Part I: Project Information

GEF ID
10870

Project Type
FSP

Type of Trust Fund
GET

CBIT/NGI
CBIT **No**
NGI **No**

Project Title
Promoting Sustainable Approaches to Ecosystem Conservation in the Imatong landscape of South Sudan

Countries
South Sudan

Agency(ies)
UNEP

Other Executing Partner(s)
Ministry of Environment and Forestry

Executing Partner Type
Government

GEF Focal Area
Multi Focal Area

Sector

Taxonomy
Land Degradation, Focal Areas, Food Security, Sustainable Land Management, Income Generating Activities, Improved Soil and Water Management Techniques, Sustainable Agriculture, Sustainable Pasture Management,

Sustainable Forest, Restoration and Rehabilitation of Degraded Lands, Sustainable Livelihoods, Ecosystem Approach, Community-Based Natural Resource Management, Climate Change, Climate Change Adaptation, Community-based adaptation, Climate Change Mitigation, Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use, Forest, Forest and Landscape Restoration, Biodiversity, Biomes, Tropical Dry Forests, Protected Areas and Landscapes, Terrestrial Protected Areas, Community Based Natural Resource Mngt, Mainstreaming, Agriculture and agrobiodiversity, Species, Wildlife for Sustainable Development, Threatened Species, Stakeholders, Gender Equality, Capacity, Knowledge and Research

Rio Markers

Climate Change Mitigation

Significant Objective 1

Climate Change Adaptation

Significant Objective 1

Biodiversity

Significant Objective 1

Land Degradation

Significant Objective 1

Submission Date

3/10/2023

Expected Implementation Start

9/1/2023

Expected Completion Date

8/31/2028

Duration

60In Months

Agency Fee($)

332,782.00

A. FOCAL/NON-FOCAL AREA ELEMENTS

Objectives/Programs	Focal Area Outcomes	Trust Fund	GEF Amount($)	Co-Fin Amount($)
BD-2-7	Address direct drivers to protect habitats and species and Improve financial sustainability, effective management, and ecosystem coverage of the global protected area estate	GET	2,639,726.00	10,000,000.00
LD-1-4	Reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses and increase resilience in the wider landscape	GET	863,242.00	5,100,000.00
		Total Project Cost($)	**3,502,968.00**	**15,100,000.00**

B. Project description summary

Project Objective

To promote sustainable approaches to ecosystem conservation in the Imatong landscape of South Sudan

Project Component	Financing Type	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing($)	Confirmed Co-Financing($)

Project Component	Financing Type	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing($)	Confirmed Co-Financing($)
1: Developing Enabling policy and regulatory frameworks for effective planning, management and governance of forest Protected Areas biodiversity conservation.	Technical Assistance	**Outcome 1.1:** Forestry Protected Area management frameworks and governance reflect the diversity of needs and interests of key stakeholders and encourage horizontal and vertical co-ordination and co-operation mechanisms. **Indicators:** 1. Number of gender responsive actions identified and approved by government to fast-track review and enactment of policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks governing forest PAs 2. Number of CFM mechanisms with local communities for access to and sharing of benefits of biodiversity	1.1.1: National policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks governing forest PAs reviewed and implemented 1.1.2: Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) mechanisms instituted and access to and sharing of benefits of biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services by local communities promoted 1.1.3: Inclusive and gender sensitive multi-stakeholder co-ordination platform for effective PA management and participatory M&E at national, and subnational levels established,	GET	902,600.00	3,063,712.00

Project Component	Financing Type	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing($)	Confirmed Co-Financing($)
		conservation developed and under implementation 3. Existence of a functional, inclusive and gender sensitive multistakeholder coordination platform for effective PA management **Targets:** 1. Five (5) actions i.e. (i) a set of required reforms; (ii) national conservation objectives; (iii) action plan, (iv) timeframe; and (v) indicators approved by government and proactively used to fast track enactment of the enabling policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks in	made functional and strengthened			

Project Component	Financing Type	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing($)	Confirmed Co-Financing($)
		the environment and forestry sectors 2. Two CFM mechanisms i.e. (i) CFM Policy, and (ii) National CFM Strategy and Action Plan approved and enhancing access to and sharing of benefits of biodiversity conservation at national, state, county, payam boma and PA levels 3. Inclusive and gender sensitive multi-stakeholder platform is in place and taking lead in PAME implementation at national, sub-national, landscape and PA level.				

Project Component	Financing Type	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing($)	Confirmed Co-Financing($)
2. Forest Management plan development and capacity building for effective forestry protected area management	Technical Assistance	**Outcome 2.1:** Forest Management plan developed, and National and PA management staff have the capacities that enable and support PAME achieving biodiversity conservation objectives. **Indicators:** 1. Percentage of PA staff with technical skills in participatory planning and management 2. Number of consultative and gender inclusive plans developed and in operation for biodiversity conservation and effective management of Imatong CFR 3. Percentage of government	2.1.1: National guidelines for PA management planning developed and technical capacity of national and PA level management staff built 2.1.2: Imatong forest Management plan developed and key priority actions and implemented to address PAME challenges in an inclusive consultative manner and participatory approach 2.1.3: Government and PA level staff trained in biodiversity conservation assessment, threat identification and monitoring, and PA	GET	691,242.00	3,115,712.00

Project Component	Financing Type	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing($)	Confirmed Co-Financing($)
		and PA level staff trained in biodiversity conservation assessment, threat identification and monitoring, and PA management methods 4. Number and types of biodiversity threat assessments conducted and informing decision making, strategies, programmes, policies and other information on biodiversity 5. Area of Imatong CFR PA under improved practices and management effectiveness **Targets:** 1. At least 80% of key national, sub national, landscape and PA staff actively	management methods 2.1.4: Biodiversity threat assessments conducted, and strategies/actions plans to support protection of priority species developed and implemented 2.1.5: Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool (IMET) established to track Protected Area Management Effectiveness (PAME) and to inform management decisions and IUCN Green Listing process			

Project Component	Financing Type	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing($)	Confirmed Co-Financing($)
		discharging effective planning and management of PAs. 2. Five(5) inclusive plans in place and operational, i.e. (i) One General Management Plan for Imatong CFR; (ii) Four associate plans for Imatong CFR viz. (a) Zonation management plan; (b) Infrastructure, works and investments development plan, (c) Site management plans, (d) Biodiversity and Cultural Heritage Conservation Plans 3. At least 60% of government and PA staff, disaggregated by gender, are capable of biodiversity conservation assessment, threat identification				

Project Component	Financing Type	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing($)	Confirmed Co-Financing($)
		and monitoring 4. Two assessments (ecosystem change and resource assessments) conducted and informing ecological integrity and sustainable use under Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) in Imatong CFR 5. 110,000 hectares of Imatong CFR under improved practices and management. The Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) score is ? 50				

Project Component	Financing Type	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing($)	Confirmed Co-Financing($)
3: Promoting sustainable agricultural practices and improved community livelihoods in the Imatong landscape	Investment	**Outcome 3.1:** Reduced pressure on the Imatong CFR from sustainable practices in the surrounding landscapes **Indicators:** 1. Number of IUCN generic indicators achieved by Imatong CFR to ascend to the IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas 2. Area of degraded agricultural land bordering Imatong CFR restored 3. Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas) 4. Number of regulatory	3.1.1: Ecosystem services in Imatong Mountain Central Forest Reserve and productive landscapes bordering the ICFR evaluated 3.1.2: Participatory land use plans for productive landscapes around the Imatong CFR developed, approved, and implemented 3.1.3: Key priority actions in the Land Use Plans for Productive Landscapes around the Imatong CFR implemented to address causes of degradation and deforestation and unsustainable	GET	848,100.00	3,987,936.00

Project Component	Financing Type	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing($)	Confirmed Co-Financing($)
		frameworks that govern the management of productive landscapes around the ICFR developed and approved 5. Number of people (at least 50% of whom are women) earning their livelihood from sustainable income generating activities centred on forest conservation and alternative community-based enterprises **Targets:** 1. At least 30 of IUCN?s generic indicators are achieved to sustain the Imatong CFR in the candidate status of the Green List of	land use practices 3.1.4: Regulatory frameworks that govern the management of productive landscapes around the ICFR developed, approved, and implemented at subnational levels 3.1.5: Forest conservation centered sustainable income generating activities for improved community livelihoods identified and implemented.			

Project Component	Financing Type	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing($)	Confirmed Co-Financing($)
		Protected and Conserved Areas 2. 47,806 hectares of degraded agricultural land bordering Imatong CFR restored 3. 10,000 hectares of landscapes bordering the Imatong FR restored and under sustainable land management practices 4. At least 3 regulatory frameworks that govern the management of productive landscapes around the ICFR approved and operational 5. A total of 200,000 people comprising of 110,000 women and 90,000 men are earning their				

Project Component	Financing Type	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing($)	Confirmed Co-Financing($)
		livelihood from sustainable income generating activities centered on forest conservation and alternative community-based enterprises				

Project Component	Financing Type	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing($)	Confirmed Co-Financing($)
4: Knowledge management and learning	Technical Assistance	**Outcome 4.1:** Sector Agencies and relevant institutions applying and scaling up sustainable biodiversity conservation in policy and practice **Indicators:** 1. Gender sensitive M&E system to track best practices and lessons learned from cost-effective PA/ biodiversity conservation management measures operational 2. Total number of lessons learned and best practices on effective PA/ biodiversity conservation and management, including gender mainstreaming, documented and shared at	4.1.1 Tools to track best practices and lessons learned from cost-effective PA/ biodiversity conservation management measures developed and operationalized 4.1.2: Best practices and lessons learned on cost-effective PA/ biodiversity conservation management measures documented and shared at National and Sub national levels and informing uptake and policy. 4.1.3: Targeted discussions at national, state and county levels to share lessons and identify additional	GET	722,426.00	3,467,661.00

Project Component	Financing Type	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing($)	Confirmed Co-Financing($)
		National and Sub-national levels and informing policy. 3. Number of sector agencies applying and scaling up sustainable biodiversity conservation in policy and practice **Targets:** 1. A functional gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation system is in place and actively tracking best practices and lessons learned in biodiversity conservation and management 2. At least 10 project lessons learned and best practices, including gender mainstreamin	areas for replication (potentially hosting workshops at local level to showcase results).			

Project Component	Financing Type	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing($)	Confirmed Co-Financing($)
		g, are documented and applied by other projects and programs locally and nationally 3. At least 5 sector agencies and relevant institutions applying and scaling up sustainable biodiversity conservation in policy and practice				
5. Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Costs	Technical Assistance	5.1: Project deliverables and results meet accountability requirements, and promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing 5.2: Project results are relevant; performance is effective and efficient and provides evidence for impact and sustainability	5.2.1. Project mid-term progress towards planned outputs documented 5.2.2. Final project evaluation conducted to ascertain performance and degree of achievement of outcomes, impacts and their sustainability documented according to plan	GET	175,000.00	632,782.00

Project Component	Financing Type	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing($)	Confirmed Co-Financing($)
				Sub Total ($)	**3,339,368.00**	**14,267,803.00**
Project Management Cost (PMC)						
				GET	163,600.00	832,197.00
				Sub Total($)	**163,600.00**	**832,197.00**
				Total Project Cost($)	**3,502,968.00**	**15,100,000.00**

Please provide justification

C. Sources of Co-financing for the Project by name and by type

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount($)
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Environment and Forestry	Public Investment	Investment mobilized	1,900,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Environment and Forestry	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	3,500,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	2,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism	Grant	Investment mobilized	500,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	2,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	The Directorate of Forestry	Grant	Investment mobilized	500,000.00
Recipient Country Government	The Directorate of Forestry	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	2,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Torit County Government	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	200,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Ikotos County Government	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	200,000.00

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount($)
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of agriculture, environment and forestry of Eastern Equatoria State Government	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	300,000.00
Civil Society Organization	South Sudanese Environment Conservation Society	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	600,000.00
Civil Society Organization	South Sudan Nature Conservation Organization (SSNCO)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	100,000.00
Other	University of Juba	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	100,000.00
Civil Society Organization	Base Net	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	100,000.00
Civil Society Organization	South Sudan Wildlife Society	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	100,000.00
			Total Co-Financing($)	**15,100,000.00**

Describe how any "Investment Mobilized" was identified

Investments mobilized were identified in the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) budget allocations for the contributing Ministries. During the project development process, consultations were held with the government of South Sudan ministries, which expressed interest and commitment in increasing their investment in this high biodiversity value targeted landscape. Therefore, the Government agrees to mobilize resources to support the GEF grant so as to support the achievement of the project development objective, maximize outcomes and carry out replication and scaling-up actions.

D. Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds

Agency	Trust Fund	Country	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Amount($)	Fee($)	Total($)
UNEP	GET	South Sudan	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	2,639,726	250,774	2,890,500.00
UNEP	GET	South Sudan	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation	863,242	82,008	945,250.00
			Total Grant Resources($)		**3,502,968.00**	**332,782.00**	**3,835,750.00**

E. Non Grant Instrument

NON-GRANT INSTRUMENT at CEO Endorsement

Includes Non grant instruments? **No**

Includes reflow to GEF? **No**

F. Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

PPG Required **true**

PPG Amount ($)

150,000

PPG Agency Fee ($)

14,250

Agency	Trust Fund	Country	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Amount($)	Fee($)	Total($)
UNEP	GET	South Sudan	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	100,000	9,500	**109,500.00**
UNEP	GET	South Sudan	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation	50,000	4,750	**54,750.00**
				Total Project Costs($)	**150,000.00**	**14,250.00**	**164,250.00**

Core Indicators

Indicator 1 Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
110,000.00	110,000.00	0.00	0.00

Indicator 1.1 Terrestrial Protected Areas Newly created

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 1.2 Terrestrial Protected Areas Under improved Management effectiveness

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
110,000.00	110,000.00	0.00	0.00

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)	METT score (Achieved at TE)
Imatong	14089	Habitat/Species Management Area	110,000.00	110,000.00			16.00		

Indicator 3 Area of land and ecosystems under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
50000.00	47806.00	0.00	0.00

Indicator 3.1 Area of degraded agricultural lands under restoration

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
Cropland	50,000.00	47,806.00		

Indicator 3.2 Area of forest and forest land under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 3.3 Area of natural grass and woodland under restoration

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 3.4 Area of wetlands (including estuaries, mangroves) under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 4 Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
10000.00	20000.00	0.00	0.00

Indicator 4.1 Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (hectares, qualitative assessment, non-certified)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 4.2 Area of landscapes under third-party certification incorporating biodiversity considerations

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Type/Name of Third Party Certification

Indicator 4.3 Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
	10,000.00		

Indicator 4.4 Area of High Conservation Value or other forest loss avoided

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
High Conservation Value Forest	10,000.00	10,000.00		

Indicator 4.5 Terrestrial OECMs supported

Name of the OECMs	WDPA-ID	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)

Documents (Please upload document(s) that justifies the HCVF)

Title	Submitted

Indicator 5 Area of marine habitat under improved practices to benefit biodiversity (excluding protected areas)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 5.1 Fisheries under third-party certification incorporating biodiversity considerations

Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)

Type/name of the third-party certification

Indicator 5.2 Large Marine Ecosystems with reduced pollution and hypoxia

Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (achieved at MTR)	Number (achieved at TE)
0	0	0	0

LME at PIF	LME at CEO Endorsement	LME at MTR	LME at TE

Indicator 5.3 Marine OECMs supported

Name of the OECMs	WDPA-ID	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO?e (direct)	1544243	7665906	0	0
Expected metric tons of CO?e (indirect)	0	0	0	0

Indicator 6.1 Carbon Sequestered or Emissions Avoided in the AFOLU (Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use) sector

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO?e (direct)	1,544,243	7,665,906		
Expected metric tons of CO?e (indirect)				
Anticipated start year of accounting		2024		
Duration of accounting		20		

Indicator 6.2 Emissions Avoided Outside AFOLU (Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use) Sector

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO?e (direct)				

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO?e (indirect)				
Anticipated start year of accounting				
Duration of accounting				

Indicator 6.3 Energy Saved (Use this sub-indicator in addition to the sub-indicator 6.2 if applicable)

Total Target Benefit	Energy (MJ) (At PIF)	Energy (MJ) (At CEO Endorsement)	Energy (MJ) (Achieved at MTR)	Energy (MJ) (Achieved at TE)
Target Energy Saved (MJ)				

Indicator 6.4 Increase in Installed Renewable Energy Capacity per Technology (Use this sub-indicator in addition to the sub-indicator 6.2 if applicable)

Technology	Capacity (MW) (Expected at PIF)	Capacity (MW) (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Capacity (MW) (Achieved at MTR)	Capacity (MW) (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 11 People benefiting from GEF-financed investments

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Female	110,000	110,000		
Male	90,000	90,000		
Total	200000	200000	0	0

Provide additional explanation on targets, other methodologies used, and other focal area specifics (i.e., Aichi targets in BD) including justification where core indicator targets are not provided

The project will contribute towards the achievement of a number of CBD Aichi Targets, namely: Target 5 by addressing the rate of loss of all natural habitats in the Imatong Mountains Landscape, including forests, and degradation and fragmentation, significantly reduced; Target 7 by promoting sustainable management of areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry, ensuring conservation of biodiversity; Target 11 by contributing to effective and equitable conservation of the ecologically representative protected areas and other effective area based conservation measures in the Imatong Mountain Landscape; Target 14 through restoration of ecosystems that provide essential services, including livelihoods and wellbeing while taking into account the needs of women, indigenous people

and other local communities, and the poor and vulnerable; Target 15 through enhancement of ecosystem resilience and contribution of biodiversity conservation and carbon stocks through conservation and restoration of degraded ecosystems, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation. At the global level, the project will contribute to specific Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Indicators namely: Indicator 12.2 by contributing to achieving the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources; Indicator 15.3 by restoring degraded land and soil, including land affected by drought and floods, and striving to achieve a land degradation neutral world. This project will also contribute to achieving the climate change targets, namely: Target 13.1 (Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate related disasters), Target 13.2 (Integrate climate change measures into policies and planning), Target 13.3 (Build knowledge and capacity to meet climate change), Target 13A (Implement the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change) and Target 13.B (Promote mechanisms to raise capacity for planning and management).

Part II. Project Justification

1a. Project Description

PART II: PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

describe any changes in alignment with the project design with the original pif

The final project design is aligned to the original PIF; it preserves its main objective, strategy and structure. However, some adjustments were made to the targets for outcomes and outputs based on discussions with expert reviewers, project partners, experts and key stakeholders during the project design stage. This improved the precision in outputs and indicators so as to best achieve the outcomes and the overall objective. While the original target for outcome 2 in the PIF was to reduce land degradation in an area of 50,000 ha over the landscape, it was confirmed during project design that the area of the targeted two counties of Ikotos and Torit counties under degradation is actually 47,806 ha, (b) an additional 10,000 ha of high conservation value forests loss which will be avoided through participatory management through approaches such as sustainable land management and therefore reflected in sub-indicator 4.3. This is in addition to the 10,000 ha, reflected in sub-indicator 4.4, of high value conservation forest loss that will be avoided through integrated landscape management approaches. The GHG mitigation potential of the project has therefore been computed to be -7,665,906 tCO2-eq (which is different from the first estimate of 1,544,243 tCO2-eq in the PIF). The project focus and thrust during the PIF has, however, been maintained during PPG.

1a. Project Description.

1.1 Global environmental and/or adaptation problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed

1.1.1 Background

South Sudan (3.5? and 12? North and longitudes 24? to 36? East) occupies an area of 658,842 km2 and is a landlocked country within the Nile River Basin in East and Central Africa. Endowed with oil wealth, it is the richest country, in terms of GDP per capita, in East Africa yet, remains among the poorest. South Sudan?s 2021 Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.385 makes in 191st out of 191 countries and is far below the average of 0.507 for countries in the low human development group and below the average of 0.541 for countries in Sub-Saharan Africa that are close to it in population size such as Benin and Lesotho, which have HDIs ranked 166 and 168 respectively[1][1]. In South Sudan, 91.9 percent of the population (11,552 thousand people) are multidimensionally poor while an additional 6.3 percent are classified as vulnerable to multidimensional poverty (797 thousand people)[2][2]. South Sudan is home to

more than 12.3 million people and approximately 51% of this population lives on less than US$ 1 per day.

South Sudan is the third most fragile state in the world after Yemen and Somalia. Its fragility is characterized by conflict, displacement of people and resulting food insecurity. The prolonged civil war was driven by historical, political, social and economic marginalization, resulting in tensions due to ethnic divisions, corruption and power struggles. With the formation of the new government in February 2020, South Sudan has entered an important transition phase, from conflict towards peace and the initiation of economic recovery. With the establishment of the revitalized peace agreement, the displaced population is returning, albeit with limited physical and financial assets, poor public and private service coverage.

South Sudan?s GDP in 2014 was approximately US$ 13 billion, of which agriculture contributed only about 15%. Oil exports accounted for 70% and 64% of GDP in 2010 and 2011, respectively, and provided 97% of government revenue**[3]3**. Most South Sudanese derive their livelihoods from subsistence agriculture, transhumant livestock farming and pastoralism, which account for around 15% of GDP. About 78% of households depend on crop farming or animal husbandry as their primary source of income. Of the working population, 53% are still traditionally unpaid family workers and only 12% are paid employees (RSS, 2016b[4]4). Approximately 12 to 15% of the population relies on fisheries as their primary source of livelihood.

Agriculture is the backbone of the subsistence economy of South Sudan, accounting for one-third of GDP in 2009. Crops grown include: Cereals (maize, sorghum, bulrush millet, finger millet and upland rice); Roots and tubers (cassava, sweet potato and yams); Oilseeds (groundnut, sesame, soybean and sunflower); Pulses (beans, cowpea and pigeon pea); Fruits (mangoes, citrus and avocados); and Vegetables as well as coffee, tea, cotton and sugarcane. Others include non-wood natural products such as honey, medicinal plants, wild foods and spices to enhance food security. According to the *South Sudan First State of Environment and Outlook Report (2018),* 70 to 90% of the country?s total area of roughly 658,800 km2 is suitable for agriculture, about 50% of which is classified as prime agricultural land and only about 4% of the total land area is cultivated. Large-scale mechanized farms cover only 25% of all cultivated land. About 81% of households cultivate land, 74% own livestock and 22% engage in fishing. A 2012 analysis[5][5] showed that the total value of agricultural production (or ?realized potential?) was about US$808 million (US$600 million from crops).

A scenario exercise by the World Bank[6][6] illustrated the great potential for agriculture to increase the country?s revenues. It showed that modestly increasing cropland from the current 4% of total land area (2.7 million ha) to 10 per cent of total land area (6.3 million ha) would increase the value of total agricultural output 2.4-fold from the current US$808 million to approximately US$2 billion. If per capita yields were to simultaneously increase by 50 per cent, the value of total agriculture output would increase 3.5-fold or to US$2.8 billion. The value of crop production per hectare would also increase from US$227 to US$340. If per capita yields double in this modest cropland expansion scenario, the value of total agriculture production would increase to US$3.7 billion and would exceed the current value of agricultural production in neighboring Uganda. Increasing productivity threefold would increase the value of agricultural production to US$5.5 billion (World Bank, 2012).

The livestock sector in South Sudan supports 950,000 livestock farmers, 350,000 herders, 4,500 animal traders, 2,000 slaughter personnel, 2,000 to 4,000 butchery owners and 500 commercial kraal operators. There is an estimated 38 million livestock in the country compared to its human population of 12.3 million. Of the livestock owners, 5% own more than 200 cattle, 20% own 51 to 200 heads of cattle and 75% have small herds of less than 50 heads of cattle. The gross value of the total livestock products in

2013 was 7.316 Billion SSP (2.480 Billion USD) (VEDAMAN Consultants Limited, 2015[7]7). The total estimated value of goods and services provided by livestock to the economy was 9.362 Billion SSPs (3.173 Billion USD) including 82% derived from conventional goods common in agricultural GDP and 18% from financial services provided by livestock. Milk offtakes is South Sudan?s most economically important livestock output, with a value of 5.126 Billion SSPs (1.738 Billion USD) in 2013, equivalent to 57.64% of livestock contribution to economy[8][8].

South Sudan is a landlocked country, with five transboundary conservation landscapes, namely, Boma-Gambella National Park with Ethiopia, Kidepo Game Reserve?Kidepo Valley National Park with Uganda, Lantoto- Garamba with Congo, and Nimule National Park-Otze Wildlife Reserve with Uganda, and Imatong mountains with Uganda. The main habitat ecosystems of South Sudan includes: a) Lowland Forests, b) Montane Forests, c) Savannah woodlands, d) Grassland Savannahs, e) Floodplains, f) Sudd Swamps and other wetlands, and g) Semi-arid and arid lands (ASALs).

South Sudan contains one of the largest remaining untouched savannah and woodland ecosystems in Africa. South Sudan also contains one Ramsar site, the Sudd, the largest (57,000 km) wetland in Africa, and one of the largest freshwater ecosystems in the world. The South Sudan Sudd is recognized under the Ramsar Convention as habitat for the world?s population stronghold of the shoebill stork and black-crowned crane. South Sudan has 27 IUCN protected areas (PAs) categories, covering about 98,214 km of the land, and these include: 13 in Category VI (Protected Area with Sustainable Use of Natural Resources), 1 in Category V (Protected Landscape / Seascape), 3 in Category IV (Habitat / Species Management) and 9 in Category II (National Park)[9][9].

The country?s wide range of habitats support a very rich diversity. The white-eared Kob, Tiang, Mongalla gazelle and Bohor reedbuck migrations across the eastern grassland savannahs and floodplains of Jonglei and Eastern Equatoria States that stretch into the Gambela region of Ethiopia represent one of the greatest animal migrations and wildlife spectacles of the world, comprising over 1.2 million individuals. Large mammal species include elephant, giraffe, buffalo and the endemic Nile lechwe, and large carnivore species, lion, leopard, cheetah and wild dog. Zebra, hartebeest, and buffalo are at risk of local extirpation unless effective protection can be quickly mobilized.

Some of the endemic fauna species in the country include the Nile lechwe, the white-eared kob, Nile Sitatunga, Hoogstral's Striped Grass Mouse, and a recently discovered African climbing mouse *Dendromus ruppi*. South Sudan is known to be the only country in Africa with both species of eland - the common eland (*Taurotragus oryx*) and the Derby?s (Giant) Eland (*Taurotragus derbianus*). South Sudan is also thought to be the centre of giraffe evolution. Reptiles endemic to South Sudan include the Torit Gracile Blind Snake, *Letheobia toritensis* and the Mount Kinyeti Chameleon. Freshwater fish known exclusively from South Sudan include *Barbus tongaensis* and *Labeo tongaensis*. Endemic flora of South Sudan includes, *Chloroselast aposana*, and *Lepidochrysops nigritia*. Among the vascular plant species restricted to South Sudan are *Aloe diolii*, *Aloe macleayi*, a cycad - *Encephalartos mackenziei*, *Chlorophytum superpositum*, *Scilla chlorantha*, and *Panicum bambusiculme*.

Being Party to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) since 2014, South Sudan is committed to achieving the objectives of the CBD and is scaling up its efforts to achieve the relevant Aichi targets defined in the CBD?s strategic plan. One of the top priorities is strengthening the policy, legal and regulatory frameworks by expediting the enactment of the draft bills into law. The Government of South Sudan (GoSS) has developed a National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan (NBSAP) (2018 ? 2027) as a first step to realize the relevant Aichi targets. The GoSS NBSAP focuses on restoration of degraded forest areas (at least 30% of the degraded forests restored by 2024), degraded farmlands restoration, ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks, through conservation and restoration, including restoration of at least 15% of degraded ecosystems, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and to combating desertification. Under the United Nations Convention to Combat

Desertification (UNCCD), the GoSS set the national LDN targets of 20% forest cover increase and 30% reduction of areas of stressed productivity by 2030.

1.1.2 Threats to sustainable forest management

South Sudan is facing serious environmental and natural resources challenges including loss of biodiversity and its natural habitat degradation. The diversity of species, genes and ecosystems, in South Sudan, are threatened by a number of human pressures. These pressures affect the structure of natural habitat and local ecological communities may cause local extinctions of species, which in turn lead to reduced ecosystem goods and services, and human well-being. The threats to biodiversity include: 1) illegal wildlife poaching and trafficking and subsistence hunting carried out by local people. There is high demand for products from wild animals, bush meat, and game trophies; 2) uncontrolled deforestation; and illegal logging of hardwoods, and growing charcoal?s production; 3) overgrazing and rangeland degradation and loss and agricultural expansion, increasing population growth, extreme rural poverty and drought; 4) natural habitat fragmentation; 5) adverse climate change impacts including increasing desertification and the delaying and shortening of rainy seasons and 6) human-wildlife conflicts especially with communities living near Protected Areas.

1.1.3 Barriers to sustainable land and biodiversity management

Long-term Solution and Barriers
The long-term solution is to facilitate a transformative shift from unsustainable to integrated sustainable land and forest management in the Imatong mountains landscape in order to secure habitat for biodiversity conservation, to maintain a flow of multiple ecosystem services and to support rural development of livelihoods opportunities. There are however several barriers that are preventing this solution to be actioned. These include:

Barrier 1: Lack of a comprehensive policy, legislative and regulatory frameworks, and coordination mechanisms for protected area effective management and biodiversity conservation
South Sudan does not have policy and legislative frameworks in place on forest protected areas. South Sudan has an Environment Policy[10][10] but does not have a policy governing forest protected area, and the use of its natural resources despite heavy charcoal burning, logging and deforestation. The relevant national legislation promoting the biodiversity conservation and management, and ecologically sustainable development in South Sudan is the Transitional Constitution of South Sudan adopted in 2011 and amended in 2015, in its Article 173, paragraph 2 promotes the protection of the environment and biodiversity. The Transitional Constitution of South Sudan provides the basis for the preparation of the draft Environmental Protection Bill (2015), the Wildlife Conservation and Protected Areas Bill (2015) and the Forestry Conservation and Protection bill (2013). All three bills when adopted, will empower the Ministry of Environment and Forestry to supervise and co-ordinate all matters relating to the environment, forestry and wildlife protected areas. It is hoped that the draft bills, after further review, will approved by the newly created inclusive national assembly under the coalition government. The South Sudan new parliament was sworn in, on 2 August 2021 under peace deal. The creation of an inclusive national assembly was a key condition of the 2018 ceasefire that paused five years of bloodshed between government and rebel forces that left nearly 400,000 people dead.[11][11]

The lack of a comprehensive legal framework has crippled effective forest management at national, state, county, payam (Parish) and boma (village) levels, where de facto arrangements have been utilized to govern the use of forest resources. The lack of a clear legislative framework causes competing claims on land and other resources, loss of productivity and conflict. Mandates between the national and State governments, Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs) and Private Sector Organizations (PSO) overlap

creating uncoordinated actions[12][12].[13]13. Poor inter-sectoral coordination and collaboration among stakeholders negatively impact on forest management and investment. In addition, forest management is impacted negatively due to weak governance structures and untrained law enforcement entities and staff. Years of conflict have led to a lack of trained personnel in natural resource management and biodiversity conservation. Ex-soldiers and combatants, many of whom have very limited skills and understanding of biodiversity conservation were incorporated into the environment and natural resources sectors, and this is undermining effective PA management and biodiversity conservation.

There are inadequate structures to adequately manage environmental protection concerns, including deforestation and biodiversity loss. There is a critical need to establish and build the capacity of an inclusive multi-stakeholder platform to champion the implementation of the policy, legal and regulatory reforms, including review of the Environmental Protection Bill (2015), the Wildlife Conservation and Protected Areas Bill (2015) and the Forestry Conservation and Protection bill (2013), and the implementation of effective protection and management of South Sudan?s protected area network and natural resource sectors for tangible conservation outcomes. Top on the agenda on this is, PA management effectiveness assessments to measure the extent to which all of the necessary systems and processes are taking place in the PA, and to identify areas for improvement. This calls for strengthened coordination and partnership among stakeholders to achieve the desired Protected Areas Management Effectiveness (PAME) reporting outcomes as a foundation for IUCN Protected Area Green Listing.

Barrier 2: Lack of a forest management plan and management capacity for PA management and biodiversity conservation

The impact of the civil war years, in effect meant that there was no PA management planning in South Sudan. Almost all PAs in South Sudan, including Imatong CFR have no medium or long term (5-15 years) Management Plans. In the absence of Management Plans, key values of the protected areas have not been adequately identified and articulated. Management strategies to guide actions on the ground have not been developed by stakeholders in a participatory manner. There is no detailed PA zoning and detailed prescriptions to guide actions on the ground. PA boundaries are just on paper but are not surveyed or/and demarcated, creating conflicts with neighboring communities over management boundaries and responsibilities, and benefit sharing.

It is important to develop the Imatong CFR Management Plan, to guide and control the management of PA resources, and the use of the area. The Management Plan will set forth the basic and development philosophy of the Imatong CFR, and provide strategies, programs, and actions necessary for effective Imatong CFR management to (re)solve the above identified challenges, and those to be identified during the management planning process, and in achieving the identified management objectives over a ten-year period. This would go a long way in addressing the pressing PA development needs in terms of support facilities and operations, and policy, legal and regulatory compliance as well as PA biodiversity assessments and M&E, and reporting on CBD in the long term and sustainable basis.

In addition, there is lack of capacity of both the government and PA management staff in data collection/information gathering for development of the management plan and its implementation.

Barrier 3: Lack of integrated land use planning in productive landscapes around protected areas for improved community livelihoods to reduce pressure on the PA:

There is lack of capacity at the state, county, and community levels to implement a landscape approach to integrated land use planning and management that strengthens protection of the Imatong CFR while at the same time supporting land and forest use in the surrounding landscape. Furthermore, there is a lack of respect for local and devolved governance, and a lack of understanding of how rural land users manage the landscape in terms of the roles of men and women and the balancing of multiple uses (agriculture, conservation forests). The result is that local rights and responsibilities are undermined leading to degradation and inequity. The NBSAP (2018) notes that assessing and building management strategies based on traditional community conservation and use systems will be key to understanding and reducing

conflict over natural resources and pressures on forests and wildlife populations. Support from constituencies for community based wildlife and forest resource management will need to be developed to control access, halt unsustainable commercial hunting, manage immigration into ecologically sensitive areas and ensure that local resources benefit local people. This will be achieved through zoning based on its value in producing certain services and integrating such values in land use planning. The capacity of farmers in sustainable land management practices also need to be developed in order to utilize land efficiently.

Institutional and technical capacities to create and improve local communities? livelihood in forest protected areas are insufficient in South Sudan. These capacity barriers are exacerbated by absence of any structures for exchanges experiences and very limited experiences in promoting livelihood diversification, forest based livelihoods, forest-related livelihoods and other alternative livelihood activities that may not be related to the forest protected areas at all. Both, the national and the state forest departments (with a limited annual budget of approximately $20,126) face many challenges, including lack of capacity and new approaches to community engagement that can increase buy-in to conservation objectives. Currently, local communities do not play a role in forest collaborative management and sustainable community livelihood development centered on forest conservation and enhanced management of Imatong CFR and the landscape at large. In and around ICFR, there is no community-based structure for natural resource management at the moment. As such the present conservation approach does not have the means to engage local people in managing and benefiting from natural resources therein. Consequently, communities in the landscape have neither the structure nor skills and instruments for participating in collaborative management of natural resource. To date, there are no income generating conservation-based projects in the Imatong landscape. Furthermore, there are no conservation compatible sustainable community livelihood activities for them to benefit from and contribute positively to conservation of the forest and the wildlife therein. Such community livelihood activities, even when initiated, are likely to encounter funding obstacles for their implementation. Nonetheless, conservation compatible, sustainable community livelihood and resilience initiatives in the Imatong landscape with strategic objectives for forestry conservation, wildlife conservation and improvement of PA management are inadequate. To date, there are no procedures and mechanisms for engaging with, consulting and involving local communities in the designation and management of PAs, neither for the generation of benefits for local communities nor compensation for potential losses. There are also no environmentally sustainable livelihoods initiatives supported among the communities. Even when initiated, such livelihood projects will require substantial funding for community development.

Barrier 4: Lack of knowledge on protected area management effectiveness (PAME) protocols and integrated landscape management approaches:

A critical constraint to effective PA in South Sudan is the very limited information that exists on biodiversity and the threats to biodiversity. So far, no system-level valuation exercise has been undertaken on the ecosystem services and goods provided by the Imatong CFR system to inform planning and management decisions. The lack of such information prevents building a strong case for local community and other stakeholder participation in the Imatong CFR, and broader production landscape sustainable management. This information lack is tied to a lack of national capacities in environmental valuation methodologies and PA and spatial land use management planning. Conservation personnel are not well trained. There is lack of PA management and biodiversity conservation technical capacity and skills, and there is total lack of conservation education programs. Overall, natural resources governance is very weak, and knowledge base extremely low, posing grave danger for forest management. Under the decentralization system of governance, overlaps exist among central Government institutions and those in the States.

This information gap coupled with lack of multi-sectoral collaboration, and PA and spatial land use planning, greatly reduces the effectiveness of existing efforts to manage PAs and preserve ecosystem services including critical habitat areas and the corridors between them. With a limited knowledge base, there is a big predicament on how to meet the ever-growing demand for agricultural products and address food security challenges while conserving biodiversity, providing critical ecosystem goods and services, and improving rural livelihoods. There is limited knowledge on how to have ecologically representative and connected network of PAs as well as productive agricultural landscapes supported by enhanced

governance arrangements that conserve biodiversity and enhance food security, ecosystem resilience and biodiversity conservation at scale. An integrated landscape approach is seen as one approach to addressing the rampant challenges of, deforestation and loss of biodiversity at the local level. The strategic intent is to bring together stakeholders to collaborate and to integrate policy and practice for different land use objectives, with the purpose of achieving sustainable landscapes, and ensure PAME at scale through knowledge enhancement.

1.2 Baseline scenario and any associated baseline projects

South Sudan started building its government institutions from a low base only less than a decade ago following independence in 2011. Since then, some progress has been achieved, as core administrative structures and mechanisms of political representation have been set up. Unfortunately, the decade of conflict in South Sudan has destroyed both human and institutional capacities across governance functions, including generation and management of statistics as a basis for accountability and evidence-based policy decision making in government, the private sector, as well as the non-government organizations. In addition, at independence, the country did not have adequate governance and institutional structures to efficiently manage its financial, economic and natural resources and formulate sound policies. Weak institutional capacities both at the national and state levels have been identified as being at the centre of the country?s failure to sustain peace. Identified challenges include (i) inadequate and lack of disaggregated economic and social data; (ii) incomplete or absence of legal frameworks (i.e., laws and regulations); (iii) inadequate institutional and human capacity; and (iv) inadequacy in policy, strategy and plan for various sector ministries. This has resulted in shortcomings in economic policy planning, formulation and implementation; gender and regional imbalanced public services delivery; poor institutional coordination; limited transparency and accountability frameworks for economic governance; weak resources mobilization; and inefficient public spending and monitoring/oversight.

Between 1973 and 2006, on average, South Sudan lost 2% of its forests to deforestation every year, which could lead to a near total loss of forest cover with its accompanying biodiversity within 50 years. It is estimated that the current annual loss of forests and other wooded land in South Sudan is at 277,630 hectares. Loss of forests is exacerbated by the unsustainable farming practices employed across South Sudan, with some parts of the country already classified as deserts. Recent maps on land cover changes indicate a dramatic shift form woodland and forest to cultivated land and bare soil for agricultural production and fuel wood and charcoal.

