Public finance: Since the project is to carry out finance gap assessment and resource mobilization plans, most likely also including public budgets, please clarify whether the relevant finance authorities of the various levels targeted have been and will be engaged.

4- Financial sector: The financial sector, be it public institutions or the private financial sector, seems largely absent of engagement plans. Please correct. The project notably plans to develop blended finance but it is unclear in the list of stakeholders which, if any, have been or will be engaged to that effect. Who are the potential providers of public funds (only NABARD seems to be targeted) and of private

investments that could contribute to biodiversity finance, and notably be interested in blended finance instruments in the target landscapes ?

5- Human and animal health sectors: While the project, in its current form, plans to develop one health strategy, it seems that most relevant actor from the animal and human health sectors have not been and are not planned to be consulted. Please revise.

6- Please clarify what is meant by "*Specific outputs will be further developed and integrated into the project design to strengthen inter-agency coordination, and to build partnerships and platforms for discussion and coordination between government, private sector and communities.*" Does it refer to new, additional outputs or the refinement of outputs already listed in table B? If the former, please integrate this/these output(s) at PIF stage and remove this sentence. If the former, please reformulate and refer explicitly to the related outputs.

## Agency Response

### UNDP Response, 4 October 2021

This has been corrected.

### UNDP Response, 21 April 2021

1. The PIF has been developed in close consultation with the National Biodiversity Authority and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MOEFCC), Government of India. Several consultations have been held with key government departments and agencies, academic and research institutions, bi-laterals, and civil society organizations.

- **Consultation with State Biodiversity Boards, State Forest Departments and Environment Departments** (December 2019-December 2020) to identify threats and barriers and priorities of the Government for conservation of biodiversity and sustainable natural resource management. This includes the State Biodiversity Boards of Tamil Nadu, Meghalaya and Puducherry, State Forest Department of Tamil Nadu and Meghalaya and the Environment Department of Meghalaya.
- **Regular meetings of the State Biodiversity Boards** and Biodiversity Councils have also been organized and led by the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA)
- **Consultation with Wildlife Institute of India and Global Tiger Forum** (January 2021)

Consultations have also been held with the Wildlife Institute of India and the Global Tiger Forum to identify key threats to biodiversity and natural resource management in the project landscapes, and design interventions to address the same.

· **Multi-stakeholder consultation** (January 2021) - A multi-stakeholder consultation was held in January with representatives from National Biodiversity Authority, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, Puducherry Union Territory Biodiversity Council, Tamil Nadu State Biodiversity Board, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), United Nations University - Institute of Advanced Studies, Nagaland Wildlife and Biodiversity Conservation Trust, ICLEI South Asia, Pushpa Gujral Science City, Goa State Biodiversity Board, IORA Ecological, to discuss the PIF, areas of convergence and further alignment of the PIF to the COVID response strategy of the Government of India and GEF.

During the PPG and implementation phase, UNDP will adopt a participatory approach for effective stakeholder engagement. Strong partnerships with government, the private sector and local communities would be required to achieve the outcomes outlined under the project. Given the presence of ethnic communities in the two select landscapes<sup>[1]</sup>, the PPG phase will focus on consultations with these groups to secure Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) by disseminating the objectives and actions associated with the proposed project and to solicit their views and support with regards to the project.

A Safeguards Specialist, thorough with the FPIC procedures, will be recruited at the PPG stage to develop an Indigenous Peoples' Planning Framework (IPPF). The IPPF will outline procedures to ensure compliance with UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards (SES) during project implementation, including the development of site-specific Indigenous Peoples Plan

A Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) will be developed during the PPG phase that would provide a mechanism to ensure speedy and localized resolution of grievances raised by stakeholders especially ethnic and local communities. As per UNDP policy, guidelines and toolkit on SES, the IPPF and the GRM will be included in the Environmental and Social Management Framework. Additionally, a comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement Plan will be developed at the PPG stage that will identify culturally appropriate means of participation of communities in project design, management and monitoring, and ensure that such measures are inclusive, participatory and transparent.

Individual stakeholder interests will be mapped as part of the PPG phase, and potential roles in project implementation agreed as a part of detailed stakeholder consultations.

