

# Addressing tenure governance and gender equality in land rights to strengthen LDN initiatives

Review CEO Approval and Make a recommendation

## Basic project information

**GEF ID**

11501

**Countries**

Global (Kyrgyz Republic, Sri Lanka, South Sudan, Paraguay)

**Project Name**

Addressing tenure governance and gender equality in land rights to strengthen LDN initiatives

**Agencies**

FAO

**Date received by PM**

1/20/2025

**Review completed by PM**

3/7/2025

**Program Manager**

Ulrich Apel

**Focal Area**

Land Degradation

**Project Type**

MSP

**PIF**  
**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**

01/28/2025: Not fully.

- The field "Countries" must include the names of the participant countries (in case ITS needs to intervene from the backend ? please contact GEF's ITS support and copy the PM).

02/17/2025: Addressed.

02/28/2025: Please use full name of ILC in Part I: International Land Coalition (ILC).

03/07/2025: Addressed.

**Agency Response**

The Portal issue has been resolved with the support from ITS. Thanks.

3/6/25: Thank you, the full name has been spelled out.

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

**Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request**

01/28/2025: Yes.

**Agency Response**

**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?**

**Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request** 01/28/2025: Yes.

**Agency Response**

**3. Project Description Overview**

- a) Is the project objective statement concise, clear and measurable?
- 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?
- c) Are gender dimensions, knowledge management, and M&E included within the project components and budgeted for?
- d) Are the GEF Project Financing and Co-Financing contributions to PMC proportional?
- e) 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**

01/28/2025: Not fully.

- a. The M&E is missing the details for the Outputs and Outcomes. Please input this information.
- b. Additionally, the recommended budget amount of the GEF funded part for the M&E component for projects up to USD 5 million is around 5%, but for this project is at 6.0%. Please revise if possible.

02/17/2025: Addressed.

**Agency Response** Please, note that an outcome and output have been added for the M&E component. Furthermore, the budget has been revisited in order to remain within the 5% recommended limit for M&E activities.

### **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** 01/28/2025: Yes.

### **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) 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?

c) 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?

d) 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?

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

f) 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?

g) 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)?

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

i) 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?

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

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

l) Transformation and/or innovation: Is the project going to be transformative or innovative? Does it explain scaling up opportunities?

## **Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request**

01/28/2025: Not fully.

- Please better outline the specific implementation plans in each country. While there are good separate baselines provided for each country, it is not fully clear what activities will be implemented in the pilot countries.

- Please also outline the specific gender related activities in each country with a view to monitoring and sharing lessons learned.

- Please specify in the project documentation that gender-related aspects (and the gender action plans per country) will be included in all reporting - PIRs, MTR, Terminal report. This is key because this project is cutting edge in terms of its integration of a gender perspective into the entire project. It would be important to capture all lessons learned and best practices that can be scaled up or replicated in future projects.

- As this project is transformative/transformational in terms of advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in the project, please clarify if & how FAO/IFAD/WFP's Joint Programme on Gender Transformative Approaches will be used in this project. There was no reference to it.

02/17/2025: The agency is requested to insert a response in the response box below.

02/28/2025: Adequately addressed.

### **Agency Response**

- Thank you for this comment. We have added more specifics on activities to be conducted within countries in Section 2.2 Description of Project Components. Specificities are especially provided under the description of Output 2.1.3 which highlights which tailor-made capacity development programmes will be implemented by the project in each country, while taking note that other programming will be derived as a result of interventions from Component 1.

- Please note that all the activities described under Output 3.1.1 in Section 2.2 will be carried out in each pilot country to support the sharing of lessons learned and support gender monitoring.

- The reference to gender monitoring has now been added throughout the document to emphasize its importance. It is in the Monitoring and Evaluation in Annex G and in the Gender Action Plan in Annex K.2. An indicator has been added in the gender action plan noting: ?Percentage of project reports including gender monitoring? with 100% target, as gender is central to all aspects of this project. It has also been added as an activity under the description of Output 3.1.1. in Section 2.2 . The description of M&E also now includes explicit reference to gender monitoring in Table 2- Project Overview.

- The Theory of Change in Section 2.1 now highlights how the project will be gender transformative. Reference has been added to the FAO/IFAD/WFP's Joint Programme on Gender Transformative Approaches, and how the lessons learnt from the program (closed in December 2024) will be used in this project. Some of the indicators in the Results Framework in Annex C have also been adjusted to capture gender transformational aspects.

### **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.).**

## **Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request**

01/28/2025: Clarification required.

- On agency executing role: The portal template entry indicates "YES". Please clarify if this is a typo, and if so, please amend. There is no indication elsewhere that FAO will have an executing role, nor has this been requested by OFPs or discussed upstream with the PM.

- However, please clarify if FAO as the implementing agency will enter into grant agreements with all 4 national execution partners.

02/17/2025: The agency is requested to insert a response in the response box below.

Apparently, the resubmission still indicates "YES" for a FAO execution role. Again, all four LoEs specify Landesa and TMG as executing agencies. Please clarify.

02/28/2025: Clarification has been provided by the agency below and in a separate call with the PM. Updated documentation justifying and requesting the execution support has been provided. Program Manager approves the proposed implementation / execution arrangements and has filed MGR approval by email separately in the portal.