With regards to land tenure policy and legal framework, land rights in South Sudan are regulated by the Transitional Constitution of South Sudan (TCSS) 2011, the Land Act 2009 and the Local Government Act 2009. The TCSS 2011 gives ownership of the land to the people of South Sudan and its regulation to the government (Land Act, 2009). Land belongs to South Sudanese, implying that all South Sudanese have access rights to land anywhere in the country (Land Act, 2009). The TCSS 2011 also categorizes land tenure into public, community and private land. Public land is ?land owned, held or otherwise acquired by any level of government as defined by law? (TCSS, 2011; Land Act, 2009). Community land is a ?land traditionally and historically held or used by local communities or their members? (TCSS, 2011). Private land consists of (1) land acquired by individual under leasehold and (2) investment land obtained and held by lease from the government or community (TCSS, 2011, Land Act, 2009).

In Eastern Equatoria, there are three separate land tenure regimes and a distinct legal system governing each:

? The Central Forest Reserves in the Imatong Mountains are governed by such legislation as is applicable to forests. This is public land within the provisions of S9 of the Land Act.

? The land in the town of Torit is municipal land and largely subject to private ownership, through leases from the municipality. This is private land within S9 of the Land Act, which also contains the basic provisions enabling this system to operate. Privately leased land can be sold without need for any consent, unless the new owner is contemplating changing the established use of the land in which case consent is required from the Directorate of Survey, Lands & Town Planning in the Ministry of Physical Infrastructure of Eastern Equatoria State.

? Almost all the rest of the land within the Equatoria State is community land, within S9. Some leases of land within community land have been granted to individuals or investors, particularly of irrigable areas alongside the riverbanks. Community rights are eligible for registration under the Land Act but none have been so registered in Torit, which in any event does not have a functioning land registry. The Easter Equatoria State government also obtains leases of community land for use as e.g. payam headquarters or schools. However, community consultation and consent is essential before any grant of a lease of what was community land.

Inside Imatong CFR, illegal logging of indigenous species, especially mahogany (*Khaya senegalensesis* and *K. grandifolia*) is increasing. Return of refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) has spurred logging to supply local markets for building material, accelerating unregulated and often-illegal logging that is causing serious environmental degradation and threatens forest habitats and biodiversity. The unsustainable harvesting of forest products for cooking, building housing units and charcoal burning and crafts for sale is destroying biodiversity and the natural resource base. Encroachment through settlements, livestock over grazing in the ICFR, and uncontrolled wild game hunting bushfires are destroying trees and their capacity to regenerate.

Outside the ICFR, the influx of returning refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), and pastoralists with their cattle is increasing land use pressures in areas not previously occupied. There is unsustainable agriculture expansion transforming productive landscapes around Imatong CFR into unproductive landscapes. Future threats outside Imatong CFR could come from the revival of commercial farming in the region including coffee plantations in the Aloma Plateau, palm tree plantation in the Yambio and Nzara areas and tea and coffee plantations around the Upper Talanga, Katire and Gilo areas near the Imatong Mountains. Also, unplanned developments and unsustainable agricultural practices in the productive landscapes will lead to habitat destruction and disturbance to breeding grounds of migratory species, decreasing successful breeding and number of migratory birds visiting the area.The project implementation sites within the Imatong CFR are four protected areas: Katire, Imelai, Gilo and Talanga lowland forest nature reserve. These nature reserves have both natural and human ecosystems that must be taken into consideration as the project enhances forest reserves and promote biodiversity conservation. However, actual management and law enforcement have been lacking. The ICFR is poorly protected and managed and has been ecologically degraded. Besides having inadequate dimensions and lacking in connectivity, it is embedded within an agricultural landscape, and existing buffer zones around the ICFR have been encroached upon. Communities around the Imatong CFR rely heavily on the forests for poles for building shelters, crop cultivation, wild game hunting, wild foods, livestock grazing, medicinal plants, timber for construction and furniture making, firewood for cooking, making charcoal for sale, wild honey harvesting and other forest products for income and households needs. Traders from Torit also collect products from the forest, especially timber, bamboo, charcoal and honey. Most households (48.3%) use firewood and straw shrubs for lighting while the major energy source for cooking is firewood (87.9%) and charcoal (28.8%). There is an increasing quantity of bamboo poles coming from

the Imatong CFR used for local construction of huts and furniture and for sale. Each household harvests about 35-100 bamboo poles per month, and poles are transported to Torit and Juba for sale.

The payams of Eastern Equatoria, however, have a well-defined community forest management structure. Traditionally, access to the forests is unrestricted to the community and the resources of the forest are considered to be common property. In each of the bomas the *Monyobiji* (youth) are in charge of the day to day running of the forest - which includes patrolling it. However, the traditional forest management structures seem ill-equipped to prevent members of the community from over-exploiting resources. Exploitation of the forest resources by the local community is uncontrolled enough for there to be the potential for abuse of the existing system and consequently an inequitable distribution of the forest resources. In the absence of established structures and systems to aid and regulate sustainable development, the exploitation of forest resources in order to meet people?s basic needs, has been uncontrolled. The traditional form of forest management is being increasingly weakened as people harvest forest resources for income generation and sale with little regard for the traditional norms and practices. The collaborative forest management approach, which is very similar to the traditional forest management approach, and can be applied even to protected areas such as the Imatong CFR, is therefore an important tool in tackling the problem of sustainable forest resource management. More importantly, the approach is a vehicle with which to deliver better livelihoods, because it extends the benefits of forestry resource management to the communities that live near to a given resource. Those benefits might be incentives for involvement in - or identification with - the goals of conservation.

The Government of South Sudan has full authority over its natural resources (including forests and protected areas). The Ministry Environment and Forestry is mandated with the Protection and conservation of the environment as well as ensuring sustainable utilization of the environmental resource base to meet the needs of both the present and future generations. Administratively, the ministry is divided into directorates: Directorate of Environment and Directorate of Forestry. The Directorate of Wetlands and Biodiversity in the Ministry of Environment have the strategic objectives for protection, conservation and Management of Biodiversity. The Directorate of Forestry is charged with ensuring that effective implementation of Forestry Policy Framework and Legislation in all States of Southern Sudan is achieved. It comprises of seven (7) Forestry Departments and Units under a Directorate General. All Forestry Departments are headed by Directors and each Department consists of several specialized Units manned by Deputy Directors. The seven Forestry Departments are 1. Afforestation & Natural Forests Conservation; 2. Agro-forestry and Forestry Extension Services; 3. Forest Training and Research Unit; 4. Forests Survey and Inventories; 5. Forest Utilization and Sawmilling; 6. Forests Investment and Economics (National Forest Programs; Concessions Appraisals, Industries Units), and 7. Forest Administration & Finance. The Directorate of Forestry also has regional, county, and Payam (sub-county) offices and staff, and it is responsible for National Central Forest Reserves and their staff (primarily forest officers, extension workers, wardens and forest rangers).

The South Sudan Wildlife Services (SWSS) within Ministry of Wildlife conservation and Tourism (MWCT) has primary responsibility for protected areas and wildlife conservation and management in the country. SWSS includes a headquarters with departments responsible for Wildlife Management, Law Enforcement, Tourism, Fisheries and Production, Training and Planning, as well as a Wildlife Conservation and Research College. SWSS also has regional, county, and Payam (sub-county) offices and staff, and it is responsible for wildlife management in the country.

The Department of Land Use Planning and Development under the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security develops land use plans and maps for government farms where it carries out (a) Soil surveys: to generate soil maps and accompanying reports that characterize the various soil types occurring in the survey area. (b) Generate land capability maps: to show different categories of land capability classes

from prime arable land through marginal to non-arable land and (c) Develop land use plans: to cover resettlement plans, crops and forestry land suitability plans. Without GEF intervention, the Department of Land Use Planning will continue producing land use plans for government farms only and yet the highest levels of land degradation exist in areas around forest reserves.

The Imatong landscape lies in Eastern Equatoria which, like other states in South Sudan, is sub-divided into counties. These are further divided into Payams, then Bomas. Each county is headed by a County Commissioner, elected by the people as the head of the local government in the County. The Eastern Equatoria state is divided into the following counties: Budi, Ikotos, Kapoeta East, Kapoeta North, Kapoeta South, Lafon, Magwi and Torit.

South Sudan has a number of laws and policies that incorporate environmental matters, including forestry and protected area management. The following table summarises the status of the main policies and laws in South Sudan.

Table 2. Main policies and laws in south Sudan with relevance to the project

Policy or legal framework	Objectives
Transitional Constitution of South Sudan	o Articles 41 & 46 provide that every person shall have the obligation to protect the environment and the right to have the environment protected for the benefit of present and future generations.
South Sudan Vision 2040	o To ensure that by 2040 South Sudan is a united and peaceful new nation, building strong foundations for good governance, economic prosperity and enhanced quality of life for all. o The Vision foresees the government initiating and investing in agriculture to achieve food security; advancing the role of women; and promoting partnerships between local and foreign investors, which invest in development that substantially increases resource ownership and management by citizens. The Vision also envisages that the government will adopt appropriate measures to limit pollution that may result from rapid industrialisation and to foster sustainable environmental management.
The Revised National Development Strategy for South Sudan ? 2021- 2024	o Establish and/or strengthen institutions for transparent, accountable and inclusive governance o Foster macroeconomic stability and lay foundations for the diversification of the economy o Build critical infrastructure for sustainable development, including roads, public buildings and broadband capability o Increase support to the social sector for human capital development and protect the the vulnerable population, to leave no one behind o Mainstream gender in all development policies and programmes and empower women and youth as drivers of growth and nation-building
National Environment Protection and Sustainable Development Policy, 2014-2024	o To provide guidance and direction on the effective management of the environment to all stakeholders: government agencies, the private sector, NGOs, CBOs and the general public.

Policy or legal framework	Objectives
Environment Protection Bill, 2014	o Empowers the Ministry of Environment and Forestry to supervise and coordinate all matters relating to the environment and to be the principal instrument of government in the implementation of all policies relating to the environment, including biodiversity. o Provides for the preparation of a National Environmental Action Plan; and designation of Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) for the actual or prospective habitat of any environmentally sensitive species required to be protected for the purpose of meeting the government?s international obligations under any of the MEAs. o Provides for freedom to access environmental information and this will facilitate education and public awareness on biodiversity. o Addresses pollution prevention, control and waste management, currently a major source of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation particularly by the oil and extractive industries.

Policy or legal framework	Objectives
National Environmental Policy 2015	o Sets guidelines and regulations on the sustainable management of the environment as well as the prudent utilization of natural resources. o Calls for the development and implementation of a National Strategy and Biodiversity Action Plan for South Sudan. It also urges for: - Promoting coordination, cooperation and participation of all relevant stakeholders in conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity across all sectors of the economy; - Encouraging a Green economy initiative to enhance low carbon and resource efficient economy as well as promoting carbon sequestration; - Promoting national integrated approaches for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and protection of aquatic ecosystems and life; - Implementing the MEAs related to biodiversity; - Supporting communication, education and public awareness programmes on the importance and benefits of conserving the biodiversity to the citizens and their livelihoods; - Sharing the benefits of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use with local communities and stakeholders; - Discouraging introduction of invasive and alien species and where such species are available manage and control properly to avoid adverse impacts on local environment; - Promoting ex-situ conservation of biodiversity; and - Encouraging conservation and cultivation of herbal, medicinal and economic plants. o Provides for the establishment of an autonomous South Sudan National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) to act as the watchdog on all public institutions, private companies and individuals defaulting against the stipulated environmental laws and regulations. o Calls for developing a national strategy and mechanisms for climate change adaptation and mitigation; and formulating a climate change policy for South Sudan.

Policy or legal framework	Objectives
Agriculture Policy 2012	o Aims at enhancing measures to mitigate the adverse effects and impacts from climate change in the medium and long-term. It also provides for the protection of plants, seed management, and development of plant genetic resources conservation programme and a biosafety framework.
Comprehensive Agricultural Development Master Plan (CAMP)	o Proposed in 2015, considered as a ?road map? for the future of agriculture in South Sudan. o The CAMP identifies the potential of different products across the country, priority programmes/projects and the resources required to implement them. During the formulation of the CAMP, a mechanism was established to ensure a harmonized and coordinated framework for effective and efficient management of activities and resources for formulation.
National Policy on Food Security 2012	o National policy to support food security. Includes policy measures and strategies meant to mitigate the adverse effects and impacts from climate change in the medium and long term. These include the development of community adaptive capacity for climate change through the development of crops that can resist droughts and floods.
Ministry of Animal Resources and Fisheries Policy Framework and Strategic Plans 2012-2016	o To take charge of protecting, promoting, exploiting and developing, on a sustainable basis, the livestock and fisheries resources, for the socio-economic prosperity of the people of South Sudan.
Fisheries Policy for South Sudan	o Provides for a framework to manage fisheries resources of the country so as to maximize production and avoid overfishing and to prevent destruction of wetlands and promote their conservation. One specific objective of the policy is to maintain a healthy environment and ecosystems by adopting measures to prevent environmental damage to aquatic systems through pollution and environmental degradation.
Forest Policy 2007	o The policy aims at ensuring a sufficient and sustained forest resource base and flow of forest goods and services to support livelihoods and socio-economic development for the present and future generations. Ensuring inter-generation equity in its potentially rich forest endowment is a key plank of this policy.
Forestry Bill 2009	o The purpose of this Bill is to cover all matters concerned with all forests and woodlands on national forest reserves, provincial forest reserves, and protection forests under custody of the Government of the Republic of South Sudan, state government, communities and individuals.

Policy or legal framework	Objectives
Forest Policy Harmonized 2015	o The policy aims at ensuring a sufficient and sustained forest resource base and flow of forest goods and services to support livelihoods and socio-economic development for the present generation without compromising this endowment for future generations. o The policy addresses important tenure issues around the country?s forests and articulates forest ownership and institutional management boundaries. The policy designates previous Central Forest Reserves as National Forest Reserves to be managed by central government, State Forest Reserves to be overseen by state governments, and allows for formalizing tenure and co-management arrangements for communities for forests on community lands.
Policy on Wildlife Conservation and Protected Areas 2012	o To guide on the sustainable management and utilization of wildlife resources including land, water, fauna and flora for the benefit of the people of South Sudan. o To protect, conserve and propagate the wildlife species and their habitats in a manner that supports the development needs of South Sudan and the cultural, economic and social well-being of its people. o Recognizes climate change as a global reality with serious implications for natural ecosystems and wildlife resources. The policy calls for designing coping strategies to address the impacts of climate change on habitats and populations of wildlife species.
Wildlife Conservation and Protected Areas Bill 2015	o Covers all matters concerned with wildlife conservation, the establishment and management of protected areas (PAs) and the sustainable management and conservation of South Sudan?s natural heritage and wildlife for the benefit of its citizens. o Allows local communities around PAs to manage wildlife in collaboration with the South Sudan Wildlife Service (SSWS) and permits other organizations to manage any PA on behalf of the Government. o Grants SSWS Officers similar enforcement and prosecutorial powers as the police officers under the Code of Criminal Procedure Act 2008 ? arrest, inspection, seizure and forfeiture. o Increases the number of wildlife offences as well as explicitly provides for the crime of wildlife trafficking. These include illegal hunting, capture and trafficking of protected animals. o Provides for the protection of wetlands.
Disaster Management Policy and its accompanying Master Plan 2015-2030	o Provides for capacity building for disaster (local conflicts, civil wars, drought and floods) risk reduction in South Sudan.

Policy or legal framework	Objectives
Water Bill Final Draft 2015	o To promote effective management of the quantity, quality and reliability of available water resources in order to maximize social and economic benefits while ensuring long-term environmental sustainability.
Water Resources Policy 2007	o The document addresses specific issues in relation to three main sub-areas of water policy, i.e. Water Resources Management (WRM), Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (RWSS), and Urban Water Supply and Sanitation (UWSS) and establishes guiding principles and objectives in relation to each.
Petroleum Act 2012	o This act provides a regulatory framework for the development and management of petroleum activities and other ancillary matters related to petroleum activities in the Republic in conformity with the Transitional Constitution. o Provides that a Social and Environmental Impact Assessment (SEIA) to be undertaken by the oil contractor or licensee in compliance with international standards to determine any present environmental and social damage, establish the costs of repair and compensation and determine any other areas of concern.
Mining Policy 2013	o Recognizes the need to ensure that mining operations are conducted in a socially and environmentally responsible manner by minimizing harmful impacts of mining and that the interests of local communities are fully considered and protected.
Mining Act 2012	o Provides a framework for the management of the mining sector consistent with international standards, including licensing, environmental protection guidelines and the use of technology to ensure as much mineral resources as possible are recovered from the ground. It also provides for Community Development Agreements for Mining Licenses and environment and social provisions.
South Sudan Tourism Policy 2012	o Recognizes that tourism developments in national parks and game reserves shall adhere to the provisions of the General Management Plans developed according to the Wildlife Conservation and Protected Area Policy and related legislation, regulations and guidelines.
Land Act 2009	o The Land Act prescribes that land may be acquired, held and transferred through customary, freehold and leasehold tenure. All citizens hold freehold titles to their lands. Non-citizens may acquire leasehold for specific periods but may not possess land in freehold. o Addresses land tenure security, transparency and accountability, resource-based conflicts, and gender bias and discrimination. It also addresses the need for social and environmental impact assessment for planned projects o The Land Act does not completely align with the Transitional Constitution in the area of land ownership.

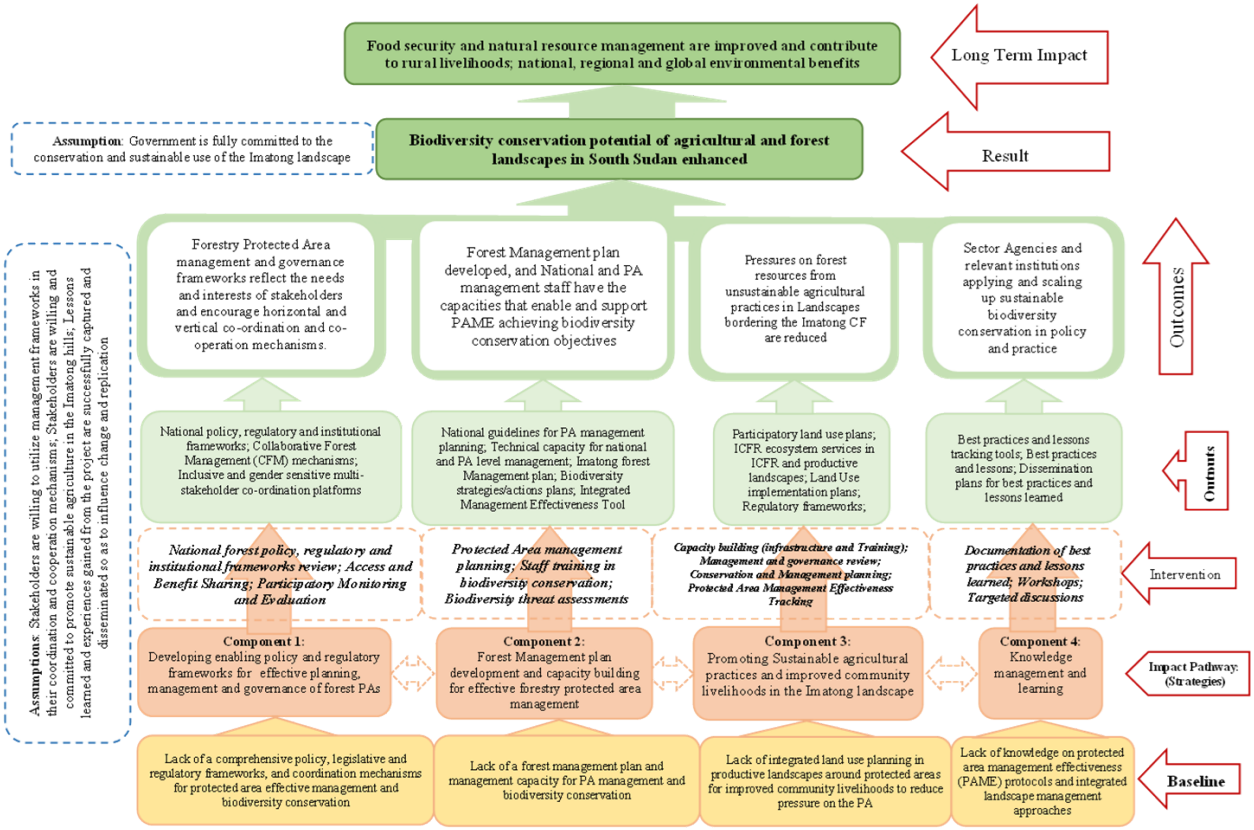
Policy or legal framework	Objectives
Land Policy	o Addresses issues such as displacements due to civil war, natural disasters, land right conflicts and conflicts over pastures and water points.
Plant Protection Bill	o Protect South Sudan?s plants against de?struc?tive dis?eases, pests and weeds and prevent the in?tro?duc?tion and spread of harm?ful or?gan?isms that may ad?versely af?fect the country?s agri?cul?ture.

1.3 Proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components

In the proposed alternative scenario, the project will contribute to Sustainable Land Management (SLM) and Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) practices that increase tree or forest cover, and reduction of the rate of degradation in the Imatong landscape using practices that increase soil organic matter, conserve water, reduce erosion or correct degradation processes. The goal will be to improve natural resource management and contribute to rural livelihoods, national, regional and global environmental benefits through sustainable ecosystem conservation of the Imatong landscape of South Sudan.

The intervention logic (theory of change) for the alternative scenario is premised on the understanding that resources will be deployed to implement the interventions (activities) to deliver outputs which in turn will lead to certain institutional and behavioural changes (outcomes) at the intermediate level provided that the assumptions and certain preconditions governing project implementation hold true. At the lowest level of the theory of change, necessary and sufficient interventions will be deployed to deliver outputs. The key assumptions underpinning this level of the theory of change is that there is political will for integrated landscape management, interest and commitment from the local communities. The next level of the theory of change, shows that outputs will lead directly to the delivery of the project outcomes, namely: (a) the Government of South Sudan adopts and starts enforcing an updated comprehensive policy, legislative and regulatory frameworks, and coordination mechanisms for protected area effective management and biodiversity conservation in the Imatong landscape (b) develop and implement a forest management plan and generate management capacity for PA management and biodiversity conservation (c) develop and implement an integrated land use planning in productive landscapes around Protected areas for improved community livelihoods to reduce pressure on the PA d) knowledge on protected area management effectiveness (PAME) protocols and integrated landscape management approaches.

The underpinning assumption here is that government is fully committed to the conservation and sustainable use of the Imatong landscape biodiversity and forestry resources. The outputs are deemed as sufficient and adequate to deliver the stated outcomes if the following assumptions are true: (i) Stakeholders are willing to cooperate in the project; (ii) Local communities are cooperative; (iii) Local scientists and other professionals are willing to partner with local communities; (iv) Information dissemination pathways are readily available for awareness creation. It is anticipated that delivery of the project objective will lead to the delivery of the anticipated project impact which is ?Natural resource management is improved and contribute to rural livelihoods, national, regional and global environmental benefits?. In order to achieve the stated impact, factors/conditions (impact drivers) are necessary for the project to move from outcomes to delivery of impact: (i) target stakeholders exhibiting continuous commitment to integrated landscape management approaches; (ii) continuous engagement and ultimate ownership/buy-in of project activities by stakeholders; and (iii) project partnerships and personnel with key institutions/policy champions to drive political will necessary for policy change are stable.



The project objective will be achieved through the key inputs under four targeted Components, viz.: 1) Enabling policy and regulatory frameworks for Forestry Protected Area (PA) effective planning, management and governance, 2) Forest Management plan development and capacity building for effective forestry protected area management, 3) Promotion of sustainable agricultural practices to maintain forest cover in landscapes around the Imatong CFR, and 4) Knowledge management and learning. The four project components are inter-related and will lead to improved capacity of decision makers, users and beneficiaries to efficiently and effectively manage the Imatong CFR and its landscapes. They have also been designed to assist the government and key stakeholders in the development of appropriate management systems and tools on forest management, biodiversity conservation and sustainable land management. This will be achieved through the following project components, outcomes and outputs:

Component 1: Developing enabling policy and regulatory frameworks for effective planning, management and governance of forest PAs

The aim of this component is to strengthen policy, legislative and institutional capacity of the GoSS for biodiversity conservation and effective management of forestry. This objective will be achieved through the following outcomes and outputs:

Outcome 1.1: Forestry Protected Area management frameworks and governance reflect the diversity of needs and interests of key stakeholders and encourage horizontal and vertical co-ordination and co-operation mechanisms.

This outcome will be achieved through 3 outputs, namely.

Output 1.1.1: National policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks governing forest PAs reviewed and implemented:
A comprehensive expert review process will be undertaken by an external expert team to review the existing policy, regulatory and institutional landscape in the country to identify gaps, assess specific needs and provide an action plan to address those gaps/needs in the environment and forestry sectors in South Sudan. The experts? report will identify barriers, opportunities and entry points to expedite the policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks review process. The report will include recommendations for improving the policy, regulatory and institutional framework of the environment and forestry sectors. A national stakeholder workshop will be convened to discuss experts? team draft report recommendations. The final recommendations endorsed by stakeholders will be submitted to the Government of South Sudan for their consideration, and will include: (i) a set of reforms to enhance sector performance; (ii) national biodiversity conservation objectives that the reforms are expected to advance; (iii) an action plan and designated national entities responsible for leading the implementation of the recommendations, (iv) approximate timeframe and sequence for the implementation of each recommendation; and (v) indicators against which the effects of proposed reforms can be assessed.

Activity 1. Conduct expert review of policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks in the environment and forestry
A multi-disciplinary team of experts will be tasked to assess gaps in the existent enabling policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks in the environment and forestry sectors. The aim of the policy and regulatory review is to: 1) Strengthen legislative and institutional capacity for PAs management and biodiversity conservation 2) Enhance enabling environment for forest PAs management at all administrative levels.

Baseline information indicate there is an environment policy and other policies that partly address PA management and biodiversity conservation in the Imatong landscape. Consequently, the policy review will cover all relevant national policies, which includes but not limited to Wildlife, Forestry and land policy. All the gaps/problems in the various relevant policies will be assessed such that the problems are clarified and prioritized. This will culminate into a detailed report about mutli-sectoral national challenges in forest PAs management and biodiversity conservation. This report will comprehensively highlight the crosscutting issues in biodiversity conservation, which include protection of animal and plant species, genetics and ecosystem existent in the Imatong landscape. Thereby contribute to enhancing the enabling environment for sustainable biodiversity conservation. Biodiversity loss is mainly because of human activities that include illegal poaching of wildlife for their meat and products, uncontrolled deforestation, rangeland degradation, habitat fragmentation in forest reserves and human-wildlife conflicts.

Legislative and institutional shortcomings are existent in PAs management and biodiversity conservation. These include 1) lack of clarity in regulations leading to competing claims and loss of productivity and conflict in protected areas. 2) Overlapping mandates between the national and state governments, Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs) and Private Sector Organizations (PSO) thereby creating uncoordinated actions, and 3) Poor inter-sectoral coordination and collaboration among stakeholders negatively affect forest management and investment.

The main barrier under component 1 is absence or limited comprehensive policy, legislative and regulatory frameworks. Coordination mechanisms for protected area effective management and biodiversity conservation are also limited. The expert report will further breakdown these barriers, systematically classifying them in terms of technological, financial, socio-cultural and political dynamics. Technological barrier will look into capacity building competence of various stakeholders vis-a-vis the needs of the beneficiary communities in the Imatong CFR. The social perspective will look at detailed account of cultural, economic and political aspects of the communities to debunk the impact on policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks for biodiversity conservation. This is a critical analysis as previously forest resources were governed by traditional governance systems that still serve the basis of sustainable management of protected areas of South Sudan. Lastly, the financial aspect looks into the

current financial opportunities available to up-scale biodiversity conservation objectives of the government of South Sudan. A combination of strategic assessments of these barriers will contribute to positive project outcomes. Thereby enabling the project to achieve its overall programmatic direction, which is to address direct drivers to protect habitats and species; improve financial sustainability; promote effective management of the Imatong FR.

Recommendations for improving the policy, regulatory and institutional framework of the environment and forestry sectors will be drawn from the expert review. These recommendation will further specify strategies that will fast track enactment of the necessary policy, regulatory and institutional reforms at national, state, payam and boma levels. Especially at community level, the involvement of Payam administrator, Chiefs, Community elders, Landlords, Youth and Women groups are all key to expedite enactment of biodiversity conservation policy. Although not well organized, traditional governance systems are led by the landlord in forest management and supported by the chiefs, community elders, youth (monyo miji) and women groups. Advocacy at various administrative levels if emphasized as essential for furthering project objectives of enhancing enabling environment for biodiversity conservation.

Activity 2. Convene a national stakeholder workshop to discuss and validate experts? report recommendations.

All relevant stakeholders will be invited to participate in an inception workshop focused on policy, legislative and institutional frameworks review of forest protected area management and biodiversity conservation in of South Sudan. These stakeholders include local community authorities and influencers, state, payam and county authorities, NGOs, CBOs, CSOs and youth groups.

Based on the report generated in activity 1, participatory set of reforms to enhance sector performance will be prescribed under the guidance of an interdisciplinary team of experts. These reforms will target an in-depth understanding of De facto arrangements that have previously and are governing use of forest resources at all administrative levels. Specifically the reforms will be geared towards solving problems such as: 1) illegal wildlife poaching and trafficking and subsistence hunting carried out by local people. There is high demand for products from wild animals, bush meat, and game trophies; 2) uncontrolled deforestation; and illegal logging of hardwoods, and growing charcoal?s production; 3) overgrazing and rangeland degradation and loss and agricultural expansion, increasing population growth, extreme rural poverty and drought; 4) natural habitat fragmentation; 5) adverse climate change impacts including increasing desertification and the delaying and shortening of rainy seasons and 6) human-wildlife conflicts especially with communities living near Protected Areas.

The stakeholders will further participate in delineating clear set of National biodiversity conservation objectives that clarify and prioritize problems in forest protected area management and biodiversity conservation. Currently, all parts of Eastern Equatoria State forests are under tremendous pressure due to residential and agriculture land development, indiscriminate removal of trees for timber, fuel wood and charcoal production and specially uncontrolled fires in the area of low savannah woodland, which result into rapid deforestation. These objectives are pivotal, as they will define the scope of biodiversity conservation in terms of the existent flora and fauna species within the Imatong forest reserves. Furthermore, the proposed objectives will holistically embody government and stakeholder aspirations towards biodiversity conservation at all levels including national, state, county, payam and boma level. These set of objectives are expected to vary due to the different climatic conditions that prevail in the agro-ecological zones of the various implementation sites in South Sudan. Eastern Equatoria state has distinct Agro ecological zones, which includes; Green belt, Hills and mountains, Semi-arid pastoral and Ironstones plateau.

The national biodiversity conservation objectives will then culminate into an Action plan that will clearly identify designated national entities to lead implementation of the recommendations of the enhanced or validated expert review from activity 1. Approximate timeframe and sequence for the implementation of each recommendation will also be determined during the stakeholders meeting. Reforms implemented in the reviewed policies will be evaluated through indicators against which the effects of proposed reforms can be assessed. Every government institution that has an impact on biodiversity conservation and forest

reserves management have to identify the problems falling under their jurisdiction or mandate, propose solutions and subsequent indicators for measuring success of the reforms.

Activity 3. Submit policy and institutional reforms recommendations to Government of South Sudan for action (including further debate, approval, etc.).
This activity consolidates government and all relevant stakeholders? expectations in validated policy and institutional reforms in activity 2. This will also build on efforts already invested at state level for instance local authority at Eastern Equatoria State has asserted efforts towards mainstreaming national strategies and policies to protect forest resources.

The Updated policy document will be presented to the government of South Sudan?s and other institutions directly or indirectly tasked with environmental management. The reviewed policy will be subjected to further debate at that national assembly for approval. This is momentous as the government endorsement in line with internal processes, regulatory and institutional frameworks governing forest PAs boost enactment of reviewed policies that promote biodiversity conservation and forest protected areas management.

Activity 4. Develop strategic action plan targeting protected area management and biodiversity conservation
The strategic action plan will elaborate upon solutions in form of reforms and recommendations achieved under activities 2 and 3. Comprehensive legal frameworks are limited at national, state, county, payam and boma, therefore there is a need to further assess De facto arrangement that govern the use of forest resources. Such an assessment will strategically inform planning and management of various activities within the Imatong CFR especially the livelihood activities such as crop production and livestock rearing.

The project implementation sites within the Imatong CFR are four protected areas: Katire, Imelai, Gilo and Talanga lowland forest nature reserve. These nature reserves have both natural and human ecosystems that must be taken into consideration as the project enhances forest reserves and promote biodiversity conservation. Key biodiversity conservation hotspots with clear national and state objectives must be identified and documented. Due to the varying nature of agro-ecological zones, the biodiversity and forest ecosystem health is expected to capture different objectives at state, county, payam and boma level. These key biodiversity conservation hotspots will be documented taking into consideration flora and fauna species. Timeframe in which the strategic action plan will be formulated, endorsed and implemented at various national administrative levels: State, County Payam and Boma level. Indicators developed in line with Aichi target 5 that aims to address the rate of loss of all natural habitats in the Imatong Mountains Landscape, including forests, and degradation and fragmentation.

Activity 5. Pilot the reviewed and approved policy and institutional frameworks in 3 communities that inhabit Imatong forest protected areas.
The Imatong forest reserve covers two counties of Torit and Ikotos. Therefore, three communities that reside within project implementation site will be direct beneficiaries of this project. In order for action at all national administrative levels including the Bomas (villages), there is need to create a local community awareness of the revised policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks. For effective management of forest protected areas at community level in Imatong CFR, this activity will aim to disseminate new policy frameworks at all administrative levels particularly at community level.

The three communities, i.e. Lotuko, Acholi and Lango, will then be empowered in terms of access to and knowledge of the reforms in the policy. The policy will further be translated into action at community level.

Output 1.1.2: Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) mechanisms instituted and access to and sharing of benefits of biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services by local communities promoted:
The aim of this output is to promote community participation in forest management for sustainable biodiversity outcomes through Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) in South Sudan. The key activities will be: (i) Review of the policy, legal and regulatory framework that enables CFM application

in the South Sudan context. (ii) Developing and securing approval of the National CFM Strategy and Action Plan for South Sudan based on the reviewed and approved CFM policy, legal and regulatory framework. (iii) Awareness raising and promotion of the approved National CFM Strategy and Action Plan at national, state, county, payam (Parish) boma (village) and PA levels. (iv) Piloting CFM in the Imatong CFR based on wide stakeholder participation, collective responsibility and equity in the management of forest reserves, and on improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities. One of the key achievements of the CFM at PA level is establishment of robust community institutions that ensure transparent decision making, adequate representation and participation of women, men and vulnerable groups, and the equitable sharing of forest benefits and responsibilities in the Imatong CFR.

Activity 1. Review existing policy, legal and regulatory framework enabling CFM application in South Sudan.

Although South Sudan has policies that mention about Sustainable Forest Management (SFM), the baseline under this project indicate that there is limited information Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) mechanism is a limited practice in South Sudan. Although the forest policy of 2015 was approved and launched on 17/9/2019, its implementation is limited due to lack of forest bill to operationalize the policy. The reviewed forestry bill and development of state forest policy documents will facilitate review of the agriculture, livestock and fisheries policies to identify and propose recommendations for mainstreaming SFM considerations into these sectors.

In order to incorporate Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) mechanism at all national administrative levels there must be regulations that systematically govern implementation. The only current document that partly address issues of CFM is the REDD+ strategy and action plan of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. Other policy documents include Environment, Wildlife, Forestry and land policies. In order to introduce and promote the use of CFM mechanism at all administrative levels, the Gaps in enabling policies e.g. The REDD+ strategy and action plan, Forestry, Wildlife, Environment and Land policies will be critically assessed.

This assessment will further highlight the challenges, barriers, opportunities and entry points to expedite review of all policies relevant in CFM application at national, state, county, Payam and Boma levels. One of the mid-term project targets in this activity is to produce CFM Policy in consultation with local communities and other stakeholders including the government, CSOs, NGOs, CBOs, private companies and investors. Through participatory process, recommendations for improving the reviewed CFM policies formulated through this activity will be consolidated to enhance application in the context of South Sudan and at all administrative levels.

Activity 2. Develop and secure approval of National CFM strategy and Action Plan

This an activity that promotes community participation in forests reserves management in Imatong landscape. The National CFM Strategy and Action Plan generated is based on CFM reviewed and approved policies under activity 1. The government of South Sudan through the Ministry of Environment and Forestry will approve the strategic action plan in line with national standards and development plans. This will enhance access to and sharing of benefits of biodiversity conservation at national, state, county, payam boma and PA levels through proposed set of reforms that target the forestry sector. Initially, a set of reforms will be formulated to highlight problems and solutions that promote CFM in South Sudan at all administrative levels which include national, state, county, Payam and Boma. Particularly in Eastern Equatoria State, the Mahogany and teak plantations are being exploited indiscriminately, poor agricultural practices such as slash and burn of the Lulu and uncontrolled bush fires set by man. It is also notable that population pressure is exerted through cultivation, encroachment and settlement in natural forest areas. The forest suffers because of these unguided human activities therefore, proposed set of reforms will address these issues in the Imatong CFR.

Under the National CFM strategy and action plan there will be clear national, state, payam and boma CFM objectives formulated. These objectives will fall under a broader defined national goal of promoting CFM mechanism especially at local community level. Furthermore, an ambitious and sustainable mission, vision and pathways for biodiversity conservation and ecosystem management will be delineated. Thereby empowering future projects to access finances from climate financing institutions

while also promoting access to and sharing of benefits by local communities. Roles and areas of operation of all relevant stakeholders will be clarified. This will especially be in terms of the activities to be implemented in the forest-protected areas in Imatong CFR. Time frame for implementation of the recommendations will be determined during the participatory meetings. The indicators against which the impact of proposed reforms can be evaluated is the effective management score of more than 80% by the end of the project duration.

Activity 3. Establish Collaborative Forest Management Platform for access and sharing of benefits

This activity aims to establish robust community institutions that bring together all stakeholders ideas through a collaborative Forest Management Platform. This platform will aim to establish a mutually agreed upon and beneficial relationship between the local community groups and the governing authority of Imatong CFR with regard to access to and sharing of benefits from the forest. This platform will promote and ensure transparent and inclusive decision-making, adequate representation and participation of women, men and vulnerable groups and equitable sharing of forest benefits and responsibilities in the Imatong CFR. First a gender sensitive committee comprising all relevant stakeholder representatives will be formed.

The community will then be guided to establish a working document or plan to guide processes and structure of operation of the Forest Management platform. The local forest governance systems have been severely impacted by decades of war in South Sudan, there is need to redefine these local governance structures. Otherwise, this has negatively affected access to and sharing of benefits accruing from biodiversity conservation and forest reserves management. A set of reforms to promote access and sharing of benefits by local communities will then be proposed in a participatory process. Regulatory tools such as Sustainable Forest Management certification will be introduced to enhance monitoring forest resource use among stakeholders. Finally, a clear strategic plan for access and sharing of benefits of biodiversity conservation at National, State, Payam and Boma level will be drafted. Indicators for assessing the impact of proposed reforms include improved community livelihood incomes and also improved ecosystem health in terms of vibrant flora and faunas in the Imatong CFR.

