

Integrated Management of Seascapes of the Kazakhstani part of the Caspian Sea and Land Resources of Adjacent Territories

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

11524

Countries

Kazakhstan

Project Name

Integrated Management of Seascapes of the Kazakhstani part of the Caspian Sea and Land Resources of Adjacent Territories

Agencies

UNDP

Date received by PM

7/31/2025

Review completed by PM**Program Manager**

Celine Augereau ep Coisy

Focal Area

Multi Focal Area

Project Type

FSP

**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

11/24/2025

Cleared.

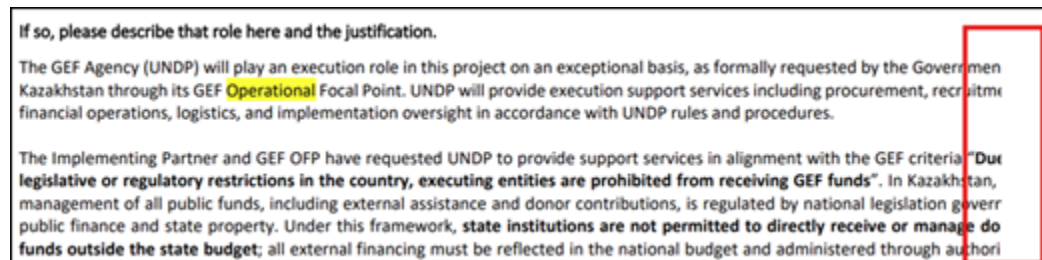
11/18/2025

Not cleared. The document still have the right margin which cuts off a few letters/words across the entire document that complicates easy comprehension. Please correct as requested.

10/14/2025

Not cleared. Please also complete in the General Project Information Table, the Project Executing Type for the Entity UNDP.

Please also ensure that the resubmitted CEO Endorsement is legible and suitable for publication ? currently the right margin cuts off a few letters/words across the entire document that complicates easy comprehension:



08/29/2025

Not cleared. Please correct the executing partner consistently with the content of the document, UNDP requesting for execution role.

Agency Response

Agency Response (11/24/2025)

Thank you for your comment. It is understood that there are cuts off of a few letters/words on the right side across the entire document, which are inserted to the portal. Please kindly note that even they have been narrowed in the word versions and re-uploaded to the system this glitches cannot

be figured out. We have kindly requested help from GEF Portal Help Desk and waiting their guidance.

Agency Response (11/18/2025)

The Executing Partner is the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources (MENR). The Executing Partner Type is therefore the "Government?". The project is now being implemented under a full National Implementation Modality (NIM) on basis of recent Rules, issued by Minister of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, adopted on June 24, 2025. Under the Rules, the implementing agency can now access grants. The Project Information Table is revised accordingly

Thank you for the comment. Resubmitted CEO Endorsement is legible and suitable for publication now.

Agency Response (10/14/2025)

Thank you for the comment. UNDP CO will be providing execution support services to the implementing partner as described in the attached LOA and it has been corrected accordingly in the CEO ER General Project Information table.

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/29/2025

Cleared.

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

08/29 /2025

a) Cleared.

b) Cleared.

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

10/14/2025

c) Cleared.

08/29/2025

a) Cleared.

b) Cleared.

c) Not cleared. Please elaborate on the gender dimensions of Component 3, in particular, how women are targeted as beneficiaries of financial incentives and alternative livelihood activities. Under Component 4, please capture best practices in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment and ensure broad dissemination.

d) Cleared.

e) Cleared.

Agency Response

Agency Response (10/14/2025)

c) The CEO ER was revised to strengthen attention to the gender dimension in improved financing and incentives for nature-positive practices (Component 3), specifically with regards to identifying and implementing Nature-based solutions for ecosystem conservation and restoration (Output 3.2) and support to diversified resilient livelihoods with communities (Output 3.3). Under Component 4, advancing gender equality and women's empowerment is further stressed, specifically as part of the gender-sensitive awareness raising and communication strategy and mainstreaming action plan (Output 4.1) as well as the documentation of specific gender-related lessons (Output 4.2).

Edit in CEO ER: "B Project Description", sub-sections "Component 3" and "Component 4"

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

10/14/2025

a) Cleared.

b) Cleared.

08/29/2025

a) Not cleared. The current situation regarding the global significance biodiversity is not well detailed. This can be provided by describing the situation in each landscapes and site targeted by

the project in regards of the global situation: for example hotspot of BD, KBA, Global 200, Endemic Bird area, endemic plant area...

The project gives an overview of the situation of agriculture, industry, threats and drivers of environmental degradation but does not really explain its impacts on the globally significant biodiversity.

b) Not cleared.

?It is well noted that the project has provided information on consultations during project development and attached a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) outlining different stakeholders? roles related to project components. However, please name specific identified public organizations, farmers' unions, fisheries associations, women's unions and other civil society and local organizations/ associations and detail their different roles and responsibilities related to project components and outputs.

It seems that the Ministry of Industry is not in the project board. Please describe clearly how they will be involved in decision and process, and how the industrial private sector will be involved, in particular the oil and extractive industries. In ToC they are supposed to be involved in conservation planning processes.

Private sector is a stakeholder not a financier.

c) NA

Agency Response

Agency Response (10/14/2025)

a) Information with regards to the global situation of PAs in the project region is added. The three main landscape types are separately distinguished, and their global status stressed (BD hotspot, KBA, Global 200, Endemic Bird area, endemic plant area, Ramsar site).

Edit in CEO ER: "Project Rationale"

The impact of threats from agriculture, industry and environmental degradation on biodiversity is further elaborated.

Edit in CEO ER: "Project Rationale", sub-section " Key threats and drivers of environmental degradation"

b) Names of specific identified public organizations ("Union of Farmers of Kazakhstan - Atyrau", "Atyrau Regional Society of Hunters and Fishermen", "Association of Businesswomen in Atyrau and Mangystau regions", "Environmental NGO ?Eko Mangystau", and "Consolidation of youth of Mangystau") were added in the SEP, their mandate to the project, and role and responsibilities was elaborated.

Edit in CEO ER: Annex "Stakeholder Engagement Plan"

The Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Ministry of Industry and Infrastructure Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan were added to Table 2. Identified stakeholders, role and responsibilities in the SEP, and their mandate relevant to the project, and role and responsibilities were described. Both Ministries were added to the Project Board as Beneficiary Representatives.

