

Robust sustainable tourism and agriculture sectors in Niue supported by biodiversity mainstreaming and sustainable land management

Basic Information

GEF ID

10769

Countries

Niue

Project Title

Robust sustainable tourism and agriculture sectors in Niue supported by biodiversity mainstreaming and sustainable land management

GEF Agency(ies)

UNEP

Agency ID

GEF Focal Area(s)

Multi Focal Area

Program Manager

Sarah Wyatt

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

4/29/2021

Yes.

4/5/2021

No, we suggest allocating some funding to LD 2-5 given the enabling activities that will be undertaken under Outcome 1. The project presents an opportunity for Niue to work towards setting LDN targets, if the country does not currently have targets set. LDN serves as a basis for the LD focal area objectives. Please consider including/mainstreaming LDN thinking into the project and including relevant language throughout the project document.

Agency Response

28042021

An output “1.1.4. Integrated National Voluntary LDN Targets and monitoring framework designed for Niue closely aligned with cross-sectoral committee” added under LD 2.5 and funds allocated accordingly. LDN has been mainstreamed across the project design and this will be further expanded in the full project development.

Indicative project/program description summary

2. Are the components in Table B and as described in the PIF sound, appropriate, and sufficiently clear to achieve the project/program objectives and the core indicators?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

4/29/2021

Yes.

During PPG, for 1.1.1 we would like the language to be more clear that the GEF is not financing the whole thing but rather ensuring that adequate attention is given to environmental considerations and plans for recovery are aligned with this project. We believe that some flexibility is also needed as the timing may influence whether this is a logical activity. These type of activities could also take place as part of PPG.

4/2/2021

No, please address the following:

-Estimated targets and indicators should be provided.

-Please see comment above on LDN and consider including it in the overall framework of the project. You may refer to the Checklist for Land Degradation Neutrality Transformative Projects and Programmes <https://knowledge.unccd.int/knowledge-products-and-pillars/land-degradation-neutrality/ldn-tools/checklist-land-degradation>

Outcome 1:

- Output 1.1.1- Not clear on the purpose of this output or GEBs will be derived from this Output. What is the link to the focal areas -BD and LD and their objectives?

- Output 1.1.2 -"Niue's Sustainable Tourism Strategy revised and Tourism Action Plan developed and implemented to avoid detrimental effects of tourism on terrestrial and marine ecosystems"- should be rephrased to focus on mainstreaming. Potential suggested text- "Biodiversity and sustainable land management mainstreamed into Niue's" To show the GEF increment versus the wider program.

- Niue may be interested in undertaking an exercise similar to what was done by Palau in response to growing tourism and growing tourism impacts if something like it has not already been done. They worked with the Conservation Strategy Fund to envision what they wanted their home to look like in the future and what tourism that would help them achieve it would look like. This involved things such as reexamining metrics of success.

Component 2

- Should be Technical Assistance and Investment

Component 3:

- 3.1.1 "Lessons learned guidance and tools systematized for scaling-up the linkages between sustainable tourism and sustainable agriculture";- The wording of this output seems to be missing the focus on the linkages to the landscapes and seascapes that these sectors depend on (i.e. BD and LD and ecosystems). Please rephrase.

-"# best practices and lessons learned used in upscaling, including on gender mainstreaming and socio-cultural benefits of tourism"

The indicator should instead measure how gender considerations are being integrated in the shift to more sustainable use of resources that support tourism and agriculture.

Agency Response

28042021

Estimated targets and indicators should be provided.

Response: Indicators have been provided and, where possible, targets for indicators defined in Table B.

Please see comment above on LDN and consider including it in the overall framework of the project. You may refer to the Checklist for Land Degradation Neutrality Transformative Projects and Programmes <https://knowledge.unccd.int/knowledge-products-and-pillars/land-degradation-neutrality/ldn-tools/checklist-land-degradation>

Response: See above. Please also note the checklist was used in the design of the project and will also be applied during the PPG.

Output 1.1.1- Not clear on the purpose of this output or GEBs will be derived from this Output. What is the link to the focal areas -BD and LD and their objectives?

