

Integrated Sustainable Landscape Management in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

10245

Countries

Viet Nam

Project Name

Integrated Sustainable Landscape Management in the Mekong Delta of
Vietnam

Agencies

FAO

Date received by PM

12/11/2020

Review completed by PM

4/28/2021

Program Manager

Paul Hartman

Focal Area

Multi Focal Area

Project Type

FSP

PIF
CEO Endorsement

Part I ? Project Information

Focal area elements

1. Does the project remain aligned with the relevant GEF focal area elements as presented in PIF (as indicated in table A)?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/24/20

Yes, the project remains aligned.

Cleared

Agency Response

Project description summary

2. Is the project structure/design appropriate to achieve the expected outcomes and outputs as in Table B and described in the project document?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/24/20

No. Please address the following:

1. Objective: The main goal of FOLUR is about transforming food systems. The CEO ER should be clear how it is contributing to this, not just incremental improvements in production at the landscape level. This starts with the project objective. The description in the alternative scenario mentions that the project seeks: "the transitioning of rice-dominated landscapes in the Mekong Delta, to a situation characterised by sustainable

levels of rice production, and alternative, adaptive and resilient models of production and landscape management that deliver multiple environmental and social benefits." While perhaps not the exact language required, the ambition demonstrated by this text, if it were also linked to the larger contribution to the food system, would seem more appropriate for a FOLUR project objective.

2. Table B

a) Components 2 & 3 look to be Investments (field based activities) rather than TA. Please revise as appropriate.

b) Component 1

- Policy commitments anticipated in outcome 1.2 are at local, national and provincial level but the indicator is entirely at the provincial level. Will the project work to affect policy changes at the national level or across all the Vietnam Mekong delta provinces as well? If so this should be reflected.

- Similarly, for outcome 1.3 can the project support effective information management not just in the 5 target provinces but at a MDR scale as well?

c) Component 2

- Component 2 doesn't include an Outcome level indicator related to activities beyond the landscape level. How this work will support more sustainable food production throughout the MDR or nationally should be measured.

-Outcome 2.2: What does 'value chains provide leverage for sustainability and GEBs? mean? Please provide clearer language.

- Output 2.2.2: it is unclear that this a measurable output. What does it mean that Value Chains are operating that contribute to ILM and GEBs? Please clarify or revise

- Output 2.2.4 seems to be missing some language.

d) Component 3

- Outcome 3.1: It is unclear what is expected to be 'managed' exactly? Farms, forest, landscape? Please clarify.

February 25, 2021

1. Objective is now better reflective of the FOLUR design. Cleared.

2. Table B

a) The response provided would suggest that only \$1.6M of the \$5.3M will deliver direct field-based interventions, which doesn't seem to align with the focus and intended outcomes of the project. We suggest this be further clarified.

b) The project should establish an effective feedback loop between the provincial and central governments so that policy lessons can be taken up and acted upon nationally. This is particularly the case in Vietnam where a great deal of authority resides in central gov't ministries. There should be some reflection of this in the indicator, perhaps through inclusion of the evidence-based guidance being developed and advocated for with the central gov't. Please revise to reflect this.

c) Component 2 - An Outcome level indicator related to activities beyond the landscape level has been included. Cleared

- Outcome 2.2: language has changed and intentions is clearer. Cleared

- Output 2.2.2: language has changed and intentions is clearer. Cleared.

- Output 2.2.4: The output description has been added to and is clearer. Cleared

d) Component 3 description and outcome has been revised and is now sufficiently clear: Cleared

04/28/21

The remaining comments have been addressed. The project design is appropriate to achieve the expected outcomes and outputs.

Cleared

Agency Response

RE 12/24/20

1. Objective: The objective has been modified (in Table B and throughout the document), as follows: "To support the transformation of rice-dominated landscapes in the Mekong Delta towards sustainable, adaptive and resilient models of production and landscape management that deliver multiple environmental and social benefits".

2. Table B

a) The promotion of sustainable food production practices and responsible gender-sensitive commodity value chains under Component 2 will principally be achieved through the provision of technical assistance, so we suggest that the TA classification is appropriate.

There is more of a focus on direct investment in support of restoration under Component 3, so this has been changed to INV in Table B.

b) Component 1

- The output level indicators under Outcome 1.2 reflect actions in support of policy commitments and changes beyond the 5 target provinces themselves: the indicator for Output 1.2.1 refers to awareness in central Government, and the indicator for Output 1.2.2 refers to the inclusion of sustainability criteria with ILM perspectives in their reporting to central Government ? which will imply buy-in by the central Government actors to whom they will be reporting.

The Outcome level indicator is conservative regarding what is achievable during the project lifetime, aspiring only to the 5 target provincial Governments having made policy commitments; the output level actions are however expected to lead to policy commitments elsewhere in the MDR, in central Government, and beyond the life of the project, as a result of the provision of evidence-based guidance to them under Output 1.2.1 (supported by improved access to information through the Mekong Delta Centre that is being supported by the ICRSL project).

Outcome 1.2 has been reworded accordingly, to make it compatible with the indicator wording (Table B and throughout).

- The indicators for Outcome 1.3 have been modified to cover the whole of the MDR (Table B and Annex A1 in ProDoc/Annex A in CEO ER).

c) Component 2

- The second indicator for Outcome 2.2 (companies accounting for a total of 20% of rice traded in the MDR committed to applying sustainability standards across their operations) was missing from Table B, and is now included (Table B and Annex A1 in ProDoc/Annex A in CEO ER).

- Outcome 2.2: This has been modified throughout to ?value chains provide incentives and standards for managing rice landscapes and production systems in accordance with environmental sustainability and GEBs? (Table B and throughout)

- Output 2.2.2: The wording of the output has been modified as follows: ?value chains are established/operating that provide incentives and support to farmers to manage rice landscapes and production systems in accordance with environmental sustainability and GEBs? (Table B and throughout)

This would involve farmers selling into markets that require and reward compliance with environmental sustainability criteria, and supply farmers with the technical and/or financial support to enable them to achieve compliance.

- Output 2.2.4: The wording has been modified to 'Value chain information management and traceability systems established' (Table B and throughout)

d) Component 3

The wording of Component 3 has been modified to 'Conservation, management and restoration in forests, wetlands and farming systems to favour ecosystem services' and Outcome 3.1 to 'Conservation, management and restoration practices in forests, wetlands and farming systems contribute to the generation of ecosystem services and are sustainably and equitably financed' (Table B and throughout).