Edit in CEO ER: Annex "Stakeholder Engagement Plan", Table 2 "Identified stakeholders, role and responsibilities"; CEO ER " Institutional Arrangement and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Projects" Section

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

11/24/2025

Cleared.

11/18/2025

c)

ii) The correction in the portal is well noted. Please correct also the annex document from CI 5.4 to 5.3

10/14/2025

c)

- Component 1:

i) Cleared.

ii) Not cleared. The core indicators for Marine OECMs supported is CI5.3. Currently the table in the CEO ER document still does not show any areas of Marine OECMs supported in CI 5.3, and the table in the annex document shows 132 526 Ha at CEO ER for **CI 5.4**. Please revise.

Indicator 5.4 Marine OECMs supported		Expected
Name of OECM	WDPA ID	PIF Stage
Aquatic eco-corridors (20% of area) in the Northern Caspian Sea State Nature Zone (WDPA-ID 34651) aimed at preserving the migration routes of Caspian seals and sturgeons (contextually linked to CI-5)		
Sum >>>		-

Cleared for output 1.4.

- Component 2:

Output 2.1: Cleared.

Output 2.2: Cleared.

- Component 3: Cleared

- Component 4: Cleared

f) Cleared

h) Cleared.

i) Cleared.

k) Cleared.

08/29/2025

a) Yes cleared

b) Cleared

c) Not cleared.

- Component 1:

i) Please explain how the extractive private sector, and Ministry of Industry will be involved on the governance and implementing process of planification. Precise, in both regions, if an assessment of the current situation regarding industrial and extraction activities planification is going to be made, and if an assessment of impacts of such activities is planned. Precise if the project is supposed to help implementing new restrictive and controls and regulation policies in terms of extraction activities, concerning respects of sustainable practices.

ii) Please precise if the biodiversity inventory and assessment will lead to planification of marine OECMs as written in the description. Precise if the eco-corridor created is continue from land to sea. Complete the description giving information on how the project will manage ecological consistency between both terrestrial and marine areas, using landscape approach. If marine eco-corridors are created through OECMs status, please complete the core-indicators table consistently.

- Output 1.4: Precise how this output is linked to Component 4 on knowledge management. In particular, how the monitoring framework and results will be used for awareness of private sectors to impacts of their activities on Caspian Sea environment, and will be used for adaptative planification and policies.

- Component 2:

- Output 2.1: Please precise if the project will implement a landscape approach in this assessment and planning, identifying main areas for biodiversity and ecological corridors. In particular, precise if this mapping will identify the ecological disruptions, the local ecological corridors to be preserved, and the restoration needs.

Precise also if this mapping and assessment will give place to cultural knowledge and practices, and how local communities will be involved in.

Output 2.2: Please explain how the local communities will be involved in assessments of degraded land and restoration needs and activities.

- Component 3:

- Please develop on how PES, incentives will be assessed and developed for key industrial sectors, and in intensive agriculture. Elaborate on how evaluation and PES will lead to more sustainable practices and on how the private sector, industry and intensive agriculture in particular will be involved in these reflections and work, how they will be particularly targeted.

- Component 4: Please elaborate on the way the knowledge will help adaptative management and how this could help to obtain results beyond the end of the project.

d) Cleared

e) Cleared.

f) Not cleared. Please, separate in individual lines each expenses for contractual services.

g) To ensure resilience to future changes, the project intend to promote integrated ecosystem-based policies, implementing sustainable landscape management planning and guidelines, developing a multi-partenarial governance, and changing practices on the ground in main activities. It will address drivers of BD degradation by improving knowledge in terms of biodiversity, ecosystems services, ecosystems connectivity, promoting sustainable practices in different economic sectors, and developing innovation en terms of financing.

h) Not cleared. Please elaborate on the role of industrial sector and Ministry of Industry in the project, the way they participate, they are involved in planification, in targets...

i) Not cleared. Please elaborate in the baseline on the role of women in the main sectors and activities targeted by the project. Describe in the rationale the current situation regarding their needs, and how the project will improve the situation.

j) Cleared

k) In Barrier 1: it is identified that policies incoherence and conflicts bring about environmentally aggressive subsidies. But please describe what exactly those negative environmental incentives are.

l) Yes. Cleared.

Agency Response

Agency Response (11/24/2025)

c-ii) Marine OECMs supported has been included under C.I 5.3 in the portal.

The GEF8 core indicator annex was updated (attached) using the revised template; Marine OECMs supported has been included under C.I 5.3.

Agency Response (11/18/2025)

c-ii) Marine OECMs supported has been included under C.I 5.3 in the portal.

Agency Response (10/14/2025)

c)

i) The extractive private sector and Ministry of Industry will be involved on matters relating to plan production via involvement in the Steering Committee and Technical Working Groups (TWGs) that focus on the role of the private sector on all matters linked to Marine and Land Spatial Planning (MLSP). Relevant Ministries and private sector organizations will engage in planning, budgeting and finance of the Conceptual Vision for establishment of governance and institutional processes to implement MSLP in the future, with links to value chains as appropriate, such that the MLSP framework moves from ?planning? to ?implementation? in a streamlined and collaborative manner, with focus on key economic development sectors (Output 1.2), building on detailed baseline assessments undertaken in both regions in Year 1 of the project to better explain the current situation/status regarding industrial and extraction activities (Output 1.1). Targeted Scenario Analysis, EIA and SEA will be undertaken to assess how impacts of a business-as-usual (BAU) scenario in which narrow sectoral, resource extraction-oriented planning in industry, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, energy, transport, water use, etc., compare with a sustainable ecosystem management (SEM) scenario. Detailed participatory stakeholder engagement exercises will formulate recommendations / decisions on whether any new restrictions, controls and/or regulations (incl. policy reform, etc.) are required to support the implementation of sustainable development. An indicative list of private sector entities to be involved in project implementation is annexed to the CEO ER, while relevant Ministries and public organizations are listed in the SEP.