Response: As explained in the PIF in section "COVID-19 pandemic", pages 10 -11, the pandemic has had a major impact on both the tourism and agricultural sector, with negative environmental impacts already observed in the agricultural sector leading to increased land degradation. With the eventual reopening of the tourism sector, negative impact on the biodiversity of Niue can also be expected if not proactively managed. These impacts are directly related to the economic impacts that the pandemic has had on individual families as well as on businesses. It is therefore of utmost importance that a social, economic and environmental impact assessment be conducted on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic prior to any long-term policy and/or strategy development. The impact assessment might not directly lead to GEBs but the resulting policies/strategies will and will lead to more effective mainstreaming of biodiversity and land degradation neutrality and SLM on the ground.

Output 1.1.2 -"Niue's Sustainable Tourism Strategy revised and Tourism Action Plan developed and implemented to avoid detrimental effects of tourism on terrestrial and marine ecosystems"- should be rephrased to focus on mainstreaming. Potential suggested text- "Biodiversity and sustainable land management mainstreamed into Niue's" To show the GEF increment versus the wider program.

Response: Thank you for the comment and output 1.1.2 revised as per recommendation.

Niue may be interested in undertaking an exercise similar to what was done by Palau in response to growing tourism and growing tourism impacts if something like it has not already been done. They worked with the Conservation Strategy Fund to envision what they wanted their home to look like in the future and what tourism that would help them achieve it would look like. This involved things such as reexamining

metrics of success.

Response: Thank you for this suggestion. The following text has been included under section 3) Proposed alternative scenario: "Further, during PPG, the possibility of undertaking a future scenario planning exercise of how Niueans want the future Niue to look like and the role that tourism will play in the future Niue will be investigated and, if deemed useful, incorporated within the National Tourism Strategy and Sustainable Tourism Action Plan. A similar exercise was undertaken in Palau and lessons can be drawn from that experience".

Component 2:

Should be Technical Assistance and Investment

Response: Agree. Investment has been added in the revised PIF, however, as the portal only allows the selection of Technical Assistance or Investment, and the fact that it is believed that Technical Assistance will use a higher percentage of the funds, Technical Assistance is maintained in the portal.

3.1.1 "Lessons learned guidance and tools systematized for scaling-up the linkages between sustainable tourism and sustainable agriculture";- The wording of this output seems to be missing the focus on the linkages to the landscapes and seascapes that these sectors depend on (i.e. BD and LD and ecosystems). Please rephrase

Response: Thank you for this comment. Output 3.1.1 has been rephrased to: "*3.1.1 Lessons learned, guidance and tools systematized for the scaling-up the linkages between sustainable tourism and sustainable agriculture and the biodiversity, productive soil and ecosystems that the sectors depend on*".

"# best practices and lessons learned used in upscaling, including on gender mainstreaming and socio-cultural benefits of tourism

The indicator should instead measure how gender considerations are being integrated in the shift to more sustainable use of resources that support tourism and agriculture.

Response: The indicator has been revised: "*At least 10 best practices and lessons learned used in upscaling, including on how gender considerations are being integrated in the shift to more sustainable use of resources that support tourism and agriculture, and socio-cultural benefits of tourism documented for future use*".

Co-financing

3. Are the indicative expected amounts, sources and types of co-financing adequately documented and consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines, with a description on how the breakdown of co-financing was identified and meets the definition of investment mobilized?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

4/29/2021

Yes, thank you.

4/2/2021

Yes, however please verify that the full amount of the GCF project is eligible as co-financing.

Agency Response

The amount is not the full amount of the project but only the portion allocated to Niue. Due to the close link between tourism and agriculture with climate change as explained in the PIF, the entire amount of the project allocated to Niue is deemed eligible.

GEF Resource Availability

4. Is the proposed GEF financing in Table D (including the Agency fee) in line with GEF policies and guidelines? Are they within the resources available from (mark all that apply):

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

4/2/2021

Yes.

Agency Response

The STAR allocation?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

4/2/2021

Yes.

Agency Response

The focal area allocation?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

4/2/2021

Yes.

Agency Response

The LDCF under the principle of equitable access?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion NA

Agency Response

The SCCF (Adaptation or Technology Transfer)?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion NA

Agency Response

Focal area set-aside?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion NA

Agency Response

Impact Program Incentive?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion NA

Agency Response

Project Preparation Grant

5. Is PPG requested in Table E within the allowable cap? Has an exception (e.g. for regional projects) been sufficiently substantiated? (not applicable to PFD)

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

4/2/2021

Yes.

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

5/6/2021

Yes, thank you.