Activity 4. Raise awareness and promote approved National CFM Strategy at National, State, Payam and Boma and PA levels

A state focused key informant interview of Eastern Equatoria approximates that only 10% of people aware about forest management and biodiversity conservation at Imatong CFR. In order to promote awareness, a collaborative approach through stakeholder engagement is paramount to project success. Partners that are already engaged in awareness raising within the Imatong landscape will be identified to support or participate in awareness raising activity. Their knowledge and experiences will be an asset to awareness raining efforts at national, state, Payam and Boma levels. Community-based sensitization meetings about forest resources management and biodiversity conservation will be conducted for 3 days in the three communities. The three communities inhabiting the Imatong CFR are Acholi, Lotuko and Lango. At community level, about 50 participants will be chosen at each community bringing total to 150 participants. Context specific community awareness tools assessed and identified to promote CFM to all stakeholders. This will largely be determined by level of education of the community and type of audience for example institutions, schools, companies, investors and various stakeholders.

Awareness raising strategies for beneficiary communities include 1) Training of community members to carry out the awareness programs 2) Translation of key messages into the local languages 3) Engaging of community influential people (chiefs, religious leaders, women and youth leaders etc.) and finally 4) Training of community leaders on conservation of Imatong landscape.

Some of the NGOs and CBOs previously engaged in awareness raising include NIRAS (Water for Eastern Equatoria project); The African Wildlife Foundation (Improving the Integrated Watershed Management of the Imatong mountains); and Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS). Their activities cover Upper, Mid and Lower Kineti Catchment areas.

Activity 5. Pilot/implement participatory management of Imatong CFR

The two counties under which Imatong landscape falls are Ikotos and Torit, these will be the target implementation areas for participatory management. The Imatong CFR communities will be empowered and engaged after activity 4 which promotes the national CFM strategy for biodiversity conservation and forest protected area management. Three communities occupy the CFR, namely the Acholi, Lotuko and Lango will participate in the implementation of management plans. Under the guidance of GIS expert, community boundaries will be mapped and the natural ecosystems and livelihood sources such as agricultural land clearly delineated. Satellite imagery will determine the extent and condition of forest reserves and enable monitoring of outputs as the project advances. Additionally, a set of reforms or community by-laws will be drafted to encourage participatory management of the Imatong CFR. This will promote alternative livelihoods for forest dependent communities in form of vegetable home gardens, collection of NTFP such as shea butter. Application of the community-based by-laws will promote sustainability through reforestation, use of innovation from the region and plans that scale-up the practice to neighboring communities.

Output 1.1.3: Inclusive and gender sensitive multi-stakeholder co-ordination platform for effective PA management and participatory M&E at national, and subnational levels established, made functional and strengthened:

The aim of this output is to mobilize key stakeholders in South Sudan to establish a formal multi-disciplinary and inclusive national platform for learning, and sharing challenges, experiences, opportunities and development planning scenarios in order to have coherence and consistency in the implementation of new policy, legal and regulatory frameworks in the biodiversity conservation and forestry sector. In this regard, the project will carry out identification, analysis and profiling of the key stakeholders in the sector and develop a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) that describes how the stakeholders will be engaged in an effective manner and, in line with the GoSS policy and institutional frameworks.

The project will establish and build the capacity of an inclusive and gender sensitive multi-stakeholder platform for effective PA management and M&E. The platform will consist of all the key, and relevant stakeholders at national, sub-national, landscape and PA level. The process will involve stakeholder mapping and analysis in consultation with the relevant line Ministries, Departments and Agencies in the GoSS. The main purpose of the Platform is to promote an Integrated Landscape Management Approach (ILMA) in the Imatong CFR Landscape. The Platform will be a forum for the stakeholders to discuss and address critical issues that are hindering or slowing down sustainable development in the landscape. It is a forum for various stakeholders to get a common understanding of issues in the landscape and agree on the inter-linkages of various sectors and actors within the landscape. The shared understanding of the interlinkages and synergies between sectors and actors will then guide strategic interventions that enhance positive change in community livelihoods and the landscape ecosystem integrity. The Platform also then provides space for the stakeholders to coordinate and jointly engage in policy lobbying and advocacy with a collective voice. In addition, the Platform will be able to provide her members with opportunities for capacity building through knowledge sharing, learning and consolidation of experiences for the betterment of society.

Activity 1. Identify key stakeholders

Various stakeholders have been involved directly or indirectly in protected area management in Imatong landscape. According to baselines scenario, some stakeholders have been engaged in activities that focus on restoration, biodiversity conservation, wildlife conservation. Government stakeholders will include the Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism, The directorate of Forestry under the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, the Department of Land Use Planning and Development under Ministry of Agriculture. The private sector and investors will also be included through International NGOs agencies include UNFAO, African Development Bank, USAID, Acacia Water and Wetland International Kenya. Private investors are mainly companies working in the Imatong CFR.

Through this activity, the types of activities and deliverables of all stakeholders will be assessed such as to inform better coordination strategies for effective PA management. Each stakeholder will commit to well defined role in PA management through MoUs or Letter of Agreements signed. Finally, a holistic Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) with clear collaboration modalities building on key relationships

established within the Imatong landscape. The SEP will outline stakeholder communication plan, including the timeframe and frequency of stakeholder meetings through a multi-stakeholder platform.

Activity 2. Establishing multi-stakeholder platform

The SEP will be instrumental in establishing an inclusive and gender sensitive multi-stakeholder platform for learning, and sharing challenges, experiences, opportunities and development planning scenarios. There will be an expert review of existent policies and institutional frameworks that will inform the formation of the stakeholder platform. This will influence its structures, mission and objectives towards biodiversity conservation and forest protected area management. The reviewed document will be presented to stakeholders for validation of proposed objectives, guidelines and processes that institutionalize and operationalize the PA management platform. Finally, a comprehensive Stakeholder Action Plan will be formulated to address issues that include PA management, stakeholder led M&E of PA and enhancement of knowledge transfer within the project sites and to all administrative levels. This will improve decision making at various levels to promote effective PA management and biodiversity conservation.

Activity 3. Establish stakeholder coordination plan

The Multi-stakeholders platform will be tasked to execute several activities directly and indirectly contributing to improving health of forest ecosystems and consequently boosting biodiversity conservation. This therefore necessitates a clear and elaborate stakeholder coordination plan to improve communication, sharing of experiences, transparency and accountability through the platform. In order to successfully establish the coordination plan, all relevant stakeholders will be assigned roles that contribute to improving PA management and M&E. The delivery of the roles will be made more effective through a clear stakeholder coordination structure enshrined in the coordination plan. Implementation of activities will be orchestrated through processes, guidelines and mechanisms enshrined in the structure of the stakeholder platform.

At community level, enhanced stakeholder coordination will promote sustainable livelihoods and landscape management through a monitoring and reporting system in the stakeholder platform. The plan will further empower strategic relations between stakeholders such as to enhance delivery of project outputs and results for effective M&E processes.

Activity 4. Train stakeholders on effective PA management

Transfer of skills, experiences and knowledge from the region and global scale is critical in supporting stakeholders in effective PA management. Stakeholders fully engaged through the multi-stakeholder platform established must undergo training to enhance skills. The baseline indicate that mutli-stakeholder platforms are non-existent in South Sudan, therefore to ensure gender sensitive selection of trainees; all participants will include 50% females and 50% males. Through expert guidance, training materials for effective PA management will be context specific, taking into consideration the cultural practices, building on indigenous knowledge and consolidating experiences that boost innovation and sustainability of the project. Training materials for effective PA management and M&E in form of manuals will be accessible to all stakeholders to promote knowledge sharing and consolidation of experiences.

Component 2. Forest Management plan development and capacity building for effective forestry protected area management.

The aim of this component is to enhance the Imatong CFR Management and capacity building for PAME. This is in line with Strategic Objectives 5 and 6 of the GoSS NBSAP with the following targets: (i) Develop a programme for effective management of PAs and PA current network, including situation analysis and development of General Management Plans for all PAs by 2024 (ii) Provide technical capacity support of national and PA level management staff and (iii) generate information for biodiversity conservation and effective protected area management. This project will support the GoSS in delivering on this target through the following outcome and outputs.

Outcome 2.1: Forest Management plan developed, and National and PA management staff have the capacities that enable and support PAME achieving biodiversity conservation objectives.

Output 2.1.1: National guidelines for PA management planning developed and technical capacity of national and PA level management staff built

This output is focused on supporting the GoSS in building its capacity on PA management and planning. It will involve developing national and standard guidelines for PA participatory management planning for South Sudan in form of a National Protected Area Planning Manual, and training of key GoSS staff in PA participatory management planning and management. The process will be participatory and inter-disciplinary in nature involving key national, sub national, landscape and PA staff. The key areas of focus in the output will be: (1) Identification of planning team and defining roles. (2) Analyzing existing legislative process for PA management plan and procedures for its approval. (3) Gathering data (characterizing the resources and conditions in the PA, delineating/refining the boundaries of the PA, identifying stakeholders, assessing legal status of PA, identifying trends in resource conditions, use, and needs of local populations and identifying key information gaps). (4) Specifying means and processes for public participation. (5) Developing desired conditions, objectives, and desired conditions for the PA. (6) Defining PA-wide guidelines on resource use. (7) Identifying PA management zones and defining management objectives and necessary guidelines for each. (8) Approval processes for the PA Management Plans. (9) Defining PA implementation modalities. (10) Defining monitoring and evaluate (M&E) indicators for PAME. (11) Defining procedures for revising and updating the PA management plans as information improves, conditions change, and monitoring results come in.

Activity 1. Gather data required for the development of forestry management planning guidelines

A holistic forest management plan is critical for South Sudan, as it will support management and decision making at all administrative level. Due to decades of civil war, forest ecosystem governance structure in South Sudan has been greatly weakened thereby leading to severe degradation of Protect Areas. This activity therefore will commence with assessment of the resources and conditions of each protected area that falls under the Imatong CFR. There are four protected areas that are target under the project, namely, Katire, Imelai, Gilo and Talanga lowland forest nature reserve. Particular emphasis will be to assess the extent and trend of degradation of both fauna and flora endemic to the protected area.

The four protected areas under the project will be delineated and the boundaries clearly identified such that the area under the project is properly monitored throughout the project cycle. This will better inform M&E systems and enable accurate progress reporting of outputs and results.

Relevant stakeholders in this project include government counter parts at all administrative levels, International NGOs, National NGOs, CSOs, CBOs, Women and other vulnerable groups. Consequently, it is very important to involve the stakeholders in forest management planning. This will enable all stakeholder opinions to be included in the planning, which contributes to Protected Area Management Effectiveness (PAME). A planning team of about 10 individuals will be appointed to represent all stakeholders. Each team member represent a clear role to be executed by the stakeholder in contribution to PAME.

In order to commence forest management planning, data will be gathered about legal status of all PAs under this project. This involves assessment of trends in resource conditions over 20 years, the use of forest resources, and needs of the local people in terms of sustainable livelihoods alternatives. This will lead to development of National Protected Area Planning Manual/guidelines, which will be implemented through a strategic action plan. The action plan translates the guidelines into practical steps to promoting PAME at all administrative levels nationally.

Activity 2. Draft national guidelines for forestry management planning

Activity 1 enables the project to have a draft national guideline for forestry management planning that will empower the communities to embrace biodiversity conservation. Therefore, participatory approaches remains a pivotal element in transforming the current status of forestry sector to embrace PAME at local levels. Therefore, for each of the three communities occupying the Imatong CFR, there is need to specify the means and processes for public participation based on the needs of the beneficiaries. Through a participatory process, ensuring a gender sensitive selection of participants, community meetings will be convened to delve deeper into PA management taking into consideration 1) The current

and future desired conditions of the natural ecosystems that meets IUCN green list, 2) Clear objectives each protected area will be targeting in line with comparative advantage in terms of investments in the agro-ecological zone.

Through this participatory process, Ministry of Environment and Forestry will improve the draft national guidelines for forestry management planning and resources use for approval. These PAs wide guidelines on forest resource use will be disseminated nationally. The project mid to end term target is to have at least 40%-80% of key national, sub national, landscape and PA staff trained in in participatory planning and management. Therefore, the national guidelines will empower communities in forestry management and biodiversity conservation.

Output 2.1.2: Imatong forest management plan developed and implemented

Subsequently, the project will support the GoSS to prepare the Imatong CFR General Management Plan using the guidelines developed in Output 2.1.1, taking into consideration the following key basic steps: (i) Formation of an inter-disciplinary and inclusive Core Planning Team (CPT); (ii) Review of existing legal instruments of gazettement and other documents; (iii) Conduct forest inventory, biodiversity and socio-economic assessment; (iv) Conduct stakeholder engagement on management and protection of the forest reserve. Once the PA Management Plan has been developed and approved, the project will facilitate PA management staff to develop, and implement site specific action plans, and annual operational plans to operationalize the Master/General Forest Management Plan implementation. This will involve development and implementation of detailed: (i) Zonation management plans. (ii) Development plans on infrastructure, works and other investments in parts of the PA. (iii) Site management plans for sites within the PA that require intensive management. (iv) Biodiversity and Cultural Heritage Conservation Plans to guide on how to conserve sites of high biodiversity and cultural heritage significance. The annual operations planning will include: (i) activities to be delivered based on the long-term Forest Management Plan; (ii) key targets and key performance indicators; (iii) quality standards; (iv) risk management plan; (v) staffing and resource (including budget) requirements for activity implementation; (vi) implementation timetables; and (vii) a process for monitoring progress of the implementation of the Operational Annual Plans (OAPs).

Activity 1. Form an inter-disciplinary and inclusive Core Planning Team (CPT)

Management and planning of forest-protected areas is cross-cutting and require broad set of skills and expertise to achieve national and global objectives in protection of forest resources and biodiversity conservation. The planning process consequently requires formation of an inter-disciplinary; gender sensitive and inclusive Core Planning Team (CPT). This will comprise technical experts, stakeholders, investors, co-financers and financial institutions. The formation of the core planning team will as much as possible observe principles of gender inclusivity, with representation from women, youth and persons with disabilities. This team will be responsible for planning and development of a management plan from production of terms of reference up to and including approvals.

Activity 2. Review existing legal instruments of gazettement and other related documents

Diverse sources will be consulted for legal and other documents about the Imatong CFR. These documents will include, among others, Forestry Act and Policies, regulations, and previous management plans (if any) about the reserve. This review is intended to obtain information required about legal status of the reserve, history of its establishment, the reasons for its gazettement, physiography (climate, hydrology, topography, soils, and rocks), maps with boundaries and surrounding land-use practices as well as the extent to which gender and social inclusion issues will be considered. Baselines indicate that there is National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan (2018) as main government policy addressing issues of biodiversity conservation. Although not documented, South Sudanese communities have informal management systems for conservation of community resources. These traditional systems have been effectively managing natural ecosystems including forest resource use. However, due to several decades of conflict, the traditional systems have been weekend thereby the degradation of natural ecosystems. Any gaps from literature review will be filled through focus group discussions and key informant interviews, targeting forestry officers (retired and current) and community leaders. Key informant interviews and focus group discussions will include all gender categories (women, youth and persons with disabilities).

In addition, published and unpublished information on the following areas: past, current and trends about biodiversity status of the reserve; ecosystem services (i.e. provisioning such as fruits, regulating such as soil erosion control, cultural such as ceremonial and ancestral sites, and supporting services such as nutrient recycling); management systems focusing on strengths and weaknesses of law enforcement, community engagements and outreach, research and development, coordination mechanisms with other institutions, etc, will be documented. Where gaps exist in literature review, key informant interviews and focus group discussions involving men, women and the youth will be conducted.

Activity 3. Conduct forest inventory, biodiversity and socio-economic assessment

The management plan will require information on several aspects, notably, fauna and flora, hydrology, soils, geology as well as socio-economic aspects of the people within a five kilometre zone around the reserve. Faunal biodiversity data on small mammals, large mammals, birds, reptiles, insects and amphibians will be collected. Floral biodiversity data will include woody plants, grasses and shrubs. Socio-economic data will be collected on demographic factors, agriculture, forestry and other land-use practices, income sources, energy sources, the role of women and the youth in natural resources management and general livelihood interventions

To collect information suggested above, relevant technical expertise will be identified. For instance, to collect data on birds, there will be need for an ornithologist and for vegetation, a botanist will be needed. The experts will develop data collection tools that will be circulated to the core planning team for review and endorsement. If the experts will not have the necessary data collection and analysis tools and equipment, the project will procure them from relevant sources. This will then be followed by respective forest resource inventories, biodiversity assessments, social and economic assessments to generate data for the management plan.

Through this activity, the project will facilitate PA management staff to develop, and implement site-specific action plans, and annual operational plans to operationalize the Master/General Forest Management Plan. The Master General Plan will include i) Zonation management plans ii) Infrastructure rehabilitation and development iii) Works and investments development plans iii) Site management plans iv) Biodiversity and Cultural Heritage Conservation Plans to guide on how to conserve sites of high biodiversity and cultural heritage significance.

Activity 4. Conduct stakeholder engagement on management and protection of the forest reserve

This project brings together several stakeholders with direct and indirect role in biodiversity conservation and forest protected area management. These include government counterparts at national, state, county, payam and boma leaders. Organizations will also be involved, therefore, participation of International and national NGOs, CSO, CBOs, youth and women group leaders will be critical in this activity. This activity will seek views from stakeholders on how they would want the reserve to be managed. The first step in this activity will be to conduct a stakeholder mapping and analysis, using the Power-Interest-Grid, to identify levels of interest and influence on management of the reserve. The second step will be to prepare a gender sensitive checklist to guide discussions with stakeholders. This checklist will seek further information, besides that obtained from literature review, on management challenges facing the reserve followed by strategies, actions and activities on how these can be resolved, by whom and resource requirements. Efforts will be made to consult all relevant social groups including politicians, the academia, the media, women, youth, and people living with disabilities.

Activity 5. Draft an inclusive and gender responsive Forest Management Plan

All the data collected and documents in the previous activities will be collated into a draft an inclusive and gender responsive forest management plan. A full awareness on gender equality, social inclusion and women empowerment will be very pertinent in the development of the management plan. This will ensure that the needs, interests and priorities of all gender groups are taken into consideration or addressed. As much as is applicable, the Imatong CFR Management Plan will draw from the form and

structure of other forestry management plans in South Sudan and the region. In many of the existing management plans, the following structure is embedded: acknowledgements, preface, executive summary, introduction and background subdivided into scope and purpose of the plan, history of plan preparation, planning context (alignment to international, regional, national and local policies, strategies and regulations) and structure of the plan; description of the forest reserves; strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; strategic goals and objectives of the management plan; Five year work plan and budget; monitoring and evaluation; appendices. The draft management plan will be validated by stakeholders in a workshop, whose views will later be incorporated in the final draft. The participants in the workshop will be identified based on their experience in natural resources management.

Activity 6. Approval and implementation of the Forest Management Plan

This activity will involve approval of the management plan by the Honorable Minister for Environment and Forestry. Once the plan is signed, it will be launched on site with the involvement of stakeholders. The plan will therefore be implemented by facilitating Imatong CFR management staff to develop, and implement site-specific action plans, and annual operational plans, in operationalization of the Forest Management Plan. Annual work plans and budgets will then henceforth be a reflection of the actions recommended in the management plan. In addition, other enabling actions will be implemented by the local staff, including: i) development of zonation management plans, ii) Infrastructure rehabilitation and development iii) Works and investments development plans iii) Site management plans iv) Biodiversity and Cultural Heritage Conservation Plans to guide on how to conserve sites of high biodiversity and cultural heritage significance, and v) Joint participatory monitoring and evaluation.

Output 2.1.3: Government and PA level staff trained in biodiversity conservation assessment, threat identification and monitoring, and PA management methods:

The capacity of Government national and PA level staff will be built on biodiversity conservation assessment, threat identification and monitoring, and PA management methods, and the following activities will be undertaken to achieve this output: (i) Conducting a technical capacity and institutional needs assessment of Government national and PA level staff in biodiversity conservation assessment, threat identification and monitoring, and best PA management practices and methodologies; (ii) Development of Capacity Building Plan (CBP) for improving the capacity of staff on biodiversity conservation assessment, threat identification and monitoring, and PA management; and (iii) Build the capacity of staff through training, re-tooling and exchange visits. This training will include aspects on Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool (IMET) to track Protected Area Management Effectiveness and to support PA planning and inform management decisions and PA IUCN Green Listing (Output 1.2.3). The training will respond to the specific data collection requirements, information management, protected area management effectiveness, governance and social assessments and others. At the end of this training, participants will have sufficient knowledge and skills to institutionalize and roll out IMET assessments across South Sudan?s protected and conserved area network. The training will also cover funding required to implement IMET at an institutional and site level (Imatong CFR), landscape and national level.

Activity 1. Conduct a technical capacity and institutional needs assessment of Government national and PA level staff in biodiversity conservation assessment, threat identification and monitoring, and best PA management practices and methodologies

This activity aims to mainstream biodiversity across sectors through an expert review that assess institutional needs in capacity building. Project baselines indicate there is inadequate capacity among government and PA staff in biodiversity assessment, threat identification and monitoring of PA management. The institutions targeted for capacity building include those with direct and indirect mandate in biodiversity conservation and PA management. The key relevant ministries include Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Ministry of Wildlife and Mainstream biodiversity.

The trainings will be conducted both at state and national level ensuring that all the beneficiaries of this training are accessible. Based on the needs of the community, the training will technically empower participants in biodiversity conservation in terms of animal, plants and sustainable management of natural ecosystem. The various threats identified in PAs management include deforestation, illegal logging, uncontrolled forest fires and burning of grasslands as a result of unsustainable agricultural

practices. Therefore, awareness raising in threat identification and sustainable land management techniques will be acquired. Note that there is a high possibility for beneficiary needs to vary as a result of unique characteristics of the agro-ecological zones in terms of climate and soil morphology.

Activity 2. Develop Capacity Building Plan (CBP) for improving the capacity of staff on biodiversity conservation assessment, threat identification and monitoring, and PA management

Building on activity 1, in which capacity building needs of the government institutions and stakeholders have been documented, this activity will focus on developing Capacity Building Plan (CBP). The area of focus will be on biodiversity conservation assessment, threat identification and monitoring and PA management. The capacity-building plan will have the following aspects considered under the focus key areas for training: 1) clear policy framework 2) institutional development and legal framework 3) citizen/democratic participation and oversight 4) human resources improvements including education and training, and 5) sustainability. Further to this, the CBP will have capacity development objectives Outline for each of the five aspects highlighted.

Activity 3. Build the capacity of staff through training, re-tooling and exchange visits

This activity focus enhancing technical skills of staff based on the CBP developed in activity 2 addressing biodiversity conservation. Capacity building objectives to meet the needs of staff in forest protected area management and biodiversity conservation through training, retooling and exchange visits. Various forest and biodiversity management practices and methodologies will be trained to government staff and key relevant stakeholders. Since the capacity, building experience will be enhancing existing knowledge at various administrative levels, re-tooling of participants will introduce innovation and sustainable approaches to biodiversity conservation and protected area management.

Environmental Education expert will be engaged to design and disseminate training materials that are targeted at specific audience at national, State, County, Payam and Boma levels. To promote learning, exchange of knowledge and experiences, participants will be scheduled to visit the four protect area management sites of the project in the Imatong CFR. At regional level, exchange visits will also be organized to Kenya, Uganda or Ethiopia such as to expose participants to best regional practices that are adaptable to the context of South Sudan. By mid-term, the project target is at least 40% of key national, sub national, landscape and PA staff trained in in participatory planning and management. This is expected to double to 80% by the end of the project.

Output 2.1.4: Biodiversity threat assessments conducted, and strategies/actions plans to support protection of priority species developed and implemented:

The project will carry out biodiversity threat assessments to inform decision making, strategies, programmes and policies in the CBD and the GoSS NBSAP as well as to provide basic information on biodiversity (status, stresses, benefits) required in the CBD on impact assessment and minimizing adverse impacts as well as inform CFM implementation (Output 1.2.3). The project will use a Rapid Biodiversity Assessment approach (more applicable in areas where there is very little published or unpublished information such as South Sudan). The assessments will include: (i) Baseline inventory, focusing on overall biological diversity rather than extensive or detailed information about specific taxa or habitats. (ii) Indicator species-specific assessment to provide a rapid appraisal of the status of selected indicator species as an indicator of biological diversity, in terms of species and community diversity to inform us about the overall health of ecosystems. (iii) Ecosystem change assessment to determine the effects of human activities or natural disturbances on the ecological integrity and associated biodiversity. (iv) Resource assessment to determine the potential for sustainable use of selected biological resources in Imatong CFR under the Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) arrangements (Output 1.1.2). The project will to the full extent possible, use digital tools as a faster way to capture and store information from the biodiversity assessments.

Activity 1. Conduct a baseline inventory, focusing on overall biological diversity rather than extensive or detailed information about specific taxa or habitats

Biological diversity refers to the global variety of species and ecosystems and the ecological processes of which they are part, covering three components: genetic, species and ecosystem diversity. The baselines indicate there is inadequate information on priority species due to limited or no biodiversity

assessments in South Sudan. Therefore, the baseline inventory will cover genetic diversity of species of animals and plants in two sub-reports. 1) The first will look into baseline inventory and indicator species-specific assessment and the second report 2) Ecosystem change and resource assessments

Activity 2. Conduct a rapid appraisal of the status of selected indicator species as an indicator of biological diversity, in terms of species and community diversity to inform us about the overall health of ecosystems

The rapid appraisal is to generate a report that will highlight status of selected indicators species associated with biological diversity in the Imatong CFR. The trend of ecosystem health transformation will be assessed based on presence or absence of indicator species. The spatial and temporal changes in forest ecosystem health trends will be monitored such as to evaluate project results. Thereby informing intervention measures based on ecosystem health perspective of both the best and worst case scenarios. This study of species diversity variation within forest reserves enable decisions makers to adopt policies and practices which target to safeguard or conserve genetic diversity.

Activity 3.Assess ecosystem change to determine the effects of human activities or natural disturbances on the ecological integrity and associated biodiversity

The Imatong landscape has experienced significant changes that require a critical assessment to inform restorative efforts through the project. Consequently, this activity aims to establish an elaborate inventory will be established to track various ecosystem changes triggered by either natural or human activities.

Both human and natural stress factors of biological diversity will also be assessed to determine the contributing factors and prescribe solutions at various administrative levels. For instance, ecosystem degradation issues such as invasive species will be reported with a focus to study the trend, area of coverage and the impact on Imatong landscape. In order to better inform all stakeholders, a periodic assessment report will be generated capturing the ecological integrity and biodiversity efforts in PAs. This is critical, as it will inform the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) such as to calculate the scores based in project impact.

Activity 4. Perform a resource assessment to determine the potential for sustainable use of selected biological resources in Imatong CFR under the Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) arrangements.

The restoration efforts required towards the Imatong landscape requires a participatory approach that brings together all relevant stakeholders. Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) Mechanism previous formed under output 1.1.2 targets resources within Imatong CFR that can be managed collaboratively to maximize benefits at all administrative levels. Ecosystem valuation exercise will capture economic potential after a thorough resource assessment exercise.

The assessment report will indicate 10 year trend of resource use, the current status of natural resources in the Imatong Landscape, the potential economic and social benefits to be accrued through biological diversity conservation will be taken into consideration under this activity. The value of genetic diversity species in terms of various socio-economic potential will further be documented. A strategic plan targeting 50,000 hectares under improved practices will be formulated. This plan will be informed through comprehensive assessment of existent investment schemes such as plantations will be achieved under this activity.

Output 2.1.5: Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool (IMET) established to track Protected Area Management Effectiveness (PAME) and to inform management decisions and IUCN Green Listing process:

The project will promote and introduce the PA Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) to track Protected Area Management Effectiveness (PAME), and to inform management decisions and the IUCN Green Listing process of the Imatong CFR. First published in 2002, the METT was one of the first tools developed to reflect the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) Framework for PAME. The METT provides a composite measurement across 38 parameters integrating all six components of the WCPA Framework (Context, Planning, Input, Process, Output and Outcome). The IMET tool will be designed in the context of South Sudan to directly support managers, both in the field

and at the national level, to improve the effectiveness of protected area management and, biodiversity conservation. The IMET tool will assist in PA planning, monitoring and evaluation and guide in designing mechanisms to improve management patterns and conservation outcomes. The IMET tool will be supported by a computer-based application (available in both online and offline versions) to collect, organize and analyze data to facilitate informed decision-making for protected area management, operations and planning. It will contain several forms which allow the compilation of a variety of data from many sources: raw data, documents and personal knowledge from different stakeholders such as management teams, scientists and community members. IMET will structure the information with quantified targeted outcomes, and its internal statistics module providing a score based estimation of level and quality of management with visual graphics of the relative contribution of each indicator to management effectiveness. The project will also establish partnerships with national agencies and other conservation partners aiming to roll out IMET assessments across their protected and conserved area network throughout South Sudan.

Activity 1. Assess policy, legal and regulatory frameworks that will incorporate and support IMET
An expert review will be conducted to gather data and information that will support the establishment and implementation of the IMET at all administrative levels in South Sudan. All relevant policies that directly or indirectly include management of forest protected areas and biodiversity conservation will be reviewed with a target to accommodate IMET. National policies under consideration include the Environment policy, Forestry, Wildlife and Land policy. This exercise unanimously explore into regulatory and institutional frameworks that will support the implementation of IMET.

The report generated will further support policy reforms process to track Protected Area Management Effectiveness through the operationalization of the IMET.

Activity 2. Promote the PA Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT)
The PAME tracking tool (METT) will serve a critical role of informing management decisions and the IUCN Green Listing process of the Imatong CFR. Therefore, an action plan is required to promote it throughout all national, state, county, payam and Boma level. Issues captured under the action plan include but not limited to 1) PA planning 2) monitoring and evaluation 3) designing mechanisms to improve management patterns and conservation outcomes.

Activity 3. Compilation of a variety of data from many sources: raw data, documents and personal knowledge from different stakeholders to feed into the METT
In order to sustainably and effectively run the METT, there is need for efficient data collection, storage, processing and dissemination of information to all relevant stakeholders including managers. Innovative technologies will be used to assess data through desk reviews and field based data collection. Field surveys will be done effectively through training of trainers in the two counties that cover the Imatong landscape. An information management system will established to particularly address all the key data needs of the IMET that meet the 38 parameters integrating all six components of the WCPA Framework (Context, Planning, Input, Process, Output and Outcome).

Due to sensitivity of data among organizations, the stakeholders have to define clear modality of data sharing with purpose to support the METT. A Memoranda of Agreement (MoU) or Letter of agreement will be signed between the various stakeholders. These letters will delegate focal persons and define terms of data sharing. The focal persons for every stakeholder will be appointed and tasked with periodic provision of data to the information management system that is to feed the METT. A sustainable action plan will then be formulated with a detailed road map to support data collection at field level; updating information management system periodically based on project progress and processing the updated data for IUCN Green Listing process.

Activity 4. Establish a network of all relevant stakeholders focused on supporting IMET roll out across protected and conserved area network throughout South Sudan.
The various stakeholders engaged in project implementation at Imatong CFR will use data compiled and processed through IMET in activity 3. The reports generated through the IMET will be shared with stakeholders in a network established to improve protected and conserved area network. The stakeholder

network will comprise of government institutions, International and national NGOs, CBOs, CSOs, women and youth groups in the Imatong landscape. MoUs and LoAs will be signed among stakeholders with clear terms of engagement and roles they will play to support IMET roll out across protected areas and conservation networks throughout the country. This is important, as it will enhance sharing of experiences, learning and knowledge transfer. The network will further be empowered to perform its roles through clear objectives that merges the interest of all stakeholders.

Component 3: Promoting sustainable agricultural practices and improved community livelihoods in the Imatong landscape.

This component is aiming at improving land use practices and conducting restoration activities in productive area around Imatong CFR, to reduce pressure on the forest. It will also improve livelihoods of the surrounding communities. The component will strive to contribute to strengthening both the management and governance skills of the Community Forest Management Groups. This will also contribute to increasing participatory management at the community level, managing resources in a sustainable manner, and improving the livelihoods of group members, including youth and women. This will enable the groups to sustain themselves independently by the end of the project period. This will be achieved through the following outcome and outputs:

Outcome 3.1: Reduced pressure on the Imatong Central Forest Reserve from sustainable practices in the surrounding landscape

This outcome will contribute to Core Indicators 3.1 (Area of degraded agricultural land restored), 4.3 (Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems) and 6.1 (Carbon sequestered or emissions avoided in the AFOLU sector). The outcome focuses on reducing pressure on forest resources from unstainable agricultural practices in landscapes bordering the Imatong Central Forest Reserve (ICFR) through participatory land use planning and creation of sustainable income generating activities to improve community livelihood. To achieve this, the project will strive to secure a number of outputs including the evaluation of ES in the ICFR and the productive landscapes bordering it; supporting the government to develop participatory land use planning and their implementation to ensure that unsustainable agricultural practices are replaced with sustainable income generating activities that will improve livelihood of the communities living in the surrounding productive landscapes. In addition to these, the project will identify key priority actions in the developed land use plans for the productive landscapes surrounding ICFR and implement them to address causes of degradation, deforestation, and unsustainable land use practices. Currently there are no regulatory frameworks that govern the management of productive landscapes around the ICFR. The project will ensure that these are developed, approved, and implemented at subnational levels. To further reduce pressure on forest resources, the project will identify and implement forest conservation-centered sustainable income generating activities for improved community livelihood in the productive landscapes neighboring ICFR.

Output 3.1.1: Ecosystem services in Imatong Mountain Central Forest Reserve and productive landscapes bordering the ICFR evaluated:

Information on biodiversity and factors that threaten them, gaps in protected area management effectiveness (PAME) and integrated landscape management approaches in the ICFR due to lack of capacity is largely absent. This is because no system-level valuation to impart knowledge on the multiple benefits of ecosystem services and goods provided by the PA; document barriers to protected area management effectiveness and therefore to conservation of its biodiversity has not been conducted. In order to address the barrier created by lack of information and the resulting protected area management effectiveness shortfalls, this output strives to: (i) communicate knowledge by increasing awareness of the multiple benefits provided by the PA, which can act as incentive to help solicit support of the stakeholders for safeguarding the PA. (ii) Support management decisions and help to ensure equity in resource use and benefits sharing among stakeholder groups. (iii) Establish baseline information to monitor changes over time, or to enable evaluation of the consequences of management decisions or policy changes on ES delivery. (iv) Provide additional evidence in applications to accreditation or

certification systems, such as the IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas. The following activities will be implemented to attain this output:

Activity 1: Increase awareness of the multiple benefits provided by the PA, which can help solicit support for safeguarding the PA.

In light of the lack of awareness of the local communities in the landscapes surrounding the IFCR, this activity strives to increase their awareness on the benefits provided by the PA, which could act as incentive for safeguarding the ICFR. Under this activity the following tasks will be accomplished:

- Identify target stakeholders (beneficiaries) at least 50% of whom should be females.
- Conduct rapid assessment of baseline knowledge of the target stakeholders on the multiple benefits provided the PA.
- Prepare demand driven training (awareness raising material.
- Raise awareness of the targeted beneficiaries to bridge the identified knowledge gaps on the multiple benefits provided by the PA.

Activity 2: Support management decisions and help ensure equity in resource use and benefits sharing among stakeholder groups.

Considering the high dependence of disadvantaged groups (women, youth, persons with disability and the elderly) this activity will focus on ensuring that there is equity in resource use and benefit sharing among the various stakeholder groups. Supporting management decision in that matter is crucial. The following tasks will be implemented to accomplish this activity:

- Identify marginalized groups in the community.
- Assess the level of equity/disparity vis-a-vis marginalized groups and mainstream community, in the use of resources and in sharing benefits that accrue from the resources.
- Support orientation of management decision ensuring increased equity between marginalized groups (women and youth), and mainstream members of the community who use resources around the PA.

Activity 3: Establish a baseline to monitor changes over time, or to enable evaluation of the consequences of management decisions or policy changes on ES delivery.

This activity aims at conducting baseline survey and analysis to establish data-based information, which will be used in monitoring changes in the ICFR and the productive landscapes surrounding it. The baseline established by this activity will also be used for evaluating the efforts of the project and the consequences of management decision. To execute this activity, the following tasks will be implemented:

- Identify (advertise consultancy position, interview, and recruit candidates) a consultant to conduct a baseline survey.
- Support the consultant to collect a baseline assessment data and analysis of ES delivery at the onset of the project implementation.
- Compile baseline report on ES delivery in the area measure changes in the ES delivery.

Activity 4: Provide additional evidence in applications to accreditation or certification systems, such as the IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas.

This activity focuses on availing additional evidence indicative that the changes resulting from the nature-based solutions implemented by the project for challenges facing sustainable land management in the ICFR are sustainable. The following tasks will be implemented under this activity:

- Conduct identification of additional evidence to be used in application for accreditation / certification systems.
- Compile a list of the additional evidence identified, along with those provided, to strengthen application for accreditation / certification.

Activity 5: Build the capacity of local extension workers.

This activity is intended to build or strengthen the capacity of local extension workers who are instrumental in increasing awareness of communities in the productive landscapes neighboring on the multiple benefits provided by the ICFR, which can help solicit support for safeguarding the PA. The activity includes the following tasks:

- Identify existing local extension / conservation education workers, and assess their capacity needs.

•Prepare training material based on the identified needs.

Activity 6: Develop training manuals in local languages.
Local communities living in the productive landscapes neighboring IFCR mostly speak local languages. As such, to ensure that local extension workers and other target beneficiaries acquire the desired knowledge on the multiple benefits the PA could offer, this activity focuses on developing training manuals in those languages. The following tasks will be implemented:
•Identify (advertise consultancy position, interview, and recruit candidates) a local consultant to translate the training manual into the local languages.
•Deliver training to the local extension workers.

Output 3.1.2: Participatory land use plans for productive landscapes around the Imatong CFR developed, approved, and implemented.
This output acknowledges that the absence of integrated land use planning in productive landscapes around protected areas for improved community livelihoods is a barrier to a transformative shift from unsustainable to integrated sustainable land and forest management in the Imatong Mountains landscape. It also recognizes that lack of land use plans is a barrier to securing habitat for biodiversity conservation, to maintain a flow of multiple ecosystem services and to support development of rural livelihood opportunities. These are also impediments to the efforts the project intends to exert to reduce pressure on the PA and the productive landscapes around it. As such, this output focuses on developing, and implementing participatory land use plans for productive landscapes around ICFR using participatory and multi-disciplinary process. Identification and engagement of stakeholders that will partake in the process of land use planning will be carried out under this output. This process will involve organizing workshops for the planning and validation of the land use plan; under this output, the process of the approval of the land use plans will be supported, followed by further support for the implementation of the approved land use plans. The following activities will be implemented to achieve the output:

Activity 1: Identify multidisciplinary stakeholders to be engaged in the development of the land use plans.
This activity is centered on identification of crucial multidisciplinary stakeholders in and outside the IMFCR and the productive landscapes bordering it. Representatives from key stakeholder institutions at the national level including MOEF, MWCT, and MA, and from state as well as county and payam levels along with local government and traditional authorize will be identified. Efforts will be made to ensure that at least 50% of representatives from stakeholder institutions at all levels come from disadvantaged groups (women, youth, persons with disability, and the elderly).

Invitation of identified stakeholder representatives will be made to maximize meaningful participation in the process of the participatory land use planning. The following tasks will comprise part of this activity:
•Identify and **compile** a comprehensive list of multidisciplinary stakeholder institutions from national, state, county, payam and civil society organizations. Identification of representatives of these institutions will ensure effective participation in the land use planning process.
•Train identified participants on the process of participatory land use planning.