Edit in CEO ER: Annex "private sector entities to be involved in project implementation", Annex "Stakeholder Engagement Plan"

ii) The biodiversity inventory and assessment (Activity 1.3.1) will produce a series of maps that (based on agreed scenario criteria selected by national stakeholders) will present options for using OECMs. The regional biodiversity and ecosystems conservation plan (BECF; Activity 1.3.2) will present an area-based regional conservation plan for the Zhaiyk Caspian basin - terrestrial, coastal and marine ecosystems, also providing strategic guidance for expanding the PA network, establishing terrestrial and marine eco-corridors, and strengthening ecosystem interconnectivity of PAs, eco-corridors and other OECMs at the landscape level. No alteration can be made at this juncture of the project's design. The "GEF8 Core indicators at baseline" table was revised.

Edit in CEO ER: Section B "Project Description", Activity 1.3.1, annex "GEF8 Core indicators at baseline"

Output 1.4) The text is improved to demonstrate how this output is linked to Component 4 on knowledge management. In Activity 1.4.3 text is added to show how the monitoring framework and results will be used for awareness raising of private sectors on impacts of their activities on Caspian Sea environment, and will be used for adaptive planning and policies.

Edit in CEO ER: Section B "Project Description", Output 1.4

Output 2.1) baseline mapping under Component 2 will apply a landscape approach to map environmental, biological, social and economic features in pilot coastal oblasts of the Zhaiyk Caspian basin in Kazakhstan. As such, the mapping will pay due attention to ecological disruptions, the local ecological corridors to be preserved, and the restoration needs in support of natural ecosystems and biodiversity. The work specifically builds on and expands the results of the baseline inventory and mapping of the marine and terrestrial ecological and biodiversity network (Activity 1.3.1)

Edit in CEO ER: Section B "Project Description", Activity 2.1.1

Output 2.1) The mapping and assessment (Activity 2.1.1) will be supported by stakeholder consultations with local public authorities, the science community, public community groups and communities (consulted and involved across a series of activities under Output 2.2 as well), by means of open and active dialogue across multiple stakeholder groups (including women, youth and disadvantaged groups) to give place to cultural knowledge and practices.

Edit in CEO ER: Section B, Activity 2.1.1, Activity 2.2.1, 2.2.2

Component 3) The Project approach to assess and develop PES schemes is better elaborated in the CEO ER as well as in the relevant annex "Financial Opportunities for Promoting Nature-Based Solutions (NbS) in Atyrau and Mangistau Regions of Kazakhstan" attached to the CEO ER.

Edit in CEO ER: Outcome 3: Improved financing and incentives for nature-positive practices in the Caspian Sea and adjacent territories.

Component 4) text is added as to how learning and knowledge sharing by the project supports adaptive management.

Edit in CEO ER: Knowledge management, awareness raising and gender mainstreaming

f) In the GEF Budget table, all services are reflected as individual lines, and their specific budget was added.

Edit in CEO ER: CEO ER, Annex G "Budget Table"

g) The clarification provided with regards to the question on how the project design will ensure resilience to future changes is confirmed.

Edit in CEO ER: n/a

h) The role of the Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Ministry of Industry and Infrastructure Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan were elaborated in "Table 2. Identified stakeholders, role and responsibilities" in the SEP, and their mandate relevant to the project, and role and responsibilities were described.

Edit in CEO ER: Annex "Stakeholder Engagement Plan", Table 2 "Identified stakeholders, role and responsibilities"

i) Clarification was added describing the status and role of women in the main sectors of relevance to the project. More details are elaborated in the annexed Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan.

Edit in CEO ER: "A Project rationale" and "B Project description", section "project approach", and annex "Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan"

i) Project investments in addressing needs and strengthening engagement of women in project activities are better described. More details are also presented in the annexed Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan.

Edit in CEO ER: "A Project rationale" and "B Project description", section "project approach", and annex " Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan"

k) There is a discrepancy with regards to the word "subsidies" and "incentives". The only type of fossil fuel which is subsidized in Kazakhstan is coal, the mining of which takes place far from the Project area, in the North of Kazakhstan. Coal is used in heating systems and for producing electricity in the North zone of Kazakhstan. The West of Kazakhstan does not use any coal, because there is plenty of natural gas. The high-voltage power line connection between the North and the West of Kazakhstan is of low capacity, and the West is not consuming electricity from the North; instead, both regions export electricity to the South of Kazakhstan. With that in mind, no fossil fuel subsidies are relevant to the West, and the oil and gas extracted there are not subsidized - on the contrary, they are heavily taxed. The wording " environmentally aggressive subsidies" was deleted, and the text was revised to allay any uncertainties on this matter.

Edit in CEO ER: "Project Rationale", sub-section "Barrier 1: Disintegrated and uncoordinated land use planning"

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

11/18/2025

a) Cleared.

10/14/2025

a) Not cleared. The diagram of flows has been provided, but please, clarify why funds are targeted directly from UNDP CO to Responsible Party KRICS and IAC while the Implementing agency is supposed to be the MENR.

b) Cleared.

c) Cleared.

08/29/2025

a) Not cleared. Please, complete with a funds flow organigram.

b) The agency requests to play execution role. Due to legislative or regulatory restrictions in the country, executing entities are prohibited from receiving GEF funds. They say they provide a letter from OFP requesting exceptional execution support mainly related to procurement, recruitment, and financial management. Annex 31 is supposed to be a letter of agreement, but currently it is a draft with no signature. The document called "Others Annex 02 - GEF execution support letter" is a letter of support for UNDP to carry out the dual implementation / execution role. It must be signed by the Operational Focal Point ? not by the Political Focal Point. Please provide a new letter signed by the Operational Focal Point. In addition, please remove any references in the CEO

Endorsement request and the ProDoc to this dual role request coming from the Political Focal Point.

The letter of support must include a clear description of the specific executing tasks to be assumed by the Agency. The current letter of support references "Engagement of responsible parties in accordance with UNDP rules and regulations"? it is not clear what such "engagement" entails or how the OFP and national entities would maintain national ownership of the project. Please, revise the LoS to ensure all execution tasks are clearly described, as they are in the other bullet points of the current LoS.

Please explain in your resubmission, how the executing role your agency will propose to assume will be "limited" to cover only the executing activities that the national EA is prohibited from conducting (e.g., if national law prohibits government bodies from receiving GEF funds, can the Agency perform direct payments and allow the IP/EA to execute all other activities?). Any dual role should also be time-limited as per Council guidance. Please, revise the section accordingly.

