



Advancing transboundary co-operation and Integrated Water Resources Management in the Dniester River Basin through implementation of the Strategic Action Programme (SAP)

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

10805

Countries

Regional

Project Name

Advancing transboundary co-operation and Integrated Water Resources Management in the Dniester River Basin through implementation of the Strategic Action Programme (SAP)

Agencies

UNDP

Date received by PM

11/13/2023

Review completed by PM

12/3/2023

Program Manager

Taylor Henshaw

Focal Area

International Waters

Project Type

FSP

PIF
CEO Endorsement

Part I ? Project Information

Focal area elements

1. Does the project remain aligned with the relevant GEF focal area elements as presented in PIF (as indicated in table A)?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

28th of November 2023 (thenshaw): Yes, but please address the following:

- (1) In the countries field, please include the project countries
- (2) Please fix table formatting throughout submission. Some tables run outside the portal margins.
- (3) Please include a consolidated PDF of the Agency Project Document and associated annexes for circulation to GEF Council.

14th of December 2023 (thenshaw)

(1) Not addressed. Field still says "Regional" only

(2) Addressed

(3) Addressed

15th of December 2023 (thenshaw): Addressed.

Agency Response

UNDP- 15 Dec 2023

Kindly note that in the CEO ER the project countries have been reflected in all related fields. however, In the portal, the field is not editable from our end as it was entered from PIF stage and may require the help desk Assistant, we will write to the help desk to make the change .

Agency Response- 14 Dec 2023

- (1) Country names added
- (2) Table format fixed.
- (3) A PDF version of Prodoc and Annexes are uploaded to the portal

Project description summary

2. Is the project structure/design appropriate to achieve the expected outcomes and outputs as in Table B and described in the project document?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

28th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

(1) Please label the M&E Component as Component 7 and associated Outcome as 7.1 and Output as 7.1.1. OR remove numbering numbering from M&E altogether, and keep project as 6 components, as is mentioned throughout document. Please remove M&E aspects from Component 5.

(2) Add missing "t" to Component 1: "Component 1: Strengthening Moldovan-Ukrainian cooperation in the field of water resources managemen(t)"

(3) Please address all comments from Council (Germany) and STAP.

14th of December 2023 (thenshaw)

(1) Addressed.

(2) Addressed.

(3) Addressed.

Agency Response

Agency Response- 14 Dec 2023

- (1) Numbering for M&E removed and all references regarding M&E in component 5 have been removed throughout the project documentation.
- (2) Missing 't' added to the title of Component 1
- (3) All comments from Council (Germany) and STAP addressed

3. If this is a non-grant instrument, has a reflow calendar been presented in Annex D?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

Co-financing

4. Are the confirmed expected amounts, sources and types of co-financing adequately documented, with supporting evidence and a description on how the breakdown of co-financing was identified and meets the definition of investment mobilized, and a description of any major changes from PIF, consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

28th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

(1) "In-Kind" co-financing cannot be "investment mobilized". Please revise accordingly. It appears the Moldova Investment Mobilized should be "Public Investment". In the field below the Co-Financing table, please further describe what the Moldova programme on water supply and sewage is and how it is considered co-financing to the project.

(2) Please update the Investment Mobilized section. It contains the same information as PIF. The paragraph begins: "All investment mobilized were identified in consultation with the governments, and other relevant entities. Related co-financing letters will be provided during the PPG phase. They are indicative at this stage and will be explored further and confirmed during the PPG"

(3) Co-financing letters:

(i) OSCE letter includes both \$2,665,000 and \$2,065,000 in the body of the letter. Please secure new letter that includes consistent figure. The \$40k for the Colours of the Dniester is for 2022-2023. This co-financing will not take place during project implementation. Please remove and adjust co-financing figures throughout document accordingly. The co-financing calculation for the sub-activities listed in the co-financing letter only add to \$1,870,000.

(ii) Co-Financing letter from UNDP (\$200,000 in-kind recurrent expenditures) does not appear uploaded to the Documents tab in the Portal. Please include.

14th of December 2023 (thenshaw):

(1) Not addressed. Proponents note "The in-kind contribution of the Republic of Moldova indicated as ?Investment Mobilized? has been replaced by ?Public Investment?". It has not. This reads in-kind/recurrent expenditure.

(2) Addressed.

(3)

(i) Addressed

(ii) Addressed

15th of December 2023 (thenshaw): Addressed.

Agency Response

UNDP- 15 Dec 2023

Addressed. In the CEO ER the adjustment has been reflected in the table C Confirmed Sources of Co-financing. Such changes may need to be reflected in the portal, to which the project design team does

Agency Response- 14 Dec 2023

- (1) The in-kind contribution of the Republic of Moldova indicated as ?Investment Mobilized? has been replaced by ?Public Investment?, as suggested and relevant explanation has been provided.
- (2) Investment Mobilized section updated
- (3) Co-financing letters:

(i). The OSCE letter has been adjusted by removing the \$40k for the Colours of the Dniester is for 2022-2023, as indicated. Kindly note that the letter indicates the following: the total amount of OSCE co-financing is **2,625,000 USD**, composed of 2,025,000.00 USD (on-going and planned OSCE projects implemented in the Dniester River basin) and USD 600,000 of total operational costs. Please note that the letter has two pages (activities indicated on the first page, indeed, only add to \$1,870,000). Activities indicated on the second page add up to the total amount of **2,625,000 USD**.

(ii) The reference to UNDP co-financing has been, for the moment, removed. This will be provided during the Inception Phase of the project.