Activity 2: Organize a workshop for the multidisciplinary stakeholder to develop the land use plans.
This activity will focus on pooling together the multidisciplinary stakeholders identified in activity 3.1.2.1 ensuring that invitees to the workshop for the development of the land use plans for the IMFCR and surrounding productive landscapes are from disadvantaged groups (women, youth, persons with disability, and the elderly). A number of tasks listed below will be implemented under this activity:
•Identify (advertise consultancy position, interview, and recruit candidates) a land use-planning consultant.
•Prepare terms of reference for the potential consultant; facilitate the consultant to carryout collection of relevant data.
•Facilitate, and oversee drafting of the land use planning process.

Activity 3: Organize a workshop to validate the draft land use plan.
Following development of the land use plans for the IMFCR and surrounding productive landscapes, this activity will endeavor to bring the stakeholders who participated in the development of the land use plans in activity 3.1.2.2 to validate the plans. This activity will include implementation of the following tasks:
- Solicit and procure workshop facility, and related services.
- Invitation and transportation of stakeholders/participants.
- Conduct/facilitate stakeholders? workshop for validation of the draft land use plan.

Activity 4: Support the process of approval of the land use plan.
Expediting the approval of the developed and validated land use plans for the IMFCR and the productive landscapes around it will be required. As such this activity will strive to overcome barriers and challenges in the process of the approval of the land use plans for the IMFCR and surrounding productive landscapes.
- Conduct rapid assessment/identification of barriers and challenges to the process of approval of the land use plan and address them.
- Support advocacy for expedited formal approval, and dissemination of the land use plan.

Activity 5: Support implementation of the land use plan.
- This activity will focus on providing technical and financial support in the production, dissemination
- Print, and disseminate the approved land use plan.
- Disseminate and create awareness on the land use plans for the IMFCR and the productive landscapes surrounding it among .key stakeholders and local lawmakers.
- Advocate for and provide financial and technical support to local authorities to implement the land use plans.

Output 3.1.3: Key priority actions in the Land Use Plans for Productive Landscapes around the Imatong CFR implemented to address causes of degradation and deforestation and unsustainable land use practices
This output builds on Output 3.1.2, which focused on development of participatory land use plans for the productive landscapes around ICFR, and supporting their implementation. As such its focus is centered on implementation of priory actions identified in those land use plans to address the causes of land degradation, deforestation and unsustainable land use practices. Activities that contribute to realization of this output include: (i) Awareness raising and training of community members, farmer groups and production landscape management committees that are to be established at Payam (Parish) and Boma (village) levels to implement the Integrated Participatory Land Management Plans (IPLMP) and Community Environment Action Plan (CEAPs); (ii) Implementation of the priority Nature-Based Solutions identified in the IPLMP and CEAPs by the trained community members, farmer groups and Payam and Boma Committees; and (iii) Joint stakeholder participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). (iv) Agriculture lands through establishment of demonstration plots, farmer field schools and promotion of SLM strategies, climate smart agriculture and use of improved seeds.

Activity 1: Raise awareness of and train community members, farmer groups and production landscape management committees at Payam (Parish) and Boma (village) levels to implement the IPLMP and CEAPs.
This activity is aimed at creating awareness and training of beneficiaries including members of the various communities, farmer groups, and production management committees at the various local government levels (Payam and Boma), the activity will be implemented by executing the following tasks:
- Identify (advertise, interview, and take on board) a consultant to assess capacity needs of the community members, farmer groups and production landscape management committees at Payam (Parish) and Boma (village) levels to implement the IPLMP and CEAPs.
- Develop terms reference for the potential consultant.
- Facilitate and oversee the consultant in preparation of need-based training material.
- Support the consultant to deliver the needs driven training to the beneficiaries.

Activity 2: Implement the priority Nature-Based Solutions in the IPLMP and CEAPs by the trained community members, farmer groups and Payam and Boma Committees.

The implementation of nature-base solutions in the IPLMP and CEAPs by the community members, farmer groups, Payam and Boma Committees trained in activity 3.1.3 will be the focus of this activity which will include the following tasks:

- Identify priority Nature-Based Solutions in the IPLMP and CEAPs.
- Formulate and execute a strategy for implementation of the identified priority nature-based solution.

Activity 3: Develop a participatory M&E plan.

Collaborative development of a participatory M&E plan and its joint implementation by multidisciplinary stakeholders will be the focus of this activity, which will involve the implementation of the following tasks:

- Hire an M&E specialist as part of the project team and task them with identification of relevant multidisciplinary stakeholder for joint participatory M&E.
- Train the identified stakeholders on basics of how to conduct joint participatory M&E, and the role they will play in the process.
- Develop a participatory M&E plan to be executed jointly with the identified and trained stakeholders in participatory M&E process.
- Engage the identified stakeholders in validating the joint participatory M&E plan developed.

Activity 4: Conduct Joint stakeholder participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

This activity will focus on providing technical and financial support for implementing the participatory M&E plan jointly developed in activity 3.1.3. It will involve implementing the following tasks:

- Support implementation of the joint participatory M&E plan produced in Activity 4
- Jointly, with the stakeholders identified, collect, analyze and report the M&E data.

Activity 5: Restore degraded agriculture lands

Restoration of degraded agricultural lands will be done in the context of the land-use plans developed in output 3.1.2. This activity will focus on restoration of those areas degraded due to bad agricultural practices or deforestation. The project will conduct stakeholder engagement at county and payam levels to:

- Define aspirational restoration goals for degraded agricultural land;
- Understand how ecological communities function; and how habitats may naturally change over time;
- Identify the past, current and possible future state and threats to the agricultural and forest landscape and sites of interest;
- Undertake site assessments to determine the current state of the sites and any current or future threats that may impact on site conditions in the degraded agricultural land;
- Refine restoration goal(s) after conducting site assessments for degraded agricultural land;
- Identify general restoration actions to be undertaken to reach the desired state for degraded agricultural land; and
- Integrate restoration actions into budgeted Restoration Action Plans (RAPs) for selected agricultural sites which may then be approved by the relevant stakeholders at county and payam levels.

A total of 47,806 ha of degraded agricultural land will be restored in the project area, comprising of 20,671 ha in Ikotos county and 27,135 ha in Torit County. The project will support the demarcation and restoration of degraded agricultural land using locally available materials such as indigenous tree species in agroforestry systems, crop diversification and rotation to enhance soil fertility, construction of soil and water conservation structures, and establishment of woodlots so as to increase agricultural land fertility for food production, increase biodiversity, mitigate climate change and control soil erosion and landslides and restore the ecological integrity of the landscape. This intervention will make available trees for fuel wood for cooking, making furniture and household construction as well as fodder for feeding livestock and for sale to other farmers for scaling up and out the project

interventions. As a result, there will be a reduction of community dependence on biomass energy from Imatong CFR leading to the restoration of the physical integrity of the forest and conservation of biodiversity in the protected area with a resultant mitigation against the emission of GHGs from landscape deforestation and forest degradation, enhanced carbon sinks for at least 7,665,906 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO2e) and a contribution to the mitigation (and adaptation to the co-benefits) of climate change impacts.

Output 3.1.4: Regulatory frameworks that govern the management of productive landscapes around the ICFR developed, approved, and implemented at subnational levels:

Considering the lack of a comprehensive policy, legislative and regulatory frameworks, and coordination mechanisms as a barrier to effective management and conservation of biodiversity in PAs, this output will focus on supporting the GoSS to formulate regulatory frameworks (local bye-laws/ordinances) that will regulate the unsustainable management of the productive landscapes around Imatong CFR, based on the nature and magnitude of the problem as revealed by the ES valuation (Output 3.1.1). The process of approving the formulated regulatory frameworks (local bye-laws/ordinances) to govern the management of the unsustainable management of the productive landscapes around ICFR, based on the nature and magnitude of the problem as revealed by the ES by the legislature will require technical and financial supported under this output. Implementation of the regulatory frameworks to govern management of the productive landscapes around the ICFR is likely to be impaired by financial and technical shortfalls. This challenge will also be addressed under this output, by accomplishing the following activities:

Activity 1: Support GoSS to formulate regulatory frameworks (local bye-laws/ordinances) to govern the management of the unsustainable management of the productive landscapes around Imatong CFR, based on the nature and magnitude of the problem as revealed by the ES valuation (Output 3.1.1).

Implementation of this activity will require fulfillment of the following tasks:

- Identify consultant (advertise consultancy position, interview, and recruit candidates), and develop ToR for consultant to identify gaps in the regulatory framework (local bye-laws/ordinances) to govern the management of the unsustainable management of the productive landscapes around Imatong CFR, based on the nature and magnitude of the problem as revealed by the ES; and
- Formulate regulatory framework (local bye-laws/ordinances) to govern the management of the unsustainable management of the productive landscapes around Imatong CFR, based on the nature and magnitude of the problem.
- Organize a workshop of competent stakeholders to validate the regulatory framework so formulated.

Activity 2: Support the process of the approval of the formulated regulatory frameworks (local bye-laws/ordinances) to govern the management of the unsustainable management of the productive landscapes around ICFR, based on the nature and magnitude of the problem as revealed by the ES.

This activity will provide financial and technical support to ensure speedy approval the formulated regulatory framework (local bye-laws/ordinances) to govern the management of the unsustainable management of the productive landscapes around ICFR.

- Identify barriers, challenges and opportunities to the process of the approval of the formulated regulatory frameworks.
- Address the identified barriers, challenges and while making use of the identified opportunities, and entry points in in supporting the process of the expedited approval of the formulated regulatory framework (local bye-laws/ordinances) to govern the management of the unsustainable management of the productive landscapes around ICFR
- Support advocacy to expedite the approval of the regulatory frameworks (local bye-laws/ordinances) by the legislature.

Activity 3: Support the implementation of the approved regulatory frameworks (local bye-laws/ordinances) to govern the management of the unsustainable management of the productive

landscapes around Imatong CFR, based on the nature and magnitude of the problem as revealed by the ES.

This activity will focus on provision of technical and financial support to ensure implementation of the fapproved regulatory framework (local bye-laws/ordinances) to govern the management of the unsustainable management of the productive landscapes around ICFR. Implementation of this activity will involve fulfillment of the following tasks:

- Identify and address potential impediments that may hinder implementation of the regulatory frameworks and opportunities that may pave the way to implementation of the approved regulatory frameworks.
- Support printing, dissemination and raising awareness on the regulatory frameworks (local bye-laws/ordinances).
- Support advocacy for the enforcement of the regulatory frameworks

Output 3.1.5: Forest conservation centered sustainable income generating activities for improved community livelihoods identified and implemented.

Under this output, the project will strive to assist women in establishment of sustainable Income Generating Activities (IGAs) to be undertaken in or near the home in some pilot villages. This could also be one of the main objectives of the self-help female groups formed with the support of the project through its reinforcement of group promotion activities. IGAs tend to give women a higher status within the family and studies generally indicate that the greater the amount of income under women's control, the greater the amount of time devoted to their children's education, health, and nutrition. The Identification of IGAs will come from a bottom up approach. An IGA should correspond to the needs of the community, more specifically women. This means that it may be implemented after some steps have already been carried out with the Project's support like Participatory Rural appraisals (PRAs) with women to identify problems, elaboration of a negotiated development programme and group promotion. All these activities will be carried out using participatory methods. In this context, it seems more appropriate to focus on planning, organizing and supporting IGAs.

The output will strive to promote collaborative forest management by establishing community-based enterprises and develop alternative income sources for livelihoods of rural communities. The project will establish community-based rural enterprises for forestry products through CFM by end of the project period; Increase alternative IGAs will be identified and operationalized; develop skills in wood products and five non-wood forest products. Community Forest association (CFA) members will be trained in wood product development and new NWFP products will be developed and market linkages established through the CFM approach. Community members from enterprises will be trained on operation and maintenance of equipment. Vulnerable communities will be identified, indigenous adaptation practices will be documented, and climate-smart adaptation measures will be initiated. Important/ vulnerable timber and non-timber species will be documented including medicinal plants.

Activity 1: Support establishment of community-based rural enterprises for forestry products by end of the project period.

- Conduct participatory rural appraisals (PRAs) with women to identify problems, elaboration of a negotiated development programme and group promotion.
- Provide support for participatory identification and establishment of sustainable IGAs to be undertaken in or near pilot villages giving special attention to vulnerable groups (women, youth, persons with disability and the elderly).
- Provide technical and financial support in formation and promotion of self-help female and other vulnerable groups with focus on establishing sustainable IGAs.
- Provide technical support in developing value chains relevant to the sustainable IGA forest products including skills in quality production, handling and packaging of forest products that comprise the identified and established IGAs.
- Strengthen business skills of community members engaged in the established community-based rural enterprises in simple bookkeeping, packaging and sale of the produce of sustainable IGAs established.

Activity 2: Increase and operationalize alternative IGAs

This activity will involve implementation of a number of tasks listed below:

- Taking participatory approach with marginalized groups (women, youth, persons with disability etc.) and mainstream community, and the information from the Participatory Rural Appraisals (PRAs) in Activity 3.1.5.1 identify additional IGAs.
- Prioritize and support community members (at least 50% women, youth and other marginalized groups) to put the newly added IGAs to work.
- Provide technical and business skills training to the community on the newly identified IGAs incorporated in community-based rural enterprises.
- Provide financial support to the trained beneficiaries to put the additional and current IGAs to function.
- Conduct rapid appraisal of the existence of SACCOs in the area, and if demanded establish such SACCOs to ensure that financial support provided is sustainable.
- Train self-help women and other vulnerable groups, and members of mainstream community in management of SACCO for sustainability.
- Avail seed funds for established/existing and trained SACCOs to avail revolving cash to operationalize the community-based enterprises.

Activity 3: Develop skills in wood products and five non-wood forest products.

Under this activity the project will develop technical skills of beneficiaries, stakeholders (women, youth and other vulnerable groups) in adding value to wood and non-wood forest products, as well as build business skills and establish market linkages for the forest and non-wood forest product IGAs. This will involve implementation of the following tasks:

- Identify consultant (advertise consultancy position, interview, and recruit candidates).
- Develop ToR for the consultant tasking them to conduct assessment of the technical and business skills needs of the beneficiaries in the productive landscape around ICFR in Activity 3.1.5.2 in wood, and the 5 NWFPs.
- Develop training material as per the identified capacity needs of the beneficiary stakeholders comprised of women, youth and other vulnerable groups, and members of the mainstream community in the productive landscapes around the IMFCR.
- Provide financial and technical support in delivering the demand driven training based on the manuals and related training materials prepared under the preceding task.

Activity 4: Train forest association (CFA) members in wood product development including new NWFP products.

This activity will involve implementation of the following tasks:

- Identify consultant (advertise consultancy position, interview, and recruit candidates) and develop ToR for the consultant to establish community forest associations (CFAs) in the productive landscape of ICFR
- Assess the capacity needs of the established CFAs in the landscape around ICFR.
- Develop training material as per the identified capacity needs.
- Procure conference facility and related services for training the members of the CFAs.
- Organize sessions for and deliver capacity building trainings for the members of the CFAs to bridge the capacity gaps identified under this activity.

Activity 5: Support identification of markets and establishment of market linkages for the NWFPs.

This activity builds on the preceding activity (3.1.5.4.) by linking the produce of the CFA members whose capacity was built in development of wood and NWFPs buy establishing market linkages for the wood and NWFPs. In doing so the activity will involve the following tasks:

- Identify consultant (advertise consultancy position, interview, and recruit candidates).
- Develop ToR for the consultant, and task them to identify potential viable markets for the NWFP in the productive landscape of ICFR;
- Task the consultant with identification of and establishing linkages between the identified markets and the established CFAs in the productive landscape of ICFR;
- Support members of the CFAs to operationalize the NWFP in the productive landscape of ICFR.

Activity 6: Train community members from enterprises on operation and maintenance of equipment.

Community members pooled from those involved in the established enterprises will need to acquire capacity and skills for the operation and maintenance of various equipment?s use in manufacturing NWFPs

- Identify consultant (advertise consultancy position, interview, and recruit candidates).
- Develop ToR for the consultant, and task and empower them with establishment of enterprises based on the NWFP IGAs; and
- Task the consultant to identify vulnerable members of the community targeted; and
- Assessing capacity needs of the members of vulnerable groups (women, youth (male and female), persons with disability) and mainstream community from the established enterprises for operation and maintenance of equipment required to process the NWFP;
- Develop capacity building material for bridging the identified capacity gaps for them to effectively operate and maintain equipment for processing the NWFP;
- Organize sessions for and deliver capacity building trainings for the members of the CFAs.
- Procure conference facility and related services for training the community members of the CFAs.
- Deliver the training based on the training material developed, and the identified capacity shortfalls.

Activity 7: Document indigenous adaptation practices in the productive landscape of ICFR.

Local knowledge and adaptation practices that abound among the communities in the productive landscapes around the IMFCR have the potential to augment the efforts, and amplify the impacts of this project. Therefore, this activity will focus on documenting those indigenous knowledge and adaptation practices by implementing the following tasks:

- Identify consultant (advertise consultancy position, interview, and recruit candidates).
- Develop ToR for the consultant, task and empower them with identifying and documenting relevant indigenous knowledge and adaptation practices in the productive landscape of ICFR.
- Incorporate identified relevant indigenous knowledge and adaptation practices, as recommended by the consultant, in the projects climate change related adaptation initiatives identified in Activity 3.1.5.8 below.

Activity 8: Initiate climate-smart adaptation measures and their application in the productive landscape of ICFR.

Indigenous knowledge and adaptation practices of, and engaging local communities in the productive landscapes around IMFCR, this activity will initiate climate smart adaptation measures and application of such measures in the area. The activity will involve implementation of the following tasks:

- Participation with community members, formulate climate smart adaptation measures inclusive of the indigenous adaptation practices recommended in Activity 3.1.5.7.
- Promote the formulated climate-smart adaption measures among the community members in the productive landscape of ICFR.
- Support the initiation and realization of climate-smart adaptation activities in the productive landscape of ICFR.

Activity 9: Document important/vulnerable timber and non-timber species including medicinal plants.

Environmental and natural resource depletion including degradation of natural habitats and loss of biodiversity, amplified by unsustainable agricultural practices and deforestation actively takes place in the productive landscapes neighboring ICFR. In light of these challenges coupled with the associated threats to diversity of ecosystems, species and genes, this activity focuses on documenting vulnerable or important timber and non-timer species including medicinal plants in the project area. Implementation of the following tasks will be involved:

- Identify consultant (advertise consultancy position, interview, and recruit candidates).
- Develop ToR for the consultant, and task them with documenting important/ vulnerable timber and non-timber plant species including medicinal plants as well as forest animal species ; and.
- Recommending / prioritizing the documented plant and animal species for immediate, medium and long-term conservation actions.

Component 4: Knowledge management and learning

The project will facilitate and enhance knowledge acquisition and experience sharing at local, landscape, national and regional levels through better access to information, knowledge, learning, and networking for purposes of catalyzing coordinated implementation of biodiversity loss reduction. This will be achieved by; (i) developing and operationalizing an interactive M&E system to track project activity implementation progress, outputs and outcomes (Output 4.1.1), and (ii) documenting and sharing best practices and lessons learned at landscape, national and regional levels to inform uptake of best practices, lessons learned and policy (Output 4.1.2).

Outcome 4.1: Sector Agencies and relevant institutions applying and scaling up sustainable biodiversity conservation in policy and practice

This outcome will contribute to Core Indicator 11, the number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment. The outcome will be achieved through 3 outputs as follows:

Output 4.1.1 Tools to track best practices and lessons learned from cost-effective PA/ biodiversity conservation management measures developed and operationalized:
The project will develop an M&E System and learning framework. The M&E System will be based on an appropriate, widely available and open source operating system with a friendly user interface that will ensure the system?s effectiveness, sustainability and interactivity. This will also allow easy access and use of the M&E System for tracking of interventions.

Activity 1: Develop M&E system and learning framework.
The Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework that will be developed by the project will lay out how stakeholders will monitor its resources, project activities and results; how periodic assessments and analysis will guide and accompany implementation; and how the information generated from monitoring and evaluation will be reflected upon and used to improve the project?s performance.
A detailed M&E plan will be developed during the beginning of the project and will to be shared with stakeholders. The M&E system will be monitored and adopted during the project cycle. The following tasks will be undertaken:

Development of ToR for an M&E consultant. The ToR will include background of the project, objectives of the consultancy, clearly describe duties and responsibilities of the consultant, qualification of the consultant, timeframe for the assignment, compensation and reporting requirements.

Identification of a competent M&E consultant. The role of the M&E consultant is to continuously collect and analyze information to compare how well the project is being implemented against expected targets. The consultant will familiarize himself/herself with the project objectives and strategies in order to have a broader overview of project activities prior to undertaking his/her the activity.

Setting of indicators against which monitoring will be conducted. This involves identification of what to measure, use of SMART process to develop high quality indicators, establishment of reference points, setting targets and determine the frequency of data collection.

Selection of tools and techniques to be used for monitoring. These tools will focus on project activities, stakeholder involvement and will be timeline flexible. The tools will capture number and types of teams involved required and available resources. Example of tools and techniques to be used are monitoring plan, surveys, interviews and FGDs.

Data will be collected using basic tools such as interviews, observation and surveys, and gender-sensitive FGDs. Data analysis on the other hand will be done using basic qualitative and quantitative methods and techniques such observation, FGD which involves asking questions and generating discussion among a group of people, semi-structured and structured interviews where personally asking people questions in one-on-one conversations.

Making use of learning to improve next phase of the project. This involve replicating good lessons and improvement of areas of low performance or sustain high performance in the project. Good lessons will further be shared and replicated in in the newly identified project area after project area.

Evaluation provides a systematic method to study a program, practice, intervention, or initiative to understand how well it achieves its goals. Evaluations help determine what works well and what could be improved in a program or initiative
It involves use of different tools or techniques for data collection such as semi-structure interviews and Focus Group Discussion and Self-Assessment forms.
Evaluation will involve five key criteria which are:

- Relevance of the project: whether the purpose of the project is achieved and why it should exist; whether the project performance results into rectifying of the problem to be addressed; and whether there are any benefits gained at short term prospect and over a long period of time.
- Effectiveness of the project: it takes into consideration whether the project is successful in producing the desired results. This will be determined through review of the scope of the project, evaluation of the project specifications, analysis of the project budget, and review of client satisfactory and internal growth in terms of project team satisfaction.
- Efficiency of the project: the production of an output in a qualified and competent way in terms of the agreed scope, cost, time and quality, where quality is not a constraint per se. It determines whether it is worth investing in the project.
- Sustainability of the project: it takes into consideration the environmental, social, economic aspects of project-meet the current needs of stakeholders without compromising or overburdening future generations. It will determine whether the project will improve and maintain human capital in the Imatong (three area of Acholi, Lango and Lokuko).
- Impact of the project on the community: the impact the project will have on natural, cultural and historic conservation values, and whether benefits of the project will be remained in the community over a long period of time or are short lived. Impact will determined through measuring achievements against set objectives, assessment of effectiveness of the project activities, description of the project success to others and identify areas intended for improvement.
- Financial report is one of the key documents to very/justify the use of funds for project implementation.

Output 4.1.2: Best practices and lessons learned on cost-effective PA/ biodiversity conservation management measures documented and shared at National and Sub national levels and informing uptake and policy.

Best practices and lessons learnt will be discussed and documented throughout the project cycle with all stakeholders at all levels (community, PA, landscape, State and national levels). This includes during; baseline data collection, stakeholder engagement meetings, participatory planning meetings, project implementation meetings and learning and joint M&E missions.

Activity 1: Discuss best practices throughout the project cycle with all stakeholders.

This activity will be achieved through:

- Development of ToR for a consultant to document best practices throughout the project cycle. The ToR will specify the stages of project circles where best practices are expected to be documented (initiation, planning, execution, monitoring, and closure).
- Identification and recruit a consultant. The project will consult with project team to identify suitable candidate for the position of a consultant to document best practices. The PMU will follow a recruitment process to ensure that the consultant is recruited within the stipulated timeframe to ensure he/she delivers on the agreed project timeframe.
- Conducting a workshop to draw participants from the three communities of Lokuko, Lango and Acholi, PA, landscape, state and national levels: The purpose of the workshop is to draw participants from the three communities in the Imatong PA is to document best practices from each of the three communities and document them. Best practices will later be replicated in the new area(s) to be identified.

Activity 2: Documentation of lessons learnt throughout the project cycle.

Document lessons learnt throughout the project cycle through deciding on the matrix for documenting a report, asking team what went well and what can be improved, organize the responses into an easy to read document, and collect and store the documents for reference. Best practices documented will later be replicated in other areas while worse practices will be avoided.

Output 4.1.3: Targeted discussions at national, state and county levels to share lessons and identify additional areas for replication (potentially hosting workshops at local level to showcase results).

Activity 1: Conduct a workshop to draw participants from national, state and local levels to share lessons learned and identify additional areas for replication within the Imatong landscape.
This activity will be achieved through the following:

- Identification of key stakeholders to participate in the above workshop. These will include men, women and youth from the three communities of Imatong PA, national and state levels stakeholders. These include government representatives, NGOs, private sector and farmers among others.
- Develop communication, education and awareness strategy to discuss lessons learnt at national, state and local levels stakeholders ranging from communities including men, women, youth and the disadvantaged; NGOs; UN Agencies; Private Sector; and others to disseminate proceedings of the workshop to all relevant stakeholders.
- Identification of additional areas for replication of project activities in the country (possible biological hotspot).
- This process will be participatory with involvement of stakeholders from various levels. Technical knowledge of hotspots country wide will guide discussion about the choice of a new biological hotspot.
- Share lessons learnt through involvement of stakeholders with the newly identified additional area for replication. Lessons from different communities will be presented during the workshop. Good lessons will be replicated in the newly selected area for replication while bad ones will be discarded.
- Dissemination of workshop report to stakeholders through project reports, national conference/stakeholders meetings, and community meetings. The reports will be translated in the local languages (Lokuko, choli and Lango) to enable community members who do not understand English to access the report. Additionally, conference and stakeholders meetings will be conducted in both English and local dialects of the respectful communities to ensure wide dissemination of the workshop reports.

Activity 2. Conduct inception workshop with target groups at the area identified for replication. This activity will be achieved through the following steps:

- Formulate objectives of the workshop to introduce the project to the newly selected area for replication. Formulation of the objective will start by understanding the problems in the area identified for replication. This is followed by definition of success of the project. The objectives will be SMART to help focus your efforts and increase the chances of achieving the objective of the project.
- Invite relevant stakeholders taking gender inclusivity, youth and disabled persons into consideration, and allow women in particular to express their views since the project pays special attention to gender inclusivity. Local stakeholders from previous project areas in particular will be invited to share their lessons with those in the area identified for replication. In addition, national and landscape stakeholders will as well be invited.
- Share lessons identified from the previous area of implementation with the stakeholders of the area identified for replication. Lessons shared will then be documented and disseminated to inform all stages of project cycle.
- Replicate the same lessons/best practices in the newly identified area in consultation with stakeholders at national, state and county levels. On the other hand, bad practices will not only be avoided but better understood to determine their possible effect and subsequent impact in a project.
- Disseminate project information through South Sudan Environment Information System and South Sudan Environment Information Network. Dissemination will take place at all levels (National, state and local levels) of reports through community meetings, reports and other means and in dialects of the people in the area identified for replication.

1.4 Alignment with GEF focal area and/or Impact Program strategies

The proposed project is designed to contribute to the GEF biodiversity and land degradation focal areas objectives of BD-2-7 Address direct drivers to protect habitats and species and improve financial sustainability, effective management, and ecosystem coverage of the global protected area estate and LD-3-4 Reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses and increase resilience in the wider landscape. Under components 1 and 2, the project will deliver global environmental benefits through improved management of the Imatong CFR leading to species conservation in in the landscape, hence making the project aligned with BD2.7. In addition, global environmental benefits will extend beyond the CFR as efforts to scale up biodiversity conservation in the landscape will be attained through components 3 and 4. The project will aim at reducing pressures on natural resources from competing land uses around Imatong CFR (LD- 3-4), by bringing together local, sub-national and national stakeholders to participatory develop and implement joint land use plan thus establishing a coordinated scheme for programming to attain integrated sustainable land management in the Imatong landscape.

The project will contribute to land degradation neutrality (LDN) at the national scale through: (i) avoidance of land degradation in stable agricultural land or intact natural systems using Sustainable Land Management (SLM) and Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) practices that increase tree or forest cover, and wetland cover, (ii) reduction of the rate of degradation in areas with declining or stressed land productivity using practices that increase soil organic matter, conserve water, reduce erosion or correct degradation processes through interventions such as strategic reforestation, (iii) reversal of land degradation through restoration or rehabilitation of degraded unproductive land using substantial and transformational measures to enhance productivity. Achievement of LDN will contribute to cutting emissions in the energy, forestry and wetland sectors in line with the NDC 2030 targets.

The project will contribute towards the achievement of a number of CBD Aichi Targets, namely: Target 5 by addressing the rate of loss of all natural habitats in the Imatong Mountains Landscape, including forests, and degradation and fragmentation, significantly reduced; Target 7 by promoting sustainable management of areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry, ensuring conservation of biodiversity; Target 11 by contributing to effective and equitable conservation of the ecologically representative protected areas and other effective area based conservation measures in the Imatong Mountain Landscape; Target 14 through restoration of ecosystems that provide essential services, including livelihoods and wellbeing while taking into account the needs of women, indigenous people and other local communities, and the poor and vulnerable; Target 15 through enhancement of ecosystem resilience and contribution of biodiversity conservation and carbon stocks through conservation and restoration of degraded ecosystems, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

At the global level, the project will contribute to specific Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Indicators namely: Indicator 12.2 by contributing to achieving the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources; Indicator 15.3 by restoring degraded land and soil, including land affected by drought and floods, and striving to achieve a land degradation neutral world. This project will also contribute to achieving the climate change targets, namely: Target 13.1 (Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate related disasters), Target 13.2 (Integrate climate change measures into policies and planning), Target 13.3 (Build knowledge and capacity to meet climate change), Target 13A (Implement the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change) and Target 13.B (Promote mechanisms to raise capacity for planning and management). The project will also directly contribute to the objectives and targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (towards reaching the 2050 vision), especially Target 1: Ensure that all areas are under participatory integrated biodiversity inclusive spatial planning and/or effective management processes, including ecosystems of high ecological integrity, close to zero by 2030, and Target 4: Ensure urgent management actions, to halt human induced extinction of known threatened species and for the recovery and conservation of species, in particular threatened species.

1.5 Incremental/additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline

Component 1: Developing enabling policy and regulatory frameworks for effective planning, management and governance of forest PAs

Without GEF project support, effective forest management at national, state, county, payam (Parish) and boma (village) levels will continue to be crippled. Without a clear policy, legal and institutional framework, poor inter-sectoral coordination and collaboration among stakeholders will continue, negatively impacting on forest management and investment. Weak PA governance structures and untrained law enforcement entities and staff will continue managing the PA with their limited skills on PA management and biodiversity conservation, further undermining effective PA management effectiveness and biodiversity conservation

With GEF project support; (i) At least 80% of all legislation and policy documents will be reviewed, and (ii) At least one multi--stakeholder governance platform established and take lead in PAME implementation. Hence, there will be increased PA management effectiveness reflected in sound PA governance, resulting in reduced off-take/ harvest of PA resources due to increased enforcement of the approved regulations, reduced PA illegal incursions due to implementation of established and approved PA regulations, restoration of PA physical integrity due to establishment of PA targeted interventions, greater PA age due to reduction in external disturbance, larger PA size due to reduced encroachment, greater indigenous local community involvement in PA governance due to establishment of multi-stakeholder forums, greater gross domestic product per capita due to greater PA benefits sharing with wider community, large animal size due to less harassment and abundant forage, greater benefits to the local community due to implementation of CFM arrangements, clearer and demarcated boundary of PA due to resolution of land tenure legal issues, lower corruption due to streamlined roles, responsibilities and coordination mechanisms, and strictness of protection due to clearer mandates bestowed by strengthened policy, legal and regulatory framework.

The incremental benefits will be: (i) reduced pressure on the HVCF from the local communities; (ii) Enhanced forest cover due to PA adaptive management and reduced deforestation; (iii) substantial increase in forest carbon stocks; (iv) reduction in GHGs emissions and climate change mitigation; (v) increased resilience of forest-dependent communities; and (vi) enhanced biodiversity conservation.

Component 2: Forest Management plan development and capacity building for effective forestry protected area management

Without GEF project support: The PA will continue to be managed without due regard to its ecological values, and it will be less and less effectively managed. The PA will not be able to serve the overall goal of achieving ecological balance that optimizes biodiversity and the health and well-being of ecosystems, biodiversity, and humanity. The communities will not be able to reap the greatest benefits from the PA and protect areas that are most important for biodiversity, including intact ecosystems; ensure that conservation supports land connectivity wherever possible; pursue conservation to ensure that the global system of protected areas is representative of our planet?s diverse nature and ecosystems; and support indigenous peoples? land rights and promote indigenous-led conservation.

With GEF project support; (i) At least 60% of the staff will be trained and have their capacity built in PA management and biodiversity conservation, (ii) One PA Management Plan will be developed, and implemented, (iii) PAME tool will be operational and informing decision making; and (iv) At least one multi--stakeholder governance platform will be established and take lead in PAME implementation. The PA Management Plan that has support from all the key stakeholders will result in increased funding for conservation and protected area management and transition toward reliable and sustainable long-term funding. The PA financial sustainability will reinforce PA management capacity to become more responsive to changing opportunities and external demands, strengthen institutional capacity to use financial and business planning tools, establish more supportive economic policy and market conditions and involve a wider range of stakeholders in PA management.

The PA critical habitats will be safeguarded, and species therein will thrive unimpacted by human disturbance, and their populations will increase. A well-managed PA will have intact ecosystems that can play a vital role in disease prevention. When managed in collaboration with nearby communities, local economies benefit from the PA through ecotourism, bringing new revenue and employment that

directly benefits communities, making them participate more in safeguarding the PA biodiversity. Through CFRs arrangements, local people will safeguard and foster the biodiversity in ecosystems that serves as important dietary components for local communities resulting in greater supplies for local communities to consume or sell ecosystem products. A well safeguarded PA will protect watersheds that ensure a clean water supply. The PA habitats will be able store excess greenhouse gases like carbon and keep them from our atmosphere, regulating the global climate. A well-managed PA will halt harmful human-induced activities, and, in turn, sequester carbon to reduce climate change. In summary, effectively managed Imatong CFR will become a critical tool for safeguarding biodiversity, maintaining ecosystem balance, preserving important habitats, building resilience to climate change, providing global food security, maintaining water quality, conserving natural resources, driving economic success, curbing the spread of diseases and pests, and providing many other benefits to wildlife and human wellbeing.

Component 3: Promoting sustainable agricultural practices and improved community livelihoods in the Imatong landscape

Without GEF project support, the barriers to sustainable landscape management will persist, and there will be continued unsustainable agriculture and natural resources management practices in the productive areas around the ICFR. Food and fiber production will not be able to support biodiversity and ecosystem services in the production landscapes and contribute to human well-being. There will be no synergies and trade-offs among ecological, economic, cultural, and social objectives at scale, and the interactions among different land uses will not be complementary but, competing. The land management strategies in the production landscapes will not produce an optimal ecological balance, and production sectors will continue to work in silos, not across sectors, ensuring that, Integrated Land Management (ILM), and forestry and biodiversity policy strategies are adequately integrated.

With GEF project support, a participatory Land Use Plan will be developed and implemented covering at least 60,000 ha in the buffer area around ICFR. Improved practices in these areas will include: (i) 50,000 ha of production landscapes outside ICFR will be placed under improved practices; and (ii) 10,000 ha of HCVFs will be safeguarded and protected in the area outside of the ICFR. The combination of trees and crops in spatial or temporal arrangements results in greater structural and functional complexity compared to monoculture production. This complexity leads to gains in efficiency of capturing and utilizing nutrients, light and water, improves food and nutritional security, results in valuable cultural landscapes, and mitigates environmental degradation, thus offering a sustainable alternative to input-intensive ?single commodity? production. This contributes to poverty alleviation, increasing food security, and halting deforestation and fosters rural quality of life and cultural values, improving water quality, controlling soil erosion, and conserving biological diversity. Ultimately, the approach offers a wide range of environmental, social, cultural, and economic benefits at landscape scale, a key strategy for the ?perennialization? of agriculture aimed at establishing permanent vegetative cover for ecosystem services and biodiversity conservation and protection.

The incremental benefits will be: (i) Increased and stabilized crop productivity through combinations of vegetation management, crop diversification, soil fertility and sustainable soil and water management practices leading to increased incomes, poverty reduction and reduced pressure on the HVCF from the local communities; (i i) Enhanced forest cover through afforestation, reforestation, and sustainable and adaptive management, while reducing deforestation will substantially increase forest carbon stocks, absorb GHGs, which will mitigate climate change and conserve biodiversity while preventing land degradation and increasing the resilience of forest-dependent communities and enabling forest ecosystems to adapt to extreme events, such as heatwaves, droughts, floods, landslides, and sand and dust storms, as well as pest and disease control, further enhancing societal and ecological resilience to climate change; and (iii) Adoption of agroforestry practices and mixed farming systems will contribute to increased soil quality and carbon sequestration, maintenance of soil fertility and nutrient cycling and control soil erosion, while providing food and income to local communities and enhancing community resilience to climate change leading to increased incomes, poverty reduction and reduced pressure on the forest from the local communities which results in improved biodiversity conservation. (iv) promotion of IGAs will empower women and youth in improving their livelihoods, their financial status and give

women greater amount of time devoted to their children's education, health, and nutrition through its reinforcement of group promotion activities. By adopting, applying and scaling up and out SLM technologies and practices as nature based solutions to address drivers of deforestation and forest and land degradation, biodiversity loss, and climate change, the actions will simultaneously address LDN, climate change mitigation, while achieving other co-benefits, such as protection of biodiversity and securing the quantity and quality of soil and water resources.

Component 4: Knowledge management and learning

Without GEF project support in generating knowledge and best practices in PA management and biodiversity conservation and integrated landscape management, and sharing those experiences with stakeholders, there will be limited data and information to inform decision making, and PAs will continue to be mismanaged. There will be inadequate investment in ecosystems, species and genetic resource management, impacting negatively on biodiversity conservation, ecosystem products and services and ultimately, human wellbeing.

With GEF support, there will be relevant, accurate, usable, timely biodiversity data and information, essential for sound decision making and support for efforts to strengthen biodiversity information sharing, through the development and promotion of standards and best practices for information management. There will be enhanced knowledge acquisition and experience sharing at local, landscape, national and regional levels through better access to information, knowledge, learning, and networking, and PA planning and management will be evidence based. This will lead to better PA management; effective resource allocation; accountability and transparency; community involvement in PA management; building of trust and constituency of BD champions, and promotion of protected area values.

The incremental and global benefits: Funding bodies, policy makers and conservationists will use the results to highlight problems and to set priorities, and to promote better management policies and practices by management agencies. Managers will use evaluation results to improve their performance, and to report on achievements to senior managers, the government or external stakeholders. Local communities and other stakeholders, including civil society, will establish how far their interests are being taken into account. This will catalyze coordinated implementation of biodiversity loss reduction, land degradation neutrality (LDN), and climate change mitigation.

