



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

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

10870

Countries

South Sudan

Project Name

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

Agencies

UNEP

Date received by PM

3/10/2023

Review completed by PM

5/31/2023

Program Manager

Pascal Martinez

Focal Area

Multi Focal Area

Project Type

FSP

PIF

CEO Endorsement

Part I ? Project Information

Focal area elements

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
March 22, 2023:

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

Cleared on March 22, 2023

Project description summary

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
March 22, 2023:

1. At the beginning of the project description, the "Expected Completion Date" should be 8/31/2028 for a project duration of 60 months. Please correct accordingly.

2. At the beginning of the project description, the taxonomy is extremely limited. Please complete.

3. On the Rio Markers, please note as "1" under climate change mitigation and climate change adaptation as it is a land-based project with climate benefits.

4. 2 different acronyms are used for the Imatong Central Forest Reserve: ICFR and IMCFR. Please use only one throughout all the project description.

May 4, 2023:

1, 2, 3 and 4. Thank you for the amendments. Cleared.

Agency Response

Cleared on May 30th

Cleared on 4 May 2023

Response to GEF review comments of 22 March 2023

1. At the beginning of the project description, the "Expected Completion Date" should be 8/31/2028 for a project duration of 60 months. Please correct accordingly.	The completion date has been corrected to 8/31/2028.
2. At the beginning of the project description, the taxonomy is extremely limited. Please complete.	At the beginning of the project description, the taxonomy has now been expanded.
3. On the Rio Markers, please note as "1" under climate change mitigation <u>and</u> climate change adaptation as it is a land-based project with climate benefits.	the Rio Markers under climate change mitigation and climate change adaptation have been put as 1.
4. 2 different acronyms are used for the Imatong Central Forest Reserve: ICFR and IMCFR. Please use only one throughout all the project description.	The acronyms have been harmonized and now only ICFR is used throughout.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response **N/A**

Co-financing

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

March 22, 2023:

1. In table C, the information under the "Investment Mobilized" column is missing for (1) Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism and (2) The Directorate of Forestry. Please complete the information as needed.
2. In table C, the "Source of Co-financing" column is not informed for (1) South Sudan Nature Conservation Organization (SSNCO) and (2) The South Sudan Business Forum (SSBF). Please complete the information as needed.
3. According to the letter provided, the co-financing of \$1.9 million from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry should be informed as "Public Investment" (and not grant) under the Type of Co-financing. Please correct accordingly.
4. In table C, the co-financing of \$2 million from the Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism is indicated as "In-kind" and "Investment Mobilized". Normally the "In-kind" co-financing corresponds to Recurrent expenditures. Please clarify.
5. The letter from the Undersecretary for Forestry/Ministry of Environment and Forestry is actually indicated as "The Directorate of Forestry" in table C. This is not consistent. Please clarify with the right name of the institution in table C.
6. According to the letter, the co-financing amount from the Torit County Government is \$300,000 and not \$200,000 as reported in table C. Please correct.
7. There are co-financing letters from "Base Net" and "South Sudan Wildlife Society" but these organizations are missing in table C. Please clarify.

8. The co-financing letters from (1) Ikotos County Government, (2) Imatong/Eastern Equatoria State Government and (3) The South Sudan Business Forum (SSBF) are missing in the uploaded document "Appendix 20 - Co-financing letters_26-Feb-2023". Please complete this document.

9. Below the table C, the sentence "The figures will be confirmed during PPG through potential agreements." looks strange after the PPG phase. Actually this is the same text as at PIF stage. Please update the explanation of how the Investments Mobilized were identified.

May 4, 2023:

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. Thank you for the clarification and new information provided. Cleared.

June 7, 2023:

Further policy checking identified the need to address the following comments:

a. The letter of co-financing from ministry of Wildlife conservation has a date in future. Please provide a letter with a correct date or provide an updated estimation of the actual amount that the agency think will go to the project considering the timeframe for both ? the co-finance and the GEF project.

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

b. The co-financing as Grant from the Directorate of Forestry is said to be ?Recurrent expenditures?. Normally a Grant is considered as ?Investment mobilized?. Please justify the current presentation or change to ?Investment mobilized?.

Recipient Country Government	The Directorate of Forestry	Grant	Recurrent expenditures	500,000.00
Recipient Country Government	The Directorate of Forestry	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	2,000,000.00

June 8, 2023:

Thank you for the updated co-financing letter and the amendmenmt. Cleared.