GEF Resource Availability

5. Is the financing presented in Table D adequate and does the project demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objectives?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 28th of November 2023
(thenshaw): Yes

Agency Response
Project Preparation Grant

6. Is the status and utilization of the PPG reported in Annex C in the document?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
28th of November 2023 (thenshaw): Partly,

(1) Validation workshop is allocated \$15,500 but has not been indicated as spent or unspent. Please revise.

(2) Please describe the elements of Component [B:Formulation](#) of the ProDoc. There is \$69,506.79 committed at this stage. Please explain what the activities for the formulation of the CEO Endorsement Request package were.

14th of December 2023 (thenshaw)

(1) Addressed

(2) Addressed

Agency Response
Agency Response- 14 Dec 2023

(1) and (2) Kindly note that Annex C has been updated to present the latest information on expenditures, including in relation to the validation workshop. Furthermore, the elements of all three Components (A): Technical Studies, (B): Formulation and (C) Validation Workshop have been explained in below the table.

Core indicators

7. Are there changes/adjustments made in the core indicator targets indicated in Table E? Do they remain realistic?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

28th of November 2023 (thenshaw): Partly,

(1) In the field below the Core Indicators table, please provide methodologies/calculations for the Core Indicators targeted under the project.

(2) There are 25,000 male and 13,000 female targeted as direct beneficiaries of the project. This is not an accepted ratio (50:50 was identified at PIF stage). Please target 50% women for Core Indicator 11 or explain (in the field below the Core Indicator table) why a 50% target is not achievable by the project.

(3) The project will restore or improve management of some terrestrial land. Please consider targeting Core Indicator 3 and or 4. Please see comment below.

14th of December 2023 (thenshaw):

(1) Addressed

(2) Addressed

(3) Addressed.

Agency Response

Agency Response- 14 Dec 2023

- (1) Explanation on the methodological calculation has been provided, as requested, in the field below the core indicators table in the CEO ER.
- (2) Numbers have been corrected
- (3) Additional indicators 3 and 4 have been included

Part II ? Project Justification

1. Is there a sufficient elaboration on how the global environmental/adaptation problems, including the root causes and barriers, are going to be addressed?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

28th of November 2023 (thenshaw): Yes

Agency Response

2. Is there an elaboration on how the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects were derived?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

28th of November 2023 (thenshaw): Yes

Agency Response

3. Is the proposed alternative scenario as described in PIF/PFD sound and adequate? Is there sufficient clarity on the expected outcomes and components of the project and a description on the project is aiming to achieve them?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

28th of November 2023 (thenshaw): Yes, but please address the following:

The proposed alternative scenario is sound and clear. However, please address the following:

(1) Please remove M&E from Component 5 expected outputs and outcomes in the Theory of Change diagram. M&E should be a standalone component and is reflected as such in the project description summary table.

M&E is also mentioned under Component 5 in the text. Please revise accordingly.

Please drop M&E from Component 5 title throughout document "**Component 5: Public awareness and engagement projects to empower and raise the capacity of stakeholders, project communications, outreach and M&E**"

Please move "Output 5.3.1: Monitoring and evaluation developed and implemented to ensure adaptive project management" to the M&E component.

(2) Please include targets for Core Indicator 3 and or 4. Component 4 includes activities targeting these Core Indicators:

ie. "Restoration of riparian buffers on both banks of the Dniester River", a total of 60 ha, etc.

"Restoration of riparian buffers of the Dniester River will present a positive example for extension of such activities in the other parts of the basin in both countries. The main plan is to plant 5 ha of trees on both banks of the Dniester in Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova near Soroca region (Ramsar Wetland Area of International Importance "Unguri Holo?ni?a") and in Ukraine. In the same way, in the C?u?eni and ?tefan Vod? districts of the "Lower Dniester" National Park, 25 ha are to be planted on both banks in two countries."

(3) Dniester Commission website url is incorrect in the document. Please revise

14th of December 2023 (thenshaw):

(1) Addressed.

(2) Addressed.

(3) Addressed.

Agency Response

Agency Response- 14 Dec 2023

- (1) The M&E has been reflected as an entirely separate component; all references regarding M&E in component 5 have been removed throughout the project documentation including in the title of Component 5, Output 5.3.1 and the Theory of Change Diagram;
- (2) Indicators 3 and 4 included as well as respective targets
- (3) Dniester Commission website has been corrected. Kindly note that currently the website indicates that the ?connection isn?t private, however the url of the website is correct. We will double-check with the relevant authorities on whether there are any technical challenges with the website and will keep you posted accordingly.

4. Is there further elaboration on how the project is aligned with focal area/impact program strategies?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

28th of November 2023 (thenshaw): No,

(1) Document notes "No changes in alignment with GEF focal area and/or Impact Program strategies".

The CEO Document must includes this information. Please bring forward from PIF/Project Document.

14th of December 2023 (thenshaw): Addressed.

Agency Response

Agency Response- 14 Dec 2023

The alignment with focal area/impact program strategies has been added at the end of section 1.1

5. Is the incremental reasoning, contribution from the baseline, and co-financing clearly elaborated?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

28th of November 2023 (thenshaw): No

(1) The CEO Document must include this information. Please bring forward from PIF/Project Document. Please include PIF text/elaborate.

Please include a paragraph on "Without the GEF increment.... [this will happen]. Please summarize the project's contribution from the baseline.