1.6 Global benefits

This project will reduce biodiversity loss and increase biodiversity conservation potential of agricultural and forest landscapes in South Sudan by enhancing and expanding the role of PA categories V and VI, and other conservation measures including the full IUCN PA Matrix of governance types. It is targeting areas of high biodiversity value where deforestation and degradation persists as an ongoing threat but where conventional exclusionary measures are neither socially acceptable nor operationally viable. By strengthening existing policy and regulatory frameworks, decision-making processes and governance structures, the project will directly contribute to national policies and strategies aimed at stabilizing land-use, protecting and conserving HVCFs, addressing the interests of local communities, supporting sustainable land use and improving ecological connectivity and biodiversity conservation.

By focusing on improving the policy and regulatory framework, and sustainable biodiversity and land-use strategies, implementation, promoting productive landscapes restoration and reducing deforestation activities, the project will deliver conservation and use economic models that directly contribute to the achievement of Aichi Targets 7 and 11. The project will help advance early actions that reconcile and optimize land-use decision making to reduce deforestation and forest degradation, enhance carbon stocks through the restoration of ecosystem functionality and promote enhanced and sustainable management of current low-carbon land-use strategies.

The Imatong landscape is a potential key biodiversity Area in the region. The Imatong Central Forest Reserve (ICFR) is part of the Imatong landscape that includes the Kidepo Valley National Park (KVNP)

in Northern Uganda and Kidepo Game Reserve in South Sudan area a very critical landscape for trans-boundary biodiversity conservation of national, regional and global significance. The government of South Sudan has been wishing to alleviate the ICFR into a National Park and to advocate for creation of a Transfrontier Conservation Area (TFCA). The Imatong landscape supports large populations of elephant, buffalo, duikers, hyena and leopard. This project will provide information to policy makers in this regard. The forest contains over 500 bird species, many birds not found in other part of South Sudan and is a resting place for European birds enroute to their over-wintering places in East Africa. One of the bird species in the area is the endangered spotted ground-thrush (*Zoothera guttata*), that deserves protection. The ICFR supports over 2,000 vascular plant and is one of the largest intact Podocarpus forest in Africa. This is the only area in South Sudan where the vascular plant species restricted to the country are housed including *Aloe diolii*, *Aloe macleayi*, a cycad (*Encephalartos mackenziei*), *Chlorophytum superpositum*, *Scilla chlorantha*, and *Panicum bambusiculme*. The Imatong landscape is a significant watershed and water tower as its rivers flow into River Nile.

The key global socio-economic benefits that will be generated through the restoration of ecosystems and integrated natural resource management in the Imatong landscape include a combination of short and long-term benefits to local communities and broader society. These range, for example, from enhancing the local green economy in the short term, to the long-term benefits from the contribution of securing ecosystem services towards enhancing the resilience and sustainability of human settlements globally. At a local level the project generates a range of specific socio-economic benefits for participating communities including skills development and training, livelihood diversification opportunities, and enhanced opportunities for sustainable natural resource harvesting, and benefits from improved ecosystem functioning and services. The global socio-economic benefits can be framed in terms of the contribution of the project to achieving:

SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. The project design and approach directly addresses gender equity and the empowerment of women, girls and youth generally. Lessons from this can also be shared regionally and internationally.

SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts - Climate change is affecting every country on every continent and ecosystem restoration and SLM interventions will contribute to enhancing carbon sequestration and support a transition to a green economy. This contributes to combatting the impacts of climate change locally, regionally and internationally.

SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss. Well-managed and healthy ecosystems support human well-being and healthy communities. The scale of these benefits of felt beyond the local level and impacts regionally and even globally.

1.7 Innovativeness, sustainability and potential for scaling up

1.7.1 Innovativeness

The multi-sectoral approach used in designing this project will facilitate the collation and use of the outcomes and recommendations from GEF funded projects that have been implemented in South Sudan and elsewhere over the years to develop activities that enhance integrated management of common resources such as land and forests for purposes of advancing local development. The project is therefore innovative in that it breaks out of the "silo mode" that most development projects have been developed and implemented in over the years. This project will learn from the experiences of others who are already implementing the approach, mainstreaming the landscape approach into locally used systems of land use planning. It will also serve to build national capacity to implement South Sudan?s commitment to the sustainable forest and land management as well as biodiversity conservation.

The proposed project is intended to build upon prior investments through the GEF. Community members in the Imatong landscape will been sensitized on the need and value of sustainable forest and land management, biodiversity conservation and local action through alternative income generating activities. New techniques will be demonstrated though experiential hands-on learning. For example, Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) mechanism is not yet a widespread practice in South Sudan, and the methodologies of establishing the Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool (IMET) to track Protected Area Management Effectiveness (PAME) and to inform management decisions and IUCN Green Listing process will be applied for the first time in the country. The equipment, devices and intervention strategies that are proposed for adoption by the Forestry department at both national and state levels and at the site level are innovations in the national context.

The project also includes training and capacity building of individual farmers and government workers charged with planning and implementation of forest and biodiversity management at the national, state and county levels. This approach will ensure that actions taken under this project will be developed with the full participation of beneficiary communities sustained beyond its lifespan. The proposed documentation of best practices and dissemination of the lessons learned from project implementation will facilitate scaling up of the project to other areas of South Sudan and beyond.

1.7.2 Sustainability

The overall sustainability of the project results will be supported by embedding capacity into the institutions and entities that need and can make good use of strengthened abilities and resources. At the national level, the project will raise awareness among legislators, the Council of Ministers, and other decision makers on the importance of conserving South Sudan?s forestry resources, thereby increasing their support for additional funding for conservation and for mainstreaming conservation objectives across all branches of government, including in particular Finance, Tourism, and Planning and Natural Resource Management. Capacity building will strengthen the on-going ability of law enforcement and protected area agencies with jurisdiction over species and their habitats, and of rural communities dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods, to continue to carry out activities that can benefit wildlife, forestry and ecosystem services. Building good policies, strong legislation and the capacity to implement them will establish the enabling environment for Protected Area Management Effective (PAME). Securing alternative development pathways that rely on a resilient and healthy wildlife stock and forestry resource base that benefits communities will reduce the incentives for rural populations to engage in poaching, hunting, illegal harvesting of forestry products or destructive ecosystem management practices. The project will seek to create stable situations on the ground where there is proper enforcement along with local communities engaged in conservation-compatible activities that generate local benefits while generating global environmental benefits.

1.7.3 potential for scaling up and/or Replication.

The proposed project will address capacity building for staff within the Directorate of Forestry (Ministry of Environment and Forestry) on Protected Area Management Effective (PAME), managing information systems, monitoring; training on implementing monitoring, enforcement; and training on PA management for staff at the targeted PA sites, which together will allow for best practices and lessons learned through national and on-site enforcement activities to be easily and be widely up-scaled to overall national forest management operations. The Project will catalyze different innovations that can be deployed at speed and scale across other sites. Training of CBOs and local communities within and adjacent to the targeted Imatong CFR and community co-management processes will be crucial for developing models that can be replicated elsewhere in the country, and replication of lessons and best practices may be enabled in areas such as monitoring, enforcement, ecotourism and other biodiversity-compatible livelihood opportunities. International exchanges with other countries practicing Community Based Natural Resource Management, such as Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, will be used to further strengthen skills in these technical areas among stakeholders in the Imatong landscape, who can then provide peer training to their colleagues at other sites in South Sudan.

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[4]RSS. (2016b). South Sudan Vision 2040: Towards Freedom, Equality, Justice, Peace and Prosperity for All. Torit, South Sudan: Government Republic of South Sudan (RSS).

[5]Diao, X., You, L., Alpuerto, V., & Folledo, R. (2012). Assessing Agricultural Potential in South Sudan ? A Spatial Analysis Method. In B. Alam, Application of Geographic Information Systems. Intech. doi:10.5772/47938

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[7]VEDAMAN Consultants Limited (2015): *?The Contribution of Livestock to the South Sudan Economy?*. IGAD Centre for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development (ICPALD) and the European Union and InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources.

[8]VEDAMAN Consultants Limited (2015): *?The Contribution of Livestock to the South Sudan Economy?*. IGAD Centre for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development (ICPALD) and the European Union and InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources.

[10]

[11](https://www.africanews.com/2021/08/02/south-sudan-swears-in-new-parliament-vowed-under-peace-deal/)

[12]World Bank Group (2014). South Sudan Country Report: Findings of the Land Governance Assessment Framework (LGAF). Washington, D.C.

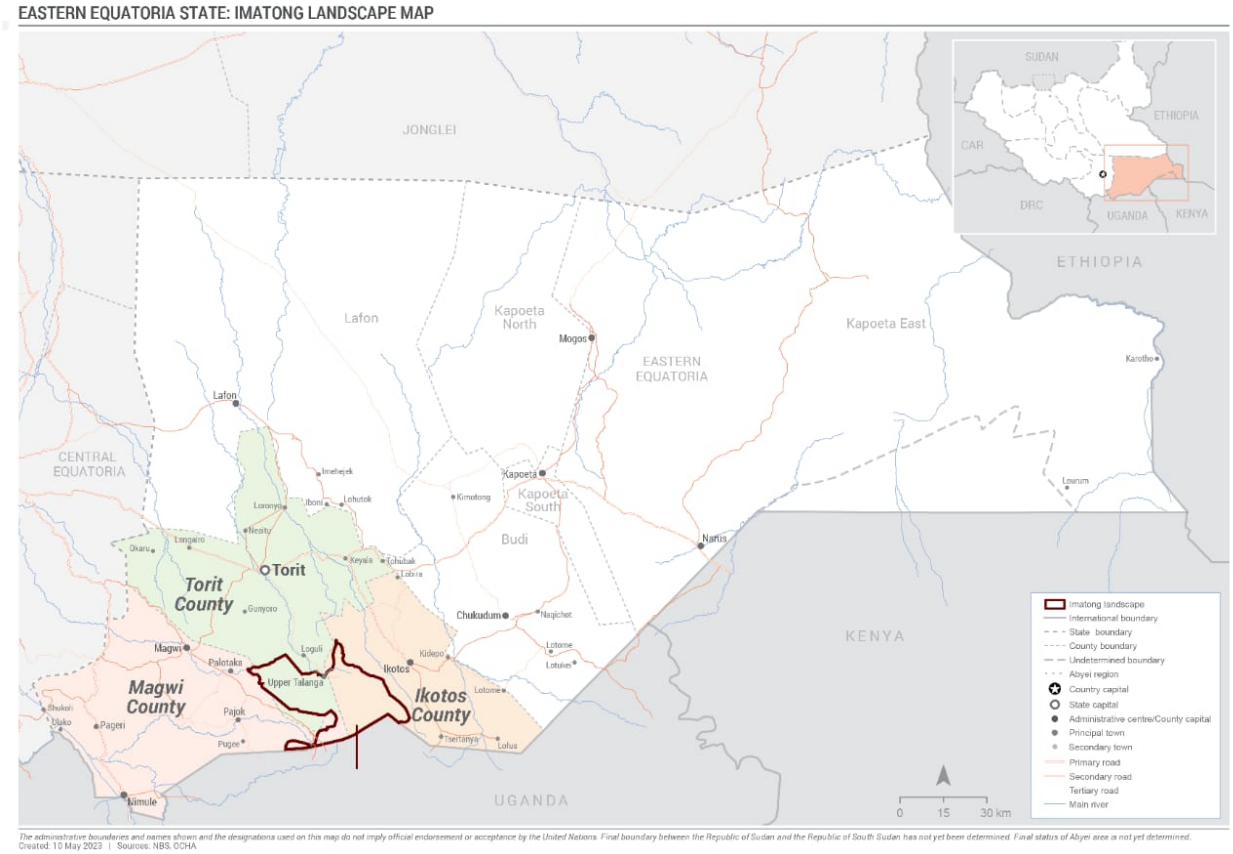
[13]UNDP (2022) Independent Country Programme Evaluation: South Sudan. Independent Evaluation Office, United Nations Development Programme, New York.

1b. Project Map and Coordinates

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.

Annex E: Project Map(s) and Coordinates

The project will be implemented in Imatong Central Forest Reserve (indicated by the white outline in the map below) and the surrounding counties of Ikotos, Torit and Magwi. The project implementation area lies between 32?31' E ? 33? 31' E and 3? 8' N - 4? 5' N



1c. Child Project?

If this is a child project under a program, describe how the components contribute to the overall program impact.

No

2. Stakeholders

Select the stakeholders that have participated in consultations during the project identification phase:

Civil Society Organizations Yes

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Yes

Private Sector Entities Yes

If none of the above, please explain why:

A wide range of stakeholders participated in the consultations during the project identification and design phases, and will continue to participate during implementation phase. These include stakeholders at the Central Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies, especially the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security and Ministry of Environment and Forestry. At Landscape/Regional level; East Equatoria Sate Government and Torit and Ikotos County officials and stakeholders at Boma (Village) level; communities neighbouring Imatong CFR have been consulted and will be actively involved in project implementation. There have also been targeted stakeholder engagements and consultations with other categories of stakeholders, namely; Civil Society Organizations (CSO), Private Sector Organizations (PSO) such as the South Sudan Business Forum (SSBF), research and academic institutions such as University of Juba, faith based organizations, and traditional institutions.

A detailed stakeholder engagement plan has been developed for this project and will be updated at inception. In summary however, stakeholder engagement will be at different levels: (i) National; (ii) State; (iii) Landscape; (iii) County; (iv) Payam; (v) Boma and (v) Village. All categories of stakeholders (Central and State Government entities, CSO, PSO, traditional institutions, etc.) will be consulted. The PMU and project implementing partners will, nevertheless, undertake continuous stakeholder engagements at various levels in order to promptly: (i) identify, capture and adequately address stakeholders? concerns and potential risks; (ii) further and properly consult groups and peoples whose lives might be affected by the project to verify and assess the significance of any impacts and device mitigation measures; and (iii) ensure equitable and gender- balanced and sensitive participation of the affected groups and communities in the development of mitigation measures, decision making processes, and in the monitoring and evaluation of project implementation. The scale and intensity of stakeholder

engagement will be commensurate to the concerns expressed or expected from stakeholders and the magnitude of potential risks.

Engagement strategies will be tailored to individual stakeholder groups to reflect their concerns and their rights to land and natural resources will entail awareness- raising and capacity-strengthening activities. Targeted tools such as; (i) Gender mapping; (ii) Transect walks / Landscape Analysis; (iii) Timeline and Trends Analysis; (iv) Livelihood Analysis; and (v) Problem and Solution Matrix will be employed. A Gender-Responsive approach focusing on the development of women as leaders and decision makers will be employed. Gender analysis will be carried out to make sure that women benefit from greater livelihoods diversification, including non-forestry activities. At least one gender responsive decision-support tool and participatory gender analysis processes will be applied to identify intervention pathways that unlock the barriers that currently prevent women from participating in decision making and equitable benefit sharing. The project will progressively expand its engagement with key private sector players in South Sudan to accelerate the attainment of the envisioned outcomes of shared interest and shared value. A detailed and tailored private sector engagement policy paper will be drafted to guide in implementation of the proposed project. This will be done with a view to rallying a wider call to action, and mandate to work hand-in-hand with the private sector to design and deliver iterative and transformational ecosystem management approaches, while opening the space to catalyse value chains and job creation.

Overall, the stakeholder engagement process was and will continue to be consultative, interactive and participatory in nature. At each level, various tools were and will continue to be employed, and these include: Focus group discussions; Gender mapping; Transect walks; Landscape Analysis; Timeline and Trends Analysis; Livelihood Analysis; and Problem & Solution Matrix Analysis. During full project development phase, at least one gender-responsive decision-support tool and participatory gender analysis process will be applied to identify intervention pathways that unlock the barriers that currently prevent women and men from participating in decision making and bene ting equitably from natural resources management and biodiversity conservation.

The project will put in place mechanisms for internal controls and enforcement of compliance reinforced by participatory monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and feed-back mechanisms from external parties. This will include establishing participatory M&E frameworks and public disclosure requirements to assure public access to relevant information about the project and mechanisms to capture concerns or grievances related to the project?s lack of compliance. The engagement process will ensure their meaningful consultation in order to facilitate their informed participation on matters that affect them directly, proposed mitigation measures, the sharing of development benefits and opportunities, and implementation issues.

Please provide the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent assessment.

The key stakeholders have been consulted and their input has been incorporated into this proposal.
Their expected engagement during the project implementation phase is described in the Table 3 below:

Table 3. List of stakeholders with relevant roles to play in project implementation

STAKEHOLDER	MANDATE	INTERESTS AND POTENTIAL ROLES
Government agencies		

Legislature (Members of Parliament) Specialized Committee for Environment and Revitalized Transitional, National Legislative Assembly	Legislation and policy oversight	o Offer guidance and strategic decision making in implementation of planned activities. o Sensitize other members about updates and emerging issues in the biodiversity and natural resources sector. o Review national and sub-national policies, strategies and plans, and o Actively engage government and development partners to commit funding for the Imatong landscape after the conclusion of the project.
Ministry of Environment and Forestry	Focal Ministry for project execution	o Coordinate the implementation of the project and act as the official project implementing partner. o At the systemic and institutional level, play a leading role in developing strategies for any legal and institutional reform processes. o Chair the project steering committee and most local working groups.
Directorate of Forestry (Ministry of Environment and Forestry)	Charged with ensuring that effective implementation of Forestry Policy Framework and Legislation in all States of Southern Sudan is achieved	o Operationalize collaborative forest management (CFM) at national level o Provide technical guidance on forest management o Draft legislation, laws and policies for the CFR management. o Design the project activities at the CFR management level, including activities to improve PA management, support infrastructure development, and work closely with targeted communities. o Identify staff to participate in project supported trainings and capacity development o Work as a member of the project steering committee

Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security Department of Land Use Planning	Develops land use plans and maps for government farms to (a) characterize soil types, (b) show different land capability classes and (c) develop resettlement plans, crops and forestry use areas	o Provide support to farmers in areas around the Imatong CFR in implementation of integrated land management practices and agroforestry o Support promotion of on-farm growing of targeted species like bamboo, etc. o The Ministry will be responsible for component 3 of the project that deals with promotion of SLM/ILM practices at farm level o The Land Use Planning section of the Ministry will be responsible for monitoring land degradation and catchment rehabilitation o Work as a member of the project steering committee
Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism	The Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism is responsible for wildlife protected areas (national parks and game reserves) in the country	o Contribute to the project by providing information in working towards upgrading of the Kidepo Game reserve and Imatong natural forests into a national park of a transfrontier conservation area. o Support in biodiversity and wildlife conservation in the Imatong CFR and the surrounding biodiversity hotspots in the landscape. o Participate in biodiversity inventories and ecosystem assessments o Work as a member of the project steering committee
Ministry of Livestock and fisheries	Guidance, regulation, promotion, and facilitation of production of livestock and fisheries sector	o Support the protection, promotion, exploitation of livestock resources as alternative IGAs o Support the market survey and access by the communities for the identified IGAs
Academia		
University of Juba, School of Natural Resources and Environmental Studies	Scientific Research major economic and development objectives.	o Conduct biodiversity and ecosystem assessments o Conduct forest inventories o Develop Imatong CFR management plan and associated plans and strategies o Identify and facilitate alternative livelihoods and IGAs.
Upper Nile University, Faculty of Forest & Range Science	Scientific Research	o Conduct biodiversity and ecosystem assessments o Conduct forest inventories o Develop Imatong CFR management plan and associated plans and strategies o Identify and facilitate alternative livelihoods and IGAs.
Sub-National Government		

Eastern Equatoria State Ministries of Agriculture, Forestry, and Environment	Develop and formulate state policies, laws, regulations, strategic and management plans	o Management of Sate Forest Reserves (SFR) o Operationalize the collaborative forest management (CFM) at state level o Draft bye-laws for the state forest reserve and community forest management. o Support infrastructure development, and work closely with targeted communities. o Identify staff to participate in project supported trainings and capacity development o Work as a member of the project steering committee
Counties ?Torit and Ikotos	Biodiversity Conservation and Management, stakeholder participation	o Assist in drafting of legislations, laws and policies, o Create awareness through extension services o Support implementation of identified alternative IGAs o Work as members of the project steering committee
NGOs, Projects/Programs/Project CBOs, CSOs		
Farm Africa (USAID ? Funded project)	.	o Support farmers in the ICFR landscape.
AfDB ? funded Project	Provide support to the development of inclusive policies and strategies	o Could complement the proposed project?s sustainable community based natural resource management efforts. o
CAADP	Improving food security, nutrition, and increasing incomes in Africa?s farming-based economies	o Promotion of Sustainable Feed and Fodder Production and Utilization
Acacia Water and Wetlands International Kenya	Long term community stability and resilience through strategic interventions for food security, water security and disaster risk reduction (DRR).	o Expected to consolidate community participation in environmental conservation through capacity building and awareness raising directly linked to water resources.
South Sudan Nature Conservation Organization (SSNCO)	Advocacy on sustainable management of biodiversity and ecosystems	o Participate in conducting awareness creation about access and use of forest resources o Participate in conducting awareness creation about biodiversity conservation among communities o Under this project, CBOs will be consulted and involved in creating awareness within indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs)
South Sudan Wildlife Society (SSWS)	Advocacy on sustainable management of biodiversity and ecosystems	o Contribute to components 1, 2 and 4 through its work in the Kidepo game reserve and Imatong wildlife conservation area.
Private sector		
South Sudan Business Forum (SSBF)	Assist farmers in value chain improvement	o Organise farmers for training as a group, including establishing and facilitating field schools.
Local Communities		

Community leaders	Representatives of indigenous peoples and local communities	o Establish site-based coordination mechanisms including CFM o Identify forest resource management and environmentally sound alternative livelihoods activities o Support all project activities for local buy-in
Farmers? associations	Coordinate all local farmers for collective efforts in production and marketing	o Ensure environmental integrity of the productive areas around Imatong CFR o Support the management and implementation of planned community-based environment management activities.
Individual farmers	Sustainable environment and land management	o Farmers will be beneficiaries of livelihoods initiatives piloted in the landscape. o Support and participate in capacity building training in farmer field schools, land and forest restoration o Provide their farms to act as demonstration sites.
UN Agencies		
FAO	Supports the GOSS to achieve household food security, increased sustainable agricultural productivity	o Offer leveraging opportunities through investment in the Imatong landscape in form of land management e.g. conservation agriculture, soil erosion control and farm inputs.
UNEP	Coordinating responses to project implementation	o Provide Project Quality Assurance and co-financing. o Provide technical advice.
		o

In addition, provide a summary on how stakeholders will be consulted in project execution, the means and timing of engagement, how information will be disseminated, and an explanation of any resource requirements throughout the project/program cycle to ensure proper and meaningful stakeholder engagement

Table 3: Overview of Stakeholder Engagement Plan highlighting purpose, approaches and activities and timing

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	PURPOSE / AIM	APPROACHES AND ACTIVITIES	TARGET PERSON / GROUP	TIMING
Project Management Unit (PMU), Project Steering Committee (PSC), Technical Working Group (TWG), UNEP	? Information sharing, communication and collaboration to support implementation and long-term sustainability of interventions ? Assess and communicate project performance to inform adaptive management of project activities and interventions ? Progress and M&E reports ? Records of stakeholder issues, input and concerns and providing mechanisms for identifying responses by responsible agents to address ? Communicate and address grievances	? Meetings, workshops, and other mechanisms for verbal communication. ? Electronic and printed documents (work plans, reports, booklets, factsheets, fliers, etc.). ? Presentations and technical briefings. ? Internet publication (e.g. project website) of notices, articles and background information and material ? Monthly planning and review meetings to monitor and evaluate progress, and adherence to Monitoring and Reporting Systems	? PMU ? Component coordinators from executing agencies ? PSC ? Technical Working Group representatives ? UNEP implementing agent representative	Weekly, monthly, quarterly and annually.

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	PURPOSE / AIM	APPROACHES AND ACTIVITIES	TARGET PERSON / GROUP	TIMING
Government Agencies	? Information sharing and communication with Ministries and Departments to enhance collaboration and synergies of complementary actions. ? Review progress and M&E outcomes to inform adaptive management of project activities and interventions	? Electronic communication via emails, articles, technical reports, etc. ? Workshops and meetings ? Personal communication via central information contact person ? Internet publications on project website	? Principal Secretaries of Ministries; ? Directors of Departments	Quarterly or *ad hoc* on specific issues

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	PURPOSE / AIM	APPROACHES AND ACTIVITIES	TARGET PERSON / GROUP	TIMING
Local administrative and Traditional Authorities and Communities	? Raise awareness and secure buy-in and support ? Information sharing and knowledge transfer ? Participation, empowerment and capacity development	? Public meetings and briefings ? Oral communications ? Printed material (booklets, leaflets, factsheets, fliers, reports) ? Exhibits or displays ? Technical reports ? Field visits ? Radio or talk shows ? Open days ? Central information contact person and field offices or information centers ? Comments and response sheets ? Surveys, questionnaires and polls ? Interviews ? Participatory rural appraisal (PRA)/participatory learning and action (PLA) ? Workshops, focus groups or key stakeholder meetings	? Local administration (County, Payam Boma) ? Project supported communities including farmers, livestock owners and resource users ? women, youth, vulnerable and marginalized groups)	Quarterly and according to project work plan

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	PURPOSE / AIM	APPROACHES AND ACTIVITIES	TARGET PERSON / GROUP	TIMING
Private sector and parastatals	? Raise awareness and secure buy-in ? Information sharing and knowledge transfer ? Participation, empowerment and capacity development ? Secure support and resources (technical, financial, human) for project activities for local activities and up-scaling	? Workshops, focus groups and key stakeholder meetings ? Advisory / Expert panels and committees ? Media notices and advertisements ? News articles and press releases ? Internet publications on project website with background information material and progress reports ? Technical reports on websites ? Field trips ? Central information contact person / Field offices ? Comments and response sheets	? Landscape level stakeholder ? Landowners (private and corporate) ? Business Managers, ? Business operations and associations ? Agricultural associations ? Game reserves and conservancies	Quarterly and *Ad Hoc* as required

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	PURPOSE / AIM	APPROACHES AND ACTIVITIES	TARGET PERSON / GROUP	TIMING
Non-government and civil society organizations	? Raise awareness and secure buy-in ? Information sharing and knowledge transfer ? Participation, empowerment and capacity development ? Secure support and resources (technical, financial, human) for project activities for local activities and up-scaling	? Public meetings and briefings ? Workshops, focus groups or key stakeholder meetings ? Website with background information material and progress reports ? Legal notices and advertisements ? Magazine or news articles ? Internet publications on project website with background information material and progress reports ? Exhibits or displays ? Technical reports ? Central information contact person ? Comments and response sheets	? Directors ? Field staff ? Persons mandated by their respective organizations to participate at the project ? Private citizens	Quarterly and *Ad Hoc* as required

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	PURPOSE / AIM	APPROACHES AND ACTIVITIES	TARGET PERSON / GROUP	TIMING
Universities and research institutes	? Inventory and biodiversity Assessments ? Raise awareness and secure buy-in ? Information sharing and knowledge transfer ? Collaboration on areas of mutual interest	? Expert panels, advisory panels, and committees ? Workshops, focus groups or key stakeholder meetings ? Internet publications on project website with background information material and progress reports ? Technical reports ? Field trips ? Central information contact person	? Directors ? Heads of Department ? Researchers	Quarterly
Development Partners	? Formation of User groups ? Raise awareness and leverage synergies ? Information sharing and knowledge transfer ? Collaboration on areas of mutual interest ? Secure support and resources (technical, financial, human) for project activities for local activities and up-scaling	? Expert panels, advisory panels, and committees ? Workshops, focus groups or key stakeholder meetings ? Internet publications on project website with background information material and progress reports ? Technical reports ? Field trips ? Central information contact person	? Directors ? Field staff ? Persons mandated by their respective organizations to participate at the project	Quarterly

Select what role civil society will play in the project:

Consulted only;

Member of Advisory Body; Contractor; Yes

Co-financier; Yes

Member of project steering committee or equivalent decision-making body; Yes

Executor or co-executor; Yes

Other (Please explain)

The project stakeholders include a range of civil society organizations (CSOs) and civil society broadly. CSOs are strategic as partners in implementation, as potential providers of technical and financial support. They are also strategic as they have the potential to provide independent monitoring and observation of project activities, which can add credibility and validation that is important in securing support from broader civil society. Their participation supports transparency in governance, and checks on accountability. The participation of CSOs can also play an important role by facilitating and promoting mutually beneficial linkages between local communities, civil society, and government agencies for integrated land management and biodiversity conservation. CSOs will be strategic partners to project implementation at a local level in particular. They are often embedded at local level, and they therefore have the potential to act as agents for and voices of local communities, to facilitate participation in the implementation and sharing of benefits from sustainable forest and land management as well as biodiversity conservation.

The project will proceed more smoothly with approval and support from civil society, which includes rural communities (including women, youth, vulnerable and marginalized people or groups), private landowners, and even the general public broadly. Participation by civil society and CSOs therefore aims to: 1). Increase awareness, understanding and visibility of the GEF Imatong landscape project, and 2). Generate support from and strengthen collaboration by civil society and CSOs. This participation by civil society involves information sharing, consultation, and collaboration and empowerment actions and processes. Participation by CSOs and civil society will evolve during the course of the project and the processes therefore needs to be adaptable and frequently reviewed and monitored to inform revision as needed.

3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Provide the gender analysis or equivalent socio-economic assesment.

3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

The Transitional Constitution of South Sudan of 2011, and as amended in 2015, grants equal rights to all regardless of gender. South Sudan ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 2014; and it also has ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples? Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. The Government adopted a National Gender Policy in 2012, which represents a reference framework for the promotion of equity and gender equality. Nevertheless, the country was ranked low (0.843 ? HDI values of Females=0.348 and Males = 0.413) on the UN Gender Development Index (GDI), which compares disparities between women and men in three basic dimensions of human development ? health, knowledge and living standards disparities between women and men in three basic dimensions of human development.[1]

In traditional South Sudanese households, given that women and men use biological resources differently and to different extents to accomplish their defined social roles in many rural local communities, gender considerations will be taken into account during the project preparation as well as during its implementation phase. A report by Farm Africa notes that more than half the farmers in the Imatong area are women and many men and women farmers are under 40 years.[2] This provides a basis for gender-based interventions such as start-up agribusiness service providers that could lead to commercialization and greater food security at rates higher than normally expected. The project?s efforts to support climate-smart agriculture and sustainable NTFP use to support ecological and livelihood security provide an avenue for gender mainstreaming and economic empowerment through activities such as value-added processing and horticulture. Vegetable production is minimal at present in the IML. Young people and women take quickly to high value horticultural crops that often generate significant cash returns within three months. Intensive production on areas of less than 500-1,000 m can increase the nutritional status of families and generate cash from sales of surpluses. The project can thus include women and youth as drivers of change.

The project will apply a gender responsive approach in all the four project components. During project implementation, the project will carry out project specific gender analyses in line with the gender mainstreaming plan (Appendix 15 of the Project Document). The gender mainstreaming plan will identifies opportunities to include women in the design and implementation of activities with an aim to: (a) strengthen access to and control of land, forests, water, and other productive assets and resources for women; (b) increase their participation and leadership in decision-making processes relating to the environment; and (c) ensure that economic benefits coming from the sustainable use of forest resources and restoration efforts are shared equitably between men and women; (d) promote more equitable benefit sharing, and empower both women and men; (e) establish a Gender Platform to assist the project in understanding and achieving gender objectives; (f) identifying training needs, knowledge products, and communication efforts towards increasing the number of commitments and initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality linked to biodiversity benefits access and; (g) fill information gaps related to gender-related challenges and opportunities facing men and women at national and landscape levels. Data will be disaggregated by gender to monitor differentiated project impacts on men and women.

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[1]UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). 2022. Human Development Report 2021-22: Uncertain Times, Unsettled Lives: Shaping our Future in a Transforming World. New York. https://hdr.undp.org/content/human-development-report-2021-22

[2]Farm Africa. November 2014. Assessment of Agricultural Opportunities for Communities in the Imatong Mountain Watershed, Eastern Equatorial State, South Sudan. Report to the African Wildlife Foundation.

Does the project expect to include any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women empowerment?

Yes

Closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources; Yes

Improving women's participation and decision making Yes

Generating socio-economic benefits or services or women Yes

Does the project?s results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators?

Yes

4. Private sector engagement

Elaborate on the private sector's engagement in the project, if any.

4. Private Sector Engagement

Private sector partners will therefore be important stakeholders for supporting this project. A range of private sector partners have been identified in the stakeholder analysis and described in the stakeholder engagement plan including South Sudan Business Forum (SSBF), Equatoria Teak Company (ETC) and farmers associations. South Sudan Business Forum (SSBF) will work with farmers in value chain improvement by organizing them into associations and cooperatives to sell their produce in bulk. SSFF will organize farmers in training as a group including establishing farmer field schools. It will then connect them with markets to sell their produce. With the support of SSBF, the project will ensure participation of the local communities and farmers association. Equatoria Teak Company (ETC) is South Sudan?s leading sustainable forestry company, and Africa?s second largest teak grower. The group is based in Nzara, Western Equatoria State, with a second location in Lainya County, Central Equatoria State. The company has concession rights over more than 3,500ha of mature teak plantations and an additional 73,000ha of forestry concession, which is not planted. ETC has built a new sawmill in Nzara and is harvesting, milling and exporting teak products to international markets. The company has a nursery and silviculture programme that it is looking to strengthen. The majority shareholder in ETC is Maris Capital (www.mariscapital.com) which has extensive experience in managing businesses in Sub-Saharan Africa. The company will provide technical support to farmers to plant trees as one of its out-grower schemes.

The project will progressively expand its engagement with key private sector players in South Sudan to accelerate the attainment of the envisioned outcomes of shared interest and shared value. A detailed and tailored private sector engagement plan will be drafted, in consultation with private sector representatives, to guide the implementation of the project. This will be done with a view to rallying a wider call to action, and mandate to work hand-in-hand with the private sector to design and deliver iterative and transformational ecosystem management approaches, while opening the space to catalyse value chains and job creation. The private sector participation plan will address private sector participation through: a) Raising awareness about the project and enhance the capacity of the private sector to engage effectively, through conducting publicity events, media campaigns, etc., b) Promoting awareness of issues on Imatong CFR management by convening workshops and seminars targeting private sector stakeholders, c) Encouraging partnerships between public and private sectors in activities to address forest management through their involvement and participation in decision making and planning structures and processes, and d) Ensuring support for the sustainability of biodiversity conservation and forest management activities by developing long-term programmes of action that includes funding and technical support from the private sector.

5. Risks to Achieving Project Objectives

Elaborate on indicated risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved, and, if possible, the proposed measures that address these risks at the time of project implementation.(table format acceptable):

5. Risks

The results framework matrix in Annex A summarizes the principal risks and assumptions associated with the project. Every effort has been made to minimize these in the design of the project strategy and its activities and outputs. This has included a review of past and ongoing GEF projects or projects in similar sectors. In addition, there has been a wide consultation through review and discussions with the country stakeholders during the project development phase.

The project strategy, described in detail within this project document, identifies the following key risks (Table 4). These risks and the mitigation measures will be continuously monitored and updated throughout the project implementation period.

Table 4: Risks and risk management measures

Risk	Significance of Risk		Risk mitigation measures
	Impact (1-5)	Probability (1-5)	
Land tenure conflicts create obstacles to protected area management effectiveness and sustainability	3	3	ESS Risk Level = Medium Risk Establishment of a multi-stakeholders? platform is one of the targets of the project. All key stakeholders will participate in the project implementation and M&E from the outset. Their roles and responsibilities in PA management will be clearly articulated and benefits clarified. Conflict resolution mechanisms will be designed and embedded into the stakeholder participation plan. In the design of PA management approaches, specific attention will be given to co-management options, given the intricate linkages between local livelihoods and the natural resource base. The project will also link with GoSS institutions charged with resolving land tenure problems such as the Land Commission to assist in addressing such conflicts.
Increase in speed of degradation and loss of habitat induced by human activities	3	3	ESS Risk level = Medium Risk By securing the PA in the region and designing a strategy for restoration of production landscapes bordering the PA, hence, creating connectivity, the project will be ensuring that PA core areas are managed and human impacts are limited in scope.

National reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts do not integrate biodiversity conservation concerns	4	2	ESS Risk Level = Medium Risk Development partners will be engaged in strengthening the capacity of the GOSS in conducting environmental assessments and valuations. The GOSS is also engaged in an extensive policy and regulatory reform process. Through the project steering committee and other coordination mechanisms, UNEP will ensure that the project outcomes are supported by this critical baseline.
Confusion over jurisdiction/ governance between GoSS and state levels	2	1	ESS Risk Level = Low Risk During project full proposal preparation phase, an in-depth governance and mandate analysis was undertaken to determine the boundaries of the GOSS and State administrations. This governance analysis informed the approach adopted and the focus of institutional and systemic capacity development activities so as to target the most relevant administrations. Vertical and horizontal inter-ministerial coordination also form part of the project, to ensure project activities are not undermined by sectoral or state-level decisions.
Potential problems of community access issues of protected area biodiversity under the collaborative forest management (CFM).	@	2	ESS Risk Level = Low Risk Formal guidelines will be developed to ensure participatory planning and management strategies for the PA to include local communities. Mapping of traditional community PA use patterns and consultative processes will be employed to ensure that potential access rights and potential displacement issues are identified and addressed appropriately and that local communities are directly involved in the PA planning, decision making and management process. Legislation will be developed as necessary to enshrine co-management as a recognized approach for protected area management and conservation.
Lack of adoption or engagement by local communities	4	2	ESS Risk Level = Medium Risk The project will develop participatory community consultation, educational and awareness programmes and will use the partnership approach with indigenous peoples and local communities to ensure full involvement in the project.
Project activities and approaches might not fully incorporate or reflect views of women and girls, or ensure equitable opportunities for their involvement and benefit.	4	1	ESS Risk Level = Medium Risk This risk will be managed through the Gender Mainstreaming Plan, which will be integrated into overall project management systems. Stakeholder consultation arrangements and required consultations will specifically and proactively include women, and will conduct participatory explorations of how best to improve project benefits for women.

