



Accelerating the Sustainable Transformation of Ecuadorian Banana Industry (Ecuador Green Footprint Project)

Review PIF and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

11923

Countries

Ecuador

Project Name

Accelerating the Sustainable Transformation of Ecuadorian Banana Industry
(Ecuador Green Footprint Project)

Agencies

FAO

Date received by PM

3/27/2025

Review completed by PM

5/19/2025

Program Manager

Ulrich Apel

Focal Area

Multi Focal Area

Project Type

MSP

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

04/02/2025:

1) The reviewer has a number of points that need to be addressed to make the project eligible for GEF funding. These points are outlined throughout the review sheet further below.

2) At this point, please remove the World Banana Forum / FAO as an executing partner as this would constitute a dual execution request. The project would ideally be executed by a national institution, which should be explored during PPG stage.

3) In the Info page ?AFOLU? should be tagged as ?Project Sector? as the project should seek alignment with CC-M as well.

05/19/2025: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency's Comments

16 May 2025

1) The comments have been addressed through the document, highlighting in yellow the changes to facilitate the review.

2) As requested, WBF/FAO has been removed as executing partner at this stage, alternatives will be explored during PPG stage.

3) Thank you for the comment, the AFOLU sector was selected.

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 04/02/2025: Yes.

Agency's Comments NA

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

04/02/2025: Not fully.

- Several outcomes/outputs and activities under component 2 are unclear with regard to the improvement and updating the existing CWF tool. Is the GEF funding being used to support the World Banana Forum to improve their existing tool or is it used to adapt the CWF tool for application in Ecuador?

05/19/2025: Has been clarified.

Cleared

Agency's Comments

16 May 2025

The project will update and adapt the CWF tool to the Ecuadorian context, contributing to the institutional and policy framework for sustainable banana production. A paragraph has been added in Section B. Project Description for clarification.

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

Secretariat's Comments 04/02/2025: Yes.

Agency's Comments NA

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

04/02/2025: Not fully.

1) The entire Component 3 has been tagged as Investment activities. However, only output 3.1. involves investment type of activities. Please consider creating two rows for Component 3, one for the investment and another for the technical assistance activities.

2) please also take into account of the comments on the type of co-financing further below in the finding the right balance between Technical Assistance and Investment activities.

05/19/2025: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency's Comments

16 May 2025

1) Thank you for the comment, the component have been divided into TA and INV.

2) Noted.

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

04/02/2025: Not fully.

The description is clear in that bananas, like other commodities, have significant environmental impacts, including chemical use, pollution, water usage, deforestation, and

carbon emissions. This project aims to address these issues using a ToC that will minimize impacts and generate GEBs. Further, adherence to sustainability standards can greatly reduce negative impacts on production, increase productivity, and limit land degradation while also reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

What is missing is:

1) in the link to environmental impacts at the landscape level / national scale. Please build into the rationale an outlook on how the project will reduce pressures on natural ecosystems and landscapes elements that are not monocultural plantations. How can it be avoided that successful project implementation will increase pressure on further land use conversion of natural areas towards bananas and other commodities. Please add.

2) Further, please adding a clear and concise paragraph on the baseline scenario including the barriers to be addressed.

05/19/2025: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency's Comments

16 May 2025

Thank you for the comments. Section A was updated to provide a better picture of the context in which the project will be implemented.

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

04/02/2025: Not fully. The justification for the project is not adequately presented.

1) Please clearly describe why this project has been prioritized over addressing other urgent environmental issues in Ecuador, and how it is aligned with national priorities. If Land Degradation focal area funding is being requested, the project needs to make a clear linkage with the national LDN strategy and its priorities, and need to justify why working on bananas

has been prioritized over e.g. implementing the National Drought Plan or working on Dryland Forest restoration.

2) Further, given the alignment with Ecuador's Carbon Zero Program, the project should also be aligned with GEF's CC-M strategy and objectives.

05/19/2025: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency's Comments

16 May 2025.

Thank you for the comments and suggestion, which are welcomed. Ecuador is one of the main banana producers in the world, and the importance of the banana industry is considerable but also its environmental impacts. Agricultural practices are one of the main drivers of land degradation and will be one of the priorities of the forthcoming LDN action plan, and the reduction of GHG emissions in the agriculture sector is also one of the priorities of Ecuador's NDC. To accelerate the transition of the banana industry is a priority for the country as it also clear in the decision to allocate part of their GEF resources in this project. Texts referencing the importance of the project have been integrated through the document, and a contribution to the CC-M focal area has also been included.