Agency Response

[Response to GEF review comments of 7 June 2023](#)

<p>June 7, 2023:</p> <p>Further policy checking identified the need to address the following comments:</p> <p>a. The letter of co-financing from ministry of Wildlife conservation has a date in future. Please provide a letter with a correct date or provide an updated estimation of the actual amount that the agency think will go to the project considering the timeframe for both ? the co-finance and the GEF project.</p>	<p>a. With regard to the letter of co-financing from Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism (MWCT), we are sorry, we attached a wrong letter. We had seen this mistake earlier and returned it to them. They then submitted another letter with the right date, but we made a mistake and uploaded the old one. Attached is the letter with the right date that has now been uploaded in the portal.</p>
<p>b. The co-financing as Grant from the Directorate of Forestry is said to be ?Recurrent expenditures?. Normally a Grant is considered as ?Investment mobilized?. Please justify the current presentation or change to ?Investment mobilized?.</p>	<p>b. The co-financing as Grant from the Directorate of Forestry of Forestry has been changed to ?Investment mobilized? in the portal.</p>

Cleared on 4 May 2023

Response to GEF review comments of 22 March 2023

<p>1. In table C, the information under the "Investment Mobilized" column is missing for (1) Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism and (2) The Directorate of Forestry. Please complete the information as needed.</p>	<p>The information in table C has been corrected</p>
<p>2. In table C, the "Source of Co-financing" column is not informed for (1) South Sudan Nature Conservation Organization (SSNCO) and (2) The South Sudan Business Forum (SSBF). Please complete the information as needed.</p>	<p>The information in table C has been corrected</p>
<p>3. According to the letter provided, the co-financing of \$1.9 million from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry should be informed as "Public Investment" (and not grant) under the Type of Co-financing. Please correct accordingly.</p>	<p>The co-financing from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry has been corrected to read ?Public investment?.</p>
<p>4. In table C, the co-financing of \$2 million from the Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism is indicated as "In-kind" and "Investment Mobilized". Normally the "In-kind" co-financing corresponds to Recurrent expenditures. Please clarify.</p>	<p>The co-financing of \$2 million from Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism is now indicated as "In-kind" as a ?recurrent expenditure?.</p>
<p>5. The letter from the Undersecretary for Forestry/Ministry of Environment and Forestry is actually indicated as "The Directorate of Forestry" in table C. This is not consistent. Please clarify with the right name of the institution in table C.</p>	<p>The right name is the Directorate of Forestry. The Ministry of Environment and Forestry is administered through three directorates i.e. the Directorate of Forestry, Directorate of Environment and Directorate of Wetlands and Biodiversity.</p>

<p>6. According to the letter, the co-financing amount from the Torit County Government is \$300,000 and not \$200,000 as reported in table C. Please correct.</p>	<p>The co-financing from Torit County is \$200,000. It is the one of Ministry of Agriculture, environment, and forestry of Eastern Equatoria state that is \$300,000</p>
<p>7. There are co-financing letters from "Base Net" and "South Sudan Wildlife Society" but these organizations are missing in table C. Please clarify.</p>	<p>Base Net" and "South Sudan Wildlife Society have been added</p>
<p>8. The co-financing letters from (1) Ikotos County Government, (2) Imatong/Eastern Equatoria State Government and (3) The South Sudan Business Forum (SSBF) are missing in the uploaded document "Appendix 20 - Co-financing letters_26-Feb-2023". Please complete this document.</p>	<p>The co-financing table C has been updated and reflects the uploaded co-financing documents. The letter from the Ministry of Agriculture, environment and forestry of Eastern Equatoria state representing the government of eastern Equatoria state has been included while South Sudan Business Forum (SSBF) has been removed.</p>
<p>9. Below the table C, the sentence "The figures will be confirmed during PPG through potential agreements." looks strange after the PPG phase. Actually this is the same text as at PIF stage. Please update the explanation of how the Investments Mobilized were identified.</p>	<p>We have failed to see this statement in the CEO ER. What we have both in the CEO ER and the portal, is reading as: ?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?.</p>

GEF Resource Availability

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
March 22, 2023:

1. As compared to the PIF, the component 4 "Knowledge management and learning" has been significantly increased. KM appears now relatively expensive (20% of GEF contribution to the project components and 24% of the co-financing). Please clarify and justify.

2. All the components are qualified as "Technical Assistance". Without any investment (as it was planned at PIF stage), there is a high risk the project will produce many paper works and have limited results on the ground. In particular it is difficult to understand how the component 3 will be implemented beyond the elaboration of land use plans. Please clarify how concretely the \$3.9 million of investment mobilized from co-financing will be spent and clearly consider investments in the project components (especially the \$1.9 million of so-called "Public Investment" from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry).

