



Promoting climate-resilience through ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) solutions in the Northern Lao PDR

Review PIF and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

11695

Countries

Lao PDR

Project Name

Promoting climate-resilience through ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) solutions in the Northern Lao PDR

Agencies

UNDP

Date received by PM

9/18/2024

Review completed by PM

10/22/2024

Program Manager

Tshewang Dorji

Focal Area

Climate Change

Project Type

FSP

GEF-8 PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF) REVIEW SHEET

1. General Project Information / Eligibility

a) Does the project meet the criteria for eligibility for GEF funding?

b) Is the General Project Information table correctly populated?

Secretariat's Comments

10/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Cleared

9/22/2024; GEFSEC:

a) Yes

b) Yes

Agency's Comments

2. Project Summary

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 results?

Secretariat's Comments

10/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Thank you. Cleared

9/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Yes. However, with regards to the projections for the future climate impacts, it may not be realistic to consider timescale by 2100 and RCP 8.5 from the project intervention perspectives.

Agency's Comments

10/21/2024, UNDP:

Thank you for your feedback. We have incorporated narratives detailing the climate change projections under RCP 4.5 and RCP 8.5 for the 2021-2050 period. We made those changes under the **?Project Summary?** section (p. 2-3), as well as in the Project's Rationale section A.1, specifically in the **?Future climate change projections?** section (p. 12).

3 Indicative Project Overview

3.1 a) Is the project objective presented as a concise statement and clear?

b) 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?

Secretariat's Comments

10/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Thank you. Cleared

9/22/2024; GEFSEC:

a). Please clarify how the integration of Ecosystem based Adaptation is going to translate into resilience in the project area?. It may be suggested to sharpen the objective of the project on the landscape in three targeted provinces in the Northern Highlands

b). Yes, the components are largely clear within the current objective. However, there are recently approved LDCF project by the FAO and WWF- US that has similar outcome to improve national level planning, coordination & capacity. Similarly, the UNDP's GEF-7 LDCF project also has a component that looks at ways to improve national level capacity for planning and coordination. While the target areas of those project interventions are across different parts of the country, it is suggested that the component 1 of these project is revised in the light of avoiding duplication and build synergies.

Agency's Comments

10/21/2024, UNDP:

Thank you for your feedback.

a) We have added the following narratives under the project's causal pathways in B.1 Project's Theory of Change (p. 20-21):The project's adoption of EbA aims to promote climate resilience - by focusing the EbA solutions for improving watershed management and fostering sustainable agriculture and agroforestry practices within the target communities. The conservation efforts of these communities will significantly enhance the health of watershed ecosystems, which serve as critical buffers against climate impacts such as floods and droughts while maintaining essential

services like clean water supply, soil fertility, and other critical ecosystem services . The integration of EbA-based sustainable livelihoods will further strengthen community resilience by diversifying income sources. Sustainable practices, including the harvesting of non-timber forest products (NTFPs), enable communities to reduce their dependence on a single income source. This diversification not only enhances economic stability but also improves resilience to economic shocks and climate impacts. Additionally, EbA strategies promote the conservation and restoration of habitats, which in turn help maintain, if not enhance the ecosystem's ability to deliver critical ecosystem services, such as water regulation through improved infiltration, soil stabilization, and provisioning services like food and water, important for climate resilience. Richer ecosystems are generally more resilient to climate change, possessing a greater ability to withstand and recover from extreme weather events. These services play a vital role in supporting household resilience, ensuring consistent access to resources that are essential for sustaining livelihoods, particularly during climate-related shocks. Finally, the project facilitates climate knowledge-sharing among stakeholders, particularly affected communities. By improving access to climate information, communities can make more informed decisions regarding their adaptation strategies, further enhancing their resilience to the challenges posed by climate change.

We revised the objective's statement into "Enhancing resilience and sustainable livelihoods in the watershed areas of the Northern Lao PDR (Nam Phark river basin, Nam Ou river basin, Nam Kor Catchment, and Ngeum River) through acceleration of the integration of ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) solutions at the national and subnational levels" in the "Indicative Project Overview" Table (p. 4). Furthermore, while the majority of interventions will be implemented in the target provinces and districts, there are also interventions at the national level. Hence, we perceive that keeping the reference pertaining EbA solutions at "national and subnational levels" is more appropriate.

b) Thank you for your feedback. We have added these two projects in "Existing Initiatives" (p. 17) and in "Table A. Potential Collaboration with Existing Initiatives" (p. 27).