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[1] Ethnic communities in Eastern Ghats of Tamil Nadu are represented by the Soligas, Irulis and Malayalis. These communities largely depend on Non-timber forest produce and medicinal plants for their sustenance which include bidi leaves (*Diospyros melanoxylon*), bamboo (*Dendrocalamus strictus*), gum, resin, oil seeds (*Madhuca indica*, *Sterculia urens*, *Pongamia pinnata*, *Azadirchta indica*), essential oils (*Santalum album*), lemon grass and eucalyptus.

The Garos in Meghalaya are one of the few remaining matrilineal societies in the world. The individuals take their clan titles from their

mothers. Historically, Garo name was used for wide range of people in southern bank of Brahmaputra but today, Garo means Hill tribes who call themselves A'chik or Mande. They are the second-largest tribe in Meghalaya after the Khasi and comprise about a third of the local

population. They have been following the slash and burn methods of cultivation but are gradually moving towards a more settled form of agriculture growing local and traditional varieties of horticulture and agriculture crops.

Please Refer Section 2 on Stakeholders, p.42.

2. Thank you for the comments. The GP are already within the landscape and the BMCs are statutory bodies of the GPs. The mandate of the GPDPs is to ensure that there is integration of sectoral interests (including environment) into the GPDP planning process, so there is inherent buy in for integration. The BMCs are directly responsible for conservation and TK conservation. What the project is going to do is to facilitate and strengthen the process of integration within the existing system to achieve replication and scale in other states and nationally.

Please refer Component 1 narrative, p.30.

3. This is reflected in Output 2.2 description.

Please refer Output 2.2 narrative, p.34.

4. The emergence of FinTech, as a pivotal force is changing the paradigms of the financial sector and offers an opportunity to allocate more resources towards biodiversity conservation. It also provides tools to improve direct and indirect investments in this area and monitor their impact. Considering India's strong foundation in IT, a conducive policy environment for supporting start-ups, and commitment from incumbent financial institutions to move towards digitalizing their operations, there exists immense potential to engage financial sector as well as utilize FinTech as a solution for biodiversity. The feasibility of Fintech solution for biodiversity and scope of engaging Financial institutions is being studied under BIOFIN Phase II in India. This study will also guide in implementation of FinTech solution for implementing conservation action in project landscapes and engaging financial sector in this regard.

The project will closely work with financial institutions like NABARD, RBS, local banks as well as e-tourism platforms like Make my trip/TripAdvisor etc. In addition to the planned scoping study under BIOFIN, a detailed consultation will be done with Financial Institutions during the PPG stage to identify potential FIs as project partners.

Some of the indicative ideas to engage FIs, include the following.

- Integrating Biodiversity into existing FinTech solutions (in Agriculture loans, insurance)
- Blockchain for eco-labelling/ certification of products also exploring potential for using Blockchain for establishing transparent and secure ABS mechanism
- Partner with e-commerce companies, digital wallets to unlock consumer savings, incentivize sustainable consumption
- e-/ responsible travel companies - FINTECH for Biodiversity Tourism

•Insurtech for PAs/ agriculture

The project will establish partnership with leading FINTECH companies and will also be guided by experiences coming from Global BIOFIN case studies in this sector.

UNDP CO's SDG finance Facility Platform led by Ministry of Finance will serve as an added advantage.

Refer Section 4 on Private Sector engagement, p.49.

5. This is included in the list of stakeholder Table.

Please refer Stakeholder engagement table, p.43.

6. This has been removed.

#### **UNDP Response, 2 September 2021**

This has been corrected. Refer Section 2 on Stakeholders (P. 45-50)

The reference to Pondicherry is removed. Refer Stakeholder Table (P. 46-50)

## **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

JS 9/15/2021 - All cleared, thank you.

JS 4/26/2021 - Thank you for the revisions and clarifications. However:

1- The boxes have not been ticked in portal:

Does the project expect to include any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women empowerment?  Yes

closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources;

improving women's participation and decision-making; and/or

generating socio-economic benefits or services for women.

Will the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators?

Yes

Please correct.

2- Cleared.

JS 4/2/2021 - The gender analysis provided is very generic and gender is not yet mainstreamed in the project. We however note the difficulties to carry out local consultations given the COVID situation and that a list of indicative measure are provided. We also note that, during PPG, a gender assessment will be conducted and a gender mainstreaming plan will be developed with the help of a gender specialist.

1- Please clarify the dimension of gender inequality the project is to tackle (tick the relevant boxes in the portal entry: closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources; improving women's participation and decision-making; and/or generating socio-economic benefits or services for women).

