



Championing Local Adaptation for Productive Ecosystems and Enhanced Resilience (CLAP for Resilience)

Review PIF and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

11436

Countries

Malawi

Project Name

Championing Local Adaptation for Productive Ecosystems and Enhanced Resilience (CLAP for Resilience)

Agencies

UNDP

Date received by PM

10/18/2023

Review completed by PM

11/28/2023

Program Manager

Aloke Barnwal

Focal Area

Climate Change

Project Type

FSP

GEF-8 PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF) REVIEW SHEET

1. General Project Information / Eligibility

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

b) Is the General Project Information table correctly populated?

Secretariat's Comments

Yes.

Agency's Comments

Agency Response 01 December 2023

Kindly note that all new responses and revisions in this round of reviews are highlighted in Magenta both here and the PIF (both in the GEF portal; and in the word file of PIF uploaded to Roadmap section)

2. Project Summary

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

Secretariat's Comments

In the summary, please highlight the alignment with GEF 8 adaptation priorities. Also, note that for adaptation projects, GEBs are not necessary. Please highlight the expected adaptation benefits.

GEFSEC 27 November 2023

Thanks. The summary is fine now.

Agency's Comments

Agency's response: 27 Nov 2023

The project summary has been revised.

General Note to Reviewer: All revisions made to the PIF are highlighted in Yellow, while existing text that addresses queries raised and referred to in the responses is highlighted in blue to guide the reviewer on where the information is located.

3 Indicative Project Overview

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

b) Are the components, outcomes and outputs sound, appropriate and sufficiently clear to achieve the project objective and the core indicators per the stated Theory of Change?

Secretariat's Comments Yes.

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments

Gender dimension is missing in the components/outcomes/outputs. Please add.

GEFSEC 27 November 2023-

Thanks.

Agency's Comments

Agency's response: 27 Nov 2023

Gender dimensions are now more clearly articulated in the components/outcomes and outputs. Insertions (tracked and highlighted in yellow pages 4-6, 29- 31 in offline version of the PIF) and existing text pertaining to gender inclusion are on pages 23, -25, 29 -32. The ToC diagram (page 18) has also been updated. All the changes were also duly reflected in GEF portal.

3.3 a) Are the components adequately funded?

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

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

Secretariat's Comments

Yes.

Agency's Comments

4 Project Outline

A. Project Rationale

4.1 SITUATION ANALYSIS

a) is the current situation (including global environmental problems, key contextual drivers of environmental degradation, climate vulnerability) clearly and adequately described from a systems perspective?

b) Are the key barriers and enablers identified?

Secretariat's Comments

While the situation analysis describes the vulnerabilities well, it doesn't present any context of how past investments by the LDCF or other climate funds have contributed to adaptation and how this project will support transformative outcomes building on the previous efforts and any progress.

The section refers to high population density as a reason for vulnerability. However, this has not been elaborated. Also, there is little scientific evidence that suggests that density leads to higher vulnerability, unless it is very high like the urban slums. Often density can lead to optimal consumption of resources and effective delivery of public infrastructure and services. Please clarify.

Further, poverty is cited as a reason for vulnerability but the section doesn't shed much light on that. It also refers to climate change as one of the factors of increased level of poverty. Please articulate this section more clearly.

On the natural resource dependence, please elaborate what is the dependence for (beyond agriculture) and how it causes the vulnerability. The degradation of nature due to climate is described, but how it impacts vulnerability is less elaborated.

Are there other systemic drivers of vulnerability which the project will address ? e.g. governance, lack of awareness/knowledge, lack of policy coherence, etc.

We can see enablers identified just below the TOC diagram, which looks fine.

We can also see elaboration of barriers in the TOC section. However, they lack the following:

- how the barriers have exacerbated or reduced over the years after two decades of investments by LDCF, other funds and government.

- some barriers are not or very thinly described in the context of changing climate. For example, under the institutional capacity gaps barrier, it just says "There is a gap in available technical expertise and financial resources at the local level that are required to support communities to take measures for climate adaptation and to mitigate impacts of climate change". However, there is no further substantiation of the specific gaps to tackle climate change. The section has a lot of details but not all are directly linked to the impacts of climate change. Similarly, the barrier on "high reliance on climate sensitive natural resources for livelihoods" doesn't make a clear link on how this is a barrier in climate adaptation action. It reads more like a driver of increased vulnerability i.e. climate change is affecting yields and other extremes, and over exploitation of land, forests and biomass is increasing the vulnerability. In the barriers section, please describe what is restricting accelerated adaptation action which this project will address.

