

# Accelerating ecosystems restoration by mobilizing communities along the Great Green Wall corridor?

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

## Basic project information

**GEF ID**

11136

**Countries**

Mali

**Project Name**

Accelerating ecosystems restoration by mobilizing communities along the Great Green Wall corridor?

**Agencies**

UNDP

**Date received by PM**

8/16/2024

**Review completed by PM**

11/5/2024

**Program Manager**

Ulrich Apel

**Focal Area**

Multi Focal Area

**Project Type**

FSP

## CEO

### Part I - General Project Information

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/20/2024: Not fully.

- Please include the GEF Agency Project ID in the Portal

- the "Environment and Sustainable Development Agency" is listed alongside the "National Agency for the Great Green Wall". However, please clarify if that is correct, as according to the description of the execution arrangements, only the first is executing partner. Please remove it will not perform executing functions (or else it should be added in a new row).

10/08/2024: Addressed.

(Agency ID entered by ITS)

Cleared

Agency Response

**October 4 2024, Agency Response 1**

PIMS number is 9614. The Agency can't make the changes but this correction will be requested through Portal Helpdesk with the GEF PM will be copied.

**October 4 2024, Agency Response 2**

This was addressed during the upload of the CEO Endorsement Request. A new LOE should be uploaded to the GEF Portal indicating The National Agency for the Great Green Wall as the sole executing partner.

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/20/2024: Yes.

However, it is noted that CCA marker is set to "2 - principal objective". In this case, the climate adaptation benefits need to be described in the proposal, alongside other GEBs.

10/08/2024: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

**October 4 2024, Agency Response 3**

Yes, this was missing, but it is now included in Section C. Alignment with GEF-8 Programming Strategies & Country /Regional Priorities.

**2. Project Summary.**

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

**b) Does the summary capture the essence of the project and is it within the max. of 250 words?**

**c) [If a child project under a program] Does the project summary include adequate and substantive link with the parent program goal and approach?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/20/2024: Not fully.

- Please include a paragraph in the summary that explains that the project is part of the Ecosystem Restoration Integrated Program and describe what specific contribution the child project makes to the program.

- Please include the main GEBs (as per core indicators) in the summary. Please make sure the numbers are consistent with the core indicator table.

10/08/2024: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

**October 4 2024, Agency Response 4**

Indeed, this was missing from the previous version. We now included a paragraph about the project's contribution into the IP. Refer to Project Summary of the CEO End Req.

### October 4 2024, Agency Response 5

This is now addressed, the GEBs per core indicator were added to the project summary.

### 3. Project Description Overview

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

### Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/20/2024: Not fully.

- Please elaborate on the Climate Change Adaptation benefits (in view of Rio Marker "2" for CCA) in context of the ToC description.

- Please remove all decimals in financial figures.

10/08/2024: Not fully addressed.

- The financial figures are still presented with 2 decimals, e.g. \$972,039.00 instead of \$972,039.  
Please adjust throughout the tables, including the budget table.

11/05/2024: Addressed.

Cleared

### Agency Response

### October 4 2024, Agency Response 6

This is now addressed, please refer to section C. Alignment with GEF-8 Programming Strategies & Country / Regional Priorities.

### October 4 2024, Agency Response 7

Yes, we now updated that in the CEO End Req and in the Budget.

**October 30 2024, Agency Response**

With regards to the figures captured in the Overview section of the Portal, please note that these appear with no decimal points in both the CEO ER Form and Portal. However, the Portal systematically adds the decimals upon saving. Please see the below example:

Window where figures are captured:

The screenshot shows a web form titled "Child Project Outputs". It contains three text input fields for outputs:

- OUTPUT 1.1.1: Sustainable and gender responsive land-use governance frameworks are strengthened/put in place.
- OUTPUT 1.1.2: Harmonisation, gender responsiveness and coherence are established between local/national level policies, plans and actions.
- OUTPUT 1.1.3: Collaboration with existing baseline investments is established.

Below the text fields, there are three financial input fields:

- Trust Fund: GEF Trust Fund (dropdown menu)
- GEF Child Project Financing(\$): 972,039
- Confirmed Co-Financing(\$): 19,386,458

At the bottom right, there are "Save" and "Cancel" buttons.