The planning and capacity related interventions under the "Enhancing Integrated Watershed Management and Climate Resilience for Vulnerable Communities in the Nam-Poui, Nam-Poun, Nam-Lay and Nam-Houng Basins in Lao PDR" project (WWF-led LDCF project) are implemented in the target provinces and districts that do not overlap with this PIF's project. There will not be duplication in this project's geography. We also added the project as one of the existing initiatives that this UNDP-MoNRE's project will coordinate with and build interventions on their lessons learned. Meanwhile, with regard to FAO's LDCF "Climate Smart Agriculture alternatives for upland production systems in Lao PDR" project, the planning and decision-making tools developed by the FAO-LDCF project for Luang Prabang and Houaphan provinces (Output 2.1.3) offer valuable lessons and guidance for the UNDP-MoNRE's LDCF project in creating the national-level remote sensing EbA tool (Output 1.1). With regard to policy intervention under its Component 1, we have adjusted it so that UNDP-MoNRE LDCF project will focus on developing regulations / policies for EbA mainstreaming in the target provinces (Output 1.2) (kindly see "Indicative Project Overview" table on p.2, as well as the project's description narratives on p.22), which will not be overlapped with FAO-LDCF's geography.

Moreover, it will identify potential alignment with the national policies developed under FAO-LDCF project.

3.2 Are gender dimensions, knowledge management, and monitoring and evaluation included within the project components and appropriately funded?

Secretariat's Comments

10/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Thank you. Cleared

9/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Please include an explanation of how GESI will be measured in the specific outputs where it is indicated that are going to be ?GESI-responsive?.

Agency's Comments

10/21/2024, UNDP:

Thank you for your feedback. We have changed indicator (a) under Outcome 2 to the following:

(a) At least 5,000 ha of critical watershed areas brought under restoration (through passive/natural restoration) and rehabilitation (through agroforestry-based afforestation) by 2,500 conservation households (at least 50% are of the ethnic minority households), directly benefiting at least 12,500 individuals (of which 50% are women) through application of EbA approaches in the target districts, strengthening local resilience to climate hazards.

The project will ensure social inclusion by targeting at least 50% of the households to be from ethnic minorities. Additionally, 50% of the direct beneficiaries will be women to promote equal gender representation.

These changes are made across the PIF where target households and beneficiaries are mentioned.

3.3 a) Are the components adequately funded?

b) Are the GEF Project Financing and Co-Financing contributions to PMC proportional?

c) Is the PMC equal to or below 5% of the total GEF grant for FSPs or 10% for MSPs? If the requested PMC is above the caps, has an exception (e.g. for regional projects) been sufficiently substantiated?

Secretariat's Comments

10/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Thank you. Cleared

9/22/2024; GEFSEC:

- a). Please review the funding allocation for the component 1 in the light of comment under 3.1 b
- b). Please review and update the co-financing contribution to PMC. For the current co-financing amount of \$26,300,000, the expected contribution to the PMC must be around \$1,315,000 instead of \$ 0.
- c). GEF contribution to the PMC is less than 5% of the GEF grant. As the costs associated with the project management must be covered by the GEF portion and the co-financing portion allocated to the PMC, the GEF contribution and the co-financing contribution must be proportional, which means that the GEF contribution to PMC might be decreased and the co-financing contribution to PMC might be increased to reach a similar level. Please amend either by increasing the co-financing portion and/or by reducing the GEF portion.

Agency's Comments

10/21/2024, UNDP:

Thank you for your feedback.

- a) Based on our consultation with MoNRE, since there is no major revision in the project outputs, we have been instructed to keep the same allocation for Component 1 (no revision).
- b) The co-financing contribution to PMC is now included.
- c) As noted in b) we have allocated co-financing for PMC.

4 Project Outline

A. Project Rationale

4.1 SITUATION ANALYSIS

- a) is the current situation (including global environmental problems, key contextual drivers of environmental degradation, climate vulnerability) clearly and adequately described from a systems perspective?**
- b) Are the key barriers and enablers identified?**

Secretariat's Comments

10/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Thank you. Cleared

9/22/2024; GEFSEC:

a). Yes and thank you. The current situations are well articulated. However, please review to utility of long-term future climate projections(2100 under RCP 8.5), especially in the context of the project. In addition, the PIF contains highlighted captions of the figures, point to the figures in the roadmaps and document section of the portal. It would be useful to have this figures reflected in the PIF for easy reference.

b). Yes, barriers are well identified.