2- The PIF notes that women's roles in community level governance and decision-making are limited, and varied across the country and that effort will be made to ensure that women are actively involved in planning and decision-making. The list of possible stakeholders, however does not, reference any women's organizations, groups, associations or national/local ministries/departments addressing gender equality. Please elaborate further on how the project expects to ensure meaningful participation of women in project design/development to inform project activities.

## **Agency Response**

### **UNDP Response, 21 April 2021**

1. Through this project, the aim is to augment the autonomy of the female head of the communities in the project landscapes in the decision-making and planning process through partnerships with local women welfare organizations.

The project would be working closely with Women Welfare Organizations in West Garo Hills, Akimbri Women's Club, Magupara Kasturba Gram Seva, Okkapara Mahila Samity, Women Welfare Organizations in East Garo Hills and Jambal Kasturba Gram Seva for achieving the objectives following a participatory approach.

UNDP has an exclusive team working on decentralized governance & integrated planning and social protection at the national and local level. The project will work closely with the aforementioned teams to mainstream gender in the project design and implementation. The project would also engage a Gender Specialist during the PPG phase to support the MoEFCC, NBA and UNDP in designing and budgeting actions for mainstreaming gender across all components of the project. Further, the Gender Focal Point of UNDP will be responsible for screening the project document and the Annual Workplans w.r.t gender mainstreaming for delivery of effective outcomes.

Refer Section 3 on gender equality, p.47; and Stakeholder engagement table, p.43.

2. This has been updated including identification of relevant women's organizations.

Refer Section 3 on gender equality, p.47; and Stakeholder engagement table, p.43.

### **UNDP Response, 2 September 2021**

This has been addressed.

## **Private Sector Engagement**

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

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

JS 9/15/2021 - Cleared.

However, it remains unclear, at this concept stage, what the project intends to do in relation to blended finance. Special attention will have to be paid during PPG, including on stakeholder mapping and consultations, so that the CEO endorsement package sets realistic objectives related to blended finance and is specific on (i) the exact role the project intends to play in this area (e.g. work on the enabling environment; prepare/aggregate a pipeline of investable projects; or just facilitating collaboration between project developers and investors ?), (ii) the tentative sources of public and private finance for blending and on the (iii) partnerships that would be leveraged.

JS 4/26/2021

1- Thank you for the additions but these elaborate on CSR and FINTECH, not on blended finance. Please elaborate here or in another section of the PIF the anticipated contribution of the project on blended finance, especially as we understand from a response in this review that there not much experience to build on in India and blended finance is strongly highlighted in this proposal.

2- Cleared.

JS 4/2/2021

1- Please elaborate on the role of private sector engagement in the development of blended finance solutions.

2- Please link the anticipated interventions mentioned in this section with the private sector to specific outputs. It is unclear under which outputs, the project "will initially work with private sector institutions in a limited number of industries (agriculture, tourism, dairy, etc.) to promote and support initiatives that include specific and measurable criteria for biodiversity conservation and local community socio-economic benefit", or "encourage the development of public-private and private-community partnerships".

## **Agency Response**

### **UNDP Response, 4 October 2021**

The feedback is well noted. At the PPG stage, the focus will be on defining more clearly the range of financial solutions and the specific uses of the blended financial instruments/mechanisms.

### **UNDP Response, 21 April 2021**

1. This has now been elaborated.

Refer Section 4 on Private Sector, p.49.

2. This has been updated.

Refer Section 4 on Private Sector, p.49.

### **UNDP Response, 2 September 2021**

Thank you for the comments. Options for anticipated contribution on blended finance is now reflected in the Private Sector engagement. Refer Section 4 on private sector engagement (p. 52-53)

## **Risks to Achieving Project Objectives**

**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**

JS 10/5/2021 - Cleared, noting that the climate risk analysis will have to be significantly revised during PPG to focus on risks climate change poses for the durability of project outcomes, instead of trying to tackle all climate risks that may exist in the targeted landscapes.

2a. Thank you for the revisions. However, "Table 4: Climate Risk Analysis" contains risk mitigation measures that go beyond mere mitigation measures embedded in a BD project. They are rather pure adaptation activities that do not appear in the rest of the description of the project (e.g. "identification of technical and extension support to address climate change effects, adaptation and mitigation actions as part of the village planning process."; "The project will look at potential financial instruments that can support complementary activities aimed at climate response in village development planning, including in the longer-term, the project will seek to identify promising financial instruments, including more effective use of viable BIOFIN options. "). Please confirm that such activities will be supported through co-finance or remove all climate risk mitigation measures that are not directly related to ensuring the durability of the biodiversity benefits provided by the project.