4/29/2021

No, please ensure that the numbers match across the document and hectares are not double counted -

On core indicators: Table B refers to "Sustainable BD conservation and SLM practices widely adopted across a globally significant terrestrial landscape (5,300 ha)." And similarly the description for Core Indicators refers to "Biodiversity-friendly agricultural products and tourism experiences will be developed in cooperation with the local communities and private sector across 5,300 hectares (including 2,800 hectares of agricultural land and 2,500 of sustainably maintained forest (in the Huvalu Forest Conservation Area). This translates to 2,500 hectares of terrestrial protected area under improved management and 2,800 hectares of area of restored land. Support will be provided to landowners and farmers to pilot sustainable land management practices across 2,800 hectares to rehabilitate degraded farmland and restore soil fertility. This is captured under area of landscape under improved practices (excluding protected areas). However, hectares under

Core Indicators 1 (2,500 ha), 3 (2,800 ha), and 4 (2,800 ha) equals to 8,100 ha. Please make sure there is no overlap (double counting) and ensure the coherence of the table B and Core Indicators.

4/2/2021

No, please address the following:

- Please put the IUCN category for the PA.
- Please provide a narrative describing the expected targets under the Core indicators including how the BD targets are aligned with the Aichi Targets. Please also indicate the categories of beneficiaries included in Core Indicator 11.
- Please consider including a target under sub-indicator 4.3 given the focus of the project on SLM (Output 1.1.3)
- Given the potential carbon sequestration benefits of the restoration and land rehabilitation activities please select '1' for the Rio Marker on Climate Change Mitigation.
- Please also include the specific GEBs related to restored and rehabilitated productive landscapes.

Agency Response

May, 6, 2021

No, please ensure that the numbers match across the document and hectares are not double counted -

Response: The two areas of 2,800 hectares were indeed the same area. This has now been corrected in the portal.

28042021

Please put the IUCN category for the PA.

Response: The IUCN Protected Area Category has been added.

Please provide a narrative describing the expected targets under the Core indicators including how the BD targets are aligned with the Aichi Targets. Please also indicate the categories of beneficiaries included in Core Indicator 11.

Response: A narrative has been provided as requested.

Please consider including a target under sub-indicator 4.3 given the focus of the project on SLM (Output 1.1.3)

Response: 2,800 ha has included as a target under sub-indicator 4.3

Given the potential carbon sequestration benefits of the restoration and land rehabilitation activities please select '1' for the Rio Marker on Climate Change Mitigation.

Response: The Rio Marker on Climate Change Mitigation has been changed to '1'.

Please also include the specific GEBs related to restored and rehabilitated productive landscapes.

Response: The following was added to section 6: Global Environmental Benefits: "*The restored and rehabilitated productive landscape will result in increased soil fertility that translates to increased crop productivity and therefore less pressure on forested areas, reduced forest*

result in increased soil fertility that translates to increased crop productivity and therefore less pressure on forested areas, reduced forest degradation and mitigation of the greenhouse gas emissions. The area will also experience less soil erosion and reduced levels of herbicides use, which will mitigate the impact on coral reefs due to reduced levels of runoff".

Project/Program taxonomy

7. Is the project/program properly tagged with the appropriate keywords as requested in Table G?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

4/29/2021

Yes.

4/2/2021

No, please include LDN in the taxonomy.

Agency Response

28042021

No, please include LDN in the taxonomy.

Response: Addressed.

Part II – Project Justification

1. Has the project/program described the global environmental/adaptation problems, including the root causes and barriers that need to be addressed?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

4/29/2021

Yes, thank you for the additions.

4/5/2021

No, please address the following:

- Please provide information on the current context as it relates to land tenure and how this has influenced current practices and could influence potential interventions.
- Please provide information on climate change and climate variability and how it has affected Niue. Information on climate change projections/scenarios at the project location or at country level if not available at local scale, 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).
- Please explain the current context as it relates to access to credit/finance by the targeted land users/small farmers.

Please explain how current reef and ocean condition relate to issues on land such as agrochemical use.

Agency Response

28042021

Please provide information on the current context as it relates to land tenure and how this has influenced current practices and could influence potential interventions.

Response: Information has been added under the section titled 'Land Tenure'.

Please provide information on climate change and climate variability and how it has affected Niue. Information on climate change projections/scenarios at the project location or at country level if not available at local scale, 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).