Agency's Comments

10/21/2024, UNDP:

Thank you for your feedback. As noted in the previous comment, we have incorporated narratives detailing the climate change projections under RCP 4.5 and RCP 8.5 for the 2021-2050 period (kindly see the 'Project Summary' section (p. 2-3), as well as in the Project's Rationale section A.1, specifically in the 'Future climate change projections' section (p. 12).

Due to the space limitation in the GEF portal, we are unable to save the remaining figures in this section. Please refer to the roadmap section for your reference.

4.2 JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT

a) Is there an indication of why the project approach has been selected over other potential options?

b) Does it ensure resilience to future changes in the drivers?

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?

d) are the relevant stakeholders and their roles adequately described?

Secretariat's Comments

10/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Thank you. Cleared

9/22/2024; GEFSEC:

a). Yes

b). Yes

c). Largely yes, but please see how FAO's LDCF project might helpful for this project

d). Please explore how the project can work with the Mekong River Commission and its Secretariate, as the interventions has direct contribution to the Mekong catchment protection.

Agency's Comments

10/21/2024, UNDP:

Thank you for your feedback.

c). As previously mentioned (comment 3.1.b's response), we have added the FAO's LDCF project to the PIF.

d). This is well-noted. We have updated the PIF's annex II 'Stakeholder Engagement Plan' that indicates the MRC as one of the key stakeholders to engage. The Project will conduct consultation to identify areas for collaboration with the MRC during PPG. The potential areas for collaboration will predominantly under the project's Components 1 and 2 include: (1) provision of data/information related to the river/catchment areas that overlap with this project's landscapes, (2) capacity enhancement for provincial/district authorities on integrated watershed/water management, (3) provision of disaster (flood & drought) related information.

5 B. Project Description

5.1 THEORY OF CHANGE

a) Is there a concise theory of change that describes the project logic, including how the project design elements will contribute to the objective, the expected causal pathways, and the key assumptions underlying these?

b) Are the key outputs of each component defined (where possible)?

Secretariat's Comments

Update, 10/27/2024, GEFSEC

The PIF document on the Portal view does not show some figures. Please amend this until all figures are duly copied in this document considering that this is the only document circulated for Council / STAP review (as usual, ITS can help if needed).

10/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Thank you. Cleared

9/22/2024; GEFSEC:

a). Yes. However, please ensure to provide better legible schematic diagram under figure 7.

b). Yes, but please address the comment under 3.1 (b)

Agency's Comments

10/29/2024, UNDP:

Thank you for your comment. Due to size restrictions stipulated in the GEF portal, adding these figures will entail reducing a substantial part of the text, which will disrupt the section's flow and result in removing important factual narratives. To avoid that we will resort to removing the figures that could not be copied (figure 4 and 5).

10/21/2024, UNDP:

Thank you for your feedback.

- a) We have adjusted the font of the diagram.
- b) Addressed.

5.2 INCREMENTAL/ADDITIONAL COST REASONING

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

Secretariat's Comments

10/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Thank you. Cleared

9/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Yes. Thank you

Agency's Comments

5.3 IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

a) Is the institutional setting, including potential executing partners, outlined and a rationale provided?

b) Comments to proposed agency execution support (if agency expects to request exception).

c) is there a description of potential coordination and cooperation with ongoing GEF-financed projects/programs and other bilateral/multilateral initiatives in the project area

d) are the proposed elements to capture and disseminate knowledge and learning outputs and strategic communication adequately described?

Secretariat's Comments

10/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Thank you. Cleared with the understanding that as per EF policies, further explained in the Guidelines on Project and Program Cycle, require that the separation of implementation functions performed by GEF Agencies and execution functions performed by Project Executing Entities is a key feature of the governance of the GEF Partnership and an important aspect of the GEF Minimum Fiduciary Standards. See

https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/GEF_Guidelines_Project_Program_Cycle_Policy_20200731.pdf. (pages 44-45). At PIF stage, Agency (dual) execution should not be included in the Agency's proposal. Once the Agency has sufficiently progressed in project preparation and if it anticipates a need for Agency execution, the Agency would submit full information and justification for a request for policy exception.