* The incremental costs section should summarize the "business as usual" scenario that would take place without the GEF intervention; the "GEF Alternative" (project interventions) that explains how the project will address key barriers and build on the baseline; and what global environmental benefits will be derived as a result of the GEF funding and project interventions.

14th of December 2023 (thenshaw): Addressed.

Agency Response

Agency Response- 14 Dec 2023

Information describing the incremental benefits has been added.

6. Is there further and better elaboration on the project's expected contribution to global environmental benefits or adaptation benefits?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

28th of November 2023 (thenshaw): No,

(1) The CEO Document must include this information. Please use Core Indicators to frame global environmental benefits. Please consider targets 3 and or 4

With the design of the project, the GEBs should be better elaborated than at PIF. Please include PIF text/elaborate.

14th of December 2023 (thenshaw): Addressed.

Agency Response

Agency Response- 14 Dec 2023

Information has been added referring also to core indicators.

7. Is there further and better elaboration to show that the project is innovative and sustainable including the potential for scaling up?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

28th of November 2023 (thenshaw): Partly,

(1) The CEO Document must include this information. Please include the write up from the Project Document.

14th of December 2023 (thenshaw): Addressed.

Agency Response

Agency Response- 14 Dec 2023

Information has been added, as indicated.

Project Map and Coordinates

Is there an accurate and confirmed geo-referenced information where the project intervention will take place?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

28th of November 2023 (thenshaw): Yes, but please see comment on Annex D. Please fill in geo reference table.

14th of December 2023 (thenshaw): Addressed.

Agency Response

Agency Response- 14 Dec 2023

The geo-references information has been reflected in the CEO ER.

Child Project

If this is a child project, is there an adequate reflection of how it contributes to the overall program impact?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

N/A

Agency Response

Stakeholders

Does the project include detailed report on stakeholders engaged during the design phase? Is there an adequate stakeholder engagement plan or equivalent documentation for the implementation phase, with information on Stakeholders who will be engaged, the means of engagement, and dissemination of information?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

28th of November 2023 (thenshaw): Partly,

(1) Please include a reporting on stakeholders engaged during the design phase, including dates, means and organizations.

14th of December 2023 (thenshaw): Addressed.

Agency Response

Agency Response- 14 Dec 2023

Kindly note that a list of stakeholders that have been consulted or participated in the project design has been included in the CEO ER under the section dedicated to Stakeholders. This includes also the means of communication as well as the dates on when correspondence exchange took place.

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Has the gender analysis been completed? Did the gender analysis identify any gender differences, gaps or opportunities linked to project/program objectives and activities? If so, does the project/program include gender-responsive activities, gender-sensitive indicators and expected results?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

28th of November 2023 (thenshaw): Yes

Agency Response

Private Sector Engagement

If there is a private sector engagement, is there an elaboration of its role as a financier and/or as a stakeholder?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

28th of November 2023 (thenshaw): Partly

(1) Private sector entities is checked as a project stakeholder.

"No change has been envisaged since the PIF formulation" has been noted.

With the design of the project, private sector engagement should be better elaborated than at PIF. Please elaborate.

14th of December 2023 (thenshaw): Addressed.

Agency Response

Agency Response- 14 Dec 2023

Information on private sector engagement has been added.

Risks to Achieving Project Objectives

Has the project elaborated on indicated risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved? Were there proposed measures that address these risks at the time of project implementation?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

28th of November 2023 (thenshaw): Yes

The UNDP Risk Register is included as Annex 6 in the Portal.

Agency Response

Coordination

Is the institutional arrangement for project implementation fully described? Is there an elaboration on possible coordination with relevant GEF-financed projects and other bilateral/multilateral initiatives in the project area?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

28th of November 2023 (thenshaw): Partly,

(1) Please include text from Project Document in the submission to explain the organogram on implementing/executing roles, including role of UNECE, and new text on composition of PCU and SC.

Coordination with other GEF-financed projects and other initiatives also needs to be included in the submission. Please port over from Project Document/PIF .

14th of December 2023 (thenshaw): Addressed.

Agency Response

Agency Response- 14 Dec 2023

Information on institutional arrangement and coordination has been added to describe the implementing/ executing roles of the project partners, as well as on the PCU and SC.

Information regarding coordination with other initiatives has also been included.

Consistency with National Priorities

Has the project described the alignment of the project with identified national strategies and plans or reports and assessments under the relevant conventions?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

28th of November 2023 (thenshaw): Partly,

(1) Please bring forward text from Project Document into the submission.

14th of December 2023 (thenshaw): Addressed.

Agency Response

Agency Response- 14 Dec 2023

Information has been included, as indicated.

Knowledge Management

Is the proposed Knowledge Management Approach for the project adequately elaborated with a timeline and a set of deliverables?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

28th of November 2023 (thenshaw): Partly,

(1) The CEO Document must include this information. Please include the write up from the Project Document.

Please provide a timeline for implementing a listed set of knowledge management and communication activities/products.

(2) Please also describe how the project will be learning from and building on relevant previous/on-going initiatives in the region and globally; and indicate how many people (disaggregated by gender) are expected to benefit from all proposed training and dissemination activities.

14th of December 2023 (thenshaw):

(1) Addressed.

(2) Addressed.

The project proposal includes elements dedicated to KM&L deliverables, across several components, that enable and enhance access to knowledge and information through trainings, workshops, exchange, field visits, learning missions, twinning initiatives as well as dissemination of knowledge and communication products for learning and awareness raising, via platforms/portals, including IW:LEARN. The project will document and share best practices and lessons, including IW:LEARN experience notes. There is reference to a communication strategy. The project results framework includes KM&L deliverables.