All the rest is cleared, thank you.

JS 4/26/2021

1- Thank you, cleared.

2a. Thank for the additions on climate risk screening. However, the elaboration on the plans for climate change risk assessment and definition of mitigation measures during PPG, which were present in the first submission, have been deleted. Please correct.

Moreover, only generic risks posed by climate change to biodiversity and key sectors in the target landscapes are discussed. Please also reflect on risks posed specifically to project interventions and their sustainability, e.g. to what extent PBRs and biodiversity-mainstreamed GPPs supported by the project will integrate climate change and contribute to resilience?

Please also correct the few typos in the added paragraphs (e.g. "*It is projected that climate change indicates a forest vulnerability index of 3.50 that climate change might exacerbate human induced forest disturbance...*").

2c. The risks that may prevent the project from delivering additional funding for biodiversity are still addressed through the technical angle only (risk related to capacity to engage stakeholder; mitigation through a technical group). Moreover, it is unclear why the risk management measures to risk 2 only refers to blended finance mechanisms. Please be explicit on how the projects intends to limit the risk that the resource gap analyses and resource mobilization strategies it will develop remain theoretical exercises that are not acted upon.

2d-e- Cleared.

A- Please be more specific on risk 4: "Gram Panchayat involvement in supporting biodiversity integration could become a problem". Why would it constitute a problem? What type of problem?

JS 4/2/2021

1- Many of the risks analyzed are environmental and social risks that may arise as a result of project implementation already covered in the ESS screening provided in section II.9. Please reduce duplication and retain only the most substantial ESS risks in this section.

2- Please also address more thoroughly external risks to achieving project objective, and notably:

2a: Climate risks: Currently climate is only mentioned as influencing the predictability of weather patterns (risk 12) and no projections/scenarios, or identification of the hazards for the project are provided. Please see STAP guidance on climate risk screening (link below) and provide at least a basic climate risk screening at PIF stage. At a minimum, at PIF stage, the climate risks should be identified, listed and described. In addition to the plans for climate change risk assessment and mitigation measures during PPG, which are provided, this can include:

- Outlining the key aspects of the climate change projections/scenarios at the project location (or as close to it with data available), which are relevant for the type of intervention being financed (e.g. changes in temperatures, rainfalls, increased flooding, sea level rise, saltwater acquirer contamination, increased soil erosion, etc).

- Time horizon if feasible/data available (e.g. up to 2050). Please refer to list of examples from STAP guidance.

- Listing key potential hazards for the project that are related to the aspects of the climate scenarios listed above (describe how the climate scenarios identified above are likely to affect the project, during 2020-2050).

(<https://stapgef.org/sites/default/files/publications/Climate%20Risk%20Screening%20web%20posting.pdf>)

2c: Risk 2 (support to finance mechanisms): The risk management measures appear limited to the existence of methodologies, as developed by BIOFIN. Given there is a significant risk, likely compounded by the COVID-19 crisis, that further analysis of the financial gap and resource mobilization strategies remains theoretical exercises that are not acted upon, please refine the risk management measures. In particular, how the project intends to foster or use changes in the policy, institutional and/or economic environment to deliver financial mechanisms at scale.

2d- Similarly, on Risk 3 (stakeholders have other priorities due to COVID), the risk management measures seem limited to communication on the importance of conservation and biodiversity management in general. Please elaborate on the relevance of the project to respond to the COVID crisis, notably its specific contribution to a green recovery, e.g. through output 2.3.

2e - Coordination across scales and institutions: The project is to deal with the complexities multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral coordination across multiple scales (local, landscape, State and likely national). There seems to be a substantial risk of divergent priorities across scales, well beyond the sole risk of conflict between local communities and public conservation institutions identified as Risk 5. Please clarify how the project intends to mitigate this risk.

## **Agency Response**

### **UNDP Response, 11 October 2021**

Well noted. This will be further reviewed and developed at PPG stage.

### **UNDP Response, 4 October 2021**

Thank you for the comments. The risk related to climate that are not directly related to the project have been removed.

Refer Table 4 (pages 55-56)

### **UNDP Response, 21 April 2021**

1. This is now revised to avoid duplication.

Please refer section 5 (General Risks), p.50; and Section 9 on Social and environmental safeguard risks, p.58.