GEFSEC 27 November 2023

Thanks. The comments are cleared now.

Agency's Comments

Agency's response: 27 Nov 2023

We have made revisions to ensure that the project has a strong and clear climate rationale. The barriers have especially been elaborated on and better specified to substantiate the gaps to address climate change impacts thereby providing greater justification to the project strategy against the preferred solution. The responses below refer to the comments sequentially (in italics below) and are inserted in the PIF document with the revised text highlighted on pages referred to for ease of reference. ***The offline document has been uploaded to the Roadmap section as well but please also note that all the changes below have also been duly reflected in GEF portal, in highlight.***

How past investments by the LDCF or other climate funds have contributed to adaptation and how this project will support transformative outcomes building on the previous efforts and any progress.

Text has been inserted on page 9-10.

The section refers to high population density as a reason for vulnerability. However, this has not been elaborated.

We have revised the discussion on root causes of vulnerability (pg. 13-15).

Often density can lead to optimal consumption of resources and effective delivery of public infrastructure and services. Please clarify.

In the case of Malawi, high population density and high dependence on agriculture and natural resources for livelihoods have not led to 'optimal' resource use. This has in fact led to subdivision of agricultural plots to unviable sizes, agricultural expansion into forests and removal of biomass for fuel and charcoal production. Please see revisions on pages 12 and 13.

Further, poverty is cited as a reason for vulnerability but the section doesn't shed much light on that. It also refers to climate change as one of the factors of increased level of poverty. Please articulate this section more clearly.

We have revised the text on pg. 12 and 13..

Elaborate what is the dependence for (beyond agriculture) and how it causes the vulnerability. The degradation of nature due to climate is described, but how it impacts vulnerability is less elaborated.

Text has been added to pages 11 - 14 to elaborate the link between climate and vulnerability

Are there other systemic drivers of vulnerability which the project will address ? e.g. governance, lack of awareness/knowledge, lack of policy coherence, etc.

Yes. The project under component 1 addresses poor governance, lack of awareness and poor implementation of policies at the grassroots level ? text highlighted in blue on pages 23 and 24.

We have added a sentence to explicitly address the lack of awareness through awareness raising during community engagement. Relevant text on page 23 highlighted in yellow.

How the barriers have exacerbated or reduced over the years after two decades of investments by LDCF, other funds and government.

We have revised the section on barriers to include a description of past investments and how they have affected critical barriers, referring to earlier investments by GEF. Note that more recent projects have been discussed in other sections. Please see page 20 yellow highlight. This will be discussed further in the PPG stage.

Some barriers are not or very thinly described in the context of changing climate. For example, under the institutional capacity gaps barrier, it just says "There is a gap in available technical expertise and financial resources at the local level that are required to support communities to take measures for climate adaptation and to mitigate impacts of climate change". However, there is no further substantiation of the specific gaps to tackle climate change. The section has a lot of details but not all are directly linked to the impacts of climate change.

The section on barriers has been revised and expanded on page 19 and 20 and is highlighted. We have also reformulated one of the barrier names to be clearer. This will be discussed in greater detail in the PPG.

Similarly, the barrier on "high reliance on climate sensitive natural resources for livelihoods" doesn't make a clear link on how this is a barrier in climate adaptation action. It reads more like a driver of increased vulnerability i.e. climate change is affecting yields and other extremes, and over exploitation of land, forests and biomass is increasing the vulnerability. In the barriers section, please describe what is restricting accelerated adaptation action which this project will address.

We have inserted text on page 21 to address this. We have also renamed this barrier to make it clearer as follows: Lack of alternative livelihood sources leading to high reliance on climate sensitive natural resources for livelihoods and energy thereby exacerbating vulnerabilities.

4.2 JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT

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

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

c) Is there a description of how the GEF alternative will build on ongoing/previous investments (GEF and non-GEF), lessons and experiences in the country/region?

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

Secretariat's Comments

The justification doesn't fully respond to the above questions (a-d). If it's included, please please direct where in the PIF we can find these responses.

Given the past investments in Malawi on similar interventions, please elaborate specifically how this PIF builds on the lessons of previous investments and applies innovative and impactful approaches in line with the GEF 8's three strategic priorities. While the project looks overall ok, it appears to be a conventional project with approaches similar to the previous phases. What is the value add that will contribute to GEF's objective to support transformative adaptation?