However, there is no clear budget and timeline for proposed KM and communications activities. There is also no mention of the fact that at least 1% of budget has been allocated to support IW:LEARN activities. Please provide a clear budget and timeline for key KM&L and communications activities. This can be done by including a table in the KM&L section. Please also indicate in the KM&L section that "at least 1% of budget has been allocated to support IW:LEARN related activities"

Agency Response

Agency Response- 14 Dec 2023

Information on knowledge management and communication activities/ products has been added. Kindly note that more than 1% of the budget is allocated to IW:LEARN related activities, and this is explained in the information added.

Knowledge Management timeline and budget have been added, including through a separate table on this aspect.

Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS)

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

28th of November 2023 (thenshaw): Yes, but please address following:

(1) M&E tables are outside portal margins. Please reformat.

*Reviewer note: SESP and ESMF uploaded to portal

14th of December 2023 (thenshaw): Addressed.

Agency Response

Agency Response- 14 Dec 2023

M& E table properly reflected in the portal.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Does the project include a budgeted M&E Plan that monitors and measures results with indicators and targets?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

28th of November 2023 (thenshaw): Partly

(1) In M&E table, "End-of-Project: 20,000 (10,000 men; 10,000 women)". This does not align with the Core Indicator target. Please revise.

(2) Please include a budgeted M&E plan in the submission (port over from Project Document). To achieve this, please include a column in the M&E table that costs out the \$180,000 allocated to M&E.

14th of December 2023 (thenshaw):

(1) Addressed.

(2) Not addressed. A budget column has not been included in the M&E table.

15th of December 2023 (thenshaw): Addressed.

Agency Response

UNDP- 15 Dec 2023

2) Kindly note that a new table with a budget on M&E has been included in the CEO ER.

Agency Response- 14 Dec 2023

Please note that figures have been revised and information on a budgeted M&E has been added.

Benefits

Are the socioeconomic benefits at the national and local levels sufficiently described resulting from the project? Is there an elaboration on how these benefits translate in supporting the achievement of GEBs or adaptation benefits?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

28th of November 2023 (thenshaw): Partly,

(1) The benefits articulation needs strengthening.

Please consult the new STAP document, INCORPORATING CO-BENEFITS IN THE DESIGN OF GEF PROJECTS. https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/2023-06/EN_GEF.C.64.STAP_Inf_03_Incorporating_cobenefits_in_the_design_of_GEF_projects.pdf

Please recast this section and identify the "prerequisite co-benefits" and the "incidental co-benefits".

Co-benefits are ?positive effects of GEF investments that are not included in its formal set of global environmental benefits (GEBs).? Co-benefits are categorized into prerequisite or incidental cobenefits.

? Prerequisite co-benefits are local benefits that must be achieved to realize the mandated GEF GEBs and ensure their durability. Examples include livelihood benefits that engage local communities in biodiversity conservation, or enhanced skills and education that create job opportunities and strengthen the ability of beneficiaries to implement solutions that generate desired GEBs.

? Incidental co-benefits are environmental and socio-economic benefits outside of GEF?s mandate. They are not critical to achieving GEBs but could help increase the overall impact of GEF investment. Examples include reduced freshwater pollution and the consequent human health benefits from reduced use of harmful chemicals in agriculture, and improved air quality and associated health benefits arising from transitioning to renewable energy or avoiding bad practices (e.g., open burning) in agriculture or waste management.

14th of December 2023 (thenshaw): Addressed.

Agency Response

Agency Response- 14 Dec 2023

Having consulted the new STAP document indicated on co-benefits, a section on prerequisite co-benefits and incidental co-benefits has been added in the CEO ER under Section 10. Benefits.

Annexes

Are all the required annexes attached and adequately responded to?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

28th of November 2023 (thenshaw): Partly:

(1) Budget:

(i) Please disaggregate Regional Project Coordinator, Assistant Project Officer, Financial Assistant and Admin Assistant (which are the PMU positions in the TORs annex) into different line items in budget. Please confirm that \$85,000 is being used to cover the staff time for all four positions.

(2) The budget notes that the Project Coordinator's time will be largely mapped to the components, yet the TORs for this position does not justify this mapping. Please update the TOR to justify to include those technical aspects of the position to justify covering part of the Project Coordinator's position through components.

14th of December 2023 (thenshaw)

(1) Addressed.

(2) Addressed.

Agency Response

Agency Response- 14 Dec 2023

(1) and (2) Kindly note that \$85,000 will be used to cover part of the staff time for all four positions ? this amount has been disaggregated as separate budget lines and also reflected in the budget notes. In addition, the staff participation in technical activities of the project has been now reflected in the revised ToRs (Annex 7).

Project Results Framework

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

28th of November 2023 (thenshaw): Partly:

(1) Results Framework runs outside portal margins. Please adjust formatting on resubmission.

(2) "End-of-Project: 20,000 (10,000 men; 10,000 women)". This does not align with the Core Indicator target. Please revise.

(3) Please include Core Indicator 3 or 4 in the table if they are now targeted.

14th of December 2023 (thenshaw):

(1) Addressed.

(2) Addressed.

(3) Addressed.

Agency Response

Agency Response- 14 Dec 2023

- (1) Please note comments above regarding the formatting of table.
- (2) and (3) the information has been amended accordingly.