Please ensure internal consistency of the document with respect to the rationale for seeking dual role authorization. The document refers to both legal restrictions on potential EAs as well as limited capacity of EAs. However, the attached capacity assessments do not reflect a claim of limited capacity. Your agency must also provide the legal or regulatory documents that demonstrate legal restrictions are in place on the EA.

For Execution Support, each request for an exception to GEF policy to allow execution support, including the request from the respective government(s), is assessed objectively on a case-by-case basis. Any execution support provided by the Agency must be limited and cover only specific, defined services that cannot be executed by the national partner due to capacity or regulatory limitations, e.g. financial transfers, procurement support, etc. The costs to provide such services must be: i) limited, ii) clearly indicated in the project document and budget, and iii) implementation and supervision thereof is covered by the Agency Fee. Project documentation should make clear that the national executing entity remains the accountable party for execution activities under any arrangements with the Agency.

- i) The cost represents 250 000 USD for the full duration of the project.
- ii) The description is provided in Annex 31.
- iii) The cost will be fully covered by non-GEF resources.
- c) No cleared. Please complete the project document by giving list of current or previous project in the same areas that this project could build upon.

Agency Response

Agency Response (11/18/2025)

- a) The diagram of fund flows is revised to reflect that the project is now being implemented under a full National Implementation modality (with no UNDP CO support).

Agency Response (10/14/2025)

a - organigram) an organigram was added in section "Institutional Arrangement and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Project". Since Government cannot receive the fund directly, UNDP will be distributing it with implementing partner and responsible parties.

Edit in CEO ER: section "Institutional Arrangement and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Project"

b - execution role) A new Letter of Support signed by the GEF Operational Focal Point of Kazakhstan, Ms. Saule Sabiyeva, has been attached to the CEO ER. This replaces the earlier one and addresses the Secretariat's request to ensure the letter is signed by the proper authority.

Edit in CEO ER: Annex "Letter of Support (Updated)"

b) - Letter of Agreement) In accordance with UNDP's internal procedures, the Letter of Agreement (LoA) is presented in draft form at the CEO Endorsement stage. This ensures that the LoA fully reflects the final project design, budget, and execution support arrangements approved by the GEF Council. Once the project is endorsed by the GEF CEO, the LoA will be formally signed by UNDP and the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Kazakhstan. This sequencing is standard practice in UNDP-GEF projects: the draft LoA is annexed to the CEO ER for transparency, while the formal signed version is executed immediately after project approval. This avoids multiple revisions of the LoA prior to endorsement and ensures internal consistency across project documents.

Edit in CEO ER: Annex "Draft LOA"

b - Political Focal Point) Reference to the Political Focal Point was replaced by "Operational Focal Point" in the CEO ER.

Edit in CEO ER: CEO ER section " Institutional Arrangement and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Project"

b - dual role) We have revised the CEO ER and ProDoc to ensure consistency with Council guidance. All references to the Political Focal Point have been removed. The request for UNDP execution support is now reflected solely as coming from the GEF Operational Focal Point. The rationale for the dual role is based exclusively on legislative and regulatory restrictions preventing national entities from directly receiving GEF funds. References to capacity limitations have been deleted. The LoS and ProDoc explicitly describe the execution support services (procurement, recruitment, financial management, logistics), and clarify that MENR remains accountable as the Executing Partner

?Due to legislative or regulatory restrictions in the country, executing entities are prohibited from receiving GEF funds?

In Kazakhstan, the management of all public funds, including external assistance and donor contributions, is regulated by national legislation governing public finance and state property. Under this framework, **state institutions are not permitted to directly receive or manage donor funds outside the state budget**; all external financing must be reflected in the national budget and administered through authorized government or international implementing entities.

The **Budget Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan** establishes the principles of unity, completeness, and transparency of the budget system (**Article 13**), requires that execution of the republican and local budgets be carried out only by authorized state bodies (**Article 44**), and stipulates that external loans and grants received by the Republic must be included in the republican budget and executed in accordance with national legislation (**Article 45**).

The **Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan ?On State Property? (No. 413-IV of 1 March 2011)** confirms that state bodies and state legal entities operate under the framework of state property management, which does not authorize the direct holding or management of externally sourced funds (**Article 5**).

In addition, **Government Resolution No. 802 of 11 July 2011 ?On Approval of the Rules for Procurement of Goods, Works and Services by State Institutions?** establishes that all procurement by state institutions, including those financed by external sources, must follow the national procurement rules, thereby preventing the direct management of donor funds by executing entities outside the Treasury system.

Taken together, these provisions mean that **Kazakhstani state institutions (?executing entities?) cannot directly receive or manage donor funds**, such as those from the **Global Environment Facility (GEF)**. All external assistance must be channeled through the **republican or local budgets** and implemented either:

- through the **Ministry of National Economy, Ministry of Finance, or other authorized state bodies**, or
- through **international organizations (e.g., UNDP)** acting as the implementing agency on behalf of the Government.

Edit in CEO ER: CEO ER section " Institutional Arrangement and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Project"

b - specific executing tasks / role / support) The Letter of Support to Request GEF Agency Execution was revised to clearly describe the specific executing tasks to be assumed by the UNDP (procurement, recruitment, financial management, logistics); the vague reference to ?engagement of responsible parties? was removed. The revised LoS and project documents now explicitly confirm that MENR remains the accountable Executing Partner for all project execution activities, with UNDP providing only limited support services. The request for execution support has been prepared in line with Council guidance: (i) The Letter of Support signed by the GEF Operational Focal Point confirms the Government?s request on an exceptional, case-by-case basis; (ii) The execution support role of UNDP is strictly limited to defined services (procurement, recruitment, financial management, logistics), while the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources remains the accountable Executing Partner; (iii) The cost of these services (USD 250,000) is clearly indicated in the project budget and detailed in Annex 31 (draft LoA); and (iv) These costs are fully covered by non-GEF resources.

Edit in CEO ER: Annex "Letter of Support (Updated)"

b) The Letter of Support was revised to clearly describe the specific executing tasks to be assumed by the UNDP (procurement, recruitment, financial management, logistics); the vague reference to ?engagement of responsible parties? was removed.

Edit in CEO ER: Annex "Letter of Support (Updated)"

i -250 000 USD) The cost of execution support is USD 250,000 for the full project duration; this represents about 3.5% of the project budget

Edit in CEO ER: n/a

ii - description in Annex 31): A clear description of the execution support services is provided both in the Letter of Support (summarizing the specific tasks) and in Annex 31 (draft LoA) (detailing the scope, processes, and associated costs).