The text under Output 3.1.2 provided the following examples (subject to confirmation through further applied studies to be carried out during implementation):

- 'The active restoration (through planting and bank stabilisation) of river bank/gallery vegetation, in order to reduce processes of erosion that have been accelerated by the reduced sediment loads in the Mekong system;
- The active removal of obsolete or unnecessary physical barriers (irrigation weirs and sluices) in water courses, in order to restore biological connectivity for aquatic fauna (thereby generating biodiversity benefits for migratory fish and improving the condition of fisheries resources);
- Modification of water management systems around Tram Chim wetland PA, in order to restore ecosystem function;
- Recovery of on-farm biodiversity, ecosystem functioning and environmental services (e.g. natural pest control processes, nutrient cycling and aquifer recharge) by support to farming systems featuring the return of seasonal flooding regimes, and the use of integrated pest and nutrient management?.

These examples are now presented in the introductory text to Outcome 3.1, to make them more visible (paragraph 252 and bullets).

RE February 25, 2021

a) Components 2 and 3 are now correctly reclassified 'Investment'.

Location of edit: Table B (page 7 of ProDoc).

b) The suggested 'feedback loop' is in fact the main purpose of Output 1.2.1 'Evidence-based guidance for policy-makers in Central Government to raise awareness regarding the national/sector benefits of integrated approaches for production and landscape management?'. This is reflected in Indicator 5 'Percentage of central Government actors aware of the benefits of integrated approaches?'. These central Government actors include policy makers; as stated in the text for Output 1.2.1, 'Component 1 will focus on supporting key actors in taking this information on board, interpreting it, and applying it in decision-making and policy formulation, facilitated as appropriate through multi-stakeholder workshops and through active on-the-job collaboration with these institutions?.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

Co-financing

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/24/20

We are pleased to see significant co-financing for the project, particularly from private sector. However the comments below require addressing:

1. From the co-financing letters from PAN and Loc Troi it is unclear if their co-financing is a grant as noted in Table C.
2. From the co-financing letter from MONRE, it's unclear that all their co-financing is in the form of grants as noted in Table C. Instead it appears that some of the co-financing will come in the form of a loan and some is in-kind.

Please revise the co-financing letters and Table C to clarify the status of this co-financing.

February 25, 2021

1. It is not clear that the response demonstrates actual grant/cash contributions to the project. Please confirm
2. This has been clarified in the MONRE co-financing letter and in Table C. Cleared
3. All the funds are now classified as "investment mobilized" even though some is in-kind and the MONRE expenditure indicates that at least a portion of this is "recurrent expenditure." Please refer to the GEF co-financing policy for clarification on what should be indicated as investment mobilized and modify accordingly.

04/28/21

The comments above have been adequately addressed. In addition, please address the following:

a) Co-financing from IUCN should be labeled as "donor Agency" as IUCN is not the GEF agency for this project

b) Co-financing from MONRE and MARD (recipient government) comes from other donor funded activities (eg. WB loan and UNDP). Please label them correctly ("donor Agency" and name) even if the letter is issued by the recipient Government implementing Agency.

05/05/21

Comments have been adequately addressed. Confirmed expected amounts, sources and types of co-financing are adequately documented.

Cleared

Agency Response

RE 12/24/20

1. The project is innovative in considering as co-financing the additional financial costs that private companies have to incur in order to preferentially source sustainably-produced rice. In the short and medium term this constitutes real and significant financial cost "until such time as sustainable production and sourcing are fully mainstreamed sector-wide" and for this reason we classify this as grant cofinancing.
2. The classifications of MONRE cofinancing have been modified in Table C to reflect the letter.

RE February 25, 2021

1. The letters from these two companies state that the cofinancing refers to the costs incurred in developing raw material areas applying SRP standards and prioritising the sourcing of sustainable rice. This represents direct financial investments by the companies in support of the development of the sustainable rice sector, relative to the BAU scenario, and as such it constitutes a financial contribution to (cash cofinancing of) the GEF project.

3. The In-Kind (MONRE, FAO and GIZ) has been reclassified in Table C as "Recurrent Expenditures"

Location of edit: Table C (page 10 of ProDoc)

RE 04/28/21

a) Co-financing from IUCN is now labelled as Donor Agency.

b) Co-financing from MONRE and MARD is now labelled as Donor Agency (World Bank, UNDP, EU), where relevant. It has been clarified in the field below the co-financing table that MARD co-financing is composed of USD 1.5m UNDP, 4 million EU and 4.5 million Public investment (Government).

GEF Resource Availability

5. Is the financing presented in Table D adequate and does the project demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objectives?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/24/20

No. Please address the following:

1. It is not clear why two Finance Managers are needed for the project.
2. All full time PMU staff will have to be covered by PMC (from GEF and Co-financing), unless their TORs specify that they will be responsible for specific project activities.
3. Please clarify if the DoNRE Focal points and DARD Focal points are existing government agency staff or to be hired under the project.

February 25, 2021

1. Sufficient justification has been provided as to why two Finance Managers are needed for the project. Cleared
2. Terms of reference have been adjusted. Please note that two positions namely ?MoNRE OP Administrative and logistical assistant? and ?MARD OP Finance Manager? should be charged under PMC. Please revise the budget to reflect this.
3. It has been clarified that DoNRE Focal points and DARD Focal points will be hired under the project. Cleared
4. Additional comments on the budget table included: (i) MONRE office rent and utilities should be charged under PMC, and (ii) Please note that our Project Guidelines require that PMC funded by GEF source is proportionate to PMC funded by co-financing. Also, because the current PMC before including the two positions and office rent & utilities is already at 5% of project budget, we would encourage co-financing source to share the burden of increased PMC if possible. Please revise accordingly.

04/28/21

Comments have been sufficiently addressed. The financing presented is adequate and demonstrates a cost-effective approach to meet the project objectives.

Cleared

Agency Response

RE 12/24/20

1. The fiduciary capacity assessment carried out for MONRE indicated that it was of ?high risk? and so unable to engage IPSARD in a sub-contract. This means that two separate Operational Partners Agreements (OPAs) are required, the financial administration of which requires a Financial Manager in each of the participating Operational Partners (OPs.)
2. The wording of the terms of reference in Annex Q has been adjusted to make it clearer that the core project team members will have specifically technical roles, especially in relation to the provision of technical advisory and oversight support.
3. These staff will be hired under the project.

RE February 25, 2021

2. These positions are now charged to PMC.
4. (i) These items are now charged to PMC.

(ii) We have now reviewed and redistributed the cofinancing amounts, with the result that PMC funded by co-financing is now proportionate to PMC funded by GEF, in accordance with the Project Guidelines. This PMC cofinancing in part consists of concrete cofinancing of GEF project PMC costs, and (following the same logic applied at the time of first submission) in part reflects the internal management costs of the partner investments that constitute the cofinancing.

Please note that with the inclusion of the two positions (Admin Assistant and Finance Manager) and office rent & utilities under PMC, PMC is now slightly higher than 5% (namely, 5.8% of sub-total). After analysis and discussion, Government has now committed to co-financing most of the costs of office rental, but is not able to cover these staff costs, which are essential to ensure the proper functioning of the project.