3. Please add in table B indicators and targets under the "Expected outcomes".

May 4, 2023:

1. Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

2. According the the explanation provided, we understand there will be investments on the ground through component 3. Please qualify this component as "Investment".

3. Thank you for adding indicators and targets in Table B. We note in this table the 10,000 ha of "landscapes bordering the Imatong FR restored and under sustainable land management practices", while in the indicators section, there is 10,000 ha of High Conservation Value or other forest loss avoided and 10,000 ha of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems (20,000 ha with different activities). The table B is not consistent with the core indicators. Please clarify and ensure consistency in terms of area and GEBs.

May 30, 2023:

2. Thank you for the amendments. Cleared.

3. Not clearly addressed, but this is not critical as table B doesn't contradict what is presented under the core indicator 4. Cleared.

Agency Response
Cleared on May 30th

Response to comments of 4 May 2023

2. According the explanation provided, we understand there will be investments on the ground through component 3. Please qualify this component as "Investment".	component 3 has been changed to "Investment".
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<p>3. Thank you for adding indicators and targets in Table B. We note in this table the 10,000 ha of "landscapes bordering the Imatong FR restored and under sustainable land management practices", while in the indicators section, there is 10,000 ha of High Conservation Value or other forest loss avoided and 10,000 ha of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems (20,000 ha with different activities). The table B is not consistent with the core indicators. Please clarify and ensure consistency in terms of area and GEBs.</p>	<p>The indicator and target in table B have been corrected to 20,000 hectares (Area of landscapes under improved practices (excluding protected areas). This is now consistent with the core indicator 4. Indicator 4.3 Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems = 10,000 ha Indicator 4.4 Area of High Conservation Value or other forest loss avoided = 10,000 ha</p>
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Response to GEF review comments of 22 March 2023

<p>1. As compared to the PIF, the component 4 "Knowledge management and learning" has been significantly increased. KM appears now relatively expensive (20% of GEF contribution to the project components and 24% of the co-financing). Please clarify and justify.</p>	<p>Our calculation indicates that at PIF stage, component 4 budget was 11.2% of GEF contribution. At PPG, it has now increased by about 7% to 18.6% of GEF contribution. The KM propositions during PIF are basically the same as those during PPG. The increment can be traced to the level and kind of dissemination of best practices and lessons learned after knowledge generation and documentation, especially through targeted discussions at national, state and county levels to share lessons and identify additional areas for replication (potentially hosting workshops).</p>
<p>2. All the components are qualified as "Technical Assistance". Without any investment (as it was planned at PIF stage), there is a high risk the project will produce many paper works and have limited results on the ground. In particular it is difficult to understand how the component 3 will be implemented beyond the elaboration of land use plans. Please clarify how concretely the \$3.9 million of investment mobilized from co-financing will be spent and clearly consider investments in the project components (especially the \$1.9 million of so-called "Public Investment" from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry).</p>	<p>Component 3 is a very practical component, which will be actualized by a series of capacity building activities, coupled with development of participatory land use plans. Beyond and on the basis of the land use plans, the project with complementation from co-financing of \$3.9 million will establish demonstration plots, farmer field schools and promote SLM strategies, climate smart agriculture and use of improved seeds. These approaches will be used in restoration of degraded lands. In addition, and complemented by the \$1.9 million co-financing from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, alternative income generating activities will be implemented as a strategy for improved community livelihoods.</p>
<p>3. Please add in table B indicators and targets under the "Expected outcomes".</p>	<p>Indicators and targets have been added to the expected outcomes in Table B</p>

Project Preparation Grant

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

March 22, 2023:

As it appears in the uploaded pdf CEO Endorsement request, the table in Annex C is correct (see blow) but for some reason, it is not fully visible in the Portal. Please copy the entire table in the Portal.

PPG Grant Approved at PIF: \$150,000			
<i>Project Preparation Activities Implemented</i>	<i>GEF/LDCF/SCCF/NPIF Amount (\$)</i>		
	<i>Budgeted Amount</i>	<i>Amount Spent To date</i>	<i>Amount Committed</i>
consultants	114,450	100,000	14,450
Travel	14,750	14,750	0
meetings/workshops/consultations	20,800	20,000	800
Total	150,000	134,750	15,250

May 4, 2023:

Thank you for the amendment. Cleared.