GEF Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

Council comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

28th of November 2023 (thenshaw): No, please address Council comments and detail how each comment is addressed in a comment matrix in the Annex B field. Annex B is currently empty

ANNEX B: RESPONSES TO PROJECT REVIEWS (from GEF Secretariat and GEF Agencies, and Responses to Comments from Council at work program inclusion and the Convention Secretariat and STAP at PIF).

**Responses in matrix should be detailed rather than referring reader to somewhere in the submission materials.

Germany Comments

Germany approves the following PIF in the work program but requests that the following comments are taken into account:

Germany requests that the following requirements are taken into account during the design of the final project proposal:

? The proposal should highlight how the experience of EU Member States with implementing the EU WFD will be transferred to the institutional realities of Moldova and Ukraine. It should also show more strongly how it plans to align with and foster Moldova's and Ukraine's engagement with the political initiatives under the EU Green Deal and its external dimensions and further develop how component 1 will increase political commitment to support capacity development.

? Output 2.1.1 should avoid legal lock-in effects due to insufficiently well-designed legislation and resulting difficulties in implementation. Output 2.1.2 should go beyond training courses to include activities to introduce and improve institutional methods and operating procedures. These will increase capacities in the face of staff fluctuations, structural changes and budgetary limitations, function as knowledge and quality management tools and benefit harmonisation between both countries.

? Outcome 3.1 should take a more comprehensive approach to improving water body status. Output 3.1.1 should aim for the most effective and efficient measures to achieve and maintain good water body status, which may go beyond the development of codes of practice to more elaborate methods of assuring their application. The planned investment support to SAP implementation should follow emerging practice on nature-based solutions. Groundwater is not reflected adequately in the proposal, despite agriculture being a significant source diffuse pollution, impacting human use and ecosystems.

? Output 4.1.2 should be aligned with Directive 2007/60/EC (the EU Floods Directive) as required under the countries' Association Agreements with the EU and its Member States, as well as with the support provided by the programme PPRD East 3. Climate change adaptation, including through ecosystem-based adaptation, should more strongly be mainstreamed throughout the proposal.

? Component 6 should demonstrate how research will be translated into policy processes and contribute to sector capacity. Monitoring of surface and groundwater (also through support under Output 3.1.2) should go beyond applied research and must be improved as an integral part of evidence-based and transparent decision-making for water resource management, as required by the WFD. The project should strengthen capacities for risk-based monitoring under the WFD in the mandated authorities.

? In rural areas, access to piped water, flush toilets as well as the connection of flush toilets to sewer networks is low. The proposal should reflect this in addressing point and diffuse source pollution from sanitation. Moreover, the proposal should consider the impacts of pollution on ecosystems and human water uses, including as drinking water. Sewered sanitation is only one option and focusing on it could preclude other potentially more adequate and cost-effective ones to achieve safely managed sanitation services.

14th of December 2023 (thenshaw): No. A Table B matrix including these responses has not been added

15th of December 2023 (thenshaw): Addressed.

Agency Response

UNDP- 15 Dec 2023

Kindly note that a Table B Matrix under Annex B has been inserted in the relevant space.

We thank Germany for the comments. Please see below the response to each of the comments addressed:

1. As indicated in the project document, the political objective of the two countries to become EU members will serve as a main driving force for the project as the introduction and application of EU regulations related to water and the environment give significant synergies to SAP implementation.

In this regard, the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive is particularly important. From the project perspective, component 2 is entirely dedicated to strengthening the regulatory framework and national capacities to implement the SAP, country commitments under the UN Water Convention and the *EU Water Framework Directive (EU WFD)* in the Dniester River basin.

While the project components may appear as stand-alone packages, linkages between project components have been designed and will develop naturally. The project has dedicated activities on knowledge management (more than 1% of the project budget is allocated for a suite of IW:LEARN activities to share lessons learned and results from the project to the broader GEF IW community, as well as actively participate in IW:LEARN capacity building workshops, forums and biannual GEF IW conferences), capacity building and trainings, that would allow for exchange of expertise with other river basins, including within EU member States. *Cooperation with the Danube Commission (ICPDR), among others*, has been specifically identified in the project as an important provider of information and experiences.

2. Aware of the potential challenges, including those related to staff fluctuations, structural changes or budgetary limitations, as pointed out in the comment, the project foresees the involvement of education institutions on water management in project activities, such as for example the Center of Advanced Training for Water Management Personnel in Ukraine, as well of other similar institutions.

With this, the project aims at building an institutional knowledge, rather than (only) increasing individual knowledge of staff members. Such an activity could take the form of a Training of Trainers (ToT) activity that would allow for the continuation of knowledge generation and transfer, beyond the project duration and scope. Furthermore, for the same scope of building an institutional knowledge, such activities will be implemented in close coordination with the Dniester Basin Management Authority (in Ukraine) and the Dniester Basin Committee (in the Republic of Moldova), as the main authorities in the two countries in charge of management of resources in the Dniester River basin. Further ideas for activities aimed at introducing and improving institutional methods and operating procedures with other basins will be sought, and, transferred to the Dniester River basin, if and as applicable.

3. The two areas of work included in component 3 (on the one hand the regulatory framework/ theoretical part? development of methodological guidelines and facilitated investment opportunities, while on the other the practical part in the form of demonstration projects) are meant to complement each other in reaching the desired output.