Project Preparation Grant

6. Is the status and utilization of the PPG reported in Annex C in the document?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/24/20

Yes. The FAO should ensure that PPG funds are utilized within the allowable period and for eligible project preparation expenditures.

Cleared

Agency Response

Core indicators

7. Are there changes/adjustments made in the core indicator targets indicated in Table E? Do they remain realistic?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/24/20

No. Please address the following:

1. Given the relatively low amount of GEF funding allocated to the project, it would be useful to know how the GEBs are expected to be achieved. What portion of GEBs will be attributable to the co-financing?
2. In general, the areas restored and under improved management are very important, but it is unclear how were they estimated. Please justify these results through acceptable means (references, estimate of cost per ha, etc)?
3. Please include the activities supporting the targets under sub-indicator 3.1 Area of degraded agricultural land restored and Sub-indicator 3.4 on wetland and mangroves
4. In several places the proposal makes reference to restoration of forested areas, buffer zones, etc. However, sub-indicator 3.2 has been left blank. Please estimate the benefits that will result from forest restoration and include this in the sub-indicator as appropriate.
5. GHG mitigated results: The Ex-ACT tool which was used for this calculation should be uploaded in the package so that the estimate can be reviewed.

February 25, 2021

1. The explanation provided is sufficient. Considering the large GEBs generated by the GEF and co-financing, we'd expect these estimates to remain constant once project implementation begins. Cleared

2. Please provide an explanation below the indicator table of how the targets for area under improved management and area restored were estimated, as is required.

3. Activities listed in Box 7. Cleared

4. Estimated result for 3.1 & 3.4 have now been included and explained. Cleared

5. Thank you for sharing the EX-ACT tool. Further detail is required on how concretely the indirect GHG emission mitigation will be achieved and where the ratios 40%/60% with direct benefits comes from. In addition, there are numbers in the Ex-ACT tool that are not clearly reflected in the project description such as the 39,800 ha of agriculture land restored (shouldn't it be 30% of 120,000 ha?) and the 2x65,000=130,000 ha of rice practices improvement. The numbers in the Ex-ACT tool don't seem to be all aligned with the CER description. Please adjust accordingly.

04/28/21

The core indicator targets are realistic.

Cleared

Agency Response

RE 12/24/20

1. In accordance with the GEF approach, GEF resources catalyse improved delivery of GEBs by the project's baseline initiatives. As GEF and baseline are designed to work in concert, it is difficult to separate precisely the respective contributions of GEF funds and co-financing towards the delivery of GEBs.

Nonetheless, GEF funds are utilised to deliver GEBs within the 5 target provinces (which account for around 33% of the total area of the Mekong Delta Region) to establish and demonstrate improved management practices.. With the exception of the GEF direct investment in restoration (the details of which will be confirmed during the project through consultative processes), project investments combine GEF and co-financed resources in an integrated manner, with GEF funds largely being used to provide support (e.g. in the form of technical advice, tools, and capacity enhancement) to increase the effectiveness of the baseline/co-financing initiatives in delivering GEBs ? for example, working through provincial Government extension systems to mainstream GEBs into their actions.

2. The total area target of 1,800,200 ha under improved management, as proposed by MONRE and provincial Governments, is a conservative target equivalent to around 50% of the agricultural land area in the MDR and around 45% of all land uses.

This target will be achieved through the proposed combination of GEF and cofinanced investments in the enhancement of capacities for landscape planning, governance, technical support and green value chains, among institutions and producers, which together will result in the proposed magnitude of landscape transformation. This will reflect a combination of major Government baseline commitment and investment in shifting the landscape away from intensive triple-cropped rice, towards a less intensive, more flood-based situation, and incremental GEF investment to help ensure that this transformation is done sustainably.

This total area target of 1,800,200 ha includes 1,770,000 of agricultural land: this is made up of 1,650,000 ha of agricultural land under improved management (Core Indicator 4) and 120,000 ha of agricultural land restored (Sub-Indicator 3.1). In fact all of the agricultural land area affected by the project is targeted for improved management and restoration (given that the improved management practices will serve to restore ecosystem functions and productive sustainability), through the combination of GEF and co-financed investment explained above.

The 120,000 ha of agricultural land restored is specifically highlighted as being "under restoration" (and so included under Sub-Indicator 3.1) as it is classified by the Government as "unsustainable or degradable cultivation areas/land". It is calculated as a conservative 30% of this land category: this proportion is lower than the 50% overall figure referred to above as restoration in these areas will be more challenging than the average.

3. The target for area of degraded agricultural land restored under sub-indicator 3.1 will be achieved through the provision of support to sustainable production practices proposed under Component 2 (examples of which are given in Box 7 and Annex Y). All of these practices will in fact contribute simultaneously to Core Indicator 4 (sub-indicators 4.1 and 4.3) and to sub-indicator 3.1: these indicators both constitute "improved management in production systems" generating BD and/or LD benefits, while at the same time serving to restore ecosystem functions.

The introductory text to Outcome 3.1 (paragraph 252 and bullets) indicates how wetland and mangrove restoration will be achieved: in the case of wetlands, through modification of water management systems (the active removal of obsolete or unnecessary physical barriers) and in the case of mangroves, through active planting.

4. A conservative target of 200 ha of forest restoration is proposed in Table F and the Core Indicator worksheet. This is based on Government cost norms of between \$1,000 and \$7,000/ha for full replanting (depending on the difficulty of the site selected) and the \$640,000 GEF budget for direct investment in restoration. This restoration

investment would be targeted through consultative project processes at localities of highest need, such as river banks with high erosion potential.

5. A revised Ex-ACT tool is attached. Total GHG mitigated is 13,369,359 tCO₂eq, of which 60% (8,021,615) is direct, and 40% (5,347,744) indirect (i.e, attributable to the long-term outcomes of GEF activities, such as capacity building, innovation, policy change, and catalytic action for replication).

RE February 25, 2021

2. The explanations provided in response to the first round of comments have been pasted in after Table F.

Location of edit: after Table F (page 12 of ProDoc).

Please note that the figures in Table F and Annex F have now been corrected to reflect these explanations.

Location of edits: Table F (page 11) and Annex F (Core Indicator worksheet, p. 161 of ProDoc)

5. Based on expert judgment and consultations during PPG, and given the relative levels of budget allocation to Component 1 (in support of an enabling environment for scaling) as well as the expected effectiveness of the strategies for scaling proposed in Section 7 (as explained in Box 9, the target provinces were specifically selected in order to maximize scaling potential), we consider that 40% of the expected GHG benefits can be achieved indirectly as a result of capacity building, innovation, policy change, and catalytic action for replication.

The new Annex BB explains the relations between the Core Indicator values and the Ex-ACT values.