GEFSEC 27 November 2023- thanks. The revisions are fine now.

Agency's Comments

Agency's response: 27 Nov 2023

The comments are well noted, and are addressed as below, with details to be provided during the PPG stage to avoid too long a PIF.

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

Several options to address the climate change problem in the project areas were considered, including the option in this project. Considerations were made with regards to relevance to the local context, addressing the current and future impacts of climate change, sustainability, likelihood of scaling up, adding value to previous investments, building on cross-sectoral initiatives thereby amplifying impact and capitalization of resources in other sectors and programmes, and alignment with GEF/LDCF strategic directions. This solution has been chosen against other options that are more short-term, addressing only the impacts of current climatic trends without considering future climate change. It has also been chosen against options that only address specific sites without taking into account entire systems that integrate livelihoods, ecosystem connectivity and value chains that connect climate resilient production and livelihoods on one hand and markets and investments on the other sectors. We have inserted text on pages 13, 39 and

40 to show this. (see also Section C for an elaborate discussion on the suitability of this preferred solution) in line with the GEF 8 Programming Strategy.

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

This is now clearly stated on page 13.

c) Is there a description of how the GEF alternative will build on ongoing/previous investments (GEF and non-GEF), lessons and experiences in the country/region?

Yes. Please refer to the following sections, headings highlighted in blue for ease of reference.

Page 14 and 15: Relevant Policies; Baseline scenario and associated baseline projects

Page 36: Coordination and Cooperation with Initiatives and Projects related to Climate Change Adaptation

Kindly also refer to Appendix 3 on page 58.

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

Yes. Please refer to Appendix 5: Summary of Stakeholder Engagement on page 82-85

Elaborate specifically how this PIF builds on the lessons of previous investments and applies innovative and impactful approaches in line with the GEF 8's three strategic priorities.

What is the value add that will contribute to GEF's objective to support transformative adaptation?

This project builds on gains made by earlier projects in improved capacities and policies, particularly at the national level, but also among extension services in other regions of Malawi. This has been included in the PIF (see earlier response). The following differences from earlier initiatives will make its impacts transformative:

1. The role envisaged for the private sector in the project will significantly improve its sustainability (component 3, page 26-29):

- Tying up with agro-industries to use high quality, climate resilient seed varieties for crops they will purchase ? providing a stable market and critical elements of the supply chain including seed, fertilizers, implements and training.

- Creating alternative livelihoods by supporting establishment of MSMEs and entrepreneurs in business including those such as briquette production from crop residue which will improve the quality of life through reduced pollution and reduced drudgery in collection of fuel, while it also reduces the pressure on forests.

- Supplying equipment, implements and appropriate varieties of seeds for climate resilient cropping.

2. Co-development of advisories by scaling up PICSAs (output 1.3, page 25) which has been successfully implemented in other districts through a GCF funded project, thereby ensuring farmers not only have the access to early warnings, but also are equipped to take necessary actions in climate resilient farming ? assisted by extension services. This approach is transformative not only in terms of de-mystifying and democratizing the use of climate information, but also because of its gender responsive nature wherein women farmers have been keen adopters of the approach.

3. Using state of the art techniques for mapping and surveying in conjunction with participatory methods to develop capacities of communities to plan, implement and monitor the impacts of interventions in agriculture and restoration of natural resources (Output 4.1, page 31). This approach will help use a mix of indigenous knowledge and modern methods from climate smart agriculture, catchment restoration and assisted

natural regeneration. The impacts of the interventions therefore be maximized while ensuring ownership of the interventions by the communities.

Community based and community centered approaches have been proven to be the most effective strategy to ensure equitable and sustainable impacts on livelihoods that are almost completely reliant on subsistence agriculture and other natural resources (Component 2, page 25). By using a ridge-to-valley and assisted natural regeneration, the project will accelerate and sustain ecosystem recovery and the resilience of natural landscapes to impacts of climate change. Simultaneously, the project will equip extension services to support adoption of methods for climate resilient /climate smart agriculture and the use of climate information for decisions in farming.