Figures format changed once the entries saved as below:

Child Project Component	Component Type	Child Project Outcomes	Child Project Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Child Project Financing(\$)	Confirmed Co-Financing(\$)
COMPONENT 1: Creation	Technical Assistance	OUTCOME 1.1: Enabling conditions are created and strengthened for	OUTPUT 1.1.1: Sustainable and gender-responsive	GET	972,039.00	19,386,458.00

**4. Project Outline**

**A. Project Rationale**

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/20/2024: Yes.

Cleared

## Agency Response

### 5 B. Project Description

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/20/2024: Yes.

- The reviewer welcomes the project's focus on field activities in cooperation with local communities and CSO, especially the grant, micro-grant, and CSO support towards restoration and SLM activities.

- As per GEF Guidance, gender considerations should be mainstreamed throughout the project, and the Gender Action Plan should be uploaded. The Agency is requested to ensure that: i) in Outputs 1.1.1, 1.1.2 and 2.1.1, policies and frameworks developed are gender-responsive (e.g., women's land tenure, access to resources and under-representation; ii) in Outputs 1.1.2, 1.1.3 and 3.1.2, women, women's organizations, and gender experts are included in decision-making processes and capacity-building/training in sustainable ecosystem restoration; iii) in Outputs 2.1.2 and 2.1.3, that women and women-led businesses are actively targeted in the pilot programs, financial and investment opportunities and capacity-building activities; and iv) that KM products and activities captures good practices and lessons learned from a gender perspective.

- Please ensure internal consistency in communicated values on expected results throughout the CEO endorsement package. Those listed under the project description differs from those in the Core Indicator dedicated section.

10/08/2024: Addressed.

Cleared

#### Agency Response

##### **October 4 2024, Agency Response 8**

The Gender Action Plan is now updated (version of 27-Sep) and uploaded to the portal. Additionally, the text for the various outputs was updated by ensuring that their language is gender responsive wherever this is applicable. Gender-responsive language and indicators were added to the description of Outcomes and to the Results Framework in Annex C.

##### **October 4 2024, Agency Response 9**

Indeed, there were inconsistencies in terms of targets for indicators. This is now corrected throughout the document.

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

**a) Are the institutional arrangements, including potential executing partners, outlined on regional, national/local levels and a rationale provided? Has an organogram and/or funds flow diagram been included?**

**b) Comment on proposed agency execution support (if agency expects to request exception). Is GEF in support of the request?**

**c) Is there a description of coordination and cooperation with ongoing GEF and non-GEF financed projects/programs (such as government and/or other bilateral/multilateral supported initiatives in the project area, e.g.).**

**d) [If a child project under an integrated program] Does the framework for coordination and collaboration demonstrate consistency with overall ambition of the program for transformative change?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/20/2024:

on b) Execution arrangement have been well-described in the proposal and additional Annex and are considered suitable in the context. However, based on the budget table items, it seems that UNDP will be performing executing functions in addition to serving as the implementing partner. As there is no letter of support from the OFP requesting these dual arrangements, please address this issue along with other comments in the budget.

10/08/2024: Addressed. The response is acceptable, HOWEVER, please make fully clear in the budget by indicating that these costs are M&E related costs by specifying their purpose correctly, and not "other operating costs".

11/05/2024: Addressed.

Cleared

## Agency Response

### October 4 2024, Agency Response 10

There are four budget lines for which UNDP is the responsible entity. Line 99b "Contractual services-Company" at \$115,000, which relates to the Costs associated with conducting the independent mid-term review/evaluation (MTR) and the independent terminal evaluation (TE). Line 100 "Travel" at \$20,000 associated with the MTR and TE exercises; line 101 "Other Operating Costs" (Audio Visual&Print Prod Costs) at 17,183.00, also related to the MTR and TE, including translation and dissemination of safeguards updates as needed; and finally line 102 "Other Operating Costs" (Professional Services) at 25,000, related annual audits. These costs in GEF projects are typically entrusted to UNDP Country Offices. The project's management arrangements mention "The UNDP Resident Representative assumes full responsibility and accountability for oversight and quality assurance of this Project and ensures its timely implementation in compliance with the GEF-specific requirements and UNDP's Program and Operations Policies and Procedures (POPP), its Financial Regulations and Rules and Internal Control Framework. A representative of the UNDP Country Office will assume the assurance role and will present assurance findings to the Project Steering Committee, and therefore attends Project Steering Committee meetings as a non-voting member." This alone justifies the management of the mentioned lines by UNDP under the NIM modality without the need for a justifying exception letter. Should the GEF require additional explanations, they can be provided on the basis of the POPP and UNDP's Financial Regulations and Rules and Internal Control Framework.