As explained in the response to the first round of comments (comment 2 above) the 30% figure refers to the relation between the overall Core Indicator 3.1 target (120,000 ha) and the total land area classified by the Government as 'unsustainable or degradable cultivation areas/land' (i.e. 400,000ha): it does not refer to the relation between the Ex-ACT figure for land restored (39,800 ha) and the Core Indicator 3.1 target (120,000 ha).

The Ex-ACT target of 39,800 ha is estimated conservatively as the proportion of the overall Core Indicator target (defined at the foot of Table F as including area over which site- and/or landscape-level management plans have been formulated) that will in practice contribute most directly to GHG emissions reductions.

The Ex-ACT entries for category 3.1.2 have been corrected (total 65,000 ha). The total area of 85,000 ha under improved management (3.1.2 and 3.3.2) corresponds to the proportion of the overall 1.65 million ha value for core indicator 4 value that will in

practice contribute most directly to GHG emissions reductions. The total Ex-ACT result has been adjusted accordingly.

Location of edit: Annex BB (page 327 of ProDoc) - copied below for reference.

Annex BB. Relations between GEF-7 Core Indicators and Ex-ACT Values

	Core Indicators (entire project area)				Ex-ACT (areas relevant for direct and indirect GHG mitigation)		
	Category	Area (ha)	Comments		Category	Area (ha)	
1	3.1 Agricultural land restored	120,000	Equivalent to 30% of the area classified as ?unsustainable or degradable cultivation areas/ land?.	Includes	2.3 Other LUC: Degraded land ? flooded rice crop	39,800	
2	4. Agricultural land under improved management	1,650,000	Includes: - 4.1: 549,500 ha - 4.2: 1,500 ha - 4.3 1,099,000 ha	Includes	3.1.2 Conventional annuals ? improved annuals	20,000	
3					3.3.2 Flooded rice	Improved exported	32,500
4						Improved buried	16,250
5						Improved burnt	16,250
6					Total		85,000
7	Total agricultural area in core indicators (1+2)	1,770,000					
8	3.2: Forest land restored	1,200	On-wetland tree planting	Consists of	2.2 Afforestation and reforestation	200	
9			Mangrove restoration		5.1 Forest degradation and management	1,000	
10	3.4: Wetlands restored	30,000					
11	Total Core Indicator 3 (1+8+10)	151,200					
12	Core indicator area total: total area target under improved management and restoration (7+8+10)	1,801,200	Equivalent to around 50% of the agricultural land area in the MDR and around 45% of all land uses	Total of areas included in Ex-ACT calculations (1+2+3+4+5+7+8)		126,000	
12	6.1 Direct GHG tCO2eq	7,733,981	60% of total	Total GHG		12,889,969	

13	6.2 Indirect GHG	5,155,988	40% of total	
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Part II ? Project Justification

1. Is there a sufficient elaboration on how the global environmental/adaptation problems, including the root causes and barriers, are going to be addressed?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/24/20

No. A significant amount of information has been provided on the physical, socio-economic, environment context of the MDR but much less so on the global environmental problems and how they play out in the national and landscape context. Specifically:

1. While the excellent threats analysis and Landscape Level Impact Flows diagrams identifies GHG emissions from flooded rice and straw burning and loss of globally important biodiversity as impacts from rice production in the MDR, the narrative description of these two impacts in the global environmental problems section is lacking. GHG emissions from rice is mentioned only briefly (including para 91) and reference to the importance of and impacts to biodiversity is more scarce?aside from a detailed description of the Tram Chim NP, which will not be an area for direct intervention. As the generation of BD,CCM, and LD GEBs should be at the core of what the program addresses, the description of these impacts in the context section should be more detailed and prominent to the "Rice Production in the MD Landscape" section.
2. In addition to rice the assessment in the CEO ER also looks in detail at other productive elements in the MDR, including aquaculture/shrimp farming, fisheries, fruit etc. and it isn't immediately apparent how all these fit into the overall program goals and outcomes. The systems that will be tapped as alternatives to rice production by the project should be more clearly highlighted. Others (eg shrimp and fish culturing), while worth mentioning briefly, perhaps shouldn't be discussed in detail as it gives the impression that the project will directly support activities related to these production systems
3. For those livelihood options that the project will include as alternatives to rice production, it would be helpful to understand what are the environmental impacts/benefits of production of these systems? Specifically, how do they contribute to environmental degradation, Biodiversity loss and CC emissions?
4. A key focus in the section is on Ag extensions systems, which are seen as vehicles to scale out options for sustainable management and production. Historically this isn't necessarily what they were set up to do, so please clarify why they are viewed as a potentially useful vehicle to this end?

5. There doesn't appear to be a discussion on land tenure even though this would seem to be an issue central to the project efforts at the landscape level. Even briefly, an examination of land tenure should be touched on as part of the current context.

6. The 'pressures and threats undermining sustainability in the Mekong Delta' heading in the CEO ER highlights includes many factors that are seemingly outside of the control of the project to address under the scope of FOLUR, such as the impact of Mekong Dams, hydrological modification, sea level rise, urbanization, etc. Unless the project has a plan on how it is going to do to address these identified threats or provides a clearer representation of how project interventions will contribute to the overall improved management of the MDR in light of these (eg. co-benefits derived from landscape level planning or through the utilization of co-financing for these other aspects), it may provide a clearer picture to focus the CEO ER on the global environmental problems, root causes and barriers most relevant to the project, and instead leave the broader detailed analysis for the ProDoc.

February 25, 2021

1. Biodiversity values are now clearer through the inclusion of Table 4 summary. The importance of Tran Chim NP and the role of the project in maintaining its biodiversity values through landscape-wide cross-surface flows and modifications to water management regimes in the broader landscape has been clarified. Cleared

2. The role of the different alternative productions systems (aquaculture/shrimp farming, fisheries, fruit, etc), has been clarified. It is now understood that these will not be worked on directly but will be taken into account in landscape planning and other indirect means. Cleared

3. It is understood that the project will pursue alternative livelihood options with some risk of degradation but that demonstrate 'improved environmental outcomes relative to the baseline alternative.' We ask the agency to clarify how it will mitigate this risk so that unsustainable alternatives to triple rice aren't supported by the project.

4. The projects efforts to work with extension services to ensure they integrate sustainability considerations into their efforts with farmers have been clarified. Cleared

5. An explanation of the tenorial context has been provided. Cleared

6. These broad threats have now been reclassified in the CEO ER so that it's clearer that they are outside of the direct control of the project. Cleared.

04/28/21

The explanation of how the project will 'tip the balance' towards sustainable alternatives is now clear. There is a sufficient elaboration on how global environmental problems is going to be addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

RE 12/24/20

1. The explanation of the impacts of hydrological modifications in the threats section (bullet under paragraph 75) has been expanded to make clearer the link between landscape-wide hydrological changes (associated with rice production systems) and ecosystem/biodiversity conditions in Tram Chim.