9/22/2024; GEFSEC:

a). Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment is identified as the Executing partner under the Project General information, while under this section, it mentions that GEF agency will be expecting play a executing role. For agency to execute the project, a more detailed information, including a letter from the OFP, will be required. Therefore, it is suggested that at any such anticipated executing role for the agency could be determined later. Please change to "TBD" during the PPG stage, and remove "Yes" to the question on "Does the GEF Agency expects to play an execution role on this project?"

b). Please refer to the above comment. Also, remove the text "UNDP, under MoNRE's authorization, may handle procurement, recruitment, and project activities", as it is too premature as to preempt the decision on a potential participation of an Implementing Agency in the execution.

c). Yes, but please include FAO's GEF-8 LDCF project. Also, more details would be needed on its coordination with GCF funded project during the PPG stage.

d). Yes

Agency's Comments

10/21/2024, UNDP:

A and b) Thank you, we agree. The need for supporting executing roles will be assessed in the PPG after detailed assessment and conducting HACT micro-assessment. Then, we will explore all the options and whether execution support is needed, including third party support. Please kindly see our revisions on p. 27.

c) We have included the FAO's LDCF project As for the GCF funded projects (led by Save the Children Australia, GIZ and UNEP), the project will identify more detailed collaboration and alignment at the PPG. Please kindly see "Table A. Potential Collaboration with Existing Initiatives" (p. 27-28).

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

b) Are the project's indicative targeted contributions to GEBs (measured through core indicators)/adaptation benefits reasonable and achievable?

Secretariat's Comments

10/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Thank you. Cleared.

9/22/2024; GEFSEC:

a). Yes, however, please clarify why project is targeting only 40% women or consider increasing women's representation.

b). Please see how the result target could be enhanced.

Agency's Comments

10/21/2024, UNDP:

a) We have increased the target to 50% considering that demographically, the proportion of men and women in Laos, and in the three target provinces is 50:50 (proportion of females = 49.6%, please see: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/laos>). We made these revisions across the PIF where beneficiary targets are being mentioned.

b) as noted in our response in a)

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

Secretariat's Comments_{n/a}

Agency's Comments

5.6 RISKS

a) Is there a well-articulated assessment of risk and identification of mitigation measures under each relevant risk category?

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 screened and rated at this stage and consistent with requirements set out in SD/PL/03?

Secretariat's Comments

10/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Thank you. Cleared

9/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Yes

Agency's Comments

5.7 Qualitative assessment

a) Does the project intend to be well integrated, durable, and transformative?

b) Is there potential for innovation and scaling-up?

c) Will the project contribute to an improved alignment of national policies (policy coherence)?

Secretariat's Comments

10/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Thank you. Cleared

9/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Yes

Agency's Comments

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

6.1 Is the project adequately aligned with focal area and integrated program strategies and objectives, and/or adaptation priorities?

Secretariat's Comments

10/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Thank you. Cleared

9/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Yes.

Agency's Comments

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's Comments

10/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Thank you. Cleared

9/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Yes. However, please elaborate linkages with ongoing NAP process, if applicable

Agency's Comments

10/21/2024, UNDP:

Thank you for your feedback.

The project's interventions have considered and incorporated the priorities set in the NAP (which will be officialized in early 2025). Among others, priorities related to: (i) Create and implement an integrated water resources management plan to adapt and be resilient to climate change; (ii) Increase public awareness within the agriculture sector with a particular focus on vulnerable farming communities in rural areas; (iii) Enhance capacity to implement existing policies, laws and regulations related to forest restoration and restoration, and (iv) Address the issue of clearance of forest areas for agriculture land expansion, which is in line with relevant laws and regulations, and with sustainable forest management and land-use planning.

We added these narratives under section A.2 "Government Commitments" section (p. 16), and in "Part C Alignment with GEF-8 Programming strategies and country/regional priorities" (p. 30).

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's Comments n/a

Agency's Comments

7 D. Policy Requirements

7.1 Is the Policy Requirements section completed?

Secretariat's Comments

10/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Thank you. Cleared

9/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Yes

Agency's Comments

7.2 Is a list of stakeholders consulted during PIF development, including dates of these consultations, provided?

Secretariat's Comments

10/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Thank you. Cleared

9/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Yes

Agency's Comments

8 Annexes

Annex A: Financing Tables

8.1 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's Comments

Agency's Comments

Focal Area allocation?