Edit in CEO ER: n/a

iii - cost fully covered by non-GEF resources): Correct, the cost is fully covered by non-GEF resources and does not affect the GEF grant. The relevant cost is stated in the TWBP and ProDoc as being provided by UNDP TRAC fund.

Edit in CEO ER: n/a

c) The list of current or previous projects in the same areas that this project could build upon is presented in Table 1 of the CEO ER document.

Edit in CEO ER: "Project Rationale", sub-section "Baseline Scenario and Preferred Approach"

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

11/24/2025

Cleared.

11/18/2025

- a) For CI 4: Cleared. Please address the comment for CI 5.3 and update between the portal and the annex (no CI 5.4 but CI 5.3).

10/14/2025

- a) Not cleared. Correction needed.

- CI 4:

Please update the CEO ER and be consistent with the annex.

Currently under CI 4.1 target is 0 at CEO ER while it should be 1 500 000 ha

Under Indicator 4 we should have 610 000 at PIF and 1 525 000 Ha while currently we have :

Indicator 4 Area of landscapes under improved pra

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)
610000.00	25500.00

Indicator 4.1 Area of landscapes under improved n qualitative assessment, non-certified) ⓘ

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)
604,000.00	0.00

- CI 5: Not cleared. Please correct indicators table. Currently there is nothing for CI 5.3.

Indicator 5.3 Marine OECMs supported ⓘ

Name of the OECMs	WDPA-ID	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
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In the annex we have this: Please revise to be consistent in the text and the table in CEO ER and in the Annex.

Indicator 5.4 Marine OECMs supported		Expected (	
Name of OECM	WDPA ID	PIF Stage	
Aquatic eco-corridors (20% of area) in the Northern Caspian Sea State Nature Zone (WDPA-ID 34651) aimed at preserving the migration routes of Caspian seals and sturgeons (contextually linked to CI-5)			
Sum >>>		-	

08/29/2025

a)

- CI 1: Please precise WDPA-ID for Zhaiyk River Floodplain State Nature Reserve, Kyzylsai State Regional Nature Park, Stepping stone' PAs along the terrestrial eco-corridor.

- CI 2: Please complete the different tables with the WDPA-ID for each PA.

- CI 3: Please complete targets at CEO ER in the different tables consistently (CI 3.1, 3.3, 3.4).

- CI 4: the target has considerably decreased between PIF and CEO ER. Please explain

Justify that there is no more target for sub CI 4.1 The sub-indicator 4.5 (OECMs) is contextual and needs to be also reported in another sub-indicator in CI 4 to be actually counted in the portal. For the OECMs targeted, please precise the WDPA-ID.

- CI 5: Please complete the contextual sub-indicators consistently, especially if OECMs are created.

b) Cleared.

Agency Response

Agency Response (11/24/2025)

a) C.I 4.1 has been updated in the portal, along with inclusion of marine OECMs created to C.I 5.3 in the portal.

The GEF8 core indicator annex (attached) was updated using the revised template; Marine OECMs supported has been included under C.I 5.3.

Agency Response (11/18/2025)

a) C.I 4.1 has been updated in the portal, along with inclusion of marine OECMs created to C.I 5.3 in the portal.

Agency Response (10/14/2025)

a)

CI 1) The Zhaiyk River Floodplain State Nature Reserve is not yet established and as such does not have a WDPA-ID; the Kyzylsai State Regional Nature Park and the 'Stepping stone' PAs along the terrestrial eco-corridor are PAs managed by the Akimat at the local level, for which the data have not yet been updated in the global database. During implementation, the Project will support the Akimat and other relevant organization to register the established PAs in the WDPA. Notes were included in the updated annex "GEF8 Core Indicators at Baseline".

Edit in CEO ER: n/a

CI 2) Annex "GEF8 Core indicators at baseline" and Annex C "Project Results Framework" were updated with WDPA-IDs as available. WDPA-IDs are also added in the text, including Activity 1.3.3 "Support to establishing new and expanding existing area-based conservation initiatives" and the "Explanatory Notes" in the "Core indicators" section.

Edit in CEO ER: Annex "GEF8 Core indicators at baseline", Annex C "Project Results Framework", Activity 1.3.3, "Explanatory Notes"

CI 3) As described in the "Explanatory Notes" in the "Core indicators" section, and under "Activity 2.2.3 "Technical and financial support for location-appropriate demonstration projects for SLM and IWRM", the project will provide integrated planning and support for the restoration of 201,000 hectares of degraded rangeland and pasture in the Shetpinsky district (36,000 ha) and Seneksky district (40,000 ha) in the Mangistau oblast, and in the Akkystau rural district (125,000 ha) in the Atyrau oblast (CI 3.1). These figures are consistently presented across the CEO ER, including the summary value in Project Description Overview, Table 2: Key Changes from PIF, Table 4: Incremental Cost Reasoning, section "Global Environmental Benefits", "Output 2.2: Piloting SLM in the pilot districts", Table 5: Project Core Indicators and Indicators and explanatory notes, Table 8: Contribution to key Global Programs, and the newly created indicator for CI 3 in the Project Results Framework. The project will not cover activities to restore natural grass and woodlands (CI 3.3) or restore wetlands (including estuaries and mangroves; CI 3.4).

Edit in CEO ER: "Explanatory Notes" in the "Core indicators" section, and under "Activity 2.2.3, Annex "GEF8 Core indicators at baseline"

CI 4) The Annex "GEF8 Core Indicators at Baseline" shows that CI 4 increased from the PIF to CEO Endorsement, from 610,000 hectares to 1,525,000 hectares. Within CI-4, following consultations with local authorities at oblast and rural district levels, as well as communities in Mangystau and Atyrau oblasts, the focus of the Project was somewhat shifted, from planning-oriented activities (CI-4.1) to demonstrating practical solutions for SLM, including pasture rotation, water retention, and agroforestry reclamation (CI-4.3), as well as the formal establishment of an eco-corridor for improved land and natural resources management (CI-4.5). As sub-indicator CI-4.5 is contextual, its value is also reported under sub-indicator CI-4.1 (double counting is avoided).

Edit in CEO ER: Annex "GEF8 Core indicators at baseline"

Sub-indicator 4.5: The contextual area of the OECM is also reported under sub-indicator 4.1 "Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity" (double counting is avoided).