5 B. Project Description

5.1 THEORY OF CHANGE

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

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

Secretariat's Comments

a) The theory of change doesn't clearly describe a climate change link. The problems identified do not seem to indicate how climate change hazards are causing the problems. For example, how the problem of conversion of riparian areas to agriculture is related to climate change. One can argue that this conversion could be an adaptation to the impacts of climate change, as more agriculture can provide additional income to households making them more adaptive to climate shocks in the short term. Similarly, please describe how deforestation is linked with climate change.

What transpires from the TOC is that the project will support addressing environmental degradation challenges which could potentially lead to improved adaptive capacity. It doesn't clearly make a case that climate change is causing the vulnerability and that the project will adopt measures which will 1) reduce vulnerability to its impacts and 2) enhance adaptive capacity. Unless the later is clearly articulated, it will look like a typical biodiversity/land degradation project which may or may not address vulnerability arising from climate hazards such as intensive flooding and droughts, changes in precipitation, increased temperatures, etc. The appendix 4 in the attached document also elaborates heavily on land restoration and other activities related to avoiding LD, without much description of the climate change aspects. Are the sites affected by flooding and other impacts? what does climate data indicate? In the current form, the project reads more like an LD focal area project as it doesn't satisfactorily makes a clear link with the impacts caused by climate change.

We reviewed the problem tree diagram also with interest in relation to the TOC. There also, it doesn't make a solid case that climate change and related hazards is the main issue. The root causes described could be additional factors increasing the vulnerability, but

doesn't seem to be the root causes of climate vulnerability. Moreover, some of them can be challenged also as described earlier, e.g. population density, high level of school dropouts, unemployment can't be concluded as root cause of climate vulnerability.

Please review the TOC and problem tree and revise accordingly. Please also add assumptions.

b)

Outcome 1 and relevant outputs:

- Please describe how climate change related data and analysis will inform the capacity building activities.

- **A fee structure will be instituted which ensures resource users contribute to the VNRCs in lieu of harvesting resources from communal areas-** We couldn't find any details for this proposed measure in Appendix 4 as indicated in the PIF. Please clarify how this will support adaptation of vulnerable communities. We would also like to understand how it will consider inclusion aspect especially marginal and poor households who may not be able to pay the fees and also whether this will be embraced by communities and how it will be implemented. This is a complex and sensitive measure in relation to local governance, unless designed and implemented well.

Outcome 2 and relevant outputs:

2.1: Please elaborate how climate related information will inform watershed development activities. In absence of integrating climate data, it will be a business as usual watershed development effort which are being practiced over a number of years. Questions to be explored in this context are:

- Are the intervention areas highly vulnerable to impacts of climate change and is there a vulnerability assessment done to inform the interventions? Will climate data, historic and projected, inform the planning of restoration activities?

2.2- It is understood that farmers would need farm packages of seeds, equipment, etc. to introduce climate resilient varieties and efficient irrigation systems. Please clarify if all of this will be provided using LDCF grant or will there be other sources to fund this. Also, how will it be sustained beyond the project period? Also, there is a big focus on improving the practices and less so on strategic agriculture and crop planning? The question to answer is , what if some of the crops are not suitable for the region given the impacts of climate change? Will the project support farmers and their organizations identify right resilient crops which can deliver income and food security even in the context of future climate impacts?

We also recommend using smart digital solutions to provide farm advisory and climate advisory services such as the Smart Farm platform of CROP IN which we are supporting through a challenge program in Ethiopia and Uganda.

3.1- please elaborate how will the government be engaged at different levels as it is critical that there is enabling policy and regulatory environment for private sector to continuously engage. Also, please indicate what criteria will be used for providing accelerated finance. We strongly recommend to have innovation at the center of this and also suggest exploring both grant and non-gran mechanisms. It is also understood that this component will build on the GEF 7 Transform project. Please elaborate the transition.

Similar to the outcome 1 and 2, in outcome 4 (output 4.1) also, there is very limited linkage of climate information and data while talking about restoration plans. Please add as it is critical to justify the LDCF adaptation funding.

On the communication and knowledge platform, please clarify if there will be a dedicated website for this project which also builds on the GEF 7 project.

GEFSEC 27 November 2023- Comment cleared now at PIF stage. Certain comments, especially the fees structure will be revisited at the CEO ER stage.

Agency's Comments

Agency's response: 27 Nov 2023

Please note that all changes were reflected in GEF portal, however, the reference to pgs below is for the offline PIF document which has also been uploaded to the Roadmap Section.

Response a) on the ToC, problem description and assumptions and revision of problem tree.