2a) Climate and COVID risk included in the risk section.

Please refer section 5 on Risks, p.50.

2c) This is now reflected in the risk section.

Refer Section 5, p. 50.

2d) This is reflected in a separate section under the Risk table.

Please refer risk description under Section 5, from p.50.

2e) Agreed. Multi-stakeholders' coordination across sectors and administrative levels are likely to pose challenge and risks. However, as described in the project strategy, the two institutions that are relevant, namely the MOEFCC, through its agencies such as NBA, SMM and BMCs and the MPR have decentralized institutional structures that are legally mandated to work at the village or GP level. The latter being the administrative level at which the project will plan and validate the integration of biodiversity and the use of its resources. Both the MOEFCC and MPR institutions at the GP level have structures and mandates to work together to integrate biodiversity into the planning and budgeting systems. However, this integration has not been forthcoming, not because of institutional reasons, but rather due to the lack of appropriate tools, capacity and plans to validate the integration into the GPDPs. The project will help develop tools to convert biological information to formats that can be used easily to integrate into the GPDP planning; enhance training to BMCs and GP committee to facilitate such integration; develop methodology to monitor and access effectiveness of integration and the impacts on biodiversity conservation and community revenue sharing from use of these natural assets.

Refer Section 5, Risk 1 in Risk Table (revised), p.50.

### **UNDP Response, 2 September 2021**

A new table has been added to address climate risk management including specific interventions, which would be further analyzed and developed at PPG stage. A climate risk to sustainability has been added.

Typos corrected in referenced paragraphs. Refer Section 5 on Risks - Table 3 (P.53-54); climate risk and table 4 – climate risk analysis (P.56-57).

2.c The risk has been revised. Refer Table 3 (Pages 53-54)

A - This risk statement has been revised accordingly reflecting a reluctance and slow acceptance of integration. This is now Risk 5. Refer Table 3 (P. 53-54)

## 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

JS 10/5/2021 - Cleared.

JS 9/15/2021

1-The text has not been updated in the portal entry when it has been in the attached word document. Please revise the portal entry to reflect that MoEFCC would be the **Executing Agency**, and correcting the typos in the two added paragraphs (e.g. "... *into the GPDP process.* [missing words?] *for planning, implementation and execution of activities. The BMC ...*").

JS 4/27/2021

1- Thank you for the revisions. Please use GEF terminology instead or in addition to UNDP's: the MoEFCC would be the **Executing Agency**, while UNDP is the **Implementing Agency**. Please also correct the typos in the two added paragraphs (e.g. "... *into the GPDP process. for planning, implementation and execution of activities. The BMC ...*").

JS 4/2/2021

1- Please separate the elaboration on the institutional arrangement for this project from the arrangement for coordination with other Multilateral or bilateral aid project/initiatives.

2-Please remove closed projects (e.g. UNDP-GEF projects in Malvan, GEF ID 3941). If lessons learnt are pertinent, place them in the baseline.

3- Please add the following to the list of projects to coordinate with:

-GEF 7 project ID 10204, Transforming agricultural systems and strengthening local economies in high biodiversity areas of India through sustainable landscape management and public-private finance, UNEP: While there is a priori no geographic overlap, this mainstreaming project also includes multistakeholder coordination and plans to work with Gram Panchayat as a prominent feature.

- GEF 7 project ID 10125 Seventh Operational Phase of the GEF Small Grants Programme in India, UNDP; which plans to have interventions in both States targeted by this proposal and notably in Khasi Hills, nearby one of the target landscapes.

-GEF 7 project ID 10385 Mainstreaming Natural Capital Values into Planning and Implementation for Sustainable Blue Economic Growth in Indian Coastal Districts, UNEP: There a priori no geographic overlap but the project is also a BD mainstreaming one. If the dimension related to the recognition of biodiversity values is retained in the current proposal, it might be worth exploring coordination.

## **Agency Response**

### **UNDP Response, 21 April 2021**

1. Institutional arrangements provided (this will be updated during the PPG phase).

Refer Section 6 on coordination, p.54.

2. Done. The relevant projects are already in the baseline.

Refer Section 6, p.54.

3. Included as suggested.

Refer Section 6, p.54.

### **UNDP Response, 2 September 2021**

Comments are well noted and revised accordingly. Refer Section 6 on coordination (P.58-59)

## 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

JS 4/27/2021 - Thank you for the revisions. Cleared.