**October 30 2024, Agency Response:**

Yes, these expenses are related to M&E and associated costs, as well as audit costs, as specified in the following budget notes (BN):

BN 99: UNDP managed budget line: Production & dissemination of evaluation reports, plus translations and dissemination of safeguards updates as needed: | Year 3: \$6,667 for MTR, | Year 5: \$10,516 for TE. | TOTAL = \$17,183

BN 100: UNDP managed budget line: Annual audit @ \$5,000/year over 5 years. | TOTAL = \$25,000

However, these fall under the "other operating costs" of the GEF Expenses categories, as shown in the below screenshot from the GEF-UNDP Budget Matrix:

74100 Professional Services	Other Operating Costs	12.3
74200 Audio Visual&Print Prod Costs	Other Operating Costs	12.4

**5.3 Core indicators**

- a) Are the identified core indicators calculated using the methodology and adhering to the overarching principles included in the corresponding Guidelines (GEF/C.62/Inf.12/Rev.01)? [If a child project under a program] Is the choice of core indicators consistent with those prioritized under the parent program?
- b) Are the project's targeted contributions to GEBs (measured through core indicators and additional listed outcome indicators) /adaptation benefits reasonable and achievable? Are the GEF Climate Change adaptation indicators and sub-indicators for LDCF and SCCF properly documented?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/20/2024: Not fully.

- Core indicators mentioned in the text are not fully consistent with core indicators in the table, e.g. CI-3: Restoration 100,000 ha vs 90,000 ha. Please double check and make consistent.

10/08/2024: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

**October 4 2024, Agency Response 11**

Yes, this inconsistency was now corrected throughout the document. It is now 90,000 ha.

**5.4 Risks**

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

omission?

- b) Is the rating provided reflecting the residual risk to the likely achievement of intended outcomes after accounting for the expected implementation of mitigation measures?**
- c) Are environmental and social risks, impacts and management measures adequately assessed and rated and consistent with requirements set out in SD/PL/03?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/20/2024: Not fully.

- Under the Political and Governance category, please provide a risk assessment that supports the outlined mitigation measures.

- Under the Overall Risk category, please provide a summary that helps understand the identified rating.

10/08/2024: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

**October 4 2024, Agency Response 12**

Indeed, the justification for proposing risk mitigation measures was missing from the document. It is now included. Refer to Risks to Project Implementation chapter.

**October 4 2024, Agency Response 13**

Indeed, the justification for proposing risk mitigation measures was missing from the document. It is now included. Refer to Risks to Project Implementation chapter. A summary has now been added.

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Requestn/a

Agency Response

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

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

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/20/2024: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/20/2024: No.

- Please elaborate alignment with national priorities, especially under the UNCCD. If CCA-marker is selected "2", one would expect alignment with NAPA and/or National Drought Plan (NDP)?

- Please elaborate on regional priorities in context of the GGWI.

10/08/2024: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

**October 4 2024, Agency Response 14**

On the alignment with national priorities: Yes, the content on alignment with NAPA and NDP was added to Section C. Alignment with GEF-8 Programming Strategies & Country /Regional Priorities.
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**October 4 2024, Agency Response 15**

On the regional priorities in context of the GGWI: Yes, the content on alignment with NAPA and NDP was added to Section C. Alignment with GEF-8 Programming Strategies & Country /Regional Priorities.
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**6.3 For projects aiming to generate biodiversity benefits (regardless of what the source of the resources is - i.e., BD, CC or LD), does the project clearly identify which of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework the project contributes to and how it contributes to the identified target(s)?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/20/2024: No.

- Please elaborate on alignment with KMGBF and its specific targets. If there is none, state accordingly.

10/08/2024: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

**October 4 2024, Agency Response 16**

Yes, the content on alignment with KMGBF was added to Section C. Alignment with GEF-8 Programming Strategies & Country /Regional Priorities.
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**7 D. Policy Requirements**

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/20/2024: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/20/2024: Please clarify. Reviewer could not locate GAP.