The climate change links is now described on page 11-12. We have also re-organised theory of change by revising and elaborating the problem statement and the problem tree (figure 2 on page 22) as suggested. The key problems have been separated from resulting environmental impacts and their links to climate change have been articulated clearly. This is now clearly explained in the section on problems which precedes the description of barriers on page 18 and 19.

We have also revised the text provided in Appendix 4 on page 73.

The following assumptions have been added to the theory of change figure on page 18:

1. Staff in the government, particularly extension staff and line department staff at the district level, will be receptive and support the implementation of project activities.

2. Community based organisations will be inclusive and allow representation of women and marginalized groups.

3. Private sector partnerships are successful and financially viable for both communities as well as private stakeholders.

4. Plans formulated are sufficiently detailed and robust to inform coordination between stakeholders and support decisions on restoration.

Response to queries on Outcome 1 and relevant outputs:

- Please describe how climate change related data and analysis will inform the capacity building activities.

The description of the output on page 23 has been elaborated (highlighted in yellow).

- A fee structure will be instituted which ensures resource users contribute to the VNRCs in lieu of harvesting resources from communal areas- We couldn't find any details for this proposed measure in Appendix 4 as indicated in the PIF.

The details have now been added to Appendix 4 on page 73. Kindly note however that fee structures need to be negotiated within communities and therefore are likely to vary from site to site. This is part of the community mobilization process and integral to the strengthening of local institutions such as the VNRCs which will be further detailed during the PPG.

Please clarify how this will support adaptation of vulnerable communities. We would also like to understand how it will consider inclusion aspect especially marginal and poor households who may not be able to pay the fees and also whether this will be embraced by communities and how it will be implemented. This is a complex and sensitive measure in relation to local governance, unless designed and implemented well.

The fee structure will be formalised during project implementation by each VNRC and VDC. The structure will levy a higher fee for extraction for sale, as opposed to extraction for domestic use and will be designed to discourage or prevent removal of timber and clearing of forest areas or dambo lands through fines. It will be used towards restoration activities and managed by the VNRC. Component 1 of the project will provide necessary capacity building and support for setting up the financial management and book keeping structures in the committees.

The committees will be encouraged to exclude vulnerable groups in the village from the fee structure based on a wealth and vulnerability ranking. These would include very poor households, women headed households and those with elderly and disabled persons. Co-financing from projects such as the Public Works Programme will also be explored which facilitates eligible groups to pay through work. It is expected that details of the fee structure will be fleshed out in close consultation with communities during the PPG phase of the project and instituted during project implementation. Please see text added to page 73:

Responses to queries pertaining to Outcome 2 and relevant outputs:

2.1: Please elaborate how climate related information will inform watershed development activities. In absence of integrating climate data, it will be a business as usual watershed development effort which are being practiced over a number of years. Questions to be explored in this context are:

- Are the intervention areas highly vulnerable to impacts of climate change and is there a vulnerability assessment done to inform the interventions?

Yes, vulnerability assessments were done during the formulation of the BRERMP which has been referred to extensively during the design of the PIF. The BRERMP included extensive consultations with communities and local authorities.

Will climate data, historic and projected, inform the planning of restoration activities?

Yes. We expect the PPG phase to build on the initial analysis on historic and projected climate scenarios which was done during the PIF and has been presented on page 81 and 82 in Appendix 4. The reviewer may note that these projections were used to prioritise the selection of sites, together with the analysis of land cover change which was updated to the 2020 dataset (the BRERMP dataset was based on 2010 land cover maps). The climate and land cover data were used in conjunction with the hydrologic analysis that is presented on pages 70-72.

2.2- It is understood that farmers would need farm packages of seeds, equipment, etc. to introduce climate resilient varieties and efficient irrigation systems. Please clarify if all of this will be provided using LDCF grant or will there be other sources to fund this.

At the time of preparing this PIF, the LDCF and agro-industry (see response to query below) were the only source of funds identified for funding the farm packages. Any additional funding sources that are identified during the PPG phase will be taken into account as co-financing.

Nonetheless, the project resources will only be used to provide a few packages of inputs/equipment packages on a pilot basis to create demonstration effect. Significant majority of such packages disseminated to the communities will be financed via access to finance interventions proposed under Component 3 (microfinance loans to be offered to community members and cooperatives/MSMEs who would offer some of these equipment on lease to communities).