As an example, the analyses performed on opportunities for investments in cooperation with IFIs and local authorities are aimed at providing informed recommendation for the attention of relevant donors on potential actions, which could lead to investment in waste water treatment facilities, which can't be supported in the framework of this project. The project will pay due attention that such analyses will consider prioritizing nature-based solutions measures, as identified in the SAP. Regarding nature-based solutions, these are an integral part of the demonstration projects and of the adaptation actions in components 3 and 4.

4. Kindly note that outcome 4.1.2 is specifically designed to support the riparian countries to translate the EU Floods Directive, by responding to the needs expressed by the riparian countries. While the Republic of Moldova appears to be more advanced with the available modelling and maps developed for the priority flood areas, the project will provide support for Ukraine to develop such tools and as well as the harmonization between the project countries.

With a view to underline this aspect, kindly note that input has been added under Component 4 of the Project Document to reflect the support of this component in the implementation of the Directive 2007/60/EC (the EU Floods Directive).

Further to this, kindly note that the project design is constructed on the basis of the SAP, therefore, as mentioned further above, there are strong interlinkages between all project components. Component 4 links to the following outputs Output 2.1.1 (Draft of new laws and regulations in the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine as a basis for implementation of SAP); Output 3.1.2 (Demonstration projects to improve the ecological status of the Dniester River basin) and Output 5.2.4 (IW Experience Notes and other IW:LEARN related products and services).

Finally, kindly note that regarding ecosystem-based measures/ activities, a number of project activities (both in Components 3 and 4) have been designed with nature-based solutions at their core.

5. Kindly note that Component 6 has a strong focus on applied research.

As a concrete example, conducting analysis of impacts of hydropower facilities located in the Dniester River Basin and developing recommendations to address these impacts is aimed at informing the Dniester River Basin Commission on ways and methods of addressing the environmental impact of hydropower facilities on the Dniester ecosystem.

Similarly, the activity related to methodology for prospective reserving and ecological network corridors, and renewing select reconstruction plans will be of key support for policy development in determining attractive localities for prospective reserving, in particular, places of the river basin that are defined as reference ones. Special attention could be dedicated to maintaining the protected regime of existing protected areas and protection of biodiversity, including prevention of the spread of invasive species. Such activities will be closely following the EU Water Framework Directive, which, defines the reference conditions for an ecological system as the conditions that prevail in the absence or near absence of human disturbance.

Finally, kindly note that the project will provide support to the Dniester Commission's Working Group on Water Monitoring and Information Exchange. In particular, it will support:

- analytical research on how to harmonize approaches to identification of ecological and chemical state of water bodies especially in relation to biological indicators in the riparian countries;

- activities in accordance with the new Regulation on cooperation in monitoring and exchange of information, namely, such as joint/coordinated samplings and measurements of the laboratories, discussions of the results and preparing recommendations for improving joint cross-border monitoring.

6. We understand the importance of addressing the point and diffuse source pollution from sanitation, however, we would like to underline that the project has a transboundary focus and that the project objective is aimed at addressing issues of transboundary nature, as identified in the SAP.

While the SAP addresses sewage systems as part of its goal on reducing pollution from point sources (measures 1.1.4), it focuses on the perspective of enterprises rather than individual inhabitants.

Agency Response - 14 Dec 2023

We thank Germany for the comments. Please see below the response to each of the comments addressed:

1. 1. As mentioned in the project document, the political objective of the two countries to become EU members will serve as a main driving force for the project as the introduction and application of EU regulations related to water and the environment give significant synergies to SAP implementation. In this regard, the ongoing implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive is particularly important. From the project perspective, component 2 is entirely dedicated to strengthening the regulatory framework and national capacities to implement the SAP, country commitments under the UN Water Convention *and the EU Water Framework Directive (EU WFD)* in the Dniester River basin. While the project components may appear as stand-alone, linkages between project components have been designed and will develop naturally. The project has dedicated activities on knowledge management (more than

1% of the project budget is allocated for a suite of IW:LEARN activities to share lessons learned and results from the project to the broader GEF IW community, as well as actively participate in IW:LEARN capacity building workshops, forums and biannual GEF IW conferences), capacity building and trainings, that would allow for exchange of expertise with other river basins, including within EU member States. Cooperation with the Danube Commission (ICPDR), among others has been clearly identified in the project as an important provider of information and experiences.