Section 6 on GEBs (paragraph 290) states that, despite the fact that the project will not work directly in Tram Chim, "The introduction of improved water management practices, and reductions in the use of agrochemicals, in the areas surrounding Tram Chim and Lang Sen wetland protected areas will contribute to the conservation status and ecological functioning of these areas, which constitute among the last remaining remnants of the Plain of Reeds ecosystem. This in turn will benefit the conservation status of the species to which they provide habitat, such as the globally endangered Sarus Crane." Section 6 presents additional specific information in relation to BD impacts, in addition to LD and CC.

An additional table (Table 4) has been included at the end of the threats description, summarizing the impacts of the project on different global environmental values.

2. Fruit and vegetable production has now been separated out from the other productive elements (paragraphs 20-23), with the explanation that "The project will not directly promote fruit and vegetable production, but its support will help to ensure that such diversification occurs in the most environmentally sustainable way possible".

The introduction to the description of the other productive elements (pangasius and shrimp aquaculture and coastal fisheries) has been adjusted to clarify that "Although the project will not work directly with these other elements, in order for landscape management to be truly integrated and sustainable they must also be taken into account in sector and landscape planning, including consideration of the flows of environmental processes and impacts among them" (paragraph 24).

3. The introduction to the presentation of the theory of change (paragraph 146) states that "Under the baseline scenario, there is a risk that the potential for these changes to improve environmental sustainability will not be realized: some of the possible alternatives to rice in fact have the potential to generate greater negative environmental impacts than rice itself".

The explanation of causal pathway 2 refers to "avoiding the risk of an environmentally harmful alternative scenario involving diversification into unsustainable alternatives".

The principles and criteria for the selection of the alternatives to be promoted are explained in Boxes 6 and 7. Foremost among the criteria presented in Box 6 is ?Improved environmental outcomes relative to the baseline alternative, in terms of implications for environmental values of local, national and global importance (including biodiversity, GHG stocks and ecosystem function) and environmental sustainability?.

4. The introduction to the text on agricultural extension systems has been expanded to fully clarify that ?the project will aim to move from a situation where extension programmes promote unsustainable production systems and practices, to one where their ?messages? and technical support packages integrate sustainability considerations, providing farmers with (and co-developing with them) productive options to that comply with considerations of environmental sustainability?.

5. Paragraph 49 addresses tenure: ?All of the land in the project area is owned by the State, but land use (occupancy and usufruct) rights are well established over the great majority of the area. Specific tenure provisions and their implications for occupancy and usufruct rights vary across land categories. On agricultural land, households are provided with certificates of land use rights (?Red Books?). In Protection Forests, households are awarded ?green books? which give them land use rights: these allow them to maintain productive activities but do not allow them to change purpose and require them to maintain a proportion of their land in forest cover.?

6. External pressures and threats requiring adaptive measures, but which the project cannot directly address (climate change, sea level rise, Mekong dams, urbanization and socioeconomic changes) are now included under a separate heading from addressable pressure and threats (paragraphs 91-111), and their relevance to the project and the need for corresponding adaptation measures is clearly explained for each one.

RE February 25, 2021

3. While the choice of management alternatives will ultimately be up to the farmers themselves, the project will ?tip the balance? towards sustainable alternatives by:

- 1) Ensuring that producers have reliable access to technical and financial support and productive resources to adopt agricultural practices and natural resource management that contributes to ILM and secures GEBs (Outcome 2.1)
- 2) Helping farmers to access value chains that provide incentives and standards that favour sustainable options (Outcome 2.2)

The application of alternative livelihood options with a risk of degradation is part of the baseline scenario: the GEF scenario would feature improvements in environmental sustainability relative to the current situation, not just relative to the without-project scenario.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/24/20

The baseline is extensive but we ask that the agency also includes projects funded by GEF if they are relevant.

February 25, 2021

Relevant GEF projects are included in the CEO ER.

Cleared

Agency Response

RE 12/24/20

Please note that the only two GEF-funded projects that are relevant are:

- Project 9265 (GEF-AF-Mekong Delta Integrated Climate Resilience and Sustainable Livelihoods Project), which is already mentioned in the baseline analysis
- The GEF International Waters (IW) project on Enhancing sustainability of the Transboundary Cambodia - Mekong River Delta Aquifer, which is currently under formulation: this project (already mentioned in Box 5) is now also described in the baseline analysis, together with an explanation of its relevance to the project.

3. Is the proposed alternative scenario as described in PIF/PFD sound and adequate? Is there sufficient clarity on the expected outcomes and components of the project and a description on the project is aiming to achieve them?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

12/24/20

No. Please address the following:

1. ToC doesn't include the 3 barriers identified in the barriers section. The description of the components also doesn't seem to indicate how these barriers will be overcome through the approach.
2. A more complete narrative description of what is in the TOC is requested.

3. Box 5 seems to offer a rationale for the project approach to help transition to alternative, adaptive and resilient models of production and landscape management. But it should be clarified which, if any, of the strategies the project will pilot, as it might otherwise appear that it will undertake all of these.

4. From Box 10, it doesn't appear that importance of biodiversity, opportunities to mitigate climate change or to restore lands factored into the selection of priority provinces. Please explain.

5. Component 2 ? the project's approach of gradually transitioning away from unsustainable intensive rice production towards alternative crops (including vegetables and perennials) and less intensive forms of rice production seems reasonable. However, it would be necessary to explain the environmental impacts of these options as well to provide an assessment of the trade offs. How specifically will the project ensure that the alternative crops are not just leading to degradation of the environment that is less impactful than rice but a net positive for the environment leading to the generation of CC, BD, LD GEBs?

- Output 2.2.1 & 2.2.4?The support and engagement of PS partners, including what types of actors across the supply chain the project will target and why, and the role that private sector co-financiers will play, should be made more specific. There is significant detail already in the Co-financing letters from which the description can draw.

6. Component 3 ? a much clearer description of what the approach is to component 3 is required. Based on assumptions of what might result the ILM planning process, there should be some expectation/examples of that types of initiatives that will be designed. For example how will Conservation agriculture and Direct-Seeding Mulch-Based Cropping be applied. More specifics on the plans to include connectivity between NP and adjoining areas would be clarifying.

- Output 3.1.2 Investments in restoration of priority areas in terms of BD and ecosystem services ? What are the land-based activities related to restoration of degraded agricultural land?

- Output 3.1.3-Functioning incentive/PES mechanisms tailored to optimize flows of ecosystem services- We note the reference to potential collaboration with the MAM-II project, on mainstreaming PES for sustainable mangrove-shrimp aquaculture. Please clarify if this output will be targeting land-based PES systems? We understand that the project is looking at the alternatives to intensive rice practices, however, the focus on aquaculture does not align with the FOLUR program. Given this, these aspects of the project might better be covered by co-financing.