Edit in CEO ER: Annex "GEF8 Core indicators at baseline", Activity 1.3.3

OECMs: In Kazakhstan, OECMs are not officially established or registered in Kazakhstan yet, and as such have not been assigned a WDPA-ID. As soon as an OECM is formally established, the project will register the OECM in the WDPA and report the assigned WDPA-ID in the next report.

Edit in CEO ER: CEO ER document, where relevant

CI 5) The OECM to be created within the boundaries of the Northern Caspian Sea State Nature Zone (WDPA-ID 34651) is contextually listed under CI-5. The OECM will be specified as part of the MPA's core zones to be identified (Activity 1.3.3).

Edit in CEO ER: Annex "GEF8 Core indicators at baseline", Activity 1.3.3

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

11/24/2025

Cleared.

11/18/2025

c) Not cleared. Please provide description of the mitigation measures.

10/14/2025

c) Not cleared: Please update the text consistently and provide a consistent explanation of risk and mitigation measures.

Overall Risk Rating	Substantial	Assessment: The overall risk is rated as 'Moderate' that can negate and/or delay project implementation. Mitigation Measures: Overall project design assessed needs for improved capacity, coordination and collective decision-making for the project. The above rated risks are not expected to undermine the viability of the project.
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08/29/2025

a) Cleared.

b) Cleared.

c) Not cleared. The overall risk is rated Moderate in the table but High or substantial in the section D- Overall Project/Program Risk Classification classification and in Annex 8. Please correct consistently.

Agency Response

Agency Response (11/24/2025)

c) The portal and GEFCEO ER have been updated to ensure consistency.

Description of summarized mitigation measures were in the previously submitted documents, but we have further strengthened mitigation measures in relation to the "Overall Risk Rating"

Agency Response (11/18/2025)

c) The portal and GEFCEO ER have been updated to ensure consistency.

Agency Response (10/14/2025)

c) "Table 6: Risks to Project Implementation" is corrected to reflect the "substantial" risk categorization in section D and in Annex 8.

Edit in CEO ER: CEO ER Table 6 "Risks to Project Implementation"

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

NA

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

08/29/2025

a) 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

08/29/2025

Yes cleared.

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

08/29/2025

Cleared.

Agency Response

7 D. Policy Requirements

7.1 Are the Policy Requirement sections completed?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/14/2025

Cleared.

08/29/2025

Please complete the role played by civil society in the section "other".

Agency Response

Agency Response (10/14/2025)

Text has been added that elaborates on the role civil society plays in the project, being beneficiaries for project activities on-the-ground, participants in spatial planning exercises, as well as being direct participants in the planning and implementation of project activities.

Edit in CEO ER: CEO ER section "D. Policy Requirements", section "Select what role civil society will play in the project "

7.2 Is the Gender Action Plan uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/29/2025

Yes.

Agency Response

7.3 Is the stakeholder engagement plan uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/29/2025

Yes

Agency Response

7.4 Have the required applicable safeguards documents been uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/29/2025

Yes.

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

08/29/2025

Cleared

Agency Response

Focal Area allocation?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

08/29/2025

Cleared

Agency Response

LDCF under the principle of equitable access?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request08/29/2025

Agency Response

SCCF A (SIDS)?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request08/29/2025

Agency Response

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request08/29/2025

Agency Response

Focal Area Set Aside?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request08/29/2025

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

10/14/2025

a) Cleared.

08/29/2025

a) Not cleared.

Please provide more details on two PPG costs; as currently written the uses described as ?Formulation of the UNDP-GEF Project Document, CEO Endorsement Request, and mandatory and project specific annexes? and ?Preparatory technical studies & reviews? appear to be ineligible.

Agency should refer to the GEF [Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy](#) (see p.10-11 for PPG eligible costs; see p. 50-53 for Agency fee eligible costs). The GEF requires that proceeds from the Agency fee are used to cover preliminary project tasks like preparation of project concept and preparation of the detailed Project Document. Please revise the table with the eligible costs in mind, as per GEF guidelines.

The Validation workshop amounts don't match: budgeted for 35,525 with 1,948 spent so far and only 23,652 committed. The Agency should check the totals for any errors and revise or confirm that the uncommitted and unspent amount of \$9,725 will be returned to the trustee.

Agency Response

Agency Response (10/14/2025)

PPG costs) The table in Annex D "Status of Utilization of Project Preparation Grant" was revised.

Edit in CEO ER: Annex D "Status of Utilization of Project Preparation Grant"

PPG eligible costs) The table in Annex D "Status of Utilization of Project Preparation Grant" was revised.

Edit in CEO ER: Annex D "Status of Utilization of Project Preparation Grant"

Validation workshop) Annex D: Status of utilization of project preparation grant" was completely revised as per the GEF Sec comment. We confirmed that unspent amount will be returned to the trustee.

Edit in CEO ER: Annex D: Status of utilization of project preparation grant"

Project preparation activities implemented	GEF Amount US\$			
	Budgeted amount	Amount spent to date	Commitment	Balance
International consultants International project development specialist; International Land Degradation, LDN, and Drylands Management Specialist; International Integrated Marine and Land Spatial Planning Specialist; International Nature Finance Expert	106,000.00	50,225.00	54,225.00	1,550.00
Local consultants Lead National Expert for PPG coordination, outreach and stakeholder engagement; National Nature Finance Expert; National GIS Specialist; National Hydrologic Specialist; National Social and Environmental Standards Specialist; National Sustainable Livestock and Pasture Management Specialist; National Expert on Nature-based Tourism and Sustainable Livelihoods; National Economist; National Marine and Land Use Spatial Planning Specialist; National Water Management Specialist; National Gender and Safeguard Specialist	61,250.00	63,616.90	0.00	-2,366.90
Training Inception meeting, online validation workshop, translation during the meeting	12,875.00	2,953.06	0	9,921.94
Travel	12,875.00	14,851.38	911.31	-2,887.69

National/International travels related to inception mission and meeting with the stakeholders				
Supplies	1,000.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00
Translate Translation costs related to the online Validation workshop, ProDoc Translation	5,000.00	645.78	5,918.00	-1,563.78
Miscellaneous Bank charge	1,000.00	0.00	26.35	973.65
Total	200,000.00	132,292.12	61,080.66	6,627.22

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

10/14/2025

Cleared.