JS 4/2/2021

1- Please be specific on the NBSAP targets this project will contribute to.

2- Please consider removing para 2 and 3. This section is dedicated to alignment with priorities identified in past report, not on how the project would contribute to future reporting to CBD and NP.

### Agency Response

#### UNDP Response, 21 April 2021

1. This has been revised as suggested .

Refer Section 7, p.55.

2. Thank you. This has been removed.

Refer Section 7, p.55.

## 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

JS 4/27/2021 - Cleared, thank you.

JS 3/31/2021 - The elaboration provided is generic and could apply in its entirety to any other project.

Please note that while it is appropriate that some of the information on the KM approach of the project is provided in other section of the PIF (as is the case here with elaboration in e.g. component 3 or the upscaling section), the KM section should contain clear references to these other sections accordingly.

Please revise.

### Agency Response

#### UNDP Response, 21 April 2021

Thank you for the comments. The KM has been revised.

Refer Output 3.3 narrative, p.37; and Section 8, p.57.

## 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 PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 4/27/2021 - Thank you, cleared.

JS 3/31/2021 - A Social and Environmental Screening is provided. We note the project is rated as having substantial environmental and social risks and that accordingly detailed assessments will be carried during PPG and notably that FPIC is to be ensured in full. However:

1 - We note that the attached Social and Environmental Screening states that the project could lead to "temporary or permanent and full or partial physical displacement (including people without legally recognizable claims to land)". Please clarify how it could be so and why the project could be designed to prevent any risk of physical displacement.

### Agency Response

#### UNDP Response, 21 April 2021

1. Thank you for the comments. The project design team (PPG phase) will include an IP expert who will conduct the FPIC consultations and prepare the IPF.

The project will not lead to temporary and or permanent physical displacement. Any activities that might entail any possibility of temporary physical displacement will not be undertaken. List of such activities will be determined during the PPG stage.

**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

JS 3/25/2021 - The LoE is adequate, 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

NA

Agency Response

**EFSEC 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**

JS 10/5/2021 - Not at this stage, please address the remaining comments above and resubmit.

JS 9/16/2021 - Not yet, please address the remaining comments above and resubmit.

JS 4/27/2021 - Not yet, please address comments above and resubmit.

JS 4/2/2021 - Not yet, please address comments above and resubmit. Please contact [jsapijanskas@thegef.org](mailto:jsapijanskas@thegef.org).

## **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

### **Additional recommendations to be considered by Agency at the time of CEO endorsement/approval.**

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

1- Many outputs are very high-level at this PIF stage and particular effort will be have to devoted during PPG to design concrete outputs with specific, clearly-defined underlying activities. In particular, output 1.7 is very theoretical at this PIF stage and its added-value will be revisited at CEO endorsement stage.

2- Please consolidate co-financing during PPG, and especially leverage co-financing from the private sector given the project`s focus on innovative and blended finance solutions.

3-Special attention will have to be paid during PPG, including on stakeholder mapping and consultations, so that the CEO endorsement package sets realistic objectives related to blended finance and is specific on (i) the exact role the project intends to play in this area (e.g. work on the enabling environment; prepare/aggregate a pipeline of investable projects; or just facilitating collaboration between project developers and investors ?), (ii) the tentative sources of public and private finance for blending and on the (iii) partnerships that would be leveraged.

4- Please consolidate targets under GEF core indicators during PPG and at least maintain this level of impact at CEO endorsement request, while investigating the possibility of reporting some results on core indicator 4.4 (loss of HCVF avoided).

5- Please develop a climate risk assessment that focusses on risks climate change poses for the durability of project outcomes rather than

5- Please develop a climate risk assessment that focusses on risks climate change poses for the durability of project outcomes rather than attempting to tackle all climate risks that may exist in the targeted landscapes

6- During PPG, please determine the best format and positioning for the Landscape Level Coordination Committee (LLCC) and State-level Coordination Committees (SCCs) to ensure proper functioning and legitimacy vis-à-vis existing institutional arrangement / structures.

**Review Dates**

	<b>PIF Review</b>	<b>Agency Response</b>
<b>First Review</b>	<b>4/7/2021</b>	<b>4/21/2021</b>
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>4/30/2021</b>	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>9/16/2021</b>	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>10/5/2021</b>	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>10/12/2021</b>	

**PIF Recommendation to CEO**

**Brief reasoning for recommendations to CEO for PIF Approval**