February 25, 2021

1. The Theory of Change (ToC) diagram has been modified and is now clearer and a more comprehensive reflection of the project's design. Cleared
2. A thorough narrative description of the ToC is now included in the ProDoc. Cleared
3. Box 5 -has been removed and the benefits summarized. Cleared
4. Selection criteria and the value of the sites for scaling explained. However, it would still be useful to understand which criteria respond to the requirement to generate key GEBs that justify the use of GEF financing in addition to what may be required based on the context.
5. Component 2 - Improved environmental outcomes relative to the baseline alternative indicate that activities will be less destructive. This is preferable but doesn't necessary equate to positive environmental outcomes that lead to the generation of GEBs. These are also not clear in the Annex X in sustainability. A further explanation of how this generates nature positive GEBs is required.
 - Output 2.2.1 & 2.2.4 Information is provided in the Private Sector section. Cleared
6. - Component 3 a clearer description of what the approach is to component 3 is provided. Cleared
 - Output 3.1.2 land-based activities related to restoration of degraded agricultural land have been clarified. Cleared
 - Output 3.1.3 it has been made clear that project will not work directly on aquaculture management, which will be co-financed through MAM. Cleared

04/28/21

The proposed alternative scenario is sound and adequate.

Cleared

Agency Response

RE 12/24/20

1. The ToC diagram (Figure 15) has been reformulated so that the barriers reflect those given in the text, and 'causal pathways' have been presented relating barriers to project outputs and impacts.
2. Detailed explanation of the theory of change logic has now been included (paragraphs 151-168 in the ProDoc).

3. Box 5 has now been removed, and instead its main implications regarding the benefits and feasibility of more sustainable management options have been summarized, with cross-reference to Annex X where more detail is presented.

As also noted in the project document, the precise nature of the management options to be promoted will be defined on a case-by-case basis through participatory processes of problem analysis and prioritisation with farmers and other local stakeholders.

4. Although the selected provinces do contain biodiversity values of particular importance at regional (Mekong Delta) level, such as Tram Chim National Park, Mekong gallery forest and coastal mangroves, the main reasons for their selection were the opportunities that they provide for validation and demonstration of ILM practices, and for thereby acting as nuclei for scaling out. This was considered to be the most cost-effective strategy for maximizing the scale of long-term benefits in terms of BD, LD and CC, as explained in detail in Box 10.

5. Component 2 ? The introduction to the presentation of the theory of change (paragraph 146) states that ?Under the baseline scenario, there is a risk that the potential for these changes to improve environmental sustainability will not be realized: some of the possible alternatives to rice in fact have the potential to generate greater negative environmental impacts than rice itself?. The explanation of causal pathway 2 refers to ?avoiding the risk of an environmentally harmful alternative scenario involving diversification into unsustainable alternatives?.

The principles and criteria for the selection of the alternatives to be promoted are explained in Boxes 6 and 7. Foremost among the criteria presented in Box 6 is ?Improved environmental outcomes relative to the baseline alternative, in terms of implications for environmental values of local, national and global importance (including biodiversity, GHG stocks and ecosystem function) and environmental sustainability?.

Output 2.2.1 & 2.2.4 ? Reference is made to the section in Private Sector Engagement, where the engagement of specific private sector actors (Olam, the PAN Group and Loc Troi) is explained in more detail (paragraph 313).

Initial discussions have been held with these private sector actors during PPG, but the intention is that the specific nature of their engagement (for example participation in multi-stakeholder dialogues and the preparation of strategic action plans) will be defined in more detail through negotiated processes during project implementation.

6. Component 3 ? The introductory text to Outcome 3.1 (paragraph 251) has been modified to clarify the overlap that exists between options for the sustainable management of production systems and options for conservation and restoration. CA and mulch-based DSR fall into this overlap category and will be supported under

Component 2, where the proposed approaches for their promotion are detailed (supported by technical detailed in Annex Y)

Additional detail has been added to the description of the proposed restoration options (paragraph 252), especially the improved management of water at landscape-level (further detailed in Annex N).

Additional explanation has been included of the proposed support to connectivity between the Mekong, Tram Chim and Lang Sen, supported by a map (paragraph 256, Figure 17).

- Output 3.1.2 ? The restoration options being considered are further detailed in the introductory text to Outcome 3.1 (paragraph 252). As explained in paragraph 251, there is significant overlap between the options for land-based improved management of production systems and restoration actions in degraded agricultural land: for simplicity, these actions are covered under Component 2, while Component 3 focuses specifically on other options that are not directly related to production systems.

- Output 3.1.3 ? The project will not work directly on aquaculture management, which will be cofinanced through MAM-II. Para 263 states that project PES work will cover wetlands and agricultural production systems, as well as mangrove forests. Any non-land-based PES work (e.g. in mangroves) will be in the context of restoration (aimed at protecting/generating environmental services on which the FOLUR-relevant land-based production systems ? rice and others ? depend) rather than sustainable production.

RE February 25, 2021

4. As now explained more explicitly in the paragraph relating to Box 9, the principal overarching consideration in the selection of the target provinces (reflected in the individual criteria listed in Box 9) was their representativeness: this approach maximizes the potential for GEB generation across the whole Mekong Delta region, through scaling out of the GEB-generating models developed there, compared to the option of focusing specifically on provinces with individually exceptional environmental values but limited replication potential.

Location of edit: paragraph 180 (page 65 of ProDoc)

5. Box 6 has been corrected to state that the options under the GEF scenario will offer improved environmental outcomes relative to both the current situation and the baseline (without GEF) alternative. This is true of all of the options proposed in Annexes X and Y: the LD2030 option set out in Annex X, for example (transition from high dikes to low dikes; instead of triple rice monoculture, double rice production with flood-resilient

crops) would offer 9% less risk of downstream flood damage, 10-20% reduction in salinisation and 70% reduction in sediment loss relative to the current situation.

Location of edit: Box 6 (page 61)

4. Is there further elaboration on how the project is aligned with focal area/impact program strategies?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/24/20

Yes, there is further elaboration on how the project is aligned with impact program strategies.

Cleared

Agency Response

5. Is the incremental reasoning, contribution from the baseline, and co-financing clearly elaborated?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/24/20

As mentioned above, it would be helpful to understand how financing from the significant co-financing, particularly from the private sector, will be deployed to contribute to project outcomes.

Feb 25, 2021

Additional detailed information has been added that is clarifying and sufficient.

Cleared

Agency Response

RE 12/24/20

Additional detailed information has been added to the section on incremental reasoning (paragraph 284 of the ProDoc), highlighting the principal contributions of co-financing to project outcomes, with emphasis on the contributions of co-financing to global environmental benefits.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/24/20

Yes, there is further elaboration on the project's expected contribution to global environmental benefits.