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 Comments04/02/2025: Yes.

Agency's CommentsNA

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 Comments04/02/2025: Yes.

Agency's CommentsNA

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

04/02/2025: As mentioned above, at PIF stage, please refrain from describing FAO / World Banana forum as an executing entity. It can be discussed during PPG stage and proper arrangements explored in the given context.

Therefore; please remove the answer ?Yes? + the additional explanation in the subsequent paragraphs in section ?Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Project?.

05/19/2025: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency's Comments

16 May 2025

Noted, as requested by GEF SEC, mention to execution by WBF/FAO has been removed. It will be explored during PPG stage.

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

04/02/2025:

1) Core Indicator 6. Please provide the Ex-ACT Tool GHG spreadsheet so the GEF team can track the calculations. Also, there is an inconsistency in the CO2 emission reductions expected, i.e., 1,496,531 tCO2 eq in the PIF versus 1,495,531 tCO2 eq under the Core Indicator section.

2) GHG emission avoided seems to stem from agriculture, so it'd be logical to record related anticipated results under 6.1 within the AFOLU sector and not 6.2. Please adjust as appropriate.

3) Given the ToC and the intention to upscale the project results to the entire banana industry, the CI 4.3 should reflect this by having a higher target.

05/19/2025: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency's Comments

16 May 2025

1) The EX-Act tool has been uploaded to the GEF portal. Also, the calculations were updated considering the upscale of the project as requested in point 3) below.

2) Thank you for the comment, this was an included by mistake and has been corrected.

3) Noted, the estimates of core indicators were updated accordingly.

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

Secretariat's Commentsn/a

Agency's CommentsNA

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

04/02/2025: Not fully.

- Under the Technological risk category, please consider referring to the risk and mitigants associated with "innovative technologies" mentioned in the Institutional and Policy category above.

05/19/2025: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency's Comments

16 May 2025

Noted and amended.

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

04/02/2025:

re c) Please elaborate briefly if in the context of this project, policy coherence will be addressed, and if so, in what way?

05/19/2025: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency's Comments

16 May 2025

A description on how the project will align and contribute to policy coherence has been included into Section B project description and C. on alignment with national priorities.

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

04/02/2025: Not fully.

1) Please align with both LD and CC-M objectives, given the the GHG emission reduction and alignment with Carbon Zero.

2) Please align specifically with CC-M objective 1.4 ?Nature based solutions with high mitigation potential?. Please consider updating the financing tables to also include CCM Focal Area as appropriate.

05/19/2025: Has been aligned.

Cleared

Agency's Comments

16 May 20'25

1 & 2. Thank you for the comment which are welcomed. The project was updated to include and align to CC-M focal area, its priorities and commitments in the country.

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

04/02/2025:

Please clearly describe alignment with national LDN strategy and targets, reflecting the prioritization of this project in the national context.

05/19/2025: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency's Comments

16 May 2025

Noted. Section C has been updated to describe the alignment to LDN strategy and targets.

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 Comments04/02/2025: Yes.

Agency's CommentsNA

7 D. Policy Requirements

7.1 Is the Policy Requirements section completed?

Secretariat's Comments04/02/2025: Yes.

Agency's CommentsNA

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

Secretariat's Comments04/02/2025: Yes.

Agency's CommentsNA

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 Comments04/02/2025: Yes.

Agency's CommentsNA

Focal Area allocation?

Secretariat's Comments04/02/2025: Yes.

Agency's CommentsNA

LDCF under the principle of equitable access?

Secretariat's Commentsn/a

Agency's CommentsNA

SCCF A (SIDS)?

Secretariat's Commentsn/a

Agency's CommentsNA

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

Secretariat's Commentsn/a

Agency's CommentsNA

Focal Area Set Aside?

Secretariat's Commentsn/a

Agency's CommentsNA

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 Comments04/02/2025: Yes.

Agency's CommentsNA

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

04/02/2025: Not fully.