Indigenous peoples and local communities may oppose regulations that restrict their activities relevant to Forest and biodiversity conservation measures	3	3	ESS Risk Level = Medium Risk The project will develop participative community consultation, educational and awareness programmes, and will use the partnership approach with indigenous peoples and local communities to ensure full involvement in the project.
Political instability and armed conflict	4	2	ESS Risk Level = Medium Risk The Republic of South Sudan achieved independence on 9 July 2011 after signing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005 that ended two decades of civil war. However, there are still tensions between the Nuer and Dink a tribesmen. The situation will be monitored closely, as will the impacts of the results. At this stage this risk is considered as a moderate one, especially as the project is focused on Imatong CFR which is mainly inhabited by the Langi and Acholi ethnic groups.
Lengthy legislative process, and slow adoption of laws, policy and regulations on forest and protected areas	4	4	ESS Risk Level = High Risk The project will support capacity building and awareness-raising activities to improve understanding of the whole implementation of the national protected areas process and knowledge for parliamentarians, decision makers and key stakeholders to facilitate the drafting of all relevant legislation.
High turnover at ministerial and government institutions level and partner agencies and loss of key staff initially involved and trained by the project	4	4	ESS Risk Level = High Risk The project will support broad-based involvement of different government entities, NGO, CSO and the public. Capacity building and awareness-raising activities will be undertaken among all relevant government agencies staff and will not rely on individual staff. The project management unit will be able to inform new staff on the project objectives, progress and opportunities and benefits regarding biodiversity conservation and protected areas.
Natural hazards, including landslides, drought, floods and fires at project sites and the worsening impacts of climate change during project implementation damage or destroy measures implemented through the project.	3	3	ESS Risk Level = Medium Risk The project is intended to manage this risk through promoting actions aimed at mitigating the impacts of climate change and drought. Specific action will include the promotion of afforestation programmes among rural communities and the institutionalization of development planning systems that reduce land degradation. In addition, disaster risk and response plans may be put in place in collaboration with selected communities

Climate change is predicted to change rainfall patterns and exacerbate drought conditions exacting an additional stress on the already vulnerable ecosystems	3	3	ESS Risk level = Medium Risk The project will strengthen the awareness and adaptive capacity of local com munities in the project sites during the community trainings, meetings and communication/awareness materials which will be developed. The project will also coordinate with the meteorological authorities to provide the local authorities with up to date information on climate, short term forecasts, seasonal forecasts, long-term climate scenarios, environmental monitoring, early warnings of severe meteorological and climatic events, and other relevant data, all at a suitable spatial scale and packaged in a manner suitable for making on-f arm and sector management decisions.
Increased desertification and loss of agricultural and grazing land, and crop loss and reduced crop yields owing to increased temperatures and changing rainfall patterns due to climate change	3	2	ESS Risk Level = Medium Risk The project will coordinate with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security to promote the use of climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) approach through innovative practices and SLM strategies to mitigate against climate change challenges including loss of agricultural and grazing land, and crop loss and reduced crop yields. In addition, the project will work with the meteorological authorities to provide the local authorities with up to date information on climate, short term forecasts, seasonal forecasts, long-term climate scenarios, environmental monitoring, early warnings of severe meteorological and climatic events, and other relevant data, all at a suitable spatial scale and packaged in a manner suitable for making on-farm and sector management decisions

6. Institutional Arrangement and Coordination

Describe the institutional arrangement for project implementation. Elaborate on the planned coordination with other relevant GEF-financed projects and other initiatives.

6. Institutional Arrangement and Coordination.

The project will be implemented by UNEP and executed nationally by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF). UNEP ? through its GEF Task Manager (TM) and Funds Management Officer (FMO) - will monitor the implementation of the project, review progress in the realization of the project outputs, and ensure the proper use of GEF funds. The UNEP TM will be directly responsible for: (i) providing consistent and regular project oversight to ensure the achievement of project objectives; (ii) liaising between the project and the GEF Secretariat; (iii) ensuring that both GEF and UNEP policy requirements and standards are applied and met (i.e. reporting obligations, technical, fiduciary, M&E); (iv) approving budget revisions, certifying fund availability and transferring funds; (v) organizing mid- and end-term evaluations and reviewing project audits; (vi) providing technical, legal and administrative guidance if requested; and (vii) certifying project operational completion.

The Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF) will be the Executing Agency on behalf of Government and will provide overall coordination and supervision. The Ministry has a track record of successful

execution of up to nine projects amounting to USD 7,895,809 funded under GEF-6 and GEF-7, and EURO 54,994 funded by GBIF. The MoEF will be accountable to UNEP for the achievement of the project objective and outcomes, according to the approved overall project work plan. The MoEF will implement the project in collaboration with project partners such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism, Torit County Government, Ikotos County Government, Imatong/Eastern Equatoria State Government, South Sudan Nature Conservation Organization (SSNCO), University of Juba and South Sudan Business Forum (SSBF). To expedite delivery of outputs, the MoEF will sign Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with project partners to implement specific activities of the project. These memoranda will clearly spell out the activities agreed upon and responsibilities of each party in the execution of the project. The mandate, expertise and competencies of the partners are some of the criteria that will be used in identifying activities to be implemented by project partners. To minimize delays to delivery of project outputs by the local communities, MoEF in consultation with Eastern Equatoria State Government and local authorities will identify opportunities on how best to support the project sites to effectively participate in the implementation of activities.

Based on participation of different project partners in development of the project, different agencies will be responsible for particular project components, outcomes and outputs as indicated in the Table 5 below:

Table 5. Project partners and their responsibilities in the project

Component/Outcomes	**Responsible Agency**	
	Lead agency	**Support Agencies**
Component 1: Developing enabling policy and regulatory frameworks for effective planning, management and governance of forest PAs	MoEF	Juba University, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism, Torit County Government, Ikotos County Government, Imatong/Eastern Equatoria State Government
Outcome 1.1: Forestry Protected Area management frameworks and governance reflect the diversity of needs and interests of key stakeholders and encourage horizontal and vertical co-ordination and co-operation mechanisms.		
Output 1.1.1: National policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks governing forest PAs reviewed and implemented		
Output 1.1.2: Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) mechanisms instituted and access to and sharing of benefits of biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services by local communities promoted		
Output 1.1.3: Inclusive and gender sensitive multi-stakeholder co-ordination platform for effective PA management and participatory M&E at national, and subnational levels established, made functional and strengthened		
Component 2. Forest Management plan development and capacity building for effective forestry protected area management	MoEF, MoWCT	Juba University, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Torit County Government, Ikotos County Government, Imatong/Eastern Equatoria State Government
Outcome 2.1: Forest Management plan developed, and National and PA management staff have the capacities that enable and support PAME achieving biodiversity conservation objectives		
Output 2.1.1: National guidelines for PA management planning developed and technical capacity of national and PA level management staff built		
Output 2.1.2: Imatong forest Management plan developed and key priority actions and implemented to address PAME challenges in an inclusive consultative manner and participatory approach		
Output 2.1.3: Government and PA level staff trained in biodiversity conservation assessment, threat identification and monitoring, and PA management methods		

Output 2.1.4: Biodiversity threat assessments conducted, and strategies/actions plans to support protection of priority species developed and implemented		
Output 2.1.5: Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool (IMET) established to track Protected Area Management Effectiveness (PAME) and to inform management decisions and IUCN Green Listing process		
Component 3: Promoting sustainable agricultural practices and improved community livelihoods in the Imatong landscape	MoAFS	Ministry of Environnent and Forestry, Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism, Torit County Government, Ikotos County Government, Imatong/Eastern Equatoria State Government, South Sudan Nature Conservation Organization (SSNCO), University of Juba and South Sudan Business Forum (SSBF).
Outcome 3.1: Reduced pressure on the Imatong CFR from sustainable practices in the surrounding landscape		
Output 3.1.1: Ecosystem services in Imatong Mountain Central Forest Reserve and productive landscapes bordering the ICFR evaluated		
Output 3.1.2: Participatory land use plans for productive landscapes around the Imatong CFR developed, approved, and implemented		
Output 3.1.3: Key priority actions in the Land Use Plans for Productive Landscapes around the Imatong CFR implemented to address causes of degradation and deforestation and unsustainable land use practices		
Output 3.1.4: Regulatory frameworks that govern the management of productive landscapes around the ICFR developed, approved, and implemented at subnational levels		
Output 3.1.5: Forest conservation centered sustainable income generating activities for improved community livelihoods identified and implemented		
Component 4: Knowledge management and learning	MoEF	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism, Torit County Government, Ikotos County Government, Imatong/Eastern Equatoria State Government, South Sudan Nature Conservation Organization (SSNCO), University of Juba and South Sudan Business Forum (SSBF).
Outcome 4.1: Sector Agencies and relevant institutions applying and scaling up sustainable biodiversity conservation in policy and practice		
Output 4.1.1 Tools to track best practices and lessons learned from cost-effective PA/ biodiversity conservation management measures developed and operationalized		
Output 4.1.2: Best practices and lessons learned on cost-effective PA/ biodiversity conservation management measures documented and shared at National and Sub national levels and informing uptake and policy		
Output 4.1.3: Targeted discussions at national, state and county levels to share lessons and identify additional areas for replication (potentially hosting workshops at local level to showcase results)		

Planned coordination with other relevant GEF-financed projects and other initiatives

Learning is most effective when it is based on practical, hands-on experience on demonstration plots in farm fields. New methods and materials can be tried with consistent extension support, and training can include many additional topics such as farm management, literacy, and financial services. Therefore, Farm Africa under the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded project organizes farmers into groups (Farmers Field School) such that they cultivate in large scale using sustainable methods to produce and sell in bulk. The programme is estimated at $200,000 per year and will support farmers in the Imatong CFR landscape. There are a number of important differences between the localized on-farm approach and the model of an FFS based at a central location. Experience shows that a local on-farm FFS is a better way to engage farmers. The proposed project will adapt lessons from the Farm Africa/USAID project to enhance the FFS learning model in the Imatong landscape.

With respect to food security and nutrition, the African Union (AU) is running a project, ?Promotion of Sustainable Feed and Fodder Production and Utilization? worth USD 1.7 million in Eastern Equatoria State. The project is implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security with financial support from the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), the agricultural programme of the New Partnership for Africa?s Development (NEPAD). Established by the AU assembly in 2003, CAADP focuses on improving food security, nutrition, and increasing incomes in Africa?s largely farming-based economies.

The Food and Agricultural Organization supports the GOSS to achieve household food security, increased sustainable agricultural productivity through diversification and enhancement of agricultural activities. Forestry activities and Sustainable land Management is promoted in all the FAO projects, which offers leveraging opportunities. The total national investment is US$ 6 Million and about 10% (US$600,000) is invested in the Imatong landscape in form of land management e.g. conservation agriculture, soil erosion control and farm inputs.

Acacia Water and Wetlands International Kenya are working together in Kinaite Catchment in the Imatong landscape, on the Protracted Crisis Horn of Africa (PCHA) Project (2018 ?2028). The aim of the project is long term community stability and resilience through strategic interventions for food security, water security and disaster risk reduction (DRR). Protecting and restoring ecosystems while optimizing ecosystem services and ecosystem-based catchment management planning contribute to sustainable livelihoods and resilience to disasters. Wetlands International will also work in Kinaite Catchment in the Partners for Resilience project (PfR) (2018-2022). This programme are implemented in partnership with the Netherlands Red Cross, South Sudan Red Cross, the Red Cross Climate Centre and CordAid with the support of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA).The programme is implemented in close collaboration with key public and local stakeholders both at the Federal and State levels, and is expected to consolidate community participation in environmental conservation through capacity building and awareness raising directly linked to water resources.

The USD1,400,000 African Development Bank (AfDB) funded project ?Good Governance and Capacity Building in Natural Resources (2020 ? 2024)? is currently being implemented in all the ten States of South Sudan. The objective is to provide support to the evolution of inclusive policies and strategies for the sustainable management of forest resources in South Sudan through institutional capacity building sector management and information system development. There are a number of interventions in support of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the area that have the potential to reduce community reliance on unsustainable use of natural resources, including illegal hunting and forest encroachment. One of those initiatives, ?Emergency livelihood support to crisis affected populations in South Sudan? project executed by FAO and funded by DFID aimed at providing livelihood support to conflict-affected displaced and vulnerable populations for enhancement of food security and diet diversification for vulnerable households. In the same area, a project implemented by the Norwegian Church Aid in collaboration with GLOBAL AIM which is a local NGO assists International Displaced Persons (IDPs) and host communities through the distribution of non-food items, psychosocial support, and training programs on water, sanitation and hygiene, prevention of gender-based violence, and HIV and AIDS awareness. Similarly, a couple of national NGOs, working in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare to implement ?Building Resilience among host communities and IDPs? focused on livelihood initiatives that could complement the proposed project?s sustainable community based natural resource management efforts.

GEF ID 9551 Title ?Capacity Development in Reducing Illegal Wildlife Trade and Improving Protected Area Management Effectiveness in South Sudan? implanted by UNEP worth GEF funding of USD 5,329,452 and Co- financing of 15,950,000 that is focusing on the Nimule national park and 3 Protected areas in the Sudd region. It aims at (a) Improving Park management and wildlife protection in Nimule NP, Strengthening capacities and information for wildlife protection in and around Nimule National Park and developing Community-based conservation and sustainable livelihoods for communities living around Nimule national park (b) strengthened Protection of Sudd ecosystem and associated PAs (Shambe, Meshra, Zeraf) , Strengthened capacities and information for wildlife protection in and around three protected areas in the Sudd Ecosystem and Community based conservation in the Sudd ecosystem. This project will use these lessons and will community conservation approach to collect and document level of awareness of communities on the benefits of ecosystem restoration with a view to change mindsets on benefits of ecosystem restoration and ecosystem services.

GEF ID 9723 titled ?Strengthening the Capacity of Government and Communities in South Sudan to Adapt to Climate Change? implemented by UNEP Worth GEF funds USD 9,032,420 and co- financing of USD 30,000,000). The project is aiming at (a) developing Institutional capacity for adaptation to climate change developed (b) transferring EbA adaptation strategies to communities as part of an agreed land-use plan structured to reduce people?s vulnerability to climate change and (c) Strengthening knowledge base and transfer of knowledge on climate change effects and adaptation benefits. The two projects will work together land use planning at community level.

10178 Title Watershed approaches for climate resilience in agro-pastoral landscapes implemented by UNDP and UNIDO worth GEF funds of USD 9,384,703 and co-financing of USD 29,500,000. The project is aiming at (a) strategies and capacities to implement community based and gender-sensitive climate change adaptation for agriculture and food value chains across South Sudan (b) Best practices in climate change resilient agriculture and food value chains adopted by rural communities (c) Assisting Communities in micro-watersheds to adopt natural resources management and restoration to reduce climate change impacts. This project will use the lessons learnt in agriculture and food value chains and in working with Communities to adopt natural resources management and restoration

At the transboundary level, this project will have very strong linkages with the GEF ID 4456 Titled ?Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Threatened Savanna Woodland in the Kidepo Critical Landscape in North Eastern Uganda? Implemented by UNDP worth GEF funding of USD 3,080,000 and co-financing of USD10, 400,000 focusing at Strengthening management effectiveness of the Kidepo critical landscape PA cluster.

Project Internal Structure

a) Project Management Unit

A Project Management Unit (PMU) will be established in the Ministry of Environment and Forestry and will comprise of the Project Manager, Sustainable Land Management Officer, Biodiversity Conservation Officer, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Community Development Officer/Social Worker, Finance and Administration Officer, and a Driver. The PMU will be responsible for the daily management of the project and for ensuring efficient and timely implementation of the project annual work plans. The PMU will be hosted and supported technically by the Directorate of Wetlands and Biodiversity within MoEF who will allocate part-time experts according to the PMU needs as part of government co?financing. Memoranda of Understanding will also be developed with relevant partners if required for the coordination of some specific interventions of the project. The PMU will work in close collaboration with UNEP and where necessary liaise with other UN Country Teams under the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for South Sudan (2023 ? 2025)[1]. The functions of the PMU will be to:

1) Technically identify, plan, design and support all project activities;
2) Liaise with government agencies and regularly advocate on behalf of the project;
3) Prepare the Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWP/B) and monitoring plan, and submit them to GEF and PSC for validation;

4) Play the role of the Secretariat of the PSC;
5) Organize regular meetings and workshops with the PSC;
6) Be responsible for the day?to?day implementation of the project in line with the AWP;
7) Ensure a gender responsive and results?based approach to project implementation, including maintaining a focus on project results and impacts as defined by the results framework indicators;
8) Ensure close collaboration with baseline and partner project to maximize synergy and complementarity;
9) Ensure the submission of appropriate annual expenditure reports on the budget identified as co?financing by the baseline projects;
10) Prepare and submit bi?annual progress reports and contribute to the preparation of UNEP progress reports;
11) Monitor and evaluate continuously the project progress regarding the Results Framework Targets according to a specific plan validated by MoEF and UNEP, and submit M&E reports regularly to UNEP and PSC;
12) Be responsible for the elaboration of UNEP Project Progress Reports (PPR) and the annual Project Implementation Review (PIR); and
13) Facilitate and support the mid?term evaluation/review and final evaluation of the project. PMU staff will be supported by national and international consultants who will be recruited during project implementation as needed.

At local level, the technical partners and local communities will be responsible for the implementation of the project at local level. The project activities will be an integral part of the MoEF?s annual programs during and after the implementation period so as to sustain the achievements of the project as well as ensure the maintenance of local good practices. The state and county governments will organize annual local meetings for sharing, consultation, and planning of activities in collaboration with the PMU.

Project External Structure (Project Oversight Mechanism)
There will be Annual UNEP participatory monitoring and evaluation missions of the project to assess progress towards achievement of the targets and effectiveness of implementation in terms of achieving project objectives, outcomes and outputs and to discuss and agree on mechanisms to improve project performance. Findings and recommendations of this review will be instrumental in bringing improvement in the overall project execution strategy for the remaining period of the project?s term if necessary.

a) Project Steering Committee
A Project Steering Committee (PSC) will be constituted to serve as the project oversight, advisory and support body for the project. The PSC will be composed of: 1) the UnderSecretary as a representative of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security 2) UNEP/GEF representative, 3) the GEF Operational National Focal Point, 4) the Acting Director of Forestry, 5) A representative of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security , 6) A representative of the Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism, 7) A representative of Eastern Equatoria State Government, 8) A representative of the University of Juba, 9) A representative of South Sudan Business Forum, and 10) A representative each of Torit and Ikotos County Governments. The PSC will ensure that the project remains on course to deliver the desired outcomes of the required quality. The PSC will provide overall guidance and policy direction to the implementation of the project and advise on appropriate strategies for project sustainability. It will also advise on any conflicts within the project or to any problems with external bodies. The PSC will play a critical role in project monitoring and evaluation by quality assuring the project processes and products. Specifically, the PSC will:
1) Provide overall guidance and direction to the project, ensuring it remains within any specified constraints;
2) Provide guidance on new project risks and agree on possible countermeasures and management actions, including gender mainstreaming, to address specific risks;
3) Review the project progress and provide direction and recommendations to ensure that the agreed deliverables are produced satisfactorily according to plans;
4) Appraise the project annual review report and make recommendations for the next annual work plan;
5) Provide strategic advice to the PMU for the implementation of project activities to ensure the integration of project activities with sustainable development objectives;

6) Oversee and ensure technical quality of outputs;
7) Ensure alignment of the activities and products with the project document;
8) Review the progress reports and financial reports;
9) Ensure close linkages between the project and other relevant ongoing projects and programmes relevant to the project;
10) Ensure timely availability and effectiveness of co?financing support;
11) Ensure effective coordination of government partner work under this project;
12) Modify, where needed, and validate Project Progress and Financial Reports, the Annual Work Plan and Budget;
13) Provide contributions to the mid?term evaluation/review and final evaluation, analyze the conclusions and formulate response plans; and
14) Facilitate the dissemination and integration of the results in national policies and programmes.

b) Technical Working Group (TWG) ? Pool of Technical Experts

The project will establish a Technical Working Group (TWG) as a pool of experts. The TWG will be a permanent structure within the project structure, comprised of the technical teams from the Project Implementing Institution. It will discuss the detailed technical aspects related to the implementation of the project activities to inform the PSC?s technical guidance, oversight and decision-making directions. The specific responsibilities of the TWG will be to:

1) Support the PMU in the development of work plans and budgets;
2) Support the PMU in the development of Terms of Reference for activities to be undertaken by consultants;
3) Collate salient and credible data/information to support the PMU and consultants in the delivery of legitimate reports;
4) Assess and advise on implementation of the planned project activities against set timeframes to deliver the following key outcomes of the project:
a) Revised, adopted and operationalized policy, legislative and institutional frameworks (Component 1 of the project);
b) Imatong Forest Management plan and capacity of staff to effectively manage the forestry protected area (Component 2 of the project);
c) Sustainable agricultural practices are promoted to maintain forest cover in the landscapes around the Imatong CFR (Component 3 of the project);
d) Best practices and documented and effectively disseminated (Component 3 of the project);
5) Review and provide input on draft project reports to ensure adequacy in the attainment of the project objectives and deliverables;
6) Support the PMU on quality assurance of documents/reports to be presented to the Project Steering Committee (PSC) for consideration; and
7) Perform any other duties that may be assigned by PSC or UNEP.

c) Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) missions

UNEP will arrange for the Project?s Mid-term, Terminal Evaluation in consultation with Project Management Unit (PMU). The Project Mid-and Terminal M&E will, inter alia: a) Review the effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness of project implementation; b) Analyze effectiveness of partnership arrangements; c) Identify issues requiring decisions and remedial actions; d) Propose any mid-course corrections and/or adjustments to the implementation strategy as necessary; and e) Describe the technical achievements and lessons learned derived from project design, implementation and management.

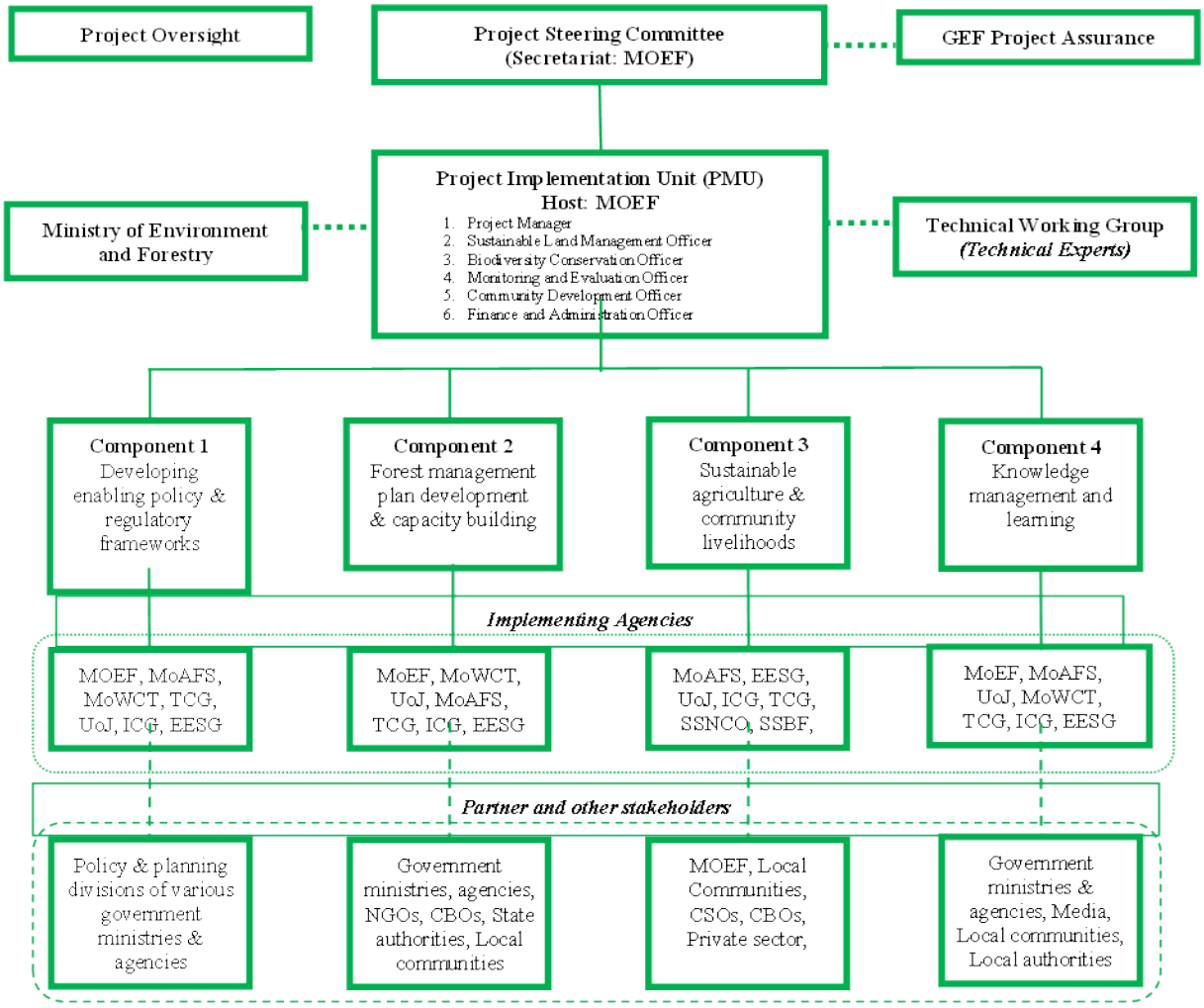
An independent Terminal Evaluation (TE) will be carried out three months after closure of the project. The TE aim is to identify the project impacts, sustainability of project results and the degree of achievement of long-term results. The TE will also have the purpose of indicating future actions needed to expand on the existing Project in subsequent phases, mainstream and up-scale its products and practices. Critical elements that both the FE will pay special attention to are the outcome indicators.

In terms of monitoring and evaluation, the reporting requirements and responsibilities have been proposed as follows:

M&E Component/Activity	Responsibility Assignment		Means of Assessment/Monitoring Data Source
	Institution	Project/Agency Officer	
Project Inception	MoEF (PMU) in consultation with UNEP,	Project Manager	Inception report with detailed methodology
Steering Committee Meetings	MoEF (PMU)	Project Manager, UNEP Task Manager	Minutes of the meetings
Semi-annual M&E review meetings	MoEF (PMU)	Project Manager, UNEP Task Manager	Minutes of the meetings
Monitoring visits to field sites	MoEF (PMU) in collaboration with the participating institutions	Project Manager, UNEP Task Manager	On site data collection Monitoring reports
Annual Review and Planning Meeting (ARPM)/Project Implementation Review (PIR)	UNEP in consultation with the PMU, and participating institutions/agencies and stakeholders	Project Manager, UNEP Task Manager	On site data collection PIR reports
Mid-Term external evaluation (MTR)	UNEP in consultation with the PMU, and participating institutions/agencies and stakeholders	Independent Consultant	On site data collection Consultant report
End of Project Terminal Evaluation	UNEP in consultation with the PMU, and participating institutions/agencies and stakeholders	Independent Consultant	On site data collection Consultant report

Project Organogram

The management structure, as shown above, will respond to the project?s needs in terms of direction, management, control, and communication. As the project is cross-functional and involves various stakeholders, its structure will be flexible in order to adjust to ongoing changes in the context. Staff and consultants will be contracted according to the established rules and regulations of South Sudan and all financial transactions and agreements will similarly follow the same rules and regulations.



Note: MoEF= Ministry of Environment and Forestry, MoAFS = Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, MoWCT = Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism, TCG = Torit County Government, UoJ = University of Juba, ICG = Ikotos County Government, EESG = Eastern Equatoria County Government, SSNCO, South Sudan Nature Conservation Organization, SSBF = South Sudan Business Forum, NGO = Non-Government Organization, CBO = Community Based Organization

The management structure, as shown in Figure 13 above, will respond to the project?s needs in terms of direction, management, control, and communication. As the project is cross-functional and involves various stakeholders, its structure will be flexible in order to adjust to ongoing changes in the context. Staff and consultants will be contracted according to the established rules and regulations of the Government of South Sudan and all financial transactions and agreements will similarly follow the same rules and regulations.

National, Regional and Global Networks

Networks are important in project implementation as they are critical sources of capacity building through joint learning, leveraging and incentivizing project stakeholders and implementation staff. Networks are also critical avenues for communicating project success and scaling up of best practices to similar landscapes in the country, regionally and globally. The project will, therefore, engage with national, regional and global networks to share communication products, outreach tools and solicit support to ensure that project interventions, improved practices and incentives are well documented and widely understood among relevant

stakeholders and the public at the national and global level, especially through the South Sudan National Environment Information Network (SSNEIN), National Biodiversity Forum, Africa Environment Information Network (AEIN) and the South Sudan Environment Information System (SSEIS) platforms.

At landscape level, the project will work in collaboration with the Eastern Equatoria State and the county governments of Torit and Ikotos during implementation and joint participatory monitoring so as to enable learning, sharing of experiences and integration of project activities into the State Development Plans. At national level, the project will be integrated into similar Government Programmes to foster knowledge sharing, learning, and synthesis of experiences. At the regional and global levels, South Sudan is a member of various bodies and platforms such as the East African Community (EAC), Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGAD) and New Partnership for Africa?s Development (NEPAD). The project will use these platforms for learning, sharing experiences and creating synergies. A deliberate effort will be made for cross-country visits especially between East Africa and the Horn of Africa countries (Ethiopia, DR Congo, Kenya, and Uganda) to share lessons learned and best practices and influence. At global level, the project will be aligned to various global and regional frameworks that South Sudan is a signatory to and participates in such as: the UNCCD; UNCBD and UNFCCC. South Sudan will use her participation in these global platforms to share experiences and for learning as well as create synergies for leveraging and scaling up and out.

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[1]United Nations Development System in South Sudan (2023). United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for South Sudan (2023 ? 2025). Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in South Sudan, Juba, South Sudan

7. Consistency with National Priorities

Describe the consistency of the project with national strategies and plans or reports and assesments under relevant conventions from below:

NAPAs, NAPs, ASGM NAPs, MIAs, NBSAPs, NCs, TNAs, NCSAs, NIPs, PRSPs, NPFE, BURs, INDCs, etc.

The project is consistent with the Government of South Sudan national policies and legislation, to wit: (i) The Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan (2011); (ii) Draft Environmental Protection Policy (2013); (iii) Draft Environmental Protection Bill (2013); (iv) Forest Policy (2014); (v) Policy on Agriculture and Livestock (2012); (vi) Draft Disaster Risk Management Policy (2015); (vii) Policy on Food Security (2012); (viii) Draft Policy on Wildlife Conservation and Protected Areas (2012); (ix) The Agriculture Sector Policy Framework (2012-2017); and (x) The Comprehensive Agriculture Master Plan (CAMP) (2015) in terms of its objectives.

More specifically, the project is consistent with Government of South Sudan (GoSS) NBSAP which focuses on restoration of degraded forest areas (at least 30% of the degraded forests restored by 2024, Degraded

farmlands restoration, ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks, through conservation and restoration, including restoration of at least 15 % of degraded ecosystems, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation, adaptation and to combating desertification. Under the UNCCD, the GoSS set the national LDN targets of 20% forest cover increase and 30% reduction of areas of stressed productivity by 2030. Under the UNFCCC, the country?s commitment requires a 10% emissions reduction and includes the land use sector. The GoSS has also conducted REDD+ Country Needs Assessment and is moving towards REDD+ readiness and implementation. This project contributes these noble initiatives by the GoSS. In this regard, the project activities will be integrated into these existing institutional structures and policy processes locally and nationally, and the outcomes will be fed into commitments related to achieving the CBD Aichi Targets 7 & 11, the UNFCCC REDD+ goal, and the implementation of UNFCCC INDCs. The project analysis will also be directly relevant to the deliberations in the CBD, FIP and FCPF, and the UN-REDD programme.

The project is aligned to the National Agriculture Sector Investment Plan (NASIP) which operationalises the agriculture sector policies and legislation, and whose main objectives are to: (i) ensure food security by increasing food production to meet the immediate consumption needs of the population; (ii) create an enabling environment for the transformation of agriculture from a subsistence system into a modern, socially and economically sustainable; (iii) invest agriculture development to double yields of food crops; (iv) support smallholders, commercial farmers, processors and agribusiness with provision of extension services and agricultural education. It is aligned to the National Adaptation Programme of Actions (NAPA) to climate change (2016) under LDCF/UNFCCC which includes strategies for: (i) Environmental protection; (ii) Sustainable management and conservation of wetlands; (iii) Promotion of climate-smart agriculture, livelihoods improvement and food security; (iv) Disaster Risk Reduction; and (v) Strengthening the institutional capacity of State and County actors.

The project is also consistent with and contributes to the achievement of: (i) The Fifth National Report to The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (2015); (ii) The United Framework Conventions on Climate Change (UNFCCC); (iii) The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme of the African Union (AU) and New Partnership for Africa?s Development (NEPAD); (iv) The National Adaptation Programme of Actions (NAPA); (v) Vision 2040 of the GoSS; (vi) The South Sudan Development Plan (SSDP) (2011?2016), and (vii) The Republic of South Sudan National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) (2018-2027).

Ownership and sustainability of project outcomes will be maximised through: (1) enabling and demonstrating com?munity-led livelihood oriented conservation areas; (2) alignment with, use of, and integration into existing development and food security objectives and decision-making and governance structures and processes; (3) systematic evidence capture mechanisms (tools, pro?cesses) built into project implementation; (4) knowledge sharing, learning and exchange with practitioners, decision makers and related externally-led initia?tives, and (5) alignment with existing long-term GoSS and IPs delivery vehicles.

8. Knowledge Management

Elaborate the "Knowledge Management Approach" for the project, including a budget, key deliverables and a timeline, and explain how it will contribute to the project's overall impact.

8. Knowledge Management.

The project will facilitate and enhance knowledge acquisition and experience sharing at local, landscape, national, regional and global levels through better access to information, knowledge, learning and networking for purposes of catalysing coordinated implementation of PAME and biodiversity loss reduction. This will be achieved by; (i) developing and operationalizing an interactive M&E system to track implementation of project activities for purposes of scaling out in similar areas in South Sudan, (ii) documenting, packaging and sharing best practices and lessons learned at landscape, national and regional levels to inform uptake of good practices and lessons learned, and policy influencing and, (iii) establishing and enhancing the functionality of national, county and PA level multi-stakeholder platforms to champion PAME and restoration of production landscapes outside PAs.

An integral part of the stakeholder engagement will be the broadening of the involvement of civil society in sustainable land and PA management, through participatory activities. The project will facilitate the exchange of ILM/SLM information with the broader community by supporting the maintenance of an appropriate website (and linked Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, e-newsletter and YouTube media) as a centralized focal point for the management of the Imatong landscape. The website will continue to be developed as a repository for ILM/SLM legislation, academic papers, technical reports, fact sheets, pamphlets, news bulletins, event information, contact information, etc. Communication and knowledge products will be developed taking into consideration gender sensitivity requirements. All communication and knowledge management activities will apply a gender sensitive approach with following principles:
? Use male and female knowledge product and public education developers for diversity of perspectives and approaches, as well as male and female reviewers of these products.
? Use gender sensitive language and gender balanced images (women not presented as victims but as agents of change).
? Check context and content (use gender analysis; use convincing gender arguments based on reliable sources and qualitative and quantitative data including sex disaggregated data).
? Refer to (inter-)national policy framework, policies, strategies and plans, as applicable and appropriate.

Each project output will include the documentation of lessons learnt from the implementation of activities under that output, and a collection of the tools and templates (and any other materials) developed during implementation of that output. Project information will be collated and presented annually at the project implementation review meeting. The best practices established, and lessons learned from this project will have significant benefits for the east African region though the transfer of expertise and knowledge, as well as peer learning between countries. They will guide the ongoing development of sustainable landscape management approaches in the region. Project resources will be committed to ensure the ongoing involvement in, and information sharing with, regional counterpart countries on landscape management and control will be taken to avoid duplicating past and present efforts, and to enhance existing methods of managing knowledge.

Annual budgets and deliverables for knowledge management to be undertaken by the project are presented in Table 6 below. This includes allocations towards generation of information (surveys, reviews, and studies), their dissemination through publication and other means and allocations towards training programmes as well as knowledge sharing events. The largest allocations for knowledge management are for the first year of the project - during which most of the information required for detailed plans will be gathered and capacities of the implementing teams will be enhanced. Much of the policy level work will be done in the first year as well. The first column is the component, output and activity number, the latter described in the ProDoc.

Table 6. Allocations for Knowledge Management

Activity/output	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
Develop Strategic Action Plan targeting protected area management and biodiversity conservation	30,000	-	-	-	30,000
Raise awareness and promote CFM at National, State, Payam and Boma and PA levels	30,000	-	-	-	30,000
Collate and assemble remote sensed data for the development of forestry management plan		30,000			30,000
Conduct a baseline inventory of flora and fauna species of Imatong CFR as well as indicator species-specific assessment of ecosystem health		30,000			30,000
Develop and operationalize alternative IGAs (e.g. PES, NWFP, and community-based ecotourism			30,000		30,000

Develop tools to track best practices and lessons learned, and also conduct KAP survey to document best practices and lessons learned	30,000	-	-	-	30,000
Capacity development of government officials at national level, extension workers at state level and stakeholders in biodiversity conservation, PA management practices and methodologies, valuation of ecosystem goods and services, integrated land management, alternative livelihoods	37,500	37,500	37,500	37,500	150,000
Awareness creation on biodiversity conservation among communities; mobilizing and sensitizing local people	37,500	37,500	37,500	37,500	150,000
Technical capacity and institutional needs assessment of Government national and PA level staff in biodiversity conservation	20,000	-	-	-	20,000
Training plan for PA management practices and methodologies	20,000	-	-	-	20,000
Training of local extension workers on valuation of ecosystem goods and services in ICFR and surrounding productive landscapes	20,000	-	-	-	20,000
Train community members, farmer groups and production committees at Payam (Parish) and Boma (village) levels in integrated land management	25,000	-	-	-	25,000
Train forest association (CFA) members in wood product development including new NWFP products.	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	20,000
Develop the capacity of women, youth and vulnerable groups and empower them to participate in decision making and implementation of lternative livelihoods	6,250	6,250	6,250	6,250	25,000
Project Inception Workshop	20,000	-	-	-	20,000
Project Steering Committee meetings	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	100,000
Develop and publish a best practices and lessons leanrt handbook	-	-	-	26,000	26,000
Analyse community data and report progress on outcomes (including gender responsiveness)	6,500	6,500	6,500	6,500	26,000
Publish and disseminate project materials on a quarterly basis	7,356	7,356	7,356	7,358	29,426
Implement a communication and environmental awareness programme	-	30,000	-	-	30,000
	320,106	**215,106**	**155,106**	**151,108**	**841,426**

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

Describe the budgeted M and E plan

The project will follow UNEP standard monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes and procedures. Reporting requirements and templates are an integral part of the UNEP legal instrument to be signed by MoEF and UNEP. The project will implement an efficient working arrangement with both UNEP and MoEF for purposes of monitoring and evaluation.

The project M&E plan is consistent with the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation policy. The Project Results Framework includes SMART indicators[1] for each expected outcome as well as mid-term and end-of-project targets. These indicators are designed according to the GEF indicator guidelines. These indicators along with the key deliverables and benchmarks included in Appendix 6 will be the main tools for assessing project implementation progress and whether project results are being achieved. The means of verification and the costs associated with obtaining the information to track the indicators are summarized in Table 7 below. Other M&E related costs are also presented in the Costed M&E Plan and are fully integrated in the overall project budget.

Table 7. Monitoring and Evaluation Budget and Work plan

Type of M&E activity	Responsible Parties	Budget from GEF	Budget co-finance	Time Frame
Inception Meeting	MOEF (PMU), UNEP	20,000	109,720	Within 2 months of project start-up
Project Steering/Review meetings	MOEF (PMU), PSC	80,000	127,000	Twice a year minimum.
Mid Term Review/Evaluation	MOEF (PMU), PSC, Consultant	35,000	73,062	At mid-point of project implementation
Terminal Evaluation	MOEF (PMU), PSC, Consultant	40,000	140,000	Within 6 months of end of project implementation
Total M&E Plan Budget		**175,000**	**449,782**	

The M&E plan will be reviewed and revised as necessary during the project inception workshop to ensure project stakeholders understand their roles and responsibilities vis-?-vis project monitoring and evaluation. Indicators and their means of verification may also be fine-tuned at the inception workshop. Day-to-day project monitoring will be the responsibility of the project management team but other project partners will have responsibilities to collect specific information to track the indicators. It will be the responsibility of the Project Manager to inform UNEP and the NPSC of any delays or difficulties faced during implementation so that the appropriate support or corrective measures can be adopted in a timely fashion.