## **Agency Response**

- FAO has been requested to deliver limited execution support services in South Sudan and Paraguay, and language has been provided in the relevant section. Both country OFPs have been requested to deliver the letters, and the LOEs are being updated in order to secure coherency across the annexures of the project.

FAO also provides limited execution functions at the global level, as detailed in the note to the file and the relevant portal section.

- No, the grant agreements, for reasons developed in the note to the file, cannot be engaged in South Sudan and Paraguay.

### **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)?**  
**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**01/28/2025: Yes.

## **Agency Response**

### **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**01/28/2025: Yes.

**Agency Response**

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 Request**n/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 LDCF/SCCF strategy?

**Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request**01/28/2025: Yes.

**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**01/28/2025: Yes.

**Agency Response**

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**n/a

**Agency Response**

7 D. Policy Requirements

7.1 Are the Policy Requirement sections completed?

**Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request**01/28/2025: Yes.

**Agency Response**

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

**Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request**02/17/2025: Yes, as part of the agency prodoc.

## **Agency Response**

### **7.3 Is the stakeholder engagement plan uploaded?**

**Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request**02/17/2025: Yes, as part of the agency prodoc.

## **Agency Response**

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

**Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request**02/17/2025: Yes, as part of the agency prodoc.

## **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**01/28/2025: Yes.

## **Agency Response**

Focal Area allocation?

**Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request**01/28/2025: Yes.

## **Agency Response**

LDCF under the principle of equitable access?

**Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request**n/a

## **Agency Response**

SCCF A (SIDS)?

**Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request**n/a

**Agency Response**

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

**Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request**n/a

**Agency Response**

Focal Area Set Aside?

**Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request**01/28/2025: Yes.

**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**

01/28/2025: Not fully.

On the status of utilization of PPG: Please itemize the information on the activities implemented per the eligible activities included in Guidelines.

02/17/2025: Please provide a response below that indicates the status of addressing the comment.

02/28/2025: Please clarify: the agency received a PPG amount of \$50,000, however, \$52,700 were budgeted. Please explain the difference or amend accordingly.

03/07/2025: On the status of utilization of PPG: Project staff (FAO financial management/analyst) is not an eligible category as presented in the Guidelines. Please remove this line item (or add to one of the other categories, as appropriate).

03/13/2025: Has been corrected.

Cleared

**Agency Response**

The PPG status table has been amended accordingly.

3/6/25: Apologies for the miscalculation. The PPG usage table has been updated.

13 March 2025: Kindly note that the budget line has been eliminated.

### 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**01/28/2025: Yes.

### 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**

01/28/2025: Yes.

02/28/2028: Please upload and link updated LoEs.

03/07/2025: Addressed.

**Agency Response**3/6/25: The LOEs have been updated, signed, and uploaded for both Paraguay and South Sudan.

#### **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**01/28/2025: Yes.

### 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**01/28/2025: n/a

### 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**01/28/2025: Yes.

### **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?**

**Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request**01/28/2025: Yes.

### **Agency Response**

**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**

01/28/2025: Please confirm whether this is applicable.

02/17/2025: Noted. The global project working in those four countries does not have specific field locations.

02/28/2025: No need to provide FAO HQ location coordinates.

03/07/2025: Addressed.

### **Agency Response**

Not applicable.

3/6/25: We have eliminated the coordinates.

**Annex G: GEF Budget template**

**8.8 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**

01/28/2025: Not fully.

a. Please specify the institution in the ?Responsible Entity? column (i.e. enter the 4 specific government partners separately).

b. \$50,000 is being charged to PMC for unspecified international travel. Unless tied to PMC, International travel is not a valid category to be covered by the Project Management Cost. Additionally, separate the travel items for each component and M&E.

02/17/2025: Please provide a response below to indicate status of addressing the comment.

02/28/2025:

a. Please specify "global partners" for line item "global workshop". If this is ILC, TMG, Landesa, please enter accordingly.

03/07/2025: Addressed.

### **Agency Response**

a. Kindly find the updated budget table.

b. The erroneous categorization has been corrected. See changes made to the budget.

3/6/25: Yes, by global partners, we understand ILC, TMG and Landesa. This has been clarified in the budget table.

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

**8.9 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 Request<sup>n/a</sup>**

### **Agency Response**

#### **Additional Annexes**

#### **9. GEFSEC DECISION**

##### **9.1.GEFSEC Recommendation**

**Is the project recommended for approval**

### **Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request**

01/28/2025: No. Please address comments made in this review.

02/17/2025: No. Please provide responses in the response box.

02/28/2025: Please address remaining comments. Please also upload and link updated LoEs and letter of support for FAO execution. If possible, please remove all yellow highlights in the re-submission.

03/07/2025: No. Please address comment on the status of utilization of PPG and re-submit asap for timely circulation to Council.

03/13/2025: Yes. Program Manager recommends CEO approval.

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

### **Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request**

#### **9.3 Review Dates**

|                                         | <b>CEO Approval</b> | <b>Response to Secretariat comments</b> |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <b>First Review</b>                     | <b>1/28/2025</b>    |                                         |
| <b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b> | <b>2/17/2025</b>    |                                         |
| <b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b> | <b>2/28/2025</b>    |                                         |
| <b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b> | <b>3/7/2025</b>     |                                         |
| <b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b> | <b>3/13/2025</b>    |                                         |