Secretariat's Comments

10/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Thank you. Cleared

9/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Please ensure that it is linked to appropriate focal area elements

Agency's Comments

10/21/2024, UNDP:

Thank you for your feedback. We have revised the figures in the table.

LDCF under the principle of equitable access?

Secretariat's Comments

10/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Thank you. Cleared

9/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Yes

Agency's Comments

SCCF A (SIDS)?

Secretariat's Commentsn/a

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Commentsn/a

Agency's Comments

Focal Area Set Aside?

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

8.2 Is the PPG requested within the allowable cap (per size of project)? If requested, has an exception (e.g. for regional projects) been sufficiently substantiated?

Secretariat's Comments

10/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Thank you. Cleared

9/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Yes

Agency's Comments

8.3 Are the indicative expected amounts, sources and types of co-financing adequately documented and consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines?

Secretariat's Comments

10/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Thank you. Cleared

9/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Please list both UNEP and IFAD as the 'donor' agency in the cofinancing table, instead of 'GEF agency'.

Agency's Comments

10/21/2024, UNDP:

Many thanks for your suggestion. We have done as instructed.

Annex B: Endorsements

8.4 Has the project been endorsed by the country? (ies) GEF OFP and has the OFP at the time of PIF submission name and position been checked against the GEF database?

Secretariat's Comments

10/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Thank you. Cleared

9/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Yes

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments

10/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Thank you. Cleared

9/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Yes

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments

10/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Thank you. Cleared

9/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Yes

Agency's Comments

8.5 For NGI projects (which may not require LoEs), has the Agency informed the OFP(s) of the project to be submitted?

Secretariat's Comments n/a

Agency's Comments

Annex C: Project Location

8.6 Is there preliminary georeferenced information and a map of the project's intended location?

Secretariat's Comments

10/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Thank you. Cleared

9/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Yes

Agency's Comments

Annex D: Safeguards Screen and Rating

8.7 If there are safeguard screening documents or other ESS documents prepared, have these been uploaded to the GEF Portal?

Secretariat's Comments

10/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Thank you. Cleared

9/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Agency's Comments

Annex E: Rio Markers

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

Secretariat's Comments

10/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Thank you. Cleared

9/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Yes

Agency's Comments

Annex F: Taxonomy Worksheet

8.9 Is the project properly tagged with the appropriate keywords?

Secretariat's Comments

10/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Thank you. Cleared

9/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Yes

Agency's Comments

Annex G: NGI Relevant Annexes

8.10 Does the project provide sufficient detail (indicative term sheet) to take a decision on the following selection criteria: co-financing ratios, financial terms and conditions, and financial additionality? If not, please provide comments. Does the project provide a detailed reflow table to

assess the project capacity of generating reflows? If not, please provide comments. Is the Partner Agency eligible to administer concessional finance? If not, please provide comments.

Secretariat's Comments n/a

Agency's Comments

9 GEFSEC Decision

9.1 Is the PIF and PPG (if requested) recommended for technical clearance?

Secretariat's Comments

10/29/2024; GEFSEC

All figures are included. Recommended for technical clearance.

Update, 10/27/2024

Not yet. Please address the comment on the need of include all the figures duly copied in this document considering that this is the only document circulated for Council / STAP review (as usual, ITS can help if needed)

10/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Thank you for addressing all the comments. Recommend for technical clearance

9/22/2024; GEFSEC:

Not yet. Please address the above mentioned comments

Agency's Comments

9.2 Additional Comments to be considered by the Agency at the time of CEO Endorsement/ Approval

Secretariat's Comments

9/25/2024; GEFSEC:

Please provide some indicative budget for the Gender Action Plan and related gender-specific activities/outputs.

Agency's Comments

10/21/2024, UNDP:

Noted and will be provided during the PPG phase/ at the time of CEO Endorsement.

Review Dates

	PIF Review	Agency Response
First Review	9/25/2024	10/21/2024
Additional Review (as necessary)	10/22/2024	
Additional Review (as necessary)	10/27/2024	
Additional Review (as necessary)	10/29/2024	
Additional Review (as necessary)		