Agency Response

Cleared on 4 May 2023

Response to GEF review comments of 22 March 2023

As it appears in the uploaded pdf CEO Endorsement request, the table in Annex C is correct (see blow) but for some reason, it is not fully visible in the Portal. Please copy <u>the entire table</u> in the Portal.	The Table in Annex C has been copied and pasted in the portal and it is clearly viewed from our side.
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Core indicators

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

March 22, 2023:

1. For the core indicator 1.2, the METT score should be indicated at CEO Endorsement. Please complete.
2. For the core indicator 6.1, please inform the "Anticipated start year of accounting" and the "Duration of accounting" (which should be 20 years unless well justified).
3. The expected result for the core indicator 6.1 is different from the one calculated in the uploaded Ex-ACT tool. Please correct.

May 4, 2023:

1. No, we don't see the METT score in the indicator section of the Portal. Please complete.

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					

2. The anticipated start year of accounting should be when the project relevant activities begin (2023 or most likely 2024). Please correct.

3. Thank you for the adjustment. Cleared.

May 30, 2023:

1 and 2. Thank you for the amendments. Cleared.

Agency Response

Cleared on May 30th

Response to comments of 4 May 2023

1. No, we don't see the METT score in the indicator section of the Portal. Please complete.	The METT Score has been added in both the CEO ER and the portal
2. The anticipated start year of accounting should be when the project relevant activities begin (2023 or most likely 2024). Please correct.	The anticipated start year of accounting has been revised to 2024

Response to GEF review comments of 22 March 2023

1. For the core indicator 1.2, the METT score should be indicated at CEO Endorsement. Please complete.	The METT score has been added at CEO endorsement to core indicator 1.2
2. For the core indicator 6.1, please inform the "Anticipated start year of accounting" and the "Duration of accounting" (which should be 20 years unless well justified).	The anticipated year (2042) has been indicated in core indicator 6.1
3. The expected result for the core indicator 6.1 is different from the one calculated in the uploaded Ex-ACT tool. Please correct.	The expected result for core indicator 6.1 (-7,665,906) is now similar to that calculated in the uploaded Ex-Act tool. See the attached Ex-Act worksheet

Part II ? Project Justification

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

March 22, 2023:

The key biodiversity importance and the magnitude of degradation/threats are not clearly presented in the targeted landscape in particular. To align with BD FA (main funding window of this project), please elaborate on the biodiversity importance of the ICFR and clarify as much as possible the extent of its current loss and degradation (such as deforestation rate, key threatened species...).

May 4, 2023:

Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

Agency Response
Cleared on May 30th

Cleared on 4 May 2023

Response to GEF review comments of 22 March 2023

<p>The key biodiversity importance and the magnitude of degradation/threats are not clearly presented in the targeted landscape in particular. To align with BD FA (main funding window of this project), please elaborate on the biodiversity importance of the ICFR and clarify as much as possible the extent of its current loss and degradation (such as deforestation rate, key threatened species...).</p>	<p>The biodiversity importance of Imatong CFR is presented under section 1.2.1. Baseline scenario. This presents the extent of degradation and forest loss in South Sudan as well as in Imatong CFR. However, the key biodiversity importance is given in section 1.5.1 Global environmental benefits.</p>
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2. Is there an elaboration on how the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects were derived?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

March 22, 2023:

1. The 2 paragraphs from "Inside Imatong CFR, ..." until "... migratory birds visiting the area." are repeated under 1.1.2 and 1.2.1. Please remove them in 1.2.1 and ensure the quality control allow to avoid such useless text before resubmitting the project in the Portal.
2. The 4 paragraphs under the sentence "With respect to the proposed project components, the baseline scenario can therefore be summarised as:" are repeated in the the section 1.4 Incremental/additional cost reasoning... of the Portal entry. Please remove them in 1.2.1.
3. Under "1.2.2 Associated baseline projects" we don't find only projects but also some presentation of institutional framework. Please separate these different kinds of information in

different sections and ensure all the co-financiers and involved stakeholders and their respective role are briefly presented in this baseline section so that we can understand in the other appropriate sections of the Portal entry the relevance of their engagement in the project.

4. In relation to the comment above, please clarify the current local governance of the target landscape (PAs and productive areas) and how it articulate with the national level.

5. The listed projects including a presentation of how they will be associated with this proposal need to be moved under the "Coordination" section which explicitly indicates in the Portal to "Elaborate on the planned coordination with other relevant GEF-financed projects and other initiatives".

6. The Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) machanism is an important element of the project strategy. Please present briefly in the baseline scenario this mechanism (what it is) and its justification in the context of this project.

May 4, 2023:

1 and 2. Thank you for removing the repeated text. Cleared.

3 and 4. Thank you for the clarification and organization of the text. Cleared.

5 . No, the relevant projects have not been moved and the "Coordination" section is exactly the same