2. 2. Being aware of the potential challenges, including those related to staff fluctuations, structural changes or budgetary limitations, as pointed out in the comment above, the project foresees the involvement of education institutions on water management in project activities, such as for example the [Center of Advanced Training for Water Management Personnel](#) in Ukraine, as well of other similar institutions. With this, the project aims at building an institutional knowledge, rather than an individual knowledge of staff members. Such an activity could take the form of a Training of Trainers (ToT) activity that would allow for the continuation of knowledge generation and sharing, beyond the project duration and scope. Furthermore, for the same scope of building an institutional knowledge, such activities will be implemented in close coordination with the Dniester Basin Management Authority (in Ukraine) and the Dniester Basin Committee (in the Republic of Moldova), as the main authorities in the two countries in charge of management of resources in the Dniester River basin.
3. 3. The two areas of work included in component 3 (on the one hand the ?theoretical part? ? development of methodological guidelines and facilitated investment opportunities, while on the other the practical part in the form of demonstration projects) are meant to complement each other in reaching the desired output. As an example, the analyses performed on opportunities for investments in cooperation with IFIs and local authorities are aimed at providing informed recommendation on potential actions to relevant donors, which could potentially lead to investment in waste water treatment facilities, which can?t be supported in the framework of this project. Such analyses could consider prioritizing nature-based solutions measures, as identified in the SAP. Furthermore, nature-based solutions are an integral part of the demonstration projects and of the adaptation actions in components 3 and 4.
4. 4. Kindly note that outcome 4.1.2 is specifically designed to support the riparian countries to translate the EU Floods Directive, by responding to the needs expressed by the riparian countries. While the Republic of Moldova appears to be more advanced with the available modelling and maps developed for the priority flood areas, the project will provide support for Ukraine to develop such tools and as well as the harmonization between the project countries. Kindly note that input has been added under Component 4 of the Project Document to reflect the support of this component in implementation of the Directive 2007/60/EC (the EU Floods Directive).
Further to this, kindly note that the project design is constructed on the basis of the SAP, therefore, as mentioned further above, while components may look as separate packages, there are strong interlinkages between all project components. Component 4 links to the following outputs Output 2.1.1 (Draft of new laws and regulations in the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine as a basis for implementation of SAP); Output 3.1.2 (Demonstration projects to improve the ecological status of the Dniester River basin) and Output 5.2.4 (IW Experience Notes and other IW:LEARN related products and services). Finally, kindly note that regarding ecosystem-based measures/ activities, a number of project activities (both in Components 3 and 4) have been designed with nature-based solutions at their core.
5. 5. Kindly note that Component 6 has a strong focus on *applied* research. As a concrete example, conducting analysis of impacts of hydropower facilities located in the Dniester River Basin and developing recommendations to address these impacts is aimed at informing the Dniester Commission on ways of addressing the environmental impact of hydropower facilities on the Dniester ecosystem. Similarly, the activity related to methodology for prospective reserving

and ecological network corridors, and renewing select reconstruction plans will be of key support for policy development in determining attractive localities for prospective reserving, in particular, places of the river basin that are defined as reference ones. Special attention could be dedicated to maintaining the protected regime of existing protected areas and protection of biodiversity, including prevention of the spread of invasive species. Such activities will be closely following the EU WFD, which, defines the reference conditions for an ecological system as the conditions that prevail in the absence or near absence of human disturbance.

Finally, kindly note that the project will provide support to the Dniester Commission's Working Group on Water Monitoring and Information Exchange. In particular, it will support:

- analytical research on how to harmonize approaches to identification of ecological and chemical state of water bodies especially in relation to biological indicators in the riparian countries;
- activities in accordance with the new Regulation on cooperation in monitoring and exchange of information, namely, such as joint/coordinated samplings and measurements of the laboratories, discussions of the results and preparing recommendations for improving joint cross-border monitoring

6. While we understand the importance of addressing the point and diffuse source pollution from sanitation, we would like to underline that the project has a transboundary focus and is more attuned to addressing issues of transboundary nature, as identified in the SAP. While the SAP addresses sewage systems as part of its goal on reducing pollution from point sources (measures 1.1.4), it focuses on the perspective of enterprises rather than individual inhabitants.

STAP comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

28th of November 2023 (thenshaw): No,

(1) Please address STAP comments and detail how each comment is addressed in a comment matrix in the Annex B field. Annex B is currently empty

**Responses in matrix should be detailed rather than referring reader to somewhere in the submission materials.

STAP Comments

(i) Knowledge Management:

"KM section is not well articulated and mostly generic, indeed verbatim with GEF 10725 in parts, e.g.: ?Information will be collected and distributed as relevant to the different needs of the various private sector partners? Civil society will be provided with information to inform communities?? Please elaborate in KM approach.

(ii) Coordination

How have the following comments been addressed:

Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them? No

Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited? No

(iii) Risks

"The problem of land-based sources of pollution appears to be most pressing ? it would be useful to know more about how climate variability will relate to this issue, including the sectors that are responsible for the most pollution (i.e. agriculture)."

(iv) Gender

"Good description of stakeholder engagement in PIF preparation. In future steps, more information is needed regarding the specific organizations and their roles in this effort and how their participation can help inform specific interventions and help achieve the ultimate objective of improved management of the river basin in order to achieve GEBs."

(v) Assumptions

"Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?" Plausible but assumptions are poorly developed.

"A theory of change is presented in a graphic, which is a depiction of the stated barriers, outputs and outcomes. Assumptions and drivers are poorly developed. The only assumption noted refers to ?countries accept commitments?? This appears to disregard the incentives and behaviors of non-state actors"

14th of December 2023 (thenshaw): No. A Table B matrix including these responses has not been added

15th of December 2023 (thenshaw): Addressed.

Agency Response

UNDP- 15 Dec 2023

Kindly note that a Table B Matrix under Annex B has been inserted in the relevant place.

(i) Kindly note that the information on Knowledge Management has been updated in the CEO Endorsement Request.

More specifically, reference to activities targeting KM have been specified, with a particular focus on Component 5 (IW:LEARN) as well as to the multiple capacity development activities.

Furthermore, reference to the targeted stakeholders has been added in the document.

Finally, a description of the KM activities and how they are divided between the various stages of project implementation ? Inception Phase, Project Implementation and Closing and Sustainability - has also been included.

The update includes also an overview and timeline of KM&L related activities reflected through a table in the CEO ER document.

Regarding the recognition of previous projects, kindly note that the Project Document refers specifically to the achievements reached in the previous GEF-funded project "Enabling transboundary co-operation and integrated water resources management in the Dniester River Basin" (referred to as the foundation GEF-funded project).