10/08/2024: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

**October 4 2024, Agency Response 17**

This was addressed during the upload of the CEO Endorsement Request
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**7.3 Is the stakeholder engagement plan uploaded?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/20/2024: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/20/2024: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

**8 Annexes**

**Annex A: Financing Tables**

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

**STAR allocation?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/20/2024: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

**Focal Area allocation?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/20/2024: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Requestn/a

Agency Response

**SCCF A (SIDS)?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Requestn/a

Agency Response

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Requestn/a

Agency Response

**Focal Area Set Aside?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/20/2024: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

**8.2 Project Preparation Grant (PPG)**

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/20/2024: Not fully.

- Please provide details on what ?Miscellaneous Expenses?, ?Supplies? and ?Contractual Services-Companies? are, so that we can assess if these are eligible costs to be covered by the PPG.

- Please avoid using decimals in the financial values.

10/08/2024: Not fully addressed.

- Contingencies "unforeseen expenses" are not an eligible cost item. Please amend.

- Please remove all decimals ".00" from the financial figures.

11/05/2024: Addressed & noted.

Cleared

Agency Response

**October 4 2024, Agency Response 18**

[1] The UNDP budget category "Miscellaneous Expenses" corresponds to the GEF's budget category "Other Operating Costs". The budget line with this category was set aside to cover unforeseen expenses @ a total of \$3,000.

[2] The UNDP budget category "Supplies" corresponds to the GEF's budget category "Office Supplies". The budget line with this category was set aside to cover purchases of stationary, office supplies and publications required during stakeholder consultations @ a total of \$3,000.

[3] The budget line tagged as ?Contractual Services-Companies? relates to statistical services to be acquired for data collection. The small amount that was used since the initiation of the PPG phase (\$981), was spent on procuring services from a company that provided transportation services (vehicle rental) to stakeholders, including beneficiaries, during stakeholder consultation workshops.

#### October 4 2024, Agency Response 19

Yes, we now updated that in the CEO Endorsement Request file and in the Budget file in Excel.








#### October 30 2024, Agency Response

- Miscellaneous expenses refers to bank charges and related expenses. Therefore, a commitment of \$3,000.00 is still reflected in the PPG Fund Utilization, noting that no expenses have yet been charged on this budget line.

- Regarding the format of figures in the PPG Fund Utilization section in the GEF Portal, please note that, same as with the Overview section, the decimal points are added automatically when saving, entries are done without decimal points:

#### ANNEX D: STATUS OF UTILIZATION OF PROJECT PREPARATION GRANT (PPG). 6

Provide detailed funding amount of the PPG activities financing status in the table below:

Project Preparation Activities Implemented	GET/LDCF/SCCF Amount (\$)			
	Budgeted Amount	Amount Spent To date	Amount Committed	
International Consultants	77,000	22,000	55,000	
Local Consultants	58,500	585,000	0	
Travel	15,660	1,397	14,263	
Contractual Services-Companie	22,000	981	21,019	
Supplies	3,000	0	3,000	
Miscellaneous Expenses	3,000	0	3,000	
Training, Workshops and Confe	20,839	14,494	6,345	

### 8.3 Source of Funds

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

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/20/2024: Yes.

Cleared

### Agency Response

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

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/20/2024: Not fully.

- The grant of USD 400,000 from UNDP is currently categorized under recurrent expenditures. However, according to the GEF Co-financing Policy, grants should generally be classified as Investment Mobilized. Additionally, the uploaded letter appears to be from Mali's Agence de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable (AEDD) instead of UNDP, which seems to be a mistake. Please submit the correct co-financing letter from UNDP.

- The other two co-financing letters from Mali's Ministry of Environment, Sanitation, and Sustainable Environment, and Ministry of Energy & Water are both in French. Please provide an English translation of these letters as per the GEF Co-financing Policy. While a formal translation is not required, the translation should be done to the best of the Agency's capacity.

10/08/2024: Addressed.

11/05/2024: Not fully addressed.

a. The grant of USD 400,000 from UNDP is currently categorized under recurrent expenditures. However, according to the GEF Co-financing Policy, grants should generally be classified as Investment Mobilized. Additionally, the uploaded letter appears to be from Mali's Agence de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable (AEDD) instead of UNDP, which seems to be a mistake. Please submit the correct co-financing letter from UNDP.



b. The other two co-financing letters from Mali's Ministry of Environment, Sanitation, and Sustainable Environment, and Ministry of Energy & Water are both in French. Please provide an English translation of these letters as per the GEF Co-financing Policy. While a formal translation is not required, the translation should be done to the best of the Agency's capacity.

11/08/2024: Addressed.