Also, how will it be sustained beyond the project period? Also, there is a big focus on improving the practices and less so on strategic agriculture and crop planning? The question to answer is , what if some of the crops are not suitable for the region given the impacts of climate change?

We expect the agro-industry to play a significant role in sustaining the improved practices as highlighted on page 27.

We would also like to inform the reviewers that consultations were held with agri-industry who emphasised the following:

1. Seeds that were being promoted by the industry had been extensively field tested in the central region of Malawi for suitability and drought resilience.

2. The agro-industry has a large installed capacity for processing of oil-seeds and are looking to increase the cultivation of these varieties in areas adjacent to Lilongwe, which include the project sites.

3. In some districts such as Nkhotankhota and Kasungu, existing community cooperatives need technical support, access to technologies/equipment that could build climate resilience, access to finance and access to larger buyers/markets to increase their productivity and business opportunities. A series of community consultations were conducted in July 2023 and notes from these consultations are attached separately.

Will the project support farmers and their organizations identify right resilient crops which can deliver income and food security even in the context of future climate impacts?

Yes. We have added text on page 25 to address this.

We also recommend using smart digital solutions to provide farm advisory and climate advisory services such as the Smart Farm platform of CROP IN which we are supporting through a challenge program in Ethiopia and Uganda.

We thank the reviewers for pointing us to the Smart Farm Platform. We have added this to the PIF on page 25.

3.1- please elaborate how will the government be engaged at different levels as it is critical that there is enabling policy and regulatory environment for private sector to continuously engage.

Also, please indicate what criteria will be used for providing accelerated finance. We strongly recommend to have innovation at the center of this and also suggest exploring both grant and non-gran mechanisms. It is also understood that this component will build on the GEF 7 Transform project. Please elaborate the transition.

We have added text to page 29 below the figure on the growth accelerate engagement model, to be detailed and verified during PPG phase..

Similar to the outcome 1 and 2, in outcome 4 (output 4.1) also, there is very limited linkage of climate information and data while talking about restoration plans. Please add as it is critical to justify the LDCF adaptation funding.

Relevant text has been added to page 31. We have also provided a link to the results of the analysis which includes trends in the bio-physical variables described in the text and the downscaled climate projections for Kasungu.

On the communication and knowledge platform, please clarify if there will be a dedicated website for this project which also builds on the GEF 7 project.

This is confirmed. Relevant text has been added to page 32.

5.2 INCREMENTAL/ADDITIONAL COST REASONING

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

Secretariat's Comments

Please refer to previous comments regarding the incrementality and justification of LDCF funding. The PIF has a large scope to improve on this aspect as many of its proposed interventions lacks a clear climate adaptation rationale.

GEFSEC 27 November 2023- Thanks. Comments cleared.

Agency's Comments

Agency's response: 27 Nov 2023

We have updated the climate adaptation rationale throughout the document, as advised in earlier comments. We have also added a paragraph, ahead of the description of barriers.

5.3 IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

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

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

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

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

Secretariat's Comments

The framework for the operation of the accelerator and engagement with the private sector is useful. Please provide a broader institutional and coordination framework for the entire program, highlighting GEF agency, Executing Agency, strategic partners and engagement of local stakeholders and decision makers. The framework should ideally reflect the whole of society approach of the GEF 8 strategy not only engagement but also in implementation.

GEFSEC 27 November 2023- The section mentions UNDP as a potential executing agency. As per GEF policy, Agencies are not allowed to execute projects. Further, for this project in Malawi which has a strong institutional capacity, the executing role of GEF Agency can't be justified. The project form also doesn't mention UNDP as EA. Please revise.

GEFSEC December 1 2023- Thanks for the explanation. The comment is cleared.

Agency's Comments

Agency's response: 27 Nov 2023

Please note that all changes were reflected in GEF portal, however, the reference to pgs below is for the offline PIF document which has also been uploaded to the Roadmap Section.

We have provided two figures to illustrate the institutional and coordination framework for the project. These are inserted on page 34 and 35. The first one is the overall institutional set-up of the project, and the second one is an initial illustration of how different actors will be part of the project implementation to foster a whole-of-society

approach. Kindly note that during the PPG phase, the number of participating institutions will be reviewed, and the structure will be further streamlined.