08/29/2025

No, please correct.

Agency Response

Agency Response (10/14/2025)

Tables "Focal/Non-Focal Area Elements and Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds?" are corrected as per figures in the LOE.

Edit in CEO ER: Annex A "Financing Tables", tables "Focal/Non-Focal Area Elements and Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds?"

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

11/24/2025

Cleared.

11/15/2025

Not cleared.

10/15/2025

Not cleared. Please provide a co-financing letter with amount in USD for Akimat of Atyrau region.

08/29/2025

Not cleared.

- Please correct correct co-financing letter providing amount in USD for Akimat of Atyrau region.

Agency Response

Agency Response (11/18/2025)

Confirmation email has been received from Akimat of Atyrau Region declaring the co-financing amount in USD.

Agency Response (10/14/2025)

In national co-financing letters, the budget is planned and allocated in national currency (KZT). The dollar equivalent (USD) is determined at the UNORE rate (508.24) on the date of receipt of the letters, being:

2025: KZT 49,642,349,000 US\$ 97,675,014

2026: KZT 30,348,367,000 US\$ 59,712,669

2027: KZT 10,243,613,000 US\$ 20,155,070

Total: US\$ 177,542,753

Edit in CEO ER: n/a

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 RequestNA

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

08/29/2025

Yes.

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

10/15/2025

Cleared.

08/29/2025

Not cleared. See comment above.

Agency Response

Agency Response (10/14/2025)

c) In national co-financing letters, the budget is planned and allocated in national currency (KZT). The dollar equivalent (USD) is determined at the UNORE rate (508.24) on the date of receiving of the letters, being:

2025: KZT 49,642,349,000 US\$ 97,675,014

2026: KZT 30,348,367,000 US\$ 59,712,669

2027: KZT 10,243,613,000 US\$ 20,155,070

Total: US\$ 177,542,753

Edit in CEO ER: n/a

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

10/15/2025

a) Cleared.

c) Cleared.

08/29/2025

a) Not cleared.

- Please insert Core indicator 3 in the table, in the dedicated outcome.

- Complete CI 4 consistently with comment above in previous paragraph (OECMs).

- Complete for CI 5 consistently with comment above in previous paragraph on indicators.

b) Yes cleared.

c) No. Please complete relevant indicators disaggregating men and women.

d) Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

Agency Response (10/14/2025)

a)

CI 3) The GEF CI 3 "Area of land and ecosystems under restoration" is inserted in the PRF under Component 2

Edit in CEO ER: CEO ER Annex C: "Project Results Framework", new indicator 11

CI-4) CI-4 was updated in the Annex "GEF8 Core indicators at baseline". No changes apply to Annex C "Project Results Framework".

Edit in CEO ER: Annex "GEF8 Core indicators at baseline"

CI 5) CI-5 was updated in the Annex "GEF8 Core indicators at baseline". In the PRF, CI-5 "Area of marine habitat under improved practices to benefit biodiversity" is inserted.

Edit in CEO ER: CEO ER Annex C: "Project Results Framework", new indicator 8

c) In the PRF, indicator statements were revised to stress the need for sex-disaggregated data collection and reporting.

Edit in CEO ER: CEO ER Annex C: "Project Results Framework", indicators 13, 15, 17.

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

08/29/2025

Cleared.

Agency Response

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

12/1/2025

Not cleared. Please add all the necessary annexes to the Prodoc and re-upload the new version of the Prodoc. Currently some annexes such as the Gender action plan, the GEF 8 indicator at baseline, Procurement plan, Taxonomy, EX-ACT carbon calculations, co-financing letters, project area, Response to STAP, communication and Knowledge management strategy are still in separate documents. Only 2 documents will be selected for circulation, Prodoc and CEO ER.

11/24/2025

Not cleared. The latest ProDoc file uploaded (?UNDP-GEF PIMS 9727 Kazakhstan ProDoc REV 211125 clean? as of 11/24/2025 11:07 AM) does not contain any Annexes. It has a list of the Annexes and their titles, but the annexes themselves are uploaded separately from the ProDoc. The comment was to insert the content of the TORs of Annex 7 ? and all other necessary Annexes ? directly into the ProDoc itself, and not have only a reference to the Annexes. As you approve an internal ProDoc in order to implement GEF projects, GEF Secretariat requires that core annexes are included into the ProDoc. Please include all the Annexes in the Prodoc and re-upload the ProDoc.

11/18/2025

b) and c) Not cleared. There is still a small difference between the table in Annex G and the Project Description Overview table for GEF financing : 3 853 827 USD vs 3 853 826 USD. Please correct.

Annual Budget Services			
Grand Total		3,853,827	1,846,093

Project Components	Type	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Fund	Financing(\$)
Component 1: Strategic policy and planning to promote ecological integrity of the Caspian Sea landscapes and seascapes	Technical Assistance	Outcome 1: Ecological integrity of the Caspian Sea promoted for biodiversity conservation and	Output 1.1: Improve the policy instruments, technical guidelines and institutional arrangements for	GET	3,853,826.00

c) Not cleared. Please include the TORs annex in the Prodoc (and also all the other annexes).

10/15/2025

a) Cleared.

b) There is a minor (\$1) discrepancy between the Component 1 and 2 subtotals in the Annex G Budget Table vs. the Project Description Overview table. This is likely due to simple rounding but please correct upon resubmission.

Grand Total		3,853,827	1,846,094	694,613	402,992	6,797,525	135,250	337,225	7,270,000	
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Component 1: Strategic policy and planning to promote ecological integrity of the Caspian Sea landscapes and seascapes	Technical Assistance	Outcome 1: Ecological integrity of the Caspian Sea promoted for biodiversity conservation and	Output 1.1: Improve the policy instruments, technical guidelines and institutional arrangements for	GET	3,853,826.00	48,299,795.00
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Component 2: Sustainable management of land and water resources in the Caspian lowlands and western region of Kazakhstan	Investment	Outcome 2: Improved resilience/productivity of agricultural landscapes, habitat connectivity and	Output 2.1: Territorial planning in the pilot districts to reduce anthropogenic pressures and	GET	1,846,093.00	23,136,977.00
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c) Not cleared. Please include the TORs annex in the Prodoc (and also all the other annexes).

08/29/2025

a) Not cleared.