Agency responded that: (1) UNDP co-financing has been captured as investment mobilized in all documents as well as in the Portal and (2) translations are provided in Annex 12 of the prodoc.

Cleared

## Agency Response

### October 4 2024, Agency Response 20

This was addressed during the upload of the CEO Endorsement Request. Refer to Annex 12 updated.

### October 4 2024, Agency Response 21

An English translations of letters are provided in PRODOC Annex 12. An updated letter from the Ministry of Energy & Water was obtained and is included in the resubmission. The correct co-financing from this partner is actually \$36,706,745.

### November 7, 2024, Agency Response

a. UNDP co-financing has been captured as investment mobilized in all documents as well as in the Portal.

The remark on the attached co-financing letter is well noted and has been corrected.

b. In the confirmed co-financing sections, we had included the letters as submitted. Both original and translated co-financing letters are now added along each line of co-financing. These letters along with their translations are also included in Annex 12 as additional agreements.

#### Annex B: Endorsements

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

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/20/2024: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/20/2024: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/20/2024: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

**Annex C: Project Results Framework**

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

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

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

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

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/20/2024: Yes.

*Please acknowledge: During implementation, the child project is expected to report to program level indicators that are outlined in the Global Coordination Project to facilitate a programmatic M&E of the Integrated Program. Please ensure that necessary arrangements are made to enable the child project to report to these indicators.*

10/08/2024: Has been acknowledged.

Cleared

Agency Response

**October 4 2024, Agency Response 22**

Refer to Annex C. Results Framework. There is a note at the end of the table addressing the comment.
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**Annex E: Project map and coordinates**

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/20/2024: Not fully.

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

10/08/2024: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response**October 4 2024, Agency Response 23**

Indeed, this was updated in the current version of the CEO End Req. Refer to ANNEX E: PROJECT MAP AND COORDINATES
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**Annex F: Environmental and Social Safeguards Documentation and Rating**

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/20/2024: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

**Annex G: GEF Budget template**

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

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

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

## Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/20/2024: Comments on the budget:

- The table in the attached CEO Endorsement Portal view (which is the document that is circulated and webposted) is difficult to read and spans across **66 pages**. Please use the template provided in the GEF Guidelines on the Project Cycle and remove the output columns so that there is more margin for the details on the activities implemented.
- It is not clear if the intention is to buy electrical vehicles? The use of GEF funds to purchase vehicles is discouraged. Such costs are normally expected to be borne by the co-financed portion of PMCs. Any request to use GEF funding to purchase project vehicles must be justified by the exceptional specific circumstances of the project.
- Several budget lines are currently aggregated (e.g. for local consultants), making it difficult to assess the individual expenditures. Please disaggregate these lines and present them in a more reasonable manner. Per the resubmission, we will review the budget again and provide comments as appropriate.
- Please include a budget line with adequate funding that will facilitate participation of the project and project staff in global/regional coordination and KM events/activities under the Ecosystem Restoration IP and its Global Coordination Project (GCP).
- Please clarify which budget lines support the implementation of component 4, its outputs and activities?
- Please explore cost efficiency in the budget line: "Support communities, private sector and local governments in developing micro-project proposals for FLoRE", which is with \$344,000 considerable high, also in view of the support offered through grants. The development of the proposals should be reasonable in comparison to the available grant funding.
- Remove budget lines that indicate UNDP will be performing executing functions in addition to serving as the implementing partner (e.g. \$20,000 for GOE)

10/08/2024: Addressed. HOWEVER, please remove the decimals in the financial figures ".00" throughout. Please also remove all colored highlights.

11/05/2024: Partly addressed.

- You mentioned the ?UNDP Quantum format budget in Excel? we could not find this document in the GEF Portal.
- Several budget lines are currently aggregated, making it difficult to assess the individual expenditures. Please ask the Agency to disaggregate these lines and present them in a more reasonable manner. Best practice is to list each position or activities in one line, with budget allocation across components and M&E, PMC as applicable. Per the resubmission, we will review the budget again and provide comments as appropriate.

11/08/2024: Addressed as per agency below and changes made in the budget.

Cleared

## Agency Response

### October 4 2024, Agency Response 24

The updated budget is now prepared in the required GEF format without columns for outputs (only component level). Concerning document length, UNDP confirms that thorough editorial was conducted in the document and it now reads better. Some sections, including the Project Summary (249 words) are now more succinct.