Response: Information has been added under the section "Climate Change and Climate Variability" in the PIF.

- Please explain the current context as it relates to access to credit/finance by the targeted land users/small farmers.

Response: The following was added to the barrier section: *"Credit is a barrier to landowners/farmers wanting to start enterprises or invest in new technologies in Niue due to land tenure system as land cannot be used as collateral".*

Please explain how current reef and ocean condition relate to issues on land such as agrochemical use.

Response: Information has been added under the section "Land-based activities and impacts on the coral reefs" in the PIF.

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

4/29/2021

Yes.

4/5/2021

No, it would be helpful to understand how this relates to current government initiatives that aren't externally funded. While government plans and initiatives are mentioned in the national priorities, they aren't described as ongoing initiatives that this project will build upon.

Agency Response

28042021

No, it would be helpful to understand how this relates to current government initiatives that aren't externally funded. While government plans and initiatives are mentioned in the national priorities, they aren't described as ongoing initiatives that this project will build upon.

Response: Text has been added to the baseline scenario section to describe government initiatives during the project period that are not externally funded.

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

4/29/2021

Yes.

4/5/2021

No, please address the following:

General

Please include in the narrative how the project can help to assist Niue with green recovery related to the impacts of

COVID. Please refer to the GEF Guidance on incorporating COVID considerations in PIF submissions for further information. This is available on the GEF website here <https://www.thegef.org/documents/project-design-and-review-considerations-response-covid-19-crisis-and-mitigation-future>

ToC

- Please revise the objective in the ToC to align with objective mentioned in the narrative and Table B
- Please include drivers and barriers in the ToC diagram. You may refer to the STAP guidance on Theory of Change available here <https://www.stagef.org/theory-change-primer>.
- Assumptions should be about how the actions of the project will actually result in the outcomes. Logical assumptions that is.
- USAID's work on Conservation Enterprise can also provide guidance on ToC development.

Outcome 1

- Output 1.1.3 - We note no mention of stakeholders responsible for land use planning or climate change in the cross- sectoral committee. As mentioned above this also presents an opportunity to apply the LDN approach and response hierarchy - of avoid, reduce and restore. It is also an important consideration given the issues with land conversion and lack of enforcement or use of EIAs.
- Is there consideration to include diverse stakeholders such as the private sector, farmers' association and village council reps in the committee. Including diverse stakeholders will assist in encouraging participatory approaches and ownership.

Component 2

- During the PPG stage, for the SLM interventions you may refer to a useful global SLM database hosted by WOCAT for tools that may apply to the Niue context.
- There is mention in the barriers to the project that- "The project will also pilot financing solutions and economic incentives to support agricultural and tourism development, and improve market access and value chains, while conserving biological diversity and ecosystem services. Possible options to be explored include user fees, environmental management charges, credits, subsidies, microloans, certification and establishment of a tourism and agriculture fund". However, there are no details on this in the project description. Will value chain strengthening and improving market access be a part of the project? If so, which value chains will be targeted?
- The barriers indicate knowledge and capacity gaps in the government and with the farming association on SLM and restoration. How is the project addressing this barrier? Output 2.1.2 only refers to training for tourism stakeholders. Will there be a training of trainers program to continue the knowledge sharing?

- 2.1.5 – Environmental certification systems can be tricky and are often not a financing solution. It would be worth exploring and considering some different options during PPG. Certification typically rewards already good actors and may not do much address poor performers and, therefore, should be considered as potentially part of a larger suite of activities to address the various components of the problem. Given the small size of Niue, it will be important to take lessons from other places and potentially simply adopt approaches and guidelines from other places. Size may also present an issue with compliance and enforcement as assessors are likely to know those being assessed and unlikely to impose penalties. Also, tourists may not have many options making certification moot. Lastly, depending on tourists to make conscious decisions may not be an effective approach.
- Output 2.1.6 - In terms of implementing sustainable financing options as well as working with the value chains, we see financial institutions possibly also playing role. Will they be engaged?
- Output 2.1.6 – These types of activities should look to the extensive work done by USAID on Conservation Enterprise to guide the approach and work done.

Component 3- What mechanisms are being put in place to monitor the progress of results for biodiversity as well as land restoration and land rehabilitation after the project ends? Is there already a monitoring mechanism in place?