Cleared

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/24/20

No. Please address the following:

1. The project will undertake a other innovative approaches that could be mentioned here such as PES and other financing models (eg. WBCSD, Agri-3 Fund, DFCD), and NBS perhaps.
2. The discussion on Sustainability should include the diagram in Annex Z, which is helpful.

Feb 25, 2021

Additional information has been provided.

Cleared

Agency Response

RE 12/24/20

1. Explanation has been added to this section on how the application of PES, blended financing and NBS is innovative in the context of this project (bullets under paragraph 298).
2. The diagram in Annex Z is now Figure 19.

Project Map and Coordinates

Is there an accurate and confirmed geo-referenced information where the project intervention will take place?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
12/24/20

Yes, the project map and coordinates have been provided.

Cleared

Agency Response
Child Project

If this is a child project, is there an adequate reflection of how it contributes to the overall program impact?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
12/24/20

Yes, there is adequate reflection of how the Child Project contributes to the overall program impact.

Cleared

Agency Response
Stakeholders

**Does the project include detailed report on stakeholders engaged during the design phase?
Is there an adequate stakeholder engagement plan or equivalent documentation for the implementation phase, with information on Stakeholders who will be engaged, the means of engagement, and dissemination of information?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
12/24/20

No. Please address the following:

1. Please note that as the FOLUR Vietnam project is a child project of an Impact Program. As there was no PIF, the CEO ER should be a stand-alone document, serving as the primary file through which the project is described. Where feasible please include relevant information in the CEO ER rather than referencing the ProDocs or annexes.

2. While information on Stakeholders consulted can be found in annex H4, there should be some narrative on the stakeholder engagement process that was undertaken during PPG in the CEO ER.

Feb 25, 2021

Adequate detail is now provided in the CEO ER on the stakeholder engagement process.

Cleared

Agency Response

RE 12/24/20

1. The relevant information has been incorporated into the CEO ER. Annexes such as the Gender Action Plan are attached in the relevant CEO ER sections. The other annexes of the ProDoc provide additional background information/baseline studies that are not considered to fit into the CEO ER sections.

2. Additional reference to the PPG workshops at national and provincial levels, and to the local stakeholder consultations, has been included in the Stakeholders section (paragraph 302).

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Has the gender analysis been completed? Did the gender analysis identify any gender differences, gaps or opportunities linked to project/program objectives and activities? If so, does the project/program include gender-responsive activities, gender-sensitive indicators and expected results?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/24/20

No. Further to the above point, there should be a brief narrative included in the CEO ER on gender context within project areas and broad approaches, not only in the gender assessment annex L.

Feb 25, 2021

Adequate detail is now provided in the CEO ER on gender.

Cleared

Agency Response

RE 12/24/20

The conclusions of the Gender Analysis are now summarized in this section (paragraph 309).

Private Sector Engagement

If there is a private sector engagement, is there an elaboration of its role as a financier and/or as a stakeholder?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/24/20

Yes, the section on private sector engagement is strong. We note that some of the detail provided in this section could support the description of activities in component two.

Cleared

Agency Response

Risks to Achieving Project Objectives

Has the project elaborated on indicated risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved? Were there proposed measures that address these risks at the time of project implementation?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/24/20

No. Please address the following:

1. Climate risks are prominent throughout the narrative of the proposal but aren't included in the risk assessment.

2. The COVID-19 consideration is limited. We request further description in a few paragraphs of: 1- the current context as it relates to COVID; 2- what are the possible consequences of the pandemic and how important they can be for the project; 3- how the project will deal with the identified likely impacts during its implementation; and 4- how the project has identified potential opportunities to mitigate impacts and contribute toward a green recovery and building back better with more resilience. We advise the agency presents this analysis in a specific note after the risk table. For further clarification, the agency may wish to refer to the note "Project Design and Review Considerations in Response to the COVID-19 Crisis and the Mitigation of Future Pandemics" shared by GEF Secretariat with the GEF Agencies on September 14.

Feb 25, 2021

1. Climate risk is now included. Cleared
2. COVID considerations have been expanded on and are now sufficient. Cleared
3. Further to point 3 in question 1 above (Part II), it may be useful to include a mitigation plan for livelihood alternatives to rice in order to ensure that the project is not supporting unsustainable options.

04/28/21

Sufficient elaboration on indicated risks, including climate change, has been presented.

Cleared

Agency Response

RE 12/24/20

1. Climate change has now been included in the risk matrix, with proposals of corresponding mitigation measures.
2. Text has been added to the risk section, in addition to the points listed in the table itself, providing additional information on the COVID-19 context in Vietnam and how the project will promote robustness to such crises and thereby contribute to building back better (paragraphs 319-323).

RE February 25, 2021

3. This is the rationale behind Output 1.4.1 (Multi-level framework for adaptive management established, based on enhanced and locally-relevant indicators and standards of sustainability), focused on *the collaborative development of a multi-level framework which will track and guide progress on managing the target landscapes in an integrated manner, in such a way as to ensure that field-level management is*

compatible with and supported by appropriate management at farm, community and landscape levels, and vice versa?, for example using the sustainability standards presented in Box 13.

Coordination

Is the institutional arrangement for project implementation fully described? Is there an elaboration on possible coordination with relevant GEF-financed projects and other bilateral/multilateral initiatives in the project area?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/24/20

No. Based on the "FAO Obligation" language of Annex P, it is unclear if there is a plan for FAO as the implementing agency to also undertake an executing function. Please clarify if this role is intended. If so, this needs to be justified, clearly stated in the institutional arrangement, and agreed to by the OFP through a formal letter before such an arrangement will be considered for an exception to the Implementing Agency/Executing Agency roles as stated in GEF policy. Understand that such an exception is not guaranteed by these actions but a necessary pre-condition for review by GEF management.

Feb 25, 2021

The budget table indicates FAO will be responsible for executing annual audits, spot checks, MTR and TE, which is acceptable and consistent with FAO's review sheet response. However, points made in Annex O (point d), and Annex P (point 4) imply FAO performing some execution functions. These points should be removed completely to be consistent with FAO's response on the review sheet.

04/28/21

The institutional arrangement for project implementation is clearly described.

Cleared

Agency Response

RE 12/24/20

The only FAO-executed elements of the project will be (please see Budget file):

- Annual audits and spot checks of the OPAs with MoNRE and MARD

- Independent mid-term review and terminal evaluation, and processing of corresponding reports.

RE February 25, 2021

These points have now been deleted.

Location of edits: Annex O (page 267 of ProDoc), Annex P (page 272 of ProDoc)

Consistency with National Priorities

Has the project described the alignment of the project with identified national strategies and plans or reports and assessments under the relevant conventions?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/24/20

No. Please address the following:

1. How is the project assisting Vietnam with achievement of its LDN targets?
2. How is the project aligned with the Aichi Targets?