Agency's response: 01 Dec 2023

The GEF policy on Execution is well noted, and we have revised the section in the PIF. Regarding the institutional capacity of Malawi, the Government has expressed that they may need support in specific areas where they will face constraints that may affect project implementation delays, such as access to foreign currency to procure value-for-money goods and services. For instance, the Malawi Government has recently been facing shortages in foreign exchange. In view of the strong expression by the Government, UNDP will, during the PPG stage, undertake detailed assessments of capacity gaps and limitations and, in consultation with the GEF, and identify any potential areas of support. We will also assess the entity that is best placed to provide such support if needed.

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

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

Secretariat's Comments

Good to note the alignment GCF. Please provide a bit more description regarding this engagement in the PIF.

The targets are reasonable.

GEFSEC 27 November 2023- Thanks. Comments cleared.

Agency's Comments

Agency's response: 27 Nov 2023

Additional descriptions have been added for the two GCF supported projects.

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

Secretariat's Comments NA

Agency's Comments

5.6 RISKS

a) Are climate risks and other main risks relevant to the project described and addressed within the project concept design?

b) Are the key risks that might affect the project preparation and implementation phases identified and adequately rated?

c) Are environmental and social risks, impacts and management measures adequately screened and rated at this stage and consistent with requirements set out in SD/PL/03?

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

5.7 Qualitative assessment

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

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

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

Secretariat's Comments

Please refer to the comments above in relation to this question. The PIF needs to elaborate on these a bit more.

GEFSEC 27 November 2023- Yes. Comments cleared.

Agency's Comments

Agency's response: 27 Nov 2023

We have elaborated the potential for innovation and scaling up based on comments provided. The additional text is in highlight and can also be located on page 41 of the offline PIF document, uploaded to the Roadmap section.

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

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

Secretariat's Comments

Please elaborate on the alignment with the three strategic priorities of GEF 8 adaptation strategy. Currently it describes only the alignment with thematic priorities.

GEFSEC 27 November 2023- Ok. Comments cleared.

Agency's Comments

Agency's response: 27 Nov 2023

We have added additional details to Section C, Alignment with GEF-8 Programming Strategies.

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

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

6.3 For projects aiming to generate biodiversity benefits (regardless of what the source of the resources is - i.e. BD, CC or LD), does the project clearly identify which of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework the project contributes to and how it contributes to the identified target(s)?

Secretariat's Comments NA

Agency's Comments

7 D. Policy Requirements

7.1 Is the Policy Requirements section completed?

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

8 Annexes

Annex A: Financing Tables

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

STAR allocation?

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

Focal Area allocation?

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

LDCF under the principle of equitable access?

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

SCCF A (SIDS)?

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

Focal Area Set Aside?

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments The list only includes government co-financing. There is no GEF Agency co-financing and financing from the private sector which is potentially very high due to component 3. The project also refers to a GCF project and an USAID project. Please review. The current co-financing is very low for a country where the baseline is quite strong for adaptation action.

Agency's Comments

Agency's response: 27 Nov 2023

The section on co-financing has been updated. The indicative co-finance figure now stands at 55,400,000 and will be updated/revised during the PPG.

Annex B: Endorsements

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

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments NA

Agency's Comments

Annex C: Project Location

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

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

Annex D: Safeguards Screen and Rating

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

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

Annex E: Rio Markers

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

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

Annex F: Taxonomy Worksheet

8.9 Is the project properly tagged with the appropriate keywords?

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

Annex G: NGI Relevant Annexes

8.10 Does the project provide sufficient detail (indicative term sheet) to take a decision on the following selection criteria: co-financing ratios, financial terms and conditions, and financial additionality? If not, please provide comments. Does the project provide a detailed reflow table to assess the project capacity of generating reflows? If not, please provide comments. Is the Partner Agency eligible to administer concessional finance? If not, please provide comments.

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

9 GEFSEC Decision

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

Secretariat's Comments

Not yet. The Agency is requested to address the technical comments provided in the review sheet.

The project has been pushed to the PPO unit for their review.

The Agency is requested to address the question of Executing Agency question under 5.3 Implementation Framework. Please address and return the project for clearance.

The project is cleared for final approval.

Agency's Comments

Agency's response: 27 Nov 2023

We have tried to address all the technical comments in the review sheet.

Agency's response: 01 Dec 2023

The question has been addressed as per comment 5.3.

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

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

Review Dates

	PIF Review	Agency Response
First Review	10/27/2023	
Additional Review (as necessary)	11/27/2023	
Additional Review (as necessary)	12/1/2023	
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		