1) For a project of that type, we would expect a credible co-financing in form of investment mobilized, especially by private sector entities.

2) Further, we consider US\$8 million in kind co-financing from the Ministry of Environment (MAATE) as a very high figure for just in-kind resources. Please explore the mobilization of investment as well or revise the figure.

3) Given that all contributions are reported as in-kind, it would be helpful to include additional information?at least at a high level, as appropriate for a PIF?on the activities supported by these contributions in the cofinancing description section, as no such details are currently provided.

05/19/2025: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency's Comments

16 May 2025.

Noted. The project co-financing sources were reviewed and further consultations were done with partners. Sources of investment mobilized were identified in the private sector and public institutions, from current investment projects that will be oriented to complement the GEF project.

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

04/02/2025: Yes; however, the letter of endorsement stipulates that the project will be partly executed by FAO.

At PIF stage, Agency ('dual') execution should not be included in the Letter of Endorsement. Once the project design has sufficiently progressed in project preparation and if it anticipates a

need for Agency execution, the OFP would submit through the Agency full information and justification for a request for policy exception.

Please note that: GEF 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)

05/19/2025: The LoE is accepted as is with the understanding that execution arrangements will be explored and discussed during the PPG phase. The approval of the PIF does not imply that an exception for dual execution arrangements will be made at CEO endorsement stage.

Agency's CommentsAs requested by the GEF SEC, references to execution by FAO were removed from the PIF. Alternatives will be explored during PPG stage.

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

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's CommentsNA

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

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's CommentsNA

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

Agency's CommentsNA

Annex C: Project Location

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

Secretariat's Comments 04/02/2025: Yes.

Agency's Comments NA

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

04/02/2025: We note that FAO attached the Environmental and Social Risk Screening checklist. The project is classified the ESS risk as moderate risk. However, the Key Risks section table indicates low risk on environmental and social risk.

- Please make the key risks table consistent with the environmental and social safeguard risk (Moderate)

- Please also provide a summary of environmental and social risk in the Key Risks table and plan of actions to mitigate these risks during PPG.

05/19/2025: NOT fully addressed.

Please make the key risks table (Low) consistent with the environmental and social safeguard risk (Moderate).

05/23/2025: The overall risk has been now changed to moderate.

Cleared

Agency's Comments

16 May 2025

The risks table was updated, including the section on environmental and social risks as requested.

23 May 2025

The overall risk has been now changed to moderate

Annex E: Rio Markers

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

Secretariat's Comments04/02/2025: Yes.

Agency's CommentsNA

Annex F: Taxonomy Worksheet

8.9 Is the project properly tagged with the appropriate keywords?

Secretariat's Comments04/02/2025: Yes.

Agency's CommentsNA

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 Commentsn/a

Agency's CommentsNA

9 GEFSEC Decision

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

Secretariat's Comments

04/02/2025: No. Please address comments made in this review.

05/19/2025: No. Please address remaining comment as noted in box 8.7

05/23/2025: Yes. Program Manager recommends CEO approval.

Agency's Comments

16 May 2025

Comments have been addressed and the updated texts highlighted in yellow to facilitate the review.

23 May 2025

Risk rating has been changed and the highlight has been removed to have a clean version of the project

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

Secretariat's Comments

04/02/2025:

1) Barriers and ToC. At CEO Approval stage, please ask the agency to elaborate further on the barriers. Also, the ToC would benefit from the identification of the assumptions made by the project.

- 2) Stakeholders. At CEO Approval stage, please consider engaging also with the financing sector and the Ministry of Economy, particularly with regards to Output 1.3 on Development of sustainable financing mechanisms and/or incentives.

- 3) Once the gender analysis has been conducted and the Gender Action Plan developed, please incorporate the findings and identified actions/interventions in the GAP in the project components, outputs and activities. The agency is also requested to provide some indicative budget for the Gender Action Plan and related gender-specific activities/outputs.

05/19/2025: Comments have been acknowledged for addressing during PPG phase.

Cleared

Agency's CommentsNoted, the comments will be considered and duly incorporated in the CEO endorsement request stage.

Review Dates

	PIF Review	Agency Response
First Review	4/2/2025	
Additional Review (as necessary)	5/23/2025	
Additional Review (as necessary)	5/23/2025	
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		