- 3.1.2 – Community science initiatives (e.g. iNaturalist) can also work with tourists and help promote nature tourism.
- 3.1.2 – Citizen reporting and documentation sounds like a good idea; however, the close knit nature of Niue may make reporting, enforcement and punishment (if warranted) complicated as has been identified in other small SIDS. How will the project address this issue? It may be better to focus on behavior change and culture.
- 3.1.3 – During PPG please explore the feasibility and cost implications of such an app, including the costs of updating with new operating systems and cost/reliability of data for cell phones.
- 3.1.4 – While it may be helpful to have a specific subcomponent on gender, it may not be helpful to have the development and implementation of the activities be separated. It would be good for implementation to be part of the broader project rather than done separately.

We recommend to explore using monitoring and reporting tools which have been developed by Trends Earth to assist countries to fulfil their obligations under UNCCD.

-At the PPG stage we recommend that how the project will utilize existing knowledge from related/similar projects in Niue and in the region should also be included in the KM plan.

Agency Response

28042021

Please include in the narrative how the project can help to assist Niue with green recovery related to the impacts of COVID. Please refer to the GEF Guidance on incorporating COVID considerations in PIF submissions for further information. This is available on the GEF website here <https://www.thegef.org/documents/project-design-and-review-considerations-response-covid-19-crisis-and-mitigation-future>

Response: Linkages to the green recovery of Niue post-COVID have been added in the narrative.

Please revise the objective in the ToC to align with objective mentioned in the narrative and Table B

Response: Objective has been corrected.

Please include drivers and barriers in the ToC diagram. You may refer to the STAP guidance on Theory of Change available here <https://www.stapgef.org/theory-change-primer>.

Response: Drivers and barriers have been included in the ToC diagram.

Assumptions should be about how the actions of the project will actually result in the outcomes. Logical assumptions that is.

Response: Assumptions have been revised.

-

USAID's work on Conservation Enterprise can also provide guidance on ToC development

Response: The following learnt from USAID's work on Conservation Enterprise has been included as an assumption in the ToC: *"If income is increased through conservation enterprises, then participants will discontinue environmentally unsustainable activities, leading to reductions to threats to the environment"*.

Output 1.1.3 - We note no mention of stakeholders responsible for land use planning or climate change in the cross- sectoral committee. As mentioned above this also presents an opportunity to apply the LDN approach and response hierarchy - of avoid, reduce and restore. It is also an important consideration given the issues with land conversion and lack of enforcement or use of EIAs.

Response: Wording has been added to Output 1.1.3 on stakeholders responsible for land use planning and climate change in the cross-sectoral committee and Output 1.1.4 has been added to ensure that LDN target setting and monitoring is integrated as part of the committee's responsibilities.

Is there consideration to include diverse stakeholders such as the private sector, farmers' association and village council reps in the committee. Including diverse stakeholders will assist in encouraging participatory approaches and ownership.

Response: Appropriate wording has been added to Output 1.1.3 regarding the inclusion of diverse stakeholders.

Component 2:

During the PPG stage, for the SLM interventions you may refer to a useful global SLM database hosted by WOCAT for tools that may apply

to the Niue context.

Response: Thank you for the suggestion. During PPG, the SLM database hosted by WOCAT for SLM tools will be referred to.

There is mention in the barriers to the project that- "The project will also pilot financing solutions and economic incentives to support agricultural and tourism development, and improve market access and value chains, while conserving biological diversity and ecosystem services. Possible options to be explored include user fees, environmental management charges, credits, subsidies, microloans, certification and establishment of a tourism and agriculture fund". However, there are no details on this in the project description. Will value chain strengthening and improving market access be a part of the project? If so, which value chains will be targeted?

Response: This referenced text has been rephrased on creating incentives and financial solutions. Output 2.1.5 has been strengthened to address this barrier.

The barriers indicate knowledge and capacity gaps in the government and with the farming association on SLM and restoration. How is the project addressing this barrier? Output 2.1.2 only refers to training for tourism stakeholders. Will there be a training of trainers program to continue the knowledge sharing?

Response:

The knowledge and capacity gaps of government and farming association on SLM and restoration will be addressed under output 2.1.3. Text has been added to reflect the Training of Trainers of these two groups of stakeholders to ensure continual assistance to the farmers.