The NPSC will receive periodic reports on progress and will make recommendations to UNEP concerning the need to revise any aspects of the Results Framework or the M&E plan. Project oversight to ensure that the project meets UNEP and GEF policies and procedures will be the responsibility of the Task Manager in UNEP. The Task Manager will also review the quality of draft project outputs, provide feedback to the project partners, and establish peer review procedures to ensure adequate quality of scientific and technical outputs and publications.

Project supervision will take an adaptive management approach. The Task Manager will develop a project supervision plan at the inception of the project which will be communicated to the project partners during

the inception workshop. The emphasis of the Task Manager supervision will be on outcome monitoring but without neglecting project financial management and implementation monitoring. Progress vis-?-vis delivery of the agreed project global environmental benefits will be assessed with the NPSC at agreed intervals. The quality of project monitoring and evaluation will also be reviewed and rated as part of the PIR. Key financial parameters will be monitored on a quarterly basis to ensure cost-effective use of financial resources.

In-line with the GEF Evaluation requirements and the UNEP Evaluation Policy, the project will be subject to an independent Mid-Term Evaluation or management-led Mid-Term Review at mid-point. The project will also be subject to a performance assessment when it reaches operational completion. This performance assessment will be either an independent Terminal Evaluation or a management-led Terminal Evaluation (TE). The UNEP Evaluation Office will provide tools, templates, and guidelines to support the Review consultant. For all Terminal Reviews, the UNEP Evaluation Office will perform a quality assessment of the Terminal Review report and validate the Review?s performance ratings. This quality assessment will be attached as an Annex to the Terminal Review report, validated performance ratings will be captured in the main report.

In the case of the Terminal Evaluation (TE) of the project, the Evaluation Office will be responsible for the entire evaluation process and will liaise with the Task Manager and the project implementing partners at key points during the evaluation. The TE will provide an independent assessment of project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine the likelihood of impact and sustainability. It will have two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP staff and implementing partners. The direct costs of the evaluation (or the management-led review) will be charged against the project evaluation budget.

The TE will typically be initiated after the project?s operational completion. If a follow-on phase of the project is envisaged, the timing of the evaluation will be discussed with the Evaluation Office in relation to the submission of the follow-on proposal. The draft TE report will be sent by the Evaluation Office to project stakeholders for comment. Formal comments on the report will be shared by the Evaluation Office in an open and transparent manner. The project performance will be assessed against standard evaluation criteria using a six-point rating scheme. The final determination of project ratings will be made by the Evaluation Office when the report is finalized. The evaluation report will be publicly disclosed and will be followed by a recommendation compliance process.

The evaluation recommendations will be entered into a Recommendations Implementation Plan template by the Evaluation Office. Formal submission of the completed Recommendations Implementation Plan by the Project Manager is required within one month of its delivery to the project team. The Evaluation Office will monitor compliance with this plan every six months for a total period of 12 months from the finalisation of the Recommendations Implementation Plan. The compliance performance against the recommendations is then reported to senior management on a six-monthly basis and to member States in the Biennial Evaluation Synthesis Report.

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[1]The detail definitions of each indicator and sub-indicators can be referred in the GEF 7 Core Indicators Guidelines https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/Results_Guidelines.pdf

10. Benefits

Describe the socioeconomic benefits to be delivered by the project at the national and local levels, as appropriate. How do these benefits translate in supporting the achievement of global environment benefits (GEF Trust Fund) or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF)?

10. Benefits.

The project will provide benefits globally, nationally and locally. This project will enhance the capacity for implementation of a robust framework for forest management and biodiversity conservation in South Sudan. By strengthening South Sudan?s strategies, mechanisms, and institutions for forest management and biodiversity conservation at the national level, globally significant biodiversity and landscapes will be protected, and livelihoods strengthened. The strengthening of forest and biodiversity management will contribute to the development of social inclusion and gender equality, foster clear and transparent provisions and strengthen the capacity for local communities to benefit from their landscape and biodiversity, thereby generating opportunities for themselves. This will also have benefits to the local communities around the Imatong CFR, including those deriving livelihoods from forest, directly through production forestry (wood products), or indirectly through ecosystem services. Further benefits will accrue through replication of the approaches used at the project sites to other sites in the country. The approach used in the project as a whole will also provide lessons and opportunities for replication in other countries in Africa.

11. Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) Risks

Provide information on the identified environmental and social risks and potential impacts associated with the project/program based on your organization's ESS systems and procedures

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification*

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
Low	Medium/Moderate		

Measures to address identified risks and impacts

Elaborate on the types and risk classifications/ratings of any identified environmental and social risks and impacts (considering the GEF ESS Minimum Standards) and any measures undertaken as well as planned management measures to address these risks during implementation.

please refer to table 4 in section 5 of the risks

Supporting Documents

Upload available ESS supporting documents.

Title	Module	Submitted
Appendix 13 - Safeguard Risk Identification Form_26-Feb-2023	**CEO Endorsement ESS**	

ANNEX A: PROJECT RESULTS FRAMEWORK (either copy and paste here the framework from the Agency document, or provide reference to the page in the project document where the framework could be found).

Annex A: Project Results Framework

Project Objective *Lasting and significant changes to which the project is expected to contribute*	**Objective level Indicators** *How contributions the objective will be measured including quantity, quality, time*	**Baseline** *Initial Baseline for Objective indicator(s)*	**Targets and Monitoring Milestones**		**Means of Verification** *How the information required to measure the indicator will be collected, when, and by whom*	**Assumptions & Risks** *Assumptions and Risks that affect objective level*	**UNEP MTS reference*** *The Subprogramme under which the project objective can be fitted*
			Mid-Term *Mid-Point Target*	**End of Project** *End of project Target*			
To promote Sustainable Approaches to Ecosystem Conservation in the Imatong landscape of South Sudan for effective natural resource manage	Existence of sector policies and regulatory frameworks that promote inter-sectoral coordination and collaboration among stakeholders. GEF Indicator 1.2 Terrestrial protected areas under improved management effectiveness	There are no deliberate policy, legal and institutional frameworks that promote inter-sectoral coordination and collaboration among stakeholders	Exisiting sector policies and regulatory frameworks revised and/or updated to reflect the diversity of needs and interests of key stakeholders thereby enhancing coordination and cooperation	Sector policies and regulatory frameworks are operational and reflect the diversity of needs and interests of key stakeholders thereby enhancing coordination and cooperation	End of project report, PIR reports, Annual progress reports, monitoring reports, minutes of meetings, informant interviews, questionnaire administration, draft policies and regulatory	**Assumptions:** ? Government is fully committed to the conservation and sustainable use of the Imatong CFR landscape	

ment and improved livelihoods	Improved PA governance, as indicated by new or strengthened collaborative governance mechanisms and a management effectiveness score of more than 80% GEF Indicator 1.2 Terrestrial protected areas under improved management effectiveness	All of the Imatong PA is not effectively managed e.g. with due regard to its ecological values (conservation and sustainable use)	Management effectiveness of Imatong forest reserve improved and indicated by a score of at least 40%	Management effectiveness of Imatong forest reserve improved and indicated by a score of at least 80%	frameworks	**Risks:** ? Potential delay in the approval of ILM strategies and plans would delay their operationalization ? Lack of consensus of roles and responsibilities for institutional and governance systems ? Health risk for staff, partners and communities in the pilot sites, including disruption and/or suspension of activities; and spread of COVID-19 among targeted communities
	Area of forest loss and forest degradation avoided due to participatory land use planning and improved community livelihoods in landscapes bordering the Imatong CFR GEF Indicator 4.4 Area of High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) loss avoided	Unsustainable natural resources management practices around Imatong CFR.	Forest loss and forest degradation in Imatong CFR reduced/avoided on 5,000 hectares of forest due to an improvement of in community livelihoods in the bordering landscapes	Forest loss and forest degradation in Imatong CFR reduced/avoided on 10,000 hectares of forest due to an improvement of in community livelihoods in the bordering landscapes		

	Degree to which sector agencies and relevant institutions apply and scale up sustainable biodiversity conservation in policy and practice GEF Indicator 1.2 Terrestrial protected areas under improved management effectiveness	There are only a few sector agencies that are scaling up sustainable biodiversity conservation	Appropriate guidelines, protocols and approaches are available and being utilized to maintain a mouse free Marion Island	All relevant agencies have built the necessary capacity through skilled manpower and are actively using appropriate guidelines, protocols and approaches to maintain and control a rodent-free Marion and Prince Edward Islands			
	Quantity of carbon (tonnes of carbondioxide equivalents) sequestered or emissions avoided GEF Indicator 6.1 Carbon sequestered or emissions avoided in the AFOLU sector	The quantity of carbon sequestered from the Imatong CFR and neighboring landscapes is not yet known	Up to 4,000,000 tonnes of CO2e of carbon are sequestered from the Imatong CFR and neighboring landscapes	Up to 7,665,906 tonnes of CO2e of carbon are sequestered from the Imatong CFR and neighboring landscapes			

	Number of direct project beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment GEF Core Indicator 11 Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment	There sre no co-benefits accruing from the project since it has not yet started.	A total of 100,000 people comprising of 55,000 women and 45,000 men will direct ly benefit from project interventio ns	A total of 200,000 people comprising of 110,000 women and 90,000 men will direct ly benefit from project interventio ns			
Project Outcom e *Capacity or behavior al changes to which the project is expected to contribut e*	**Outcome Indicators** *How the outcome will be measured including quantity, quality, time*	**Baseline** *Initial Baseline for Outcome Indicators*	**Targets and Monitoring Milestones** **Mid-Term** *Mid-Point Target*	**End of Project** *End of project Target*	**Means of Verificatio n** *How the information required to measure the indicator will be collected, when, and by whom*	**Assumptio ns & Risks** *Assumption s and Risks that affect processes by which outcomes contribute to objectives*	**UNEP MTS reference*** *The Expected Accomplis hment under which the project outcome can be fitted*

Outcome 1: Forestry Protected Area management frameworks and governance (adopted by the Government of South Sudan) reflect the diversity of needs and interests of key stakeholders and encourage horizontal and vertical co-ordination and co-operation	Number of gender responsive actions identified and approved by government to fast-track review and enactment of policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks governing forest PAs GEF Indicator 1.2 Terrestrial protected areas under improved management effectiveness	No action has been taken by government yet to fast track review and enactment of policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks governing forest PAs	At least five (5) actions i.e. (i) a set of required reforms; (ii) national conservation objectives; (iii) action plan, (iv) timeframe; and (v) indicators identified for review of the enabling policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks in the environment and forestry sectors	At least five (5) actions i.e. (i) a set of required reforms; (ii) national conservation objectives; (iii) action plan, (iv) timeframe; and (v) indicators approved by government and proactively used to fast track enactment of the enabling policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks in the environment and forestry sectors		**Assumptions** ? Prerequisite competencies for development of sound legislative frameworks is available **Risks** ? Competing priorities and emergencies arise and delay revision and update of legislative frameworks; ? Approval process may take very long and delay their implementation	

mechanism	Number of CFM mechanisms with local communities for access to and sharing of benefits of biodiversity conservation developed and under implementation GEF Indicator 1.2 Terrestrial protected areas under improved management effectiveness	There are no Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) mechanism in widespread practice in South Sudan,	Two (2) CFM mechanisms i.e. CFM Policy and National CFM Strategy and Action Plan developed in consultation with local communities	Two (2) CFM mechanisms i.e. CFM Policy and National CFM Strategy and Action Plan approved and enhancing access to and sharing of benefits of biodiversity conservation at national, state, county, payam boma and PA levels	- Meeting minutes - Monthly reports - Quarterly reports - Annual report		
	Existence of a functional, inclusive and gender sensitive multistakeholder coordination platforms for effective PA management GEF Indicator 1.2 Terrestrial protected areas under improved management effectiveness	There are no (0) multistake holder coordination platforms for effective PA management	One inclusive and gender sensitive multistake holder platform established to promote an Integrated Landscape Management Approach (ILMA) in the Imatong CFR Landscape	One inclusive and gender sensitive multi--stakeholder platform is in place and taking lead in PAME implementation at national, sub-national, landscape and PA level.	- Meeting minutes - Monthly report - Quarterly report - Annual report		
Outputs: 1.1.1: National policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks governing forest PAs reviewed and implemented 1.1.2: Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) mechanisms instituted and access to and sharing of benefits of biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services by local communities promoted 1.1.3: Inclusive and gender sensitive multi-stakeholder co-ordination platforms for effective PA management and participatory M&E at national, and subnational levels established, made functional and strengthened							

Outcome 2: Forest Management plan developed, and National and PA management staff have the capacities that enable and support PAME achieving biodiversity conservation objectives	Percentage of PA staff with technical skills in participatory planning and management GEF Indicator 1.2 Terrestrial protected areas under improved management effectiveness	No staff have been trained yet in participatory management planning	At least 40% of key national, sub national, landscape and PA staff trained in in participatory planning and management	At least 80% of key national, sub national, landscape and PA staff actively discharging effective planning and management of PAs.		-	
	Number of consultative and gender inclusive plans developed and in operation for biodiversity conservation and effective management of Imatong CFR GEF Indicator 1.2 Terrestrial protected areas under improved management effectiveness	There are no plans for biodiversity conservation and effective management of Imatong CFR	One gender inclusive General Management Plan for Imatong CFR developed; Four associate plans for Imatong CFR developed viz. Zonation management plans, Infrastructure, works and investments development plans, Site management plans, Biodiversity and Cultural Heritage Conservation Plans	One gender inclusive General Management Plan for Imatong CFR in place and operational; Four (4) associate plans for Imatong CFR viz. Zonation management plan; Infrastructure, works and investments development plan, Site management plans, Biodiversity and Cultural Heritage Conservation Plans in place	- Meeting minutes - Reports - Plan developed	-	

	Percentage of government and PA level staff trained in biodiversity conservation assessment, threat identification and monitoring, and PA management methods GEF Indicator 1.2 Terrestrial protected areas under improved management effectiveness	There is inadequate capacity among government and PA staff in biodiversity assessment, threat identification and monitoring of PA management	At least 30% of government and PA staff, disaggegated by gender, are capable of biodiversity conservation assessment, threat identification and monitoring	At least 60% of government and PA staff, disaggregated by gender, are capable of biodiversity conservation assessment, threat identification and monitoring		-	
	Number and types of biodiversity threat assessments conducted and informing decision making, strategies, programmes, policies and other information on biodiversity GEF Indicator 1.2 Terrestrial protected areas under improved management effectiveness	There is inadequate information on priority species due to inadequate or no biodiversity assessments in South Sudan	At least two assessments (Baseline inventory and Indicator species-specific assessment) conducted and informing biodiversity conservation and ecosystem health in the Imatong CFR	Two assessments (ecosystem change and resource assessments) conducted and informing ecological integrity and sustainable use under Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) in Imatong CFR		-	

	Area of Imatong CFR PA under improved practices and management effectiveness GEF Indicator 1.2 Terrestrial protected areas under improved management effectiveness	The methodologies for tracking Protected Area Management Effectiveness to inform management decisions have never been used in South Sudan	50,000 hectares of Imatong CFR under improved practices and management. The Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) score is 30	110,000 hectares of Imatong CFR under improved practices and management. The Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) score is ? 50		-	
Outputs: 2.1.1: National guidelines for PA management planning developed and technical capacity of national and PA level management staff built 2.1.2: Imatong forest Management plan developed and key priority actions and implemented to address PAME challenges in an inclusive consultative manner and participatory approach 2.1.3: Government and PA level staff trained in biodiversity conservation assessment, threat identification and monitoring, and PA management methods 2.1.4: Biodiversity threat assessments conducted, and strategies/actions plans to support protection of priority species developed and implemented 2.1.5: Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool (IMET) established to track Protected Area Management Effectiveness (PAME) and to inform management decisions and IUCN Green Listing process							
Outcome 3: Reduced pressure on the Imatong CFR from unsustainable practices in the surrounding landscapes	Number of IUCN generic indicators achieved by Imatong CFR to ascend to the IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas GEF Indicator 1.2 Terrestrial protected areas under improved management effectiveness	The Imatong CFR is not yet green listed as a well conserved and managed PA by IUCN	At least 6 of IUCN?s generic indicators are achieved for Imatong CFR to qualify for application status of the Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas	At least 30 of IUCN?s generic indicators are achieved to sustain the Imatong CFR in the candidate status of the Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas	PIR, Workshop reports, Meeting minutes, Participants ? contacts, List of Income Generating Activities	**Assumptions** ? There is political will to implement and monitor policies at various administrative levels ? Stakeholders are highly committed to sustainable agricultural practices ? Stakeholders adhere to	

	Area of degraded agricultural land bordering Imatong CFR restored GEF Indicator 3.1 Area of degraded agricultural land restored	47,806 hectares of agricultural land comprising of 20,671 hectares in Ikotos and 27,135 hectares in Torit is currently degraded	47,806 hectares of degraded agricultural land bordering Imatong CFR restored	47,806 hectares of degraded agricultural land bordering Imatong CFR restored	policies and guidelines for sustainable land management practices. **Risks** ? Relevant institutions may not strictly adhere to land use plans ? Potential delay in approval of guidelines and regulations ? Competing interests of multi-stakeholders may delay consensus building ? Stakeholders priorities may change ? Participants may not utilize the knowledge and skills acquired
	Area of landscapes bordering the Imatong FR restored and under sustainable land management practices GEF Indicator 4.3 Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems	10,000 hectares of landscapes bordering the Imatong CFR is currently not sustainably managed	5,000 hectares of landscapes bordering the Imatong FR restored and under sustainable land management practices	10,000 hectares of landscapes bordering the Imatong FR restored and under sustainable land management practices	
	Area of Imatong CFR loss avoided/safeguarded from deforestation GEF Indicator 4.4 Area of High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) loss avoided	10,000 hectares of Imatong CFR threatened with serious degradation	Loss of 5,000 hectares of Imatong CFR avoided/ safeguarded from deforestation through sustainable management activities	Loss of 10,000 hectares of Imatong CFR avoided/ safeguarded from deforestation through sustainable management activities	

	Number of people (at least 50% of whom are women) earning their livelihood from sustainable income generating activities centered on forest conservation and alternative community based enterprises GEG Indicator 11 Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment	The number of people benefiting from Imatong CFR for their livelihoods is informal and not structured resulting into a paucity of data on their IGAs	A total of 100,000 people comprising of 50,000 women and 40,000 men are earning their livelihood from sustainable income generating activities centered on forest conservation and alternative community based enterprises	A total of 200,000 people comprising of 110,000 women and 90,000 men are earning their livelihood from sustainable income generating activities centered on forest conservation and alternative community based enterprises			
Outputs: 3.1.1: Ecosystem services in Imatong Mountain Central Forest Reserve and productive landscapes bordering the ICFR evaluated 3.1.2: Participatory land use plans for productive landscapes around the Imatong CFR developed, approved, and implemented 3.1.3: Key priority actions in the Land Use Plans for Productive Landscapes around the Imatong CFR implemented to address causes of degradation and deforestation and unsustainable land use practices 3.1.4: Regulatory frameworks that govern the management of productive landscapes around the ICFR developed, approved, and implemented at subnational levels 3.1.5: Forest conservation centered sustainable income generating activities for improved community livelihoods identified and implemented							

4: Sector Agencies and relevant institutions applying and scaling up sustainable biodiversity conservation in policy and practice	Gender sensitive M&E system to track best practices and lessons learned from cost-effective PA/ biodiversity conservation management measures developed	No formal monitoring and evaluation system exists for tracking best practices and lessons learned in biodiversity conservation and management	Draft gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation system developed for tracking best practices and lessons learned in biodiversity conservation and management	A functional gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation system is in place and actively tracking best practices and lessons learned in biodiversity conservation and management	Functional M&E system, M&E indicators, Documented best practices and lessons taught, PIR, Correspondences on networking and sharing of best practices and lessons learnt, Workshop reports, Meeting minutes, CEPA plan, KAP survey reports, Participants ? contacts.	**Assumptions** Information dissemination pathways are readily available for awareness creation **Risks** Infrastructure impediments e.g. transport, mass communication, telephone connectivity, etc. may take hamper and/or delay surveys and information dissemination
	Total number of lessons learned and best practices on effective PA/ biodiversity conservation and management, including gender mainstreaming, documented and shared at National and Sub-national levels and informing policy.	There are no best practices yet developed (and hence no lessons yet documented) in biodiversity conservation and management	At least 4 project lessons learned and best practices, including gender mainstreaming, are documented and applied by other projects and programs locally and nationally	At least 10 project lessons learned and best practices, including gender mainstreaming, are documented and applied by other projects and programs locally and nationally		

	Number of sector agencies applying and scaling up sustainable biodiversity conservation in policy and practice	Sector agencies are yet to apply and scale up sustainable biodiversity conservation in policy and practice	Atleast 3 sector agencies and relevant institutions applying and scaling up sustainable biodiversity conservation in policy and practice	Atleast 5 sector agencies and relevant institutions applying and scaling up sustainable biodiversity conservation in policy and practice			
Outputs: 4.1.1: Tools to track best practices and lessons learned from cost-effective PA/ biodiversity conservation management measures developed and operationalized 4.1.2: Best practices and lessons learned on cost-effective PA/ biodiversity conservation management measures documented and shared at National and Sub national levels and informing uptake and policy 4.1.3: Targeted discussions at national, state and county levels to share lessons and identify additional areas for replication (potentially hosting workshops at local level to showcase results)							

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).

Annex B: Response to Project Reviews

(from GEF Secretariat and GEF Agencies, and Responses to Comments from Council at work program inclusion, and responses to comments from the Convention Secretariat and STAP at PIF).

(i) GEF Secretariat Review for Full Sized Project ? GEF - 7

Promoting Sustainable Approaches to Ecosystem Conservation in the Imatong landscape of South Sudan

Basic Information: GEF ID 10870
Countries: South Sudan
Project Title: Promoting Sustainable Approaches to Ecosystem Conservation in the Imatong landscape of South Sudan

GEF Agency(ies): UNEP
Agency ID:
GEF Focal Area(s): Multi Focal Area
Program Manager: Pascal Martinez

Secretariat comment at PIF	Agency response
Part I ? Project Information Focal area elements	
1. Is the project/program aligned with the relevant GEF focal area elements in Table A, as defined by the GEF 7 Programming Directions?	
Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion September 25, 2021: Yes, cleared.	Agency Response Cleared on 25 Sept 2021
Indicative project/program description summary	
2. Are the components in Table B and as described in the PIF sound, appropriate, and sufficiently clear to achieve the project/program objectives and the core indicators?	
Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion September 27, 2021: The component 3 includes concrete actions on the ground to reduce the pressure on forest. Shouldn't the "Financial Type" of this component considered as "Investment" as opposed to "Technical Assistance" (especially considering the 50,000 ha restored)? Please consider that option as if all the investments are technical assistance, we can wonder to which extent enough actions will actually happen on the ground to meet the project objectives. October 14, 2021: Thank you for the amendment. Cleared.	Agency Response for the 27 September 2021 GEF review: "Financial Type" of component 3 has been changed to investment in both, the portal and the PIF Co-financing
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, with a description on how the breakdown of co-financing was identified and meets the definition of investment mobilized?	

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion September 30, 2021: 1. IUCN should be categorized as Donor Agency and not Civil Society Organization, please correct the source of co-financing. 2. In addition, kindly note that five sources of co-financing have been categorized as Investment Mobilized. Please further develop and describe how these 5 Investments Mobilized were identified in the paragraph below Table C. October 14, 2021: Thank you for the amendment and additional information. Cleared.	Agency Response for the 27 September 2021 GEF review: IUCN has been categorized as Donor Agency in both the PIF and the portal. Investments mobilized were identified in the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) budget allocations for the contributing Ministries. During the PIF development process, consultations were held with the government of South Sudan ministries, which expressed interest and commitment in increasing their investment in this high biodiversity value targeted landscape. Therefore, the Government agrees to mobilize resources to support the GEF grant so as to support the achievement of the project development objective, maximize outcomes and carry out replication and scaling-up actions. The figures will be confirmed during PPG through potential agreements. This has been added in the para below table C in the PIF and in the portal
GEF Resource Availability	
4. Is the proposed GEF financing in Table D (including the Agency fee) in line with GEF policies and guidelines? Are they within the resources available from (mark all that apply)	
Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion September 25, 2021: Yes, cleared.	Agency Response Cleared on 25 Sept 2021
The STAR allocation? Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion September 25, 2021: Yes, cleared.	Agency Response Cleared on 25 Sept 2021
The focal area allocation? Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion September 25, 2021: Yes, with less than $7 million of STAR allocation, the country has a full flexibility to program its allocations across the three focal areas. Cleared.	Agency Response Cleared on 25 Sept 2021
The LDCF under the principle of equitable access? Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion N/A	Agency Response N/A
The SCCF (Adaptation or Technology Transfer)? Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion N/A	Agency Response N/A
Focal area set-aside? Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion N/A	Agency Response N/A

Impact Program Incentive? Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion N/A	Agency Response N/A
Project Preparation Grant 5. Is PPG requested in Table E within the allowable cap? Has an exception (e.g. for regional projects) been sufficiently substantiated? (not applicable to PFD) Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion September 25, 2021: Yes, the PPG requested in Table E within the allowable cap. Cleared.	Agency Response Cleared on 25 Sept 2021
Core indicators 6. Are the identified core indicators in Table F calculated using the methodology included in the corresponding Guidelines? (GEF/C.54/11/Rev.01) Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion September 25, 2021: 1. In the core indicators section under the indicator 1.2, the following information is missing: the names of the protected areas, WDPA ID and IUCN Category Please complete and IUCN Category. Please complete. 2. The number of beneficiaries appear very high considering the project budget. Please explain who they are and how the numbers were calculated. 3. In the core indicator worksheet uploaded in the document section, the terrestrial protected area under improved management effectiveness is 130,200 ha while it is 153,200 ha in the Portal entry. The expected result for the core indicator 6.1 is also different in the core indicator worksheet and in the Portal entry. Please clarify and ensure the numbers are consistent. 4. The project is expected to reduce pressure on the HVCF from the local communities. Please consider the possibility of adding the sub-core indicator 4.4 which should be very relevant (even with a conservative estimate). In such a case, the climate change mitigation benefit should be adjusted accordingly. 5. Please attach the GEF 7 Core Indicator Worksheet in Annex B of the Portal entry (after the map in Annex A). October 14, 2021: Thank you for the clarifications and amendments. Cleared.	Response for the 27 September 2021 GEF review: In the core indicators section under the indicator 1. 2, the name of the protected areas, WDPA ID and IUCN Category have been recorded in the portal. Name is Imatong, WDPA ID is 14089, and the IUCN category V of Habitat/Species Management Area 2. Population estimate of Imatong state is 598,190 people (Park[1]). However, the number of direct beneficiaries has been reduced to 200,000 (110,000 women & 90,000 men). 3. In the core indicator worksheet uploaded in the document section, the terrestrial protected area und The right figure should be 110,000 ha. This has been harmonized in both the portal entry and the core indicator worksheet. 4. The expected result for core indicator 6.1 is 1,544,243tCO2eq and has been corrected in both the core indicator worksheet and in the Portal. The FAO EXACT worksheet has been attached. The 50,000 ha of land under improved land practices, was divided in 12,500 ha of Maize improved, 12,500 ha of beans and pulses land improved, and 25,000 ha of grazing land improved. For the 10,000 ha of HCVFs under improved management, 2% annual deforestation rate was used. ?According to the country?s inaugural State of the Environment Outlook Report, launched in June 2018, fuelwood and charcoal account for over 80 per cent of all wood used in South Sudan, with an annual deforestation rate estimated at between 1.5 and 2 per cent.? https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/south-sudan-cracks-down-charcoal-trade. The sub-core indicator 4.4 of 10,000ha, has been included in both the portal and the core indicator worksheet at PIF stage 5. A revised GEF 7 Core Indicator Worksheet has been attached/uploaded
Project/Program taxonomy	

7. Is the project/program properly tagged with the appropriate keywords as requested in Table G? Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion September 25, 2021: 1. The taxonomy reported in the Portal entry at the beginning of the project description is very limited. Many relevant references are missing. Please complete as relevant. 2. Please attach Taxonomy Worksheet in Annex C of the Portal entry. October 14, 2021: The taxonomy still needs to be completed. Please complete the taxonomy as needed at PPG stage. Cleared.	Agency Response for the 27 September 2021 GEF review: The taxonomy worksheet has been revised and uploaded in both the portal
Part II ? Project Justification	
1. Has the project/program described the global environmental/adaptation problems, including the root causes and barriers that need to be addressed? Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion September 26, 2021: 1. We learn that many of the key national legislations for biodiversity management in South Sudan are still in the form of Draft Bills. Please clarify why these legislations have not been adopted yet and how the project will be successful to address this issue. 2. The allocation of lands is presented as part of the solution for a successful community-based wildlife and forest resource management. Please clarify the current land tenure and rights in the targeted areas. 3. The Barrier corresponding to the lack of livelihood improvement options is not considered. Wouldn't it be relevant as it relates to and partially justify the activities proposed under component 3? 4. Please clarify what "IDPs" stands for. October 14, 2021: Thank you for the clarifications and amendments. Cleared.	Agency Response for the 27 September 2021 GEF review: 1. The section has been reworded to avoid confusion in adoption of the bill in the country. The bills had been drafted in 2015 during the war awaiting approval by the Legislative Assembly. At that time, the peace negotiations in Addis Ababa were pushing for creation of a coalition government and the Legislative Assembly was seating. To date, after signing of the peace agreement, the coalition government has been formed and the Legislative Assembly is in place to enact the bills into law. The South Sudan new parliament was sworn in, on 2 August 2021 under peace deal. The creation of an inclusive national assembly was a key condition of the 2018 ceasefire that paused five years of bloodshed between government and rebel forces that left nearly 400,000 people dead. (https://www.africanews.com/2021/08/02/south-sudan-swears-in-new-parliament-vowed-under-peace-deal/) 2. Using allocation of lands as part of the solution for a successful community-based wildlife and forest resource management has been removed. It had been included by mistake. But a rough description of land tenure systems in the area has been added and the details will be presented during the PPG in the CEO endorsement Request. 3. The barrier on livelihood improvement options has been considered as suggested and has been integrated in barrier #3 and in addition, a new output on livelihoods improvement has been added accordingly (see table B and section 1.3 of the PIF) 4. IDPs, is an abbreviation for Internally Displaced Per sons (IDPs) and it has been corrected in both the PIF and the portal

2. Is the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects appropriately described? Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion September 26, 2021: Please provide the meaning of the acronyms the first time they appear in the text (see for example MWCT). October 14, 2021: Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.	Agency Response for the 27 September 2021 GEF review: MWCT stands for Ministry of Wildlife conservation and Tourism (MWCT) and has been corrected
3. Does the proposed alternative scenario describe the expected outcomes and components of the project/program? Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion September 26, 2021: 1. Under component 2, the description says "following targets: (i) Develop a programme..." but there is no (ii). Please complete or amend this sentence. 2. Under the outcome 3.1.1, the support to the development of mechanisms to incentivize rights holders is unclear. Please explain what such mechanisms could be providing examples. 3. Through the outcome 3.1.3, key priority actions will be implemented. Some of them are known such as the restoration of agriculture lands but the proposal is unclear on this aspect which is very important to reduce pressure on forests. Please elaborate further on the actions considered at this stage. 4. Most of the project is about governance, regulations, planning and capacity building. Please clarify how these activities will have the needed impact to concretely alleviate the pressure on the ecosystems and reduce the environmental degradation. 5. In the TOC, the outputs are not fully visible. Please amend. October 14, 2021: Thank you for the clarifications and amendments. Cleared.	Agency Response for the 27 September 2021 GEF review: 1. This has been corrected in both the PIF and the portal. It now reads as: The aim of this component is to enhance the Imatong CFR Management and capacity building for PAM E. This is in line with Strategic Objectives 5 and 6 of the GoSS NBSAP with the following targets: (i) Develop a programme for effective management of PA s and PA current network, including situation analysis and development of General Management Plan s for all PAs by 2024 (ii) Provide technical capacity support of national and PA level management staff and (iii) generate information for biodiversity conservation and effective protected area management. This project will support the GoSS in delivering on this target through the following outcome and outputs. 2. That phrase has been removed in both the portal and the PIF 3. Output 3.1.3 has been revised to include restoration of agriculture lands. This has been done in both the portal and the PIF 4. Under component 2, the project will develop the Imatong forest Management plan and implement its key priority actions to address PAME challenges in an inclusive consultative manner and participatory approach. In addition, Component 3 has been revised to aim at promoting sustainable agricultural practices and community livelihoods improvement to reduce pressure on the Imatong Central Forest Reserve (ICFR) 5. The outputs in the TOC have been made visible and re-posted in the portal.
4. Is the project/program aligned with focal area and/or Impact Program strategies? Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion September 27, 2021: It is unclear how the project will improve financial sustainability of the PA which is also included in the BD 2-7 objective. Please explain. October 14, 2021: Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.	Agency Response for the 27 September 2021 GEF review: The project is only to achieve a part of the objective which is ?to protect habitats and species effective management, and ecosystem coverage of the global protected area estate?. It will not directly aim at Improving financial sustainability but will indirectly contribute to it.

5. Is the incremental/additional cost reasoning properly described as per the Guidelines provided in GEF/C.31/12? Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion September 27, 2021: Yes, cleared.	Agency Response Cleared on 27 Sept 2021
6. Are the project?s/program?s indicative targeted contributions to global environmental benefits (measured through core indicators) reasonable and achievable? Or for adaptation benefits? Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion September 27, 2021: Yes, cleared.	Agency Response Cleared on 27 Sept 2021
7. Is there potential for innovation, sustainability and scaling up in this project? Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion September 27, 2021: Yes, cleared.	Agency Response Cleared on 27 Sept 2021
Project/Program Map and Coordinates	
Is there a preliminary geo-reference to the project?s/program?s intended location? Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion September 25, 2021: The geo-referenced information is missing. Please complete. October 14, 2021: Thank you for the complement. Cleared.	Agency Response for the 27 September 2021 GEF review: The Geo-referenced coordinates have been included in both the portal and the PIF. They are 3?57?0?N 32?54?0?E
Stakeholders	
Does the PIF/PFD include indicative information on Stakeholders engagement to date? If not, is the justification provided appropriate? Does the PIF/PFD include information about the proposed means of future engagement? Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion September 27, 2021: Yes, cleared.	Agency Response Cleared on 27 Sept 2021
Gender Equality and Women?s Empowerment Is the articulation of gender context and indicative information on the importance and need to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, adequate? Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion September 27, 2021: Yes, cleared.	Agency Response Cleared on 27 Sept 2021
Private Sector Engagement	

Is the case made for private sector engagement consistent with the proposed approach? Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion September 27, 2021: The description of the private sector is general. Please elaborate further providing more details of the stakeholders in the targeted landscape (who they are) and the value chains (what they produce/do). October 14, 2021: Thank you for the additional information. Cleared.	Agency Response for the 27 September 2021 GEF review: The section of the private sector has been expanded as per section 4 of the PIF.
Risks to Achieving Project Objectives	

Does the project/program consider potential major risks, including the consequences of climate change, that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved or may be resulting from project/program implementation, and propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the project design? Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion September 27, 2021: 1. In the proposal, the risks analysis related to the COVID-19 pandemic identifies key risks but the pandemic can affect other important elements of the project such as the availability of co-financing and expertise. Please ensure all the possible risks are considered and also conduct a brief opportunity analysis exploring possible opportunities this project can provide to enhance the resilience of the beneficiaries against possible future pandemics (all the COVID-19 analysis can be a specific and separate note after the risk table). For further clarification, we advise to refer to the note "Project Design and Review Considerations in Response to the COVID-19 Crisis and the Mitigation of Future Pandemics" shared by GEF Secretariat with the GEF Agencies on September 14, 2020. 2. The climate risk is not enough analyzed. At a minimum, each agency should use a risk screening process that includes four steps (hazard identification, assessment of vulnerability and exposure, risk classification and risk mitigation plan). At PIF stage, A preliminary climate risk screening should be conducted identifying risks and planned risk mitigation or adaptation measures. Please briefly outline the key aspects of the climate change projections/scenarios at the project locations or at country level if not available at local scale (including a time horizon, ideally 2050, if the data is available) and list key potential impacts for the project that are related to the climate scenarios (during and after the project implementation) and mitigation measures. For further guidance, the Agency may want to refer to STAP guidance available here: https://www.stapgef.org/resources/advisory-documents/stap-guidance-climate-risk-screening. 3. Beyond the potential access issues, the risk of the lack of adoption or engagement by local communities is not considered. Please assess that risk too. October 14, 2021: Thank you for the additional information. Cleared.	Agency Response for the 27 September 2021 GEF review: 1. The risks analysis related to the COVID-19 pandemic has been improved. See section 5 of the PIF 2. Climate change projections/scenarios have been described in section 1.1 of the PIF. More climate risks have been added in the table of section 5 in the PIF but a deeper analysis of climate risks will be undertaken during the PPG 3. The risk of the lack of adoption or engagement by local communities has been included in the risk table of section 5 in the PIF
Coordination	

Coordination Is the institutional arrangement for project/program coordination including management, monitoring and evaluation outlined? Is there a description of possible coordination with relevant GEF-financed projects/programs and other bilateral/multilateral initiatives in the project/program area? Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion September 25, 2021: 1. At the beginning of the project description, the information for the "Other Executing Partner(s)" is missing. Please inform here the executing agency (ies) of the project. 2. Two relevant GEF projects are mentioned. In addition, under the baseline scenario other bilateral/multilateral initiatives in the project area are identified. Please explain how the proposal will build on and/or articulate with these projects. October 14, 2021: Thank you for the amendment and additional information. Cleared.	Agency Response for the 27 September 2021 GEF review: 1. The entry for "Other Executing Partner(s)" has been filled. It is the Ministry of Environment and Forestry 2. This has been added in section 6 of the PIF
Consistency with National Priorities	
Has the project/program cited alignment with any of the recipient country?s national strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions? Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion September 27, 2021: The description says the project is consistent with a series of plans and activities under the environmental Conventions but it doesn't say how. Please briefly elaborate further on how the project is consistent with these plans and activities. October 14, 2021: Thank you for the additional information. Cleared.	Agency Response for the 27 September 2021 GEF review: This has been done in section 7 of the PIF
Knowledge Management	
Is the proposed ?knowledge management (KM) approach? in line with GEF requirements to foster learning and sharing from relevant projects/programs, initiatives and evaluations; and contribute to the project?s/program?s overall impact and sustainability? Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion September 27, 2021: Yes, cleared.	Agency Response Cleared on 27 Sept 2021
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 PIF/Work Program Inclusion September 30, 2021: We note that the project overall ESS risk is classified as moderate, and UNEP attached the Safeguard Risk Identification Form (SRIF). The SRIF, however, does not provide ?Justification for the response? for the Safeguard 6 (Displacement and Involuntary Resettlement and Safeguard or Safeguard 7 (Indigenous Peoples,) although there is a full or partial physical displacement or relocation of people (6.1) and impacts to the human rights of indigenous peoples (7.3). The SRIF further notes in Safeguard 4 (Community Health, Safety and Security) that the project will engage security personnel to support project activities. Please provide, if possible, some additional explanation related to these risks and elaborate on any planned measures to avoid, mitigate and manage these risks (e.g. Environmental and Social Management Framework, Environmental and Social Impact Assessment, Indigenous Peoples Plans, Environmental and Social Management Plan). October 14, 2021: Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.	Agency Response for the 27 September 2021 GEF review: The project will not be involved in any Displacement and Involuntary Resettlement of local people. Also, the project will not engage security personnel to support project activities. The SRIF has been revised to overall ESS risk classified as Low.
Part III ? Country Endorsements	
Has the project/program been endorsed by the country?s GEF Operational Focal Point and has the name and position been checked against the GEF data base? Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion September 25, 2021: Yes, cleared.	Agency Response Cleared on 27 Sept 2021
Term sheet, reflow table and agency capacity in NGI Projects	
Does the project provide sufficient detail in Annex A (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 in Annex B to assess the project capacity of generating reflows? If not, please provide comments. After reading the questionnaire in Annex C, is the Partner Agency eligible to administer concessional finance? If not, please provide comments. Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion N/A	Agency Response N/A

GEFSEC RECOMMENDATION	
Is the PIF/PFD recommended for technical clearance? Is the PPG (if requested) being recommended for clearance? Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion September 27, 2021: Not yet. Please address the comments raised above. October 14, 2021: Thank you for addressing the remaining comments. The PIF is now recommended for technical clearance.	