(ii) Regarding the recognition of previous projects, kindly note that both the Project Document, as well as the CEO Endorsement Request refer specifically to the fact that the project is based on the achievements reached in the previous GEF-funded project "Enabling transboundary co-operation and integrated water resources management in the Dniester River Basin" (referred to as the foundation GEF-funded project).

Furthermore, in several instances reference is made to the lessons learned (including in the KM section, extensively in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan, etc.) during the foundation GEF-funded project.

(iii) With a view to address the interlinkages between agriculture ? drought ? pollution - water quality, this particular issue will be included in the focus of the project activity aimed at revising the Strategic Framework for Adaptation to Climate Change in the Dniester River Basin (Component 4).

(iv) Regarding the involvement of stakeholders, kindly note that a significant information has been added on the role of stakeholders during the design phase, with detailed description about the specific institution and organizations, as well as the means of communication during the project design phase.

With regard to the involvement of various stakeholders at throughout project implementation, the stakeholder engagement plan has been prepared and attached to the Project Document. This provides a description of the following elements: stakeholder identification and planning, disclosure and dissemination of information, consultation and meaningful participation, dispute resolution and grievance redress, ongoing reporting to affected communities and stakeholders, and inclusion of stakeholders in monitoring and evaluation.

(v) Kindly note that risks and assumptions have been indicated as part of the Project Results Framework, reflected in Annex A.

Risks and Assumptions have been indicated for all levels of change, starting from the Project Objective to Objective and Outcome Indicators and for all project components.

Furthermore, the Gender Results Framework contains a dedicated section on Assumptions.

Kindly note that further information has been added on OSCE's overall capabilities relevant to the GEF Dniester project, which, among others, refer to OSCE's experience and mandate in the context of the Transdniestrian settlement process, through the OSCE Mission to Moldova, which will be relevant in ensuring the interaction and engagement with relevant structures in Transdniestria.

Agency Response - 14 Dec 2023

- (i) Kindly note that the Knowledge Management has been updated.
- (ii) Regarding the recognition of previous projects, kindly note that the Project Document refers specifically to the achievements reached in the previous GEF-funded project 'Enabling transboundary co-operation and integrated water resources management in the Dniester River Basin' (referred to as the foundation GEF-funded project).
- (iii) With a view to address the interlinkages between agriculture ? drought ? pollution and water quality, this particular issue will be included in the focus of the project activity aimed at Revising the Strategic Framework for Adaptation to Climate Change in the Dniester River Basin (Component 4).
- (iv) Additional Information has been added on stakeholders.

Convention Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

Other Agencies comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

CSOs comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

Status of PPG utilization

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
28th of November 2023 (thenshaw): Partly,

(1) Please see PPG comment above.

Agency Response

Agency Response

(1) and (2) Kindly note that Annex C has been updated to present the latest information on expenditures, including in relation to the validation workshop. Furthermore, the elements of all three Components (A): Technical Studies, (B): Formulation and (C) Validation Workshop have been explained in below the table.

Project maps and coordinates

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

h of November 2023 (thenshaw):

(1) Annex D: Please include map and geo coordinates. The fields are not populated in the Annex.

ANNEX D: Project Map(s) and Coordinates

Please attach the geographical location of the project area, if possible.

GEO LOCATION INFORMATION

The Location Name, Latitude and Longitude are required fields insofar as an Agency chooses to enter a project location under the set format. The Geo Name ID is required in instances where the location is not exact, such as in the case of a city, as opposed to the exact site of a physical infrastructure. These IDs are available on the [GeoNames' geographical database](#) containing millions of placenames and allowing to freely record new ones. The Location & Activity Description fields are optional. Project longitude and latitude must follow the Decimal Degrees WGS84 format and Agencies are encouraged to use at least four decimal points for greater accuracy. Users may add as many locations as appropriate. Web mapping applications such as [OpenStreetMap](#) or [GeoNames](#) use this format. Consider using a conversion tool as needed, such as: <https://coordinates-converter.com> Please see the Geocoding User Guide by clicking [here](#).

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	Geo Name ID	Location & Activity Description
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14th of December 2023 (thenshaw): Not addressed.

15th of December 2023 (thenshaw): Addressed.

Agency Response

UNDP- 15 Dec 2023

Kindly note that the geographical location and the map have been added under Annex D, as well as in the CEO ER.

Agency Response- 14 Dec 2023

The geographical coordinates and the map have been added.

Does the termsheet in Annex F provide finalized financial terms and conditions? Does the termsheet and financial structure address concerns raised at PIF stage and that were pending to be resolved ahead of CEO endorsement? (For NGI Only)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

N/A

Agency Response

Do the Reflow Table Annex G and the Trustee Excel Sheet for reflows provide accurate reflow expectations of the project submitted? Assumptions for Reflows can be submitted to explain expected reflows. (For NGI Only)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

Did the agency Annex H provided with information to assess the Agency Capacity to generate and manage reflows? (For NGI Only)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

GEFSEC DECISION

RECOMMENDATION

Is CEO endorsement recommended? (applies only to projects and child projects)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

28th of November 2023 (thenshaw): No, please address above comments and resubmit. Thank you.

14th of December 2023 (thenshaw): No, please address above comments and resubmit. Thank you.

15th of December 2023 (thenshaw): Yes

Review Dates

**Secretariat Comment at
CEO Endorsement**

**Response to
Secretariat comments**

First Review	11/28/2023
Additional Review (as necessary)	12/14/2023
Additional Review (as necessary)	12/15/2023
Additional Review (as necessary)	
Additional Review (as necessary)	

CEO Recommendation

Brief reasoning for CEO Recommendations