2.1.5 – Environmental certification systems can be tricky and are often not a financing solution. It would be worth exploring and considering some different options during PPG. Certification typically rewards already good actors and may not do much address poor performers and, therefore, should be considered as potentially part of a larger suite of activities to address the various components of the problem. Given the small size of Niue, it will be important to take lessons from other places and potentially simply adopt approaches and guidelines from other places. Size may also present an issue with compliance and enforcement as assessors are likely to know those being assessed and unlikely to impose penalties. Also, tourists may not have many options making certification moot. Lastly, depending on tourists to make conscious decisions may not be an effective approach.

Response: Thank you for the suggestion. During the PPG, the efficacy of certification in Niue will be reviewed and the project design revised as appropriate.

Output 2.1.6 - In terms of implementing sustainable financing options as well as working with the value chains, we see financial institutions possibly also playing role. Will they be engaged?

Response: Indeed, for example, in providing credits and microloans. Text has been added to make this involvement explicit.

Output 2.1.6 – These types of activities should look to the extensive work done by USAID on Conservation Enterprise to guide the approach and work done.

Response: Thank you for the suggestion. Text has been added to the output to explain how the USAID work on Conservation Enterprise will guide the implementation of this output.

Component 3- What mechanisms are being put in place to monitor the progress of results for biodiversity as well as land restoration and land rehabilitation after the project ends? Is there already a monitoring mechanism in place?

Response: It is envisaged that the cross-sector committee that will be established under output 1.1.3 and 1.1.4 will continue to monitor the implementation of the NBSAP (biodiversity) and LDN targets. During PPG, the sustainability of this approach will be investigated and strengthened if not seen as sufficient.

3.1.2 – Community science initiatives (e.g. iNaturalist) can also work with tourists and help promote nature tourism.

Response: Thank you for the suggestion. Tourists has been added to the community science initiatives.

3.1.2 – Citizen reporting and documentation sounds like a good idea; however, the close knit nature of Niue may make reporting, enforcement and punishment (if warranted) complicated as has been identified in other small SIDS. How will the project address this issue? It may be better to focus on behavior change and culture.

Response: Thank you for your comment. The focus of the output is on increasing awareness of environment and sustainable development and the citizen reporting is a small part of the approach. The focus with student and tourists in citizen science and biodiversity monitoring initiatives will be focused on awareness and outreach and not on reporting illegal activities.

3.1.3 – During PPG please explore the feasibility and cost implications of such an app, including the costs of updating with new operating systems and cost/reliability of data for cell phones.

Response: We confirm that during PPG the feasibility and cost implications of the app will be explored.

3.1.4 – While it may be helpful to have a specific subcomponent on gender, it may not be helpful to have the development and implementation of the activities be separated. It would be good for implementation to be part of the broader project rather than done separately.

Response: Output 3.1.4 has been deleted and the gender-sensitive sustainable livelihood strategies incorporated under output 2.1.4.

We recommend to explore using monitoring and reporting tools which have been developed by Trends Earth to assist countries to fulfil their obligations under UNCCD.

Response: The following was added to output 3.1.5: *“During PPG, monitoring and reporting tools which have been developed by Trends Earth to assist countries to fulfil their obligation under UNCCD will be explored for potential use by the project”.*

At the PPG stage we recommend that how the project will utilize existing knowledge from related/similar projects in Niue and in the region should also be included in the KM plan.

Response: UNEP confirms that during PPG the existing knowledge from related/similar project in Niue and the region will be included in the KM plan

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

4/29/2021

Yes.

4/5/2021

No, please see comments on LD alignment.

Agency Response

28042021

Please see above in alignment to LD 2.5.

5. Is the incremental/additional cost reasoning properly described as per the Guidelines provided in GEF/C.31/12?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

4/29/2021

Yes.

4/5/2021

No, please see other comments on articulating the GEF role. Also, it would be good to note and consider (if only briefly) how this project could improve or maintain marine biodiversity in addition to terrestrial here in the alternative scenario or elsewhere.

Agency Response

28042021

See responses on articulating the GEF role in previous responses. Mention of impact on marine biodiversity has been integrated in the discussion of the components in the alternative scenario.

6. Are the project's/program's indicative targeted contributions to global environmental benefits (measured through core indicators) reasonable and achievable? Or for adaptation benefits?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

4/29/2021

Yes.