Prior to resubmitting the CEO Endorsement request, please revise the budget table ?Responsible Parties? column so that the EA is appropriately listed in budget lines for which it will bear responsibility, according to the updated Letter of Support and approval by GEF Manager for the dual role exception.

b) Not cleared.

- The initial entries for "Contractual Services ? Individual" on page 2 of the budget table include multiple roles per line. Please break out individual roles into their own budget lines with their respective costs.

- The budget table includes one Project Manager and a ?Principle [sic] Technical Coordinator? responsible for Outcomes 1-3. It is typically not advised to add multiple layers of management inside the PMU from a value-for-money perspective. Therefore, please ask the Agency to merge the positions Project Manager with Principal Technical Coordinator in one for this position to carry out managerial and technical responsibilities, also indicating where the unused funds will be allocated.

- The TORs are included in a separate file from the ProDoc. Please ask the Agency to include not only this, but other relevant annexes into the ProDoc, and update the TORs according to the changes requested above.

- Equipment/Vehicle (\$402,582) ? Please clarify the use of this budget line as the description does not explain what kind of equipment or vehicle is under consideration. Please note that the GEF strongly discourages the use of GEF funds to purchase vehicles. Any request to use GEF funding to purchase project vehicles must be justified by the exceptional specific circumstances of the project, as typically such costs are recovered in the cofinancing portion.

- You have included M&E costs as additional components, rather than as the standalone M&E component. Please revise to include M&E costs in the dedicated space (same applies to the Project Description Overview Table ? see screenshot below).

Component 5: Monitoring and evaluation	Technical Assistance	Outcome 5: Enhanced monitoring for adaptive management. This will be measured by: (i) Evaluations conducted e)	Output 5.1: M&E system supports project impact assessment including gender and youth mainstreaming	GET	135,250.00	1,695,081.00
Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) ⓘ						
				Sub Total (\$)	6,932,774.00	86,888,079.00
Project Management Cost (PMC) ⓘ						
				GET	337,226.00	4,226,437.00
				Sub Total(\$)	337,226.00	4,226,437.00
				Total Project Cost(\$)	7,270,000.00	91,114,516.00

When the project will be resubmitted we will review the budget table and provide comments as appropriate.

c) Cleared.

Agency Response

Agency Response (12/03/2025)

c) Thank you for your comment, all necessary annexes have been incorporated into the ProDoc. Additionally, links have been provided for each annex which wasn't inserted to the ProDoc and EX ACT and Core Indicators which are excel format and inserted as jpeg format to the ProDoc.

Agency Response (12/02/2025)

c) Other requested annexes also have been added to ProDoc. Please kindly not that multiple sheet-files like EX ACT or Core Indicators excel sheet cannot be inserted to the annex section of ProDoc. Screenshot is the only way done in the document and we apologize for the fact that they can't be read very well.

Agency Response (12/01/2025)

c) Thank you for your comment. Core annexes have been included in the ProDoc and others were uploaded to the portal during the first submission and re-submissions.

Agency Response (11/24/2025)

b) Thank you for your comment. Amounts have been recalculated and understood that it is a typo mistake and corrected.

c) ?Annex 7. Indicative Terms of References for project staff, consultants and consultancy services? in the Annexes section of the ProDoc is referring to the TORs annex and all annexes are included in that section. Please kindly let us know if you have further comment.

Agency Response (11/18/2025)

a) Numbers have been adjusted in the GEF budget table.

c) The correction has been made, and the TORs Annex is included.

Agency Response (10/14/2025)

a) RPs were added to the budget as per the description in the Prodoc. The Information Analytical Center (IAC) under the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation (MoWRI) will serve as the RP for project activities related to integrated water resource management, digitalization of water-related data, and support to spatial planning and decision-support systems (Outputs 1.1 and 1.2). The Kazakh Research Institute of the Caspian Sea (KRICS) will be engaged as the RP for activities related to environmental monitoring, biodiversity assessments, and support to conservation planning and ecosystem health tracking (Outputs 1.3 and 1.4).

Since Government cannot receive the fund directly, UNDP will be distributing it with implementing partner and responsible parties.

Edit in CEO ER: CEO ER Annex G "Budget Table"

Entries for "Contractual Services ? Individual") In the GEF Budget table, all services are reflected as individual lines, and their specific budget was added.

Edit in CEO ER: **Edit in CEO ER:** CEO ER Annex G "Budget Table"

PM) Corrected in CEO ER

Edit in CEO ER: CEO ER Annex G "Budget Table"

TORs) All relevant annexes are attached to the revised CEO ER, including annexes changed

Edit in CEO ER: Package of annexes attached

Equipment/Vehicle) Purchasing of equipment for GEF investments in Sustainable Land Management (SLM)/Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) demonstration projects on landscape planning, pasture management, fish and water resources (solar panels, desalinators, fish cages and incubators, equipment for nurseries and greenhouses). No vehicles will be purchased.

Edit in CEO ER: n/a

Thank you for the comment. This has been corrected. Please kindly note that total M&E amount is USD 135,250.

Edit in CEO ER: Project Description Summary section

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

Agency Response
Additional Annexes
9. GEFSEC DECISION

9.1.GEFSEC Recommendation
Is the project recommended for approval

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/03/2025

Cleared. The project is now recommended for approval.

11/24/2025

The project is not yet ready. Please address the comment related to the Annexes to include in the Prodoc. The latest ProDoc file uploaded (?UNDP-GEF PIMS 9727 Kazakhstan ProDoc REV 211125 clean? as of 11/24/2025 11:07 AM) does not contain any Annexes. It has a list of the Annexes and their titles, but the annexes themselves are uploaded separately from the ProDoc. Please insert all necessary Annexes ? directly into the ProDoc itself, and not have only a reference to the Annexes, and re-upload the Prodoc.

11/18/2025

The project is not yet ready. Please address the comments.

10/15/2024

The project is not yet ready. Please address the comments.

08/29/2025

The project is not yet ready. Please address the comments. There are also a number of comments on this project from Council members and CBD COP. Please, respond to these comments in your resubmission in Annex I.

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

	CEO Approval	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review	9/5/2025	
Additional Review (as necessary)	10/15/2025	
Additional Review (as necessary)	11/18/2025	
Additional Review (as necessary)	11/24/2025	
Additional Review (as necessary)	12/1/2025	