### October 4 2024, Agency Response 25

UNDP has updated the GEF format budget to now include simpler budget notes and make budget analysis easier. In doing so, the budget line that mentioned "electrical vehicles" was corrected. That text did not belong in the file and this is now rectified. The budget note should read "Costs of domestic travel in connection with Component 1 activities". This is now in the updated version of the budget.

### October 4 2024, Agency Response 26

The updated GEF format budget now includes simpler budget notes to make budget analysis easier. In case the GEF Secretariat would like to see all the details, it is possible to consult the UNDP Quantum format budget in Excel. The budget notes contain quite a bit of detail.

### October 4 2024, Agency Response 27

UNDP analyzed the budget lines linked to travel and training under component 4. There are over \$356K allocated to those items. Travel included \$10K per year, which indeed can be improved to allow a more effective participation of the Mali Child Project and key stakeholders in KM events/activities under the Ecosystem Restoration IP and its Global Coordination Project (GCP). The travel line has been amended to include double the original budget.

### October 4 2024, Agency Response 28

The updated GEF format budget should make it clear which lines are allocated to Component 4, which has a total budget of \$1.5M for the project's duration. There are several consultancies directly linked to knowledge management, communication, and a key budget line to link national systems such as SIFOR, SNGIE, etc. to international ones, among them the GGW database. The project will work with "Task Force Data GGW" to achieve these goals. The budget is considered sufficient, except for travel, which can be increased. This is addressed in the next budget line.

### October 4 2024, Agency Response 29

This comment stems from a double issue relating on the one hand to budget categorization (line 18 in the UNDP Quantum Budget is a "Contractual Services - Companies" type of line), and budget note formulation on the other. On the latter, a formulation mentioning "support" was perhaps not adequate. Line 18 is in fact similar to line the Grants' line 20, except that it cannot be classified as a grant because of the contractual mechanism envisaged. Line 18 also includes the engagement of private-sector players. Therefore a procurement process will be required to select final beneficiaries, whereas with grants a different due diligence process is to be conducted. Line 20 has \$100K per year, while line 18 has \$68K. It is not excessive for a grantmaking scheme under FLoRE. The note for line 18 is now corrected to read "Lumpsums grants under the FLoRE targeting communities, private sector and local governments in view of developing and implementing micro-project proposals for FLoRE @ \$68,800/year. | TOTAL = \$344,000".

#### **October 4 2024, Agency Response 30**

As this is a full NIM project, UNDP will not play any execution support role. The only budget lines associated with UNDP are for MTR, TE and audits, which are services typically handled by UNDP Country Offices as part of their implementation oversight function and so they do not constitute execution support. UNDP will, therefore, not be charging the project for these services as they are covered by the Agency Fee.

#### **October 30 2024, Agency Response:**

Decimal figures in the budget have been removed, same as the highlights in the documents.

#### **November 7, 2024, Agency Response**

- The ?UNDP Quantum format budget in Excel? is the budget used to develop the Total Budget and Work plan in the Agency Project Document. The Excel file is now attached for your reference.

- Well noted. Positions and activities are outlined with budget allocation associated with each position in the budget note across all components including M&E and PMC.

#### **Annex H: NGI Relevant Annexes**

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

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

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Requestn/a

Agency Response

Additional Annexes

**9. GEFSEC DECISION**

### 9.1.GEFSEC Recommendation

#### Is the project recommended for approval

##### Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/20/2024: No. Please address comments made in this review.

10/08/2024: No. While the resubmission has addressed most comments, please address the few outstanding comments. Please re-submit a version without decimals in the financial figures (tables in CEO endorsement template and budget table). Please remove all colored highlight in the resubmission so that it can be circulated (if the submission is cleared).

11/05/2024: No. Please addressed remaining comments dated 11/05/2024.

11/08/2024: Yes. Program Manager recommends CEO endorsement.

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

##### Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/20/2024:

- During project implementation, please ensure that the PIRs, the MTE and the TE include a review and reporting of the GAP and relevant gender dimensions of the project.
- Please also ensure that GEF Council comments on the parent PFD #11118 are addressed, if any are relevant for this child project.

### 9.3 Review Dates

	CEO Approval	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review	8/20/2024	
Additional Review (as necessary)	10/8/2024	
Additional Review (as necessary)	11/5/2024	
Additional Review (as necessary)	11/8/2024	

CEO  
Approval

Response to Secretariat  
comments

<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>
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