4/5/2021

Yes. However, it would be good to discuss how projected numbers relate to Niue's international targets or total land area to emphasize the substantial area that the project is covering.

Agency Response

28042021

Thank you, the following was added to the Global Environmental Benefits section: "*The project sites cover 5,400 hectares, which is 20.8 per cent of the total terrestrial land area of Niue*".

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

4/29/2021

Yes.

4/5/2021

No, please address the following:

Innovation- We note the ideas shared for innovation and encourage that these experiences are documented and shared widely within the region.

Sustainability

- How will the training activities outlined throughout the different components of the project be institutionalized?
- What are the plans to institutionalize the cross-sectoral committee beyond the life of the project to ensure continuity?
- What are the continuity plans for the financing mechanisms and the value chain support to the small farmers?

Agency Response

28042021

Innovation- We note the ideas shared for innovation and encourage that these experiences are documented and shared widely within the region.

Response: The following was added to the text on innovation: "The experiences of the project will be documented and shared widely within the region".

How will the training activities outlined throughout the different components of the project be institutionalized?

Response: The focus on training of government officials will be to develop Trainers, and thereby institutionalizing the training activities within the relevant government departments.

What are the plans to institutionalize the cross-sectoral committee beyond the life of the project to ensure continuity?

Response: It is anticipated that the neediness of the cross-sectoral committee will be realized during project implementation and therefore continued after project closure. As the cost after project closure will be in-kind, no major issues are foreseen with this approach.

What are the continuity plans for the financing mechanisms and the value chain support to the small farmers?

Response: The idea of the project is to show that sustainable land management and biodiversity-friendly enterprises can be profitable. Through the showcasing of approaches (through project financing) and capacitating the tourism and agriculture sector in these approaches as well as in business planning, it is believed that the approaches will be taken up in areas outside the project sites and scaled across Niue. Further, the involvement of financial institutions will ensure that funding is available post-project re credit/microloans.

Project/Program Map and Coordinates

Is there a preliminary geo-reference to the project's/program's intended location?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

4/29/2021

Yes.

4/5/2021

Yes. At CEO Endorsement, we would like to have information about the buffer zone as well.

Agency Response

28042021

UNEP confirms that information will be provided about the buffer zone at CEO Endorsement.

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

5/6/2021

Yes, thank you. We look forward to more details on consultations at CEO Endorsement.

4/29/2021

No,

On Stakeholder Engagement: The project has indicated that it has consulted Indigenous Peoples, CSOs and Private sector but does not provide any information on the consultations that the project has carried out during PIF preparation. Please provide details on the stakeholder consultative measures carried out during project preparation.

4/5/2021

No, please address the following:

- Please insert the stakeholder table in the portal submission
- Please include the means of engagement in the table.
- As noted above, given the focus of Output 2.1.6 on implementing sustainable finance options, we see a role for the Ministry of Finance/equivalent body and financial institutions as key stakeholders. Please include or clarify.
- Without over complicating, it is also worth considering whether the Ministry of Health might be a good partner on the agriculture initiatives. Assuming that non-communicable diseases are a major concern in Niue, as in many countries in the region, the Ministry of Health should be interested in the prevention opportunities presented by improved local agriculture.

Agency Response

May 6, 2021

No,

On Stakeholder Engagement: The project has indicated that it has consulted Indigenous Peoples, CSOs and Private sector but does not provide any information on the consultations that the project has carried out during PIF preparation. Please provide details on the stakeholder consultative measures carried out during project preparation.

Response: The following text has been added to the concept and the portal:

"The Department of Environment had initial consultations with all the main stakeholders. This includes the agriculture sector as well as the tourism sector. The Department of Agriculture has been part of the development of the concept and a number of meetings were held between the two departments. Joint discussion with the farmers in the target area was held and the proposal shared verbally with the farmer representatives. Further, Department of Environment held detailed discussions with the Niue Tourism Authority and with a few selected hotel owners and managers. Preliminary discussions were held with NIUANGO, and these will be intensified during PPG".

28042021

FOOTNOTES

Please insert the stakeholder table in the portal submission

Response: The stakeholder table has been included in the portal.

Please include the means of engagement in the table.

Response: Means of engagement has been added as a column to the table.

As noted above, given the focus of Output 2.1.6 on implementing sustainable finance options, we see a role for the Ministry of Finance/equivalent body and financial institutions as key stakeholders. Please include or clarify.