Feb 15, 2021

1. LDN targets have been included. Please note that 2.2.3 Natural forest restoration states that the project will result in the restoration of **XX** ha of natural forest. This number should be populated.

2. The projects contribution to Aichi targets are included. Cleared

04/28/21

The description of alignment with identified national strategies is sufficient.

Cleared

Agency Response

RE 12/24/20

1. Project contributions to LDN targets are now set out in the section on Consistency with National Priorities (paragrap 373).

2. Table 12 presents the contributions of the project to Aichi targets.

RE February 25, 2021

This figure has been inserted, The reference to the GEF-7 indicator has been corrected from 4.2 to 3.2.

Location of edits: bullet under paragraph 373 (page 120 of ProDoc)

Knowledge Management

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/24/20

Yes, the KM approach is adequately elaborated and a timeline and set deliverables included.

Cleared

04/28/21

Please address the following additional comment:

a) This child project mainstreams KM well across the board, and its KM section is well-formulated. However, the KM section is missing a budget and a timeline for KM implementation. Granted, component 4 of the project is all about KM and has an associated budget. However, it would be good for the KM section to clearly state the budget and timeline for the implementation of key KM deliverables of this project across the board, even if this coincides with the budget/timeline of a particular project component. This is a requirement for CEO endorsement.

05/05/21

The comment has been addressed. The Knowledge Management Approach for the project adequately elaborated.

Cleared

Agency Response

RE 04/28/21

a) A table with KM budget, key deliverables and timeline has been added in Section 8. Knowledge Management (page 122-123 of ProDoc).

Monitoring and Evaluation

Does the project include a budgeted M&E Plan that monitors and measures results with indicators and targets?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/24/20

No. Please address the following:

1. Table 1 under the M&E plan makes reference to restoration of forested land. However, this is not selected as a core indicator. Please clarify or revise the core indicator table.
2. Please include a budgeted M& E Plan.

Feb 25, 2021

1. Core indicator for restoration is now included. Cleared
2. We are still not seeing a budgeted M&E Plan in the portal submission. Table 15 of the prodoc should be included in the portal version of CEO ER.

04/28/21

The M&E budget is now uploaded to the portal CEO ER.

Cleared

Agency Response

RE 12/24/20

1. A target of 200 ha has been included in the Core Indicator worksheet and across the CEO ER.
2. A Monitoring Plan is presented in Table 13, and an M&E budget in Table 15

RE February 25, 2021

2. Now uploaded to the portal.

Benefits

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
12/24/20

Yes, socioeconomic benefits at the national and local levels are sufficiently described.

Cleared

Agency Response
Annexes

Are all the required annexes attached and adequately responded to?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
12/24/20

Yes, all the required annexes were attached.

Cleared

Agency Response
Project Results Framework

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
12/24/20

No. Please include all of the GEBs in the Results Framework.

Feb 25, 2021

GEBs have not yet been integrated into the targets of the Results Framework. Please do so.

04/28/21

GEBS are now included in the portal CEO ER results framework.

Cleared

Agency Response

RE 12/24/20

The core indicator targets reflecting biodiversity, land degradation and climate change mitigation benefits are indicated at the level of project objective (Annex A1 in ProDoc/Annex A in CEO ER, Results Framework).

RE February 25, 2021

Now uploaded to the portal (revised Results Framework).

GEF Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/24/20

Yes, GEFSEC comments were addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

Council comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/24/20

Please review and address any relevant comments from Council at the time of the PFD review.

Feb 25, 2021

Council comments have been addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

RE 12/24/20

The Council comments have been addressed in detail in project formulation. Of particular importance are the following.

- Project contributions to LDN targets are now set out in the section on Consistency with National Priorities (paragrap 373). Additionally, reference to LDN indicators is part of the project?s monitoring and evaluation plan.
- A detailed gender analysis has been conducted during PPG and is presented in Annex L1.
- Youth and women participation has been incorporated into the project design, in particular for the capacity development under Output 2.1.2.
- Alignment with IP: Close alignment with the Global Knowledge to Action (K2A) platform project was sought during the child project development, including alignment of outcomes, outputs and indicators where relevant. Project M&E will be closely coordinated with the program M&E.
- Adaptation benefits: Resilience building and capacities for adaptation have been incorporated as integral part of the project design, as described in Section 3) Proposed alternative scenario.

STAP comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/24/20

Please review and address any relevant comments from STAP at the time of the PFD review.

Feb 25, 2021

STAP comments have been addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

RE 12/24/20

The STAP comments have been addressed in detail in project formulation. Of particular importance are the following:

6) Global Environmental Benefits (trade-offs): the project itself does not actively promote transitions away from intensive rice monocropping to less intensive systems nor alternative crops, and is not in itself responsible for generating trade-offs that may

result from this in the short term. Annex X indicates how the proposed project options were considered and designed to generate win-win outcomes and a calculated-transition, (as opposed to wide spread livelihood trade-offs).

6) Global Environmental Benefits (climate change): the implications of climate change, and the related phenomena of sea level rise and coastal erosion, are detailed in paragraphs 92-104. Boxes 4 and 6 propose specific options for addressing climate change, including the application of Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) such as the restoration of mangroves and river-side vegetation; the overall diversification of household-level farming systems; and the promotion of flood-based systems capable of buffering against extreme river flow variations.

7) Innovativeness, sustainability and potential for scaling-up: section 7 of the ProDoc details linkages to regional and global dynamics and opportunities, the inclusion of innovative financing models, and its specific attention to Nature-Based Solutions as key areas of innovation of the project.

2. Stakeholders: paragraphs 314-316 of the ProDoc explain in detail how the project will relate to the FOLUR IP Global Platform, the Sustainable Rice Platform and the WBCSD.

3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: detailed gender analysis is presented in Annex L1.

Convention Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

Other Agencies comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/24/20

Yes, comments of the lead agency, the World Bank, were addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

CSOs comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response
Status of PPG utilization

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
12/24/20

Yes. Please ensure that remaining funds are spent within the allowable timeline.

Cleared

Agency Response
Project maps and coordinates

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
12/24/20

Project maps and coordinates were provided.

Cleared

Agency Response
Does the termsheet in Annex F provide finalized financial terms and conditions? Does the termsheet and financial structure address concerns raised at PIF stage and that were pending to be resolved ahead of CEO endorsement? (For NGI Only)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

N/A

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

GEFSEC DECISION

RECOMMENDATION

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/24/20

No. Please address the comments.

02/25/21

No. Please address remaining comments.

04/28/21

Please address the comments on co-financing and knowledge management.

Review Dates

	Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review	12/24/2020	
Additional Review (as necessary)	2/25/2021	
Additional Review (as necessary)	4/28/2021	
Additional Review (as necessary)	5/5/2021	
Additional Review (as necessary)		

CEO Recommendation

Brief reasoning for CEO Recommendations