(ii) GEF Council Review Comments

Comment	Response
? Austria Comments The below comments from Austria were received prior to the Council meeting. A response from GEFSEC was provided and can be found in the list of documents specific to the project in the GEF Portal.	
? In the South Sudan project (Promoting Sustainable Approaches to Ecosystem Conservation in the Imatong Landscape of South Sudan), how will the project implementation be affected given the low online and internet capacity and what can be done to mitigate the risks associated with low connectivity?	We appreciate the concern for the low internet connectivity, especially in the project area. However, there is some level of connectivity which can be utilized for project communication. Nevertheless, the bulk of project implementation, including supervision, monitoring and evaluation, will be done in the project area. The project will establish offices in Torit which will provide effective supervision and monitoring of project activities.
? Germany Comments Germany approves the following PIF in the work program but asks that the following comments are taken into account:	
GER appreciates the integral approach of the Project, especially its focus on inclusivity (gender, Indigenous Peoples), and nature-positive and climate-resilient livelihoods in a conflict-battered area. GER explicitly supports the project from a strategic development perspective in favor of exploring the linkages of natural resources management with food security and climate resilient livelihoods in South Sudan.	We appreciate these supportive comments
Suggestions for improvements to be made during the drafting of the final project proposal:	
? GER suggests a closer look at the social and environmental risks (which are not necessarily identical with the project objectives risks) and safeguards measures, as indigenous peoples are target groups and partners which need special attention, e.g. when it comes to participation and consultation needs.	Yes, we appreciate this comment. The environmental and social safeguards will be a subject of further review at project inception. However, at PPG, this issue has been examined to some extent (see Appendices 13,14,15 and 16).

? Digital tools for biodiversity data collection could make use of the traditional knowledge and embedment of (indigenous) communities in the PA and surroundings, and simultaneously empower and sensitize them for the values of nature. ? As returning refugees and IDPs as well as possible revival of commercial farming pose potential risks of conflicts as well as of forest and ecosystem degradation, GER recommends also to more actively involve the Land Commission in order to integrally resolve tenure issues and thus assure long-term stability and incentives for sustainable management of natural resources. ? The preparation of local project development capacities and the leverage of funding for such initiatives is also recommendable in an area and context that up to date depends on the GEF project alone for initiating any transition in the sector.	Yes, this possibility will be explored. We have provided for virtual or online interactions, especially during project monitoring (see section 9). This has been captured and provided for, especially in Output 2.1.4 We agree with the comments. During PPG, land conflicts arising out of, among others, tenure issues, was noted as one of the risks. Mitigation measures, including conflict resolution through the land commission and multistakeholder platforms have been proposed in section 5 of the CEO ER. We appreciate. We plan to strongly leverage on past and ongoing efforts where initiatives are such that they complement ours.
? Norway and Denmark Comments ? The project has a well-developed background analysis including barriers and there appears to be a clear need for the project. ? However, our concern is that the Project and more specifically Component 3 still has weak links to the achievement of Outcome 3 (?Pressures on forest resources from unsustainable practices reduced?). Component 3 addresses some of the drivers of deforestation and suggests interventions to promote sustainable agricultural practices, but it needs to be further developed. This is highlighted in the STAP Review, but we encourage even more attention to this part of the program. Hence, we support the coordination with the project 10178 Watershed approaches for climate resilience in agropastoral landscapes implemented by UNDP and UNIDO that works on climate change resilient agriculture and value chains. ? The risk highlighted by the STAP review is that most of the program builds on capacity building and increase awareness. We would like to highlight that this risk needs to be monitored closely and preferably look for more long-term interventions that can complement training of individuals.	Thank you! We agree! We will strongly leverage on past and ongoing efforts, such as GEF10178 to ensure full achievement of our objectives. At PPG, Outcome 3 has been further elaborated to provide interventions for collaborative forest management, sustainable land management as well as alternative livelihood opportunities. We agree! The project will closely monitor this risk, and as such, more long-term interventions such as strengthening the policy and regulatory framework, creation of multistakeholder platforms, collaborative management of forest resources, knowledge management and establishment of an effective M&E system.

(iii) Response to STAP Review Comments

Part I: Project Information	Response		Response to STAP Comments
GEF ID	10870		

Project Title	Promoting Sustainable Approaches to Ecosystem Conservation in the Imatong landscape of South Sudan		
Date of Screening	11 November 2021		
STAP member screener	John Donaldson		
STAP secretariat screener	Alessandro Moscuzza		

STAP Overall Assessment and Rating	Minor issues to be considered during project design: our review concluded that this proposal focuses on an area of importance for achieving GEBs and provides sufficient analysis of the problems and proposed mechanisms of change for this stage of the project development process. However, we also identified a number of areas where information was either missing or where further attention should be devoted to specific aspects. These included: (i) the baseline section where we concluded that some existing projects of relevance may have been missed, and where we could not find any reference to multiple baseline analyses; (ii) the proposed mechanisms of change relating to components 3 & 4 where STAP recommends that the scope of the intended change is more precisely defined and the proposed mechanisms are aligned to the achievement of these changes; and (iii) the risk section where we recommend the inclusion of additional information on ?risk likelihood?.		
Part I: Project Information B. Indicative Project Description Summary	What STAP looks for	Response	

Project Objective	Is the objective clearly defined, and consistently related to the problem diagnosis?	The project objective is defined as ?To promote Sustainable Approaches to Ecosystem Conservation in the Imatong landscape of South Sudan? which is consistently related to the problem diagnosis. The objective is currently not measurable and should be 2 strengthened by including intended outcomes. For example, the narrative states that the impact will be: resource management is improved and contributes to rural livelihoods, national, regional and global environmental benefits	The project objective has been reviewed and revised as follows: ?To promote sustainable approaches to ecosystem conservation in the Imatong landscape of South Sudan for effective natural resource management and improved livelihoods?
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project?s objectives?	The project has four components, which are mostly clear and coherent with the project?s objective. However, our review found that the wording for component 1 was not very clear and did not illustrate sufficiently what the project will actually do to enable policy and regulatory frameworks for the planning, management and governance of PAs. The wording for component 3 was also too long and somewhat confusing.	Component 1 has been re-formulated by adding the word ?developing? i.e. ?Developing enabling policy and regulatory frameworks for effective planning, management and governance of forest PAs?. This is succinct and avoids confusion. The wording for component 3 has been revised to: ?Promoting sustainable agricultural practices and improved community livelihoods in the Imatong landscape?.
Outcomes	A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention. Do the planned outcomes encompass important adaptation benefits?	The outcomes were mostly fine and well designed, although the wording for outcome 3.1 was too long and bound to be confusing.	Outcome 3.1 has been re-phrased as follows: Reduced pressure on the Imatong Central Forest Reserve from sustainable practices in the surrounding landscape

	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	Yes, the PIF provides a compelling explanation of how the project can deliver a number of GEBs and the sum of components, outcomes and outputs as a whole provide a solid pathway to do this.	
Outputs	A description of the products and services which are expected to result from the project. Is the sum of the outputs likely to contribute to the outcomes?	Output 1.1. Not clear who will review and implement the national policy and institutional frameworks (supposedly the relevant national authorities) which then raises the same question regarding the contribution and/or role to be made by the project.	The review of the policy and institutional frameworks will be done by a multi-disciplinary team of experts. This has been clarified during PPG and is reflected in the CEO ER output 1.1.1. Implementation of national policies, however, is the responsibility of government departments. The involvement of government departments has been integrated throughout the project design, implementation and will provide a very good basis for continuity after project closure.
Part II: Project justification	A simple narrative explaining the project?s logic, i.e. a theory of change.		
1. Project description. Briefly describe: 1) the global environmental and/or adaptation problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed (systems description)	Is the problem statement well-defined?	The project description was not very long but was dense with relevant information and supported by a robust set of technical data and a very reasonable list of references from government agencies and other ?technical? sources.	

	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	The PIF presented a total of four barriers, which were described to a sufficient extent for this phase of project development. The description was supported by a good amount of background data but was light on references. STAP recommendation is that the project developers review this version in the next phase of project development with two aims in mind: i) consider whether there are additional barriers to be added to the current list (e.g. lack of technical capacity or political instability), ii) review the current content with a view to strengthen this by adding more technical references.	During PPG, it was decided by technical experts and stakeholder consultations that the barriers be retained as they were at PIF. The description of the three barriers was enhanced and strengthened with more technical references. Please see section 1.1.3 of the CEO ER.
	For multiple focal area projects: does the problem statement and analysis identify the drivers of environmental degradation which need to be addressed through multiple focal areas; and is the objective well-defined, and can it only be supported by integrating two, or more focal areas objectives or programs?	Yes, the problem statement focuses really well on the drivers of environmental degradation that will need to be addressed and provides a clear and comprehensive summary of the major threats to biodiversity (e.g. illegal wildlife poaching and trafficking, illegal logging of hardwoods etc.).	

2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	Is the baseline identified clearly?	Yes, the PIF provides a clear description of the main government actors that operate in the environmental protection and conservation space in South Sudan, it also provides a list of four existing projects that have been funded by a mixture of international donors. Whilst we found the level of detail provided for the interventions listed to be satisfactory we would also recommend that the project developers conduct a further scanning of the interventions landscape to identify any additional projects that may have been missed.	At PPG, a further scanning of the project and development landscape in South Sudan and neighboring countries was done. The baseline projects were expanded at PPG to include an additional 3 projects. See section 1.2.4 of the CEO ER
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project?s benefits?	Yes, the current scope of the baseline identified in the PIF provides a sufficient basis for quantifying the project?s benefits.	
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Yes, the information provided in the baseline section of the PIF includes the financial value and size of existing projects, which provides a sufficient justification in support of the additional investment to be delivered by this project.	

	For multiple focal area projects: are the multiple baseline analyses presented (supported by data and references), and the multiple benefits specified, including the proposed indicators; are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and How did these lessons inform the design of this project?	We could not find any information related to this aspect in the current version of the PIF. STAP recommends that this information be provided as a matter of priority in eth next phase of project design and development.	This information is found in section 1.2 of the CEO ER. In sections 1.2.1-1.2.3, baseline analyses are provided with a detailed description of the forest and biodiversity management, degradation and conservation in the project area, as well as land degradation, including land tenure in the project area. In section 1.2.4, a separate section provides associated projects whose lessons have informed and will provide good lessons for implementation
3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project	What is the theory of change?	The intervention logic for the project is premised on the understanding that resources will be deployed to implement the interventions (activities) to deliver outputs, which in turn will lead to certain institutional and behavioral changes (outcomes) at the intermediate level provided that the assumptions and certain preconditions governing project implementation hold true.	

	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	At the lowest level of the theory of change, the needed interventions will be deployed to deliver outputs. The next level of the theory of change, shows that outputs will lead directly to the delivery of the project outcomes, which include the enforcement an updated of a comprehensive policy, legislative and regulatory frameworks, and coordination mechanisms for the effective management of protected areas and biodiversity conservation in the Imatong landscape.	
	What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project?s objectives?	Above comment refers.	

	Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?	The mechanisms are reasonably well-defined. The logical flow between the various ToC elements (i.e. outputs, outcomes, results and long-term impacts) is clearly illustrated in the ToC diagram, which also integrates the proposed intervention, baseline and impact pathways. These mechanisms seem plausible for the components dealing with enabling policy and management plans for the protected area. There is a large assumption that the activities and outputs under Components 3 and 4 will address the major drivers of degradation and biodiversity loss, which have been identified as the breakdown or lack of recognition of local institutions for governing resource use, in-migration from returning refugees and displaced persons, illegal logging and hunting, and increased pressure from commercial agriculture. The proposed interventions are appropriate to deal with some of the drivers, but the information provided does not show that they will be sufficient to address the main drivers. STAP recommends that the scope of the intended change is more precisely defined,	We appreciate the comment. At PPG, the mechanisms of change have been effectively described on the basis of the identified drivers. In as far as outcomes and impacts are concerned, we are sure that this project will ?contribute? to outlined outcomes (in the medium term) and impacts (in the long term). In component 3, specific interventions through collaborative forest management, sustainable land management and alternative livelihoods, all interspersed with adequate capacity development, have been developed. In component 4, adequate and detailed description of knowledge management and effective M&E are provided. These, together with the outputs in components 1 and 2, will effectively address the main drivers identified. A further stakeholder consultation will be conducted to more precisely define the scope of the intended change of the project in view of the activities and outputs anticipated.

	Is there a recognition of what adaptations may be required during project implementation to respond to changing conditions in pursuit of the targeted outcomes?	Yes, this is described in section 1.1. Of the PIF: ?Global environmental and/or adaptation problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed?.	
5) incremental/additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline, the GEF trust fund, LDCF, SCCF, and co-financing	GEF trust fund: will the proposed incremental activities lead to the delivery of global environmental benefits?	Yes, the PIF included a very detailed section on incremental and additional benefits, which listed and described clearly the incremental and global benefits that the project is expected to deliver. These include items such as: Enhanced forest cover due to PA adaptive management and reduced deforestation; substantial increase in forest carbon stocks; reduction in GHGs emissions and climate change mitigation and enhanced biodiversity conservation. Our assessment concluded that the proposed incremental activities will lead to the delivery of GEBs especially in view of the importance of South Sudan in terms of global biodiversity and natural habitat status.	
	LDCF/SCCF: will the proposed incremental activities lead to adaptation which reduces vulnerability, builds adaptive capacity, and increases resilience to climate change?		
-	-	-	

6) global environmental benefits (GEF trust fund) and/or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF)	Are the benefits truly global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits, and are they measurable?	Yes, South Sudan contains a range of regionally important habitats and ecosystems, which comprise: Lowland Forests, Montane Forests, Savannah woodlands, Grassland Savannahs, Floodplains, Sudd Swamps, wetlands, and Semi-arid and arid lands (ASALs). South Sudan contains an impressive range of internationally protected areas, which include one of the largest remaining untouched savannah and woodland ecosystems in Africa, and one Ramsar site (i.e. the Sudd), which is the largest wetland in Africa (57,000 km) and one of the largest freshwater ecosystems in the world.	
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	The overall scale of the benefits proposed does justify the proposed investment. However, it is important to note that the outputs under component 3 are likely to have the biggest impact on the drivers of degradation and delivery of the outcomes in terms of ha of land restored or under improved practices. As noted elsewhere, it will be essential to define the scope of these interventions and then make sure they receive an appropriate portion of the budget allocation.	Yes, we agree with the review comment. A detailed description of the outputs and activities in component 3 are provided. As already noted above, appropriate detail has been provided into the CEO ER with regard to the project interventions. The budget allocation has been made based on this (see Appendix 1 ? Budget sheet)
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits explicitly defined?	Yes, above comments refer.	See comment above

	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	Yes, the PIF provides a range of indicators that are also aligned with Aichi targets.	
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project?s resilience to climate change?	The project is planning to manage this risk through the promotion of afforestation programs among rural communities and the institutionalization of development planning systems that reduce land degradation. In addition, disaster risk and response plans may be put in place in collaboration with selected communities	

7) innovative, sustainability and potential for scaling-up	Is the project innovative, for example, in its design, method of financing, technology, business model, policy, monitoring and evaluation, or learning?	Yes, the project contains several innovative elements, for example: Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) mechanism is not yet a widespread practice in South Sudan, and the methodologies of establishing the Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool (IMET) to track Protected Area Management Effectiveness (PAME) and to inform management decisions and IUCN Green Listing process will be applied for the first time in the country. The equipment, devices and intervention strategies that are proposed for adoption by the Forestry department at both national and state levels and at the site level are also innovative in the national context of South Sudan. A potential area of innovation could be how to strengthen traditional community resource use systems to cope with increasingly globalized pressures which manifest at community level in the form of in-migration, illegal trade, commercial agriculture and climate change.	This is noted and very much appreciated.

	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	Yes, the proposed project activities will address capacity building for staff within the Directorate of Forestry on Protected Area Management Effective (PAME), managing information systems, monitoring; training on implementing monitoring, enforcement; and training on PA management for staff at the targeted PA sites, which together will allow for best practices and lessons learned through national and on-site enforcement activities to be easily and be widely up-scaled to overall national forest management operations. Training of local communities within and adjacent to the targeted Imatong area will be crucial for developing models that can be replicated elsewhere in the country.	
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	Given the nature of this intervention, STAP assessment is that its success will require incremental adaptation over a period of time.	
1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.			

2. Stakeholders. Select the stakeholders that have participated in consultations during the project identification phase: Indigenous people and local communities; Civil society organizations; Private sector entities. If none of the above, please explain why. In addition, provide indicative information on how stakeholders, including civil society and indigenous peoples, will be engaged in the project preparation, and their respective roles and means of engagement.	Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers?	Yes, a wide range of stakeholders participated in the consultations during the project identification phase and will continue to participate during both full project development and implementation Phase. These have also been listed in the PIF that was reviewed by STAP and include stakeholders in Central Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies. At the sub-national level, county officials and local communities? committees neighboring the target area of Imatong were consulted, whereas at the local level, civil society organizations, private sector organizations, research and academic institutions, faith-based organizations and traditional institutions were also consulted.	
	What are the stakeholders? roles, and how will their combined roles contribute to robust project design, to achieving global environmental outcomes, and to lessons learned and knowledge?	What are the stakeholders? roles, and how will their combined roles contribute to robust project design, to achieving global environmental outcomes, and to lessons learned and knowledge?	Thanks for this comment. The stakeholder roles and how they provided and will also participate in project implementation is given in Appendix 14 as well as section 1.2.3 of the CEO ER.

3. Gender Equality and Women?s Empowerment. Please briefly include below any gender dimensions relevant to the project, and any plans to address gender in project design (e.g. gender analysis). Does the project expect to include any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women empowerment? Yes/no/ tbd. If possible, indicate in which results area(s) the project is expected to contribute to gender equality: access to and control over resources; participation and decision-making; and/or economic benefits or services. Will the project?s results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators? yes/no /tbd	Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences?	Yes, the PIF includes a section on gender analysis, which provides a broad but sufficiently comprehensive overview of gender issues in South Sudan. The project the project will also carry out project-specific gender analyses and develop a gender action plan in the next phase of project development, which will identify and support opportunities to include women in the design and implementation of project activities. This will be an important component of the project because many of the root causes of degradation and biodiversity loss are significantly gendered, e.g. illegal and unsustainable logging and hunting typically involve men whereas harvesting of NTFPs mostly involves women. It will need to be clear how gender-sensitive responses will address this. Our review of this section of the PIF concluded that this was perfectly adequate for this stage of project development.	We appreciate this comment. A gender analysis has been included as well as Appendix 15.
	Do gender considerations hinder full participation of an important stakeholder group (or groups)? If so, how will these obstacles be addressed?	Our review did not identify any issues of this kind.	There are no gender issues that hinder full participation of any important stakeholder group.

5. Risks. Indicate risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved, and, if possible, propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the project design	Are the identified risks valid and comprehensive? Are the risks specifically for things outside the project?s control? Are there social and environmental risks which could affect the project? For climate risk, and climate resilience measures: ? How will the project?s objectives or outputs be affected by climate risks over the period 2020 to 2050, and have the impact of these risks been addressed adequately? ? Has the sensitivity to climate change, and its impacts, been assessed? ? Have resilience practices and measures to address projected climate risks and impacts been considered? How will these be dealt with? ? What technical and institutional capacity, and information, will be needed to address climate risks and resilience enhancement measures?	The PIF included a well-presented risk section, which identified a number of risks that may prevent or hinder the project from achieving its objectives, including COVID19 and climate-related risks. Our assessment concluded that the list of risks identified was both valid and sufficiently comprehensive for this stage of project development. We noted that there were no risks identified for possible conflicting commercial interests (e.g. for high value hardwoods or commercial agriculture) nor for the impact of illicit trade. These may not be significant but given the description of drivers in the proposal, they do seem like possible risks. The proposed risk mitigation measures were appropriate for the potential impact and likelihood of each category of risk. However, we noted the absence of a column in the risk table that rated the likelihood of a risk happening. Whilst we recognize that this is not an essential requirement, STAP recommends that this information be added to the next iteration of the project proposal.	The risk table has been revised and now presents the risk, its impact and probability of occurrence, risk level as well as the mitigation measures. See section 5 of the CEO ER.

6. Coordination. Outline the coordination with other relevant GEF-financed and other related initiatives	Are the project proponents tapping into relevant knowledge and learning generated by other projects, including GEF projects?	The PIF includes a section on co-ordination, which provides a good overview of how the project will be managed and coordinated, including any governance arrangements. This also provides a list of three GEF projects which will be coordinating their activities with those of this project. Our assessment concluded that this section of the PIF was totally adequate -both in scope and level of detail provided- for this stage of project development.	
	Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?	Yes, for further details please refer to the comments provided on the KM component of the project below.	
	Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?	Yes, the co-ordination section of the PIF (i.e. section 6) provides a few examples where experience and lessons from previous GEF-funded projects were listed. The same section also describes how this project will use these lessons with a view to change mindsets on benefits of ecosystem restoration and ecosystem services.	
	How have these lessons informed the project?s formulation?	-	

	Is there an adequate mechanism to feed the lessons learned from earlier projects into this project, and to share lessons learned from it into future projects?	Yes, there are adequate provision made to satisfy this requirement in the KM section of the PIF. In addition, planned training activities on PA management for staff at the targeted PA sites will allow for best practices and lessons learned through national and on-site enforcement activities to be easily and be widely up-scaled to overall national forest management operations.	
8. Knowledge management. Outline the ?Knowledge Management Approach? for the project, and how it will contribute to the project?s overall impact, including plans to learn from relevant projects, initiatives and evaluations.	What overall approach will be taken, and what knowledge management indicators and metrics will be used?	The project is aiming to facilitate and enhance knowledge acquisition and experience sharing at local, landscape, national, regional and global levels through better access to information, knowledge, learning and networking.	
	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	The PIF states that this will be achieved by: i) developing and operationalizing an interactive M&E system to track implementation of project activities for purposes of scaling out in Similar areas in South Sudan; and ii) documenting, packaging and sharing best practices and lessons learned at landscape, national and regional levels to inform uptake of good practices and lessons learned, and policy influencing.	

Notes

STAP advisory response	Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed
1. Concur	STAP acknowledges that on scientific or technical grounds the concept has merit. The proponent is invited to approach STAP for advice at any time during the development of the project brief prior to submission for CEO endorsement.

	* In cases where the STAP acknowledges the project has merit on scientific and technical grounds, the STAP will recognize this in the screen by stating that ***?STAP is satisfied with the scientific and technical quality of the proposal and encourages the proponent to develop it with same rigor. At any time during the development of the project, the proponent is invited to approach STAP to consult on the design.?***
2. Minor issues to be considered during project design	STAP has identified specific scientific /technical suggestions or opportunities that should be discussed with the project proponent as early as possible during development of the project brief. The proponent may wish to:
	(i) Open a dialogue with STAP regarding the technical and/or scientific issues raised;
	(ii) Set a review point at an early stage during project development, and possibly agreeing to terms of reference for an independent expert to be appointed to conduct this review.
	The proponent should provide a report of the action agreed and taken, at the time of submission of the full project brief for CEO endorsement.
3. Major issues to be considered during project design	STAP proposes significant improvements or has concerns on the grounds of specified major scientific/technical methodological issues, barriers, or omissions in the project concept. If STAP provides this advisory response, a full explanation would also be provided. The proponent is strongly encouraged to:
	(i) Open a dialogue with STAP regarding the technical and/or scientific issues raised; (ii) Set a review point at an early stage during project development including an independent expert as required. The proponent should provide a report of the action agreed and taken, at the time of submission of the full project brief for CEO endorsement.

[1]Nakimangole, Peter Lokale (22 April 2016). "Additional Counties in Imatong And Namorunyang States Established". Gurtong. Retrieved 14 August 2016.

ANNEX C: Status of Utilization of Project Preparation Grant (PPG). (Provide detailed funding amount of the PPG activities financing status in the table below:

PPG Grant Approved at PIF: **150,000**			
Project Preparation Activities Implemented	***GETF/LDCF/SCCF Amount ($)***		
	Budgeted Amount	***Amount Spent To date***	***Amount Committed***
Project Design Expert / international consultant	45,000	45,000	8,726
Biodiversity expert	15,000	15,000	
Sustainable Land Management (SLM) expert	15,000	15,000	
Land degradation consultant	4,000	4,000	
National Finance and Budget consultant	1,000	1,000	
Assistant national team leader	2,000	2,000	
National technical advisors	5,000	5,000	
PPG national Team leader	8,000	8,000	
Stakeholder, social safeguards, risks, and gender mainstreaming, sustainability plan, exist strategy consultant	14,000	14,000	
Travel	14,750	7,828	
Meetings/workshops/consultations	20,800	18,996	
Total	***144,550***	***135,824***	***8,726***

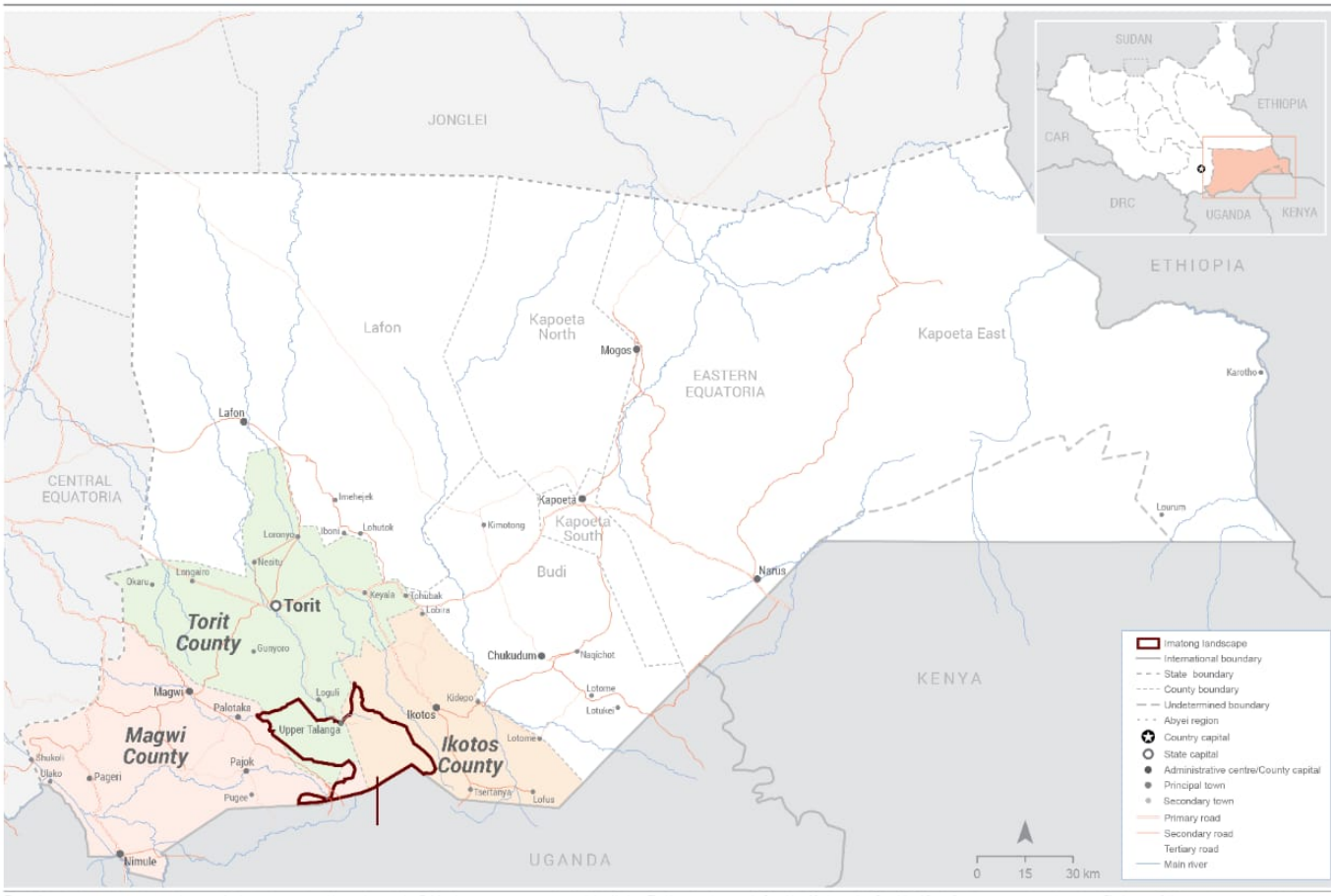
ANNEX D: Project Map(s) and Coordinates

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

Annex E: Project Map(s) and Coordinates

The project will be implemented in Imatong Central Forest Reserve (indicated by the white outline line in the map below) and the surrounding counties of Ikotos, Torit and Magwi. The project implementation area lies between 32?31' E ? 33? 31' E and 3? 8' N - 4? 5' N

EASTERN EQUATORIA STATE: IMATONG LANDSCAPE MAP



The administrative boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined. Final status of Abyei area is not yet determined.
Created: 10 May 2023 | Sources: NBS, OCHA

ANNEX E: Project Budget Table

Please attach a project budget table.

Expenditure Category	Detailed Description	Component and Outcomes (USD)							Total (USD)	Responsible Entity	Budget Notes
		Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	Component 4	Sub-Total	M&E	PMC			
		Outcome 1.1	*Outcome 2.1*	*Outcome 3.1*	*Outcome 4.1*						

Goods	Inventory tools	-	15,000	-		**15,000**			**15,000**	Ministry of Environment and Forestry	1
	Inventory equipment		20,000			**20,000**			**20,000**		2
	Sub-Total	**-**	**35,000**	**-**	**-**	**35,000**	**-**	**-**	**35,000**		
Vehicles	4x4 double cabin pickup vehicle for field work \	1 4,000	1 4,000	1 4,000	1 4,000	**56,000**			**56,000**	Ministry of Environment and Forestry	3
	Sub-Total	**1 4,000**	**1 4,000**	**1 4,000**	**1 4,000**	**56,000**	**-**	**-**	**56,000**		

Sub-contract to executing partner/ entity	Policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks; CFM; Multistakeholder coordination platforms; Forest management planning; Biodiversity assessments; : Forest conservation centered sustainable income generating activities; Knowledge management including conflict analysis and management	220,200	109,600		115,000	**444,800**			**444,800**	Ministry of Environment and Forestry	4
	Sustaiable agricultural practices; Sustainable (Intengrated) Land and Landscape Management; Participatory land use planning;	-	-	440,800	-	**440,800**			**440,800**	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security	5

	PA management planning; Integrated Management Effectiveness	130,200	173,942		100,000	**404,142**			**404,142**	Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism	6
	Collaborative Forest Management (CFM); Drafting legislation, laws and policies for the CFR management; Support infrastructure development; Training and Capacity development	178,400	48,600	40,000	160,200	**427,200**			**427,200**	Directorate of Forestry	7

	Capacity development of government officials at national level, extension workers at state level and stakeholders in biodiversity conservation, PA management practices and methodologies, valuation of ecosystem goods and services, integrated land management, alternative livelihoods	50,000	43,300	30,000	30,000	**153,300**			**153,300**	University of Juba	8
	Awareness creation on biodiversity conservation among communities; mobilizing and sensitizing local people	50,000	40,000	33,300	30,000	**153,300**			**153,300**	South Sudan Nature Conservation Organisation	9
	Sub-Total	**628,800**	**415,442**	**544,100**	**435,200**	**2,023,542**	**-**	**-**	**2,023,542**		

Contractual Services ? Individual	Develop and publish a best practices and lessons leanrt handbook	-	-	-	26,000	**26,000**			**26,000**	Ministry of Environment and Forestry	10
	Analyse community M&E data and report progress on outcomes (including gender responsiveness)	-			26,000	**26,000**			**26,000**		11
	Sub-Total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**52,000**	**52,000**	**-**	**-**	**52,000**		
Contractual Services ? Company	Publish and disseminate project materials on a quarterly basis	-			29,426	**29,426**			**29,426**	Ministry of Environment and Forestry	12
	Implement a communication and environmental awareness programme	-	-	-	30,000	**30,000**			**30,000**		13
	Sub-Total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**59,426**	**59,426**	**-**	**-**	**59,426**		
International Consultants	Terminal Evaluation	-	-	-	-	**-**	40,000		**40,000**	Ministry of Environment and Forestry	14
	Mid-Term evaluation	-	-	-	-	**-**	35,000		**35,000**		15

	Sub-Total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**75,000**	**-**	**75,000**		
Local Consultants	Policy expert: Expert review of policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks in environment and forestry	50,000				**50,000**			**50,000**	Ministry of Environment and Forestry	16
	Strategic Planning expert: Develop Strategic Action Plan targeting protected area management and biodiversity conservation	30,000				**30,000**			**30,000**	Ministry of Environment and Forestry	17
	CFM expert: Develop and support implementation of CFM mechanisms in South Sudan	30,000				**30,000**			**30,000**	Ministry of Environment and Forestry	18

	Communication expert: Raise awareness and promote CFM at National, State, Payam and Boma and PA levels	30,000				**30,000**			**30,000**	Ministry of Environment and Forestry	19
	M& E expert: Develop inclusive and gender sensitive multi-stakeholder co-ordination platforms for effective PA management	30,000				**30,000**			**30,000**	Ministry of Environment and Forestry	20
	GIS expert: Collate and assemble remote sensed data for the development of forestry management plan		30,000			**30,000**			**30,000**	Ministry of Environment and Forestry	21

	Forest/PA Management Planning expert: Develop gender responsive and inclusive management plan for Imatong CFR		30,000			**30,000**			**30,000**	Ministry of Environment and Forestry	22
	Biodiversity expert: Conduct a baseline inventory of flora and fauna species of Imatong CFR as well as indicator species-specific assessment of ecosystem health		30,000			**30,000**			**30,000**	Ministry of Environment and Forestry	23
	Livelihood expert: Develop and operationalize alternative IGAs (e.g. PES, NWFP, and community-based ecotourism			30,000		**30,000**			**30,000**	Ministry of Environment and Forestry	24

	Natural resources governance expert: Formulate regulatory frameworks (local bye-laws/ordinances) for sustainable management of the productive landscapes around Imatong CFR			30,000		**30,000**			**30,000**	Ministry of Environment and Forestry	25
	Knowledge Management expert: Develop tools to track best practices and lessons learned, and also conduct KAP survey to document best practices and lessons learned				30,000	**30,000**			**30,000**	Ministry of Environment and Forestry	26
	Sub-Total	**170,000**	**90,000**	**60,000**	**30,000**	**350,000**	**-**	**-**	**350,000**		
Salary and benefits / Staff costs	Project Manager	-	-	-	-	**-**		76,000	**76,000**	Ministry of Environment and Forestry	27
	Sustainable Land Management Officer	-		86,400		**86,400**			**86,400**		28

	Biodiversity Conservation Officer	43,200	43,200			**86,400**			**86,400**		29
	Monitoring and Evaluation Officer	21,600	21,600	21,600	21,600	**86,400**	-		**86,400**		30
	Community Development Officer/Social Worker	-			86,400	**86,400**			**86,400**		31
	Finance and Administration Officer					-		57,600	**57,600**		32
	Driver	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,800	**28,800**		-	**28,800**		33
	Sub-Total	**71,800**	**71,800**	**115,000**	**115,800**	**374,400**	**-**	**133,600**	**508,000**		
Trainings, Workshops, Meetings	Project Inception Workshop					-	20,000		**20,000**	Ministry of Environment and Forestry	34
	Project Steering Committee meetings					-	80,000		**80,000**		35
	Technical capacity and institutional needs assessment of Government national and PA level staff in biodiversity conservation	-	20,000			**20,000**			**20,000**		36

	Training plan for PA management practices and methodologies	-	20,000			**20,000**			**20,000**	37
	Training of local extension workers on valuation of ecosystem goods and services in ICFR and surrounding productive landscapes	-		20,000		**20,000**			**20,000**	38
	Train community members, farmer groups and production committees at Payam (Parish) and Boma (village) levels in integrated land management			25,000		**25,000**			**25,000**	39

	Train forest association (CFA) members in wood product development including new NWFP products.			20,000		**20,000**			**20,000**		40
	Develop the capacity of women, youth and vulnerable groups and empower them to participate in decision making and implementation of lternative livelihoods			25,000		**25,000**			**25,000**		41
	Sub-Total	**-**	**40,000**	**90,000**	**-**	**130,000**	**100,000**	**-**	**230,000**		
Travel	National travel	10,000	15,000	15,000	10,000	**50,000**			**50,000**	Ministry of Environment and Forestry	42
	International travel	8,000	10,000	10,000	6,000	**34,000**			**34,000**		43
	Sub-Total	**18,000**	**25,000**	**25,000**	**16,000**	**84,000**	**-**	**-**	**84,000**		
Office Supplies	Office equipment (computers, printers, etc)	-				**-**		20,000	**20,000**	Ministry of Environment and	44

	Sub-Total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**20,000**	**20,000**	Forestry	
Other Operating Costs	O&M of office and field equipment and tools	-				-		10,000	**10,000**	Ministry of Environment and Forestry	45
	Sub-Total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**10,000**	**10,000**		
Grand Total		**902,600**	**691,242**	**848,100**	**722,426**	**3,164,368**	**175,000**	**163,600**	**3,502,968**		
									3,502,968		

ANNEX F: (For NGI only) Termsheet

Instructions. Please submit an finalized termsheet in this section. The NGI Program Call for Proposals provided a template in Annex A of the Call for Proposals that can be used by the Agency. Agencies can use their own termsheets but must add sections on Currency Risk, Co-financing Ratio and Financial Additionality as defined in the template provided in Annex A of the Call for proposals. Termsheets submitted at CEO endorsement stage should include final terms and conditions of the financing.

ANNEX G: (For NGI only) Reflows

Instructions. Please submit a reflows table as provided in Annex B of the NGI Program Call for Proposals and the Trustee excel sheet for reflows (as provided by the Secretariat or the Trustee) in the Document Section of the CEO endorsement. The Agencys is required to quantify any expected financial return/gains/interests earned on non-grant instruments that will be transferred to the GEF Trust Fund as noted in the Guidelines on

the Project and Program Cycle Policy. Partner Agencies will be required to comply with the reflows procedures established in their respective Financial Procedures Agreement with the GEF Trustee. Agencies are welcomed to provide assumptions that explain expected financial reflow schedules.

ANNEX H: (For NGI only) Agency Capacity to generate reflows

Instructions. The GEF Agency submitting the CEO endorsement request is required to respond to any questions raised as part of the PIF review process that required clarifications on the Agency Capacity to manage reflows. This Annex seeks to demonstrate Agencies? capacity and eligibility to administer NGI resources as established in the Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy, GEF/C.52/Inf.06/Rev.01, June 9, 2017 (Annex 5).