Response: The Ministry of Infrastructure and Finance and financial institutions have been added to the stakeholder table.

Without over complicating, it is also worth considering whether the Ministry of Health might be a good partner on the agriculture initiatives. Assuming that non-communicable diseases are a major concern in Niue, as in many countries in the region, the Ministry of Health should be interested in the prevention opportunities presented by improved local agriculture.

Response: The Department of Health has been added to the stakeholder table.

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Is the articulation of gender context and indicative information on the importance and need to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, adequate?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

4/29/2021

Yes. We encourage consideration of this issue throughout PPG to ensure that quality of participation and involvement is measured. At times, this may mean using less quantifiable indicators (such as surveys) but this can help guide this and other projects in being more gender responsive over the long term.

4/5/2021

No, it would be good to have the indicator better reflect quality of outputs related to gender than just number of them.

Agency Response

28042021

The following has been added to the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment section: *"The project will have specific gender indicators included in the project's logframe, as well as indicators that reflect the quality of outputs as it relates to gender".*

Private Sector Engagement

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

4/5/2021

Yes.

Agency Response

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

4/29/2021

Vac

4/5/2021

No, please address the following:

-We suggest reinforcing the screening of climate risks-issues related to climate variability such as drought, unpredictable rainfall patterns and climate vulnerability should be considered based on historical climatic conditions and projection scenarios. Different options may be proposed to mitigate these risk. Additionally, how do the project interventions assist with increasing resilience or mitigating against climate risk.

-We note the inclusion of considerations for COVID. At this stage however, we expect consideration for: 1) the risks that COVID-19 poses for all aspects of project design and eventual implementation and how the situation may impact the delivering of Global Environment Benefits.

Agency Response

28042021

We suggest reinforcing the screening of climate risks-issues related to climate variability such as drought, unpredictable rainfall patterns and climate vulnerability should be considered based on historical climatic conditions and projection scenarios. Different options may be proposed to mitigate these risk. Additionally, how do the project interventions assist with increasing resilience or mitigating against climate risk.

Response: Additional text has been added to the risk dealing with adverse climate change to address the comment.

We note the inclusion of considerations for COVID. At this stage however, we expect consideration for: 1) the risks that COVID-19 poses for all aspects of project design and eventual implementation and how the situation may impact the delivering of Global Environment Benefits.

Response: A risk dealing directly with the development and implementation of the project has been added. Mention is also made on the delivery of Global Environment Benefits.

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?**

4/5/2021

Yes.

Agency Response

Consistency with National Priorities

Has the project/program cited alignment with any of the recipient country's national strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

4/29/2021

Yes.

4/5/2021

No, please indicate how the project is aligned with commitments under the UNFCCC and UNCCD. Additionally, as Niue was included in the LDN Target Setting project. Please indicate if the project will be assisting the country to achieve LDN targets or to set LDN targets?

Agency Response

28042021

Linkages to UNCCD and UNFCCC commitments and action plans have been provided in the PIF. Reference has also been made to the fact that the project will assist in the LDN target setting and monitoring framework.

Knowledge Management

Is the proposed “knowledge management (KM) approach” in line with GEF requirements to foster learning and sharing from relevant projects/programs, initiatives and evaluations; and contribute to the project’s/program’s overall impact and sustainability?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

4/5/2021

Yes. At the PPG stage we recommend to also consider how the project will utilize existing knowledge from related/similar projects in Nuie and in the region should also be included in the KM plan.

Agency Response

28042021

UNEP confirms that during PPG it will be considered how the project will utilize existing knowledge from related/similar projects in Nuie and in the region as part of the KM plan.

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

4/5/2021

Yes.

Agency Response

art III – Country Endorsements

Has the project/program been endorsed by the country's GEF Operational Focal Point and has the name and position been checked against the GEF data base?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

4/5/2021

Yes.

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

5/6/2021

Yes, thank you for the revisions.

4/29/2021

No, please address a few remaining issues.

4/5/2021

Not at this time. Please revise and resubmit.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Review Dates

PIF Review Agency Response

First Review	4/5/2021
Additional Review (as necessary)	4/29/2021
Additional Review (as necessary)	5/5/2021
Additional Review (as necessary)	5/6/2021
Additional Review (as necessary)	

PIF Recommendation to CEO

Brief reasoning for recommendations to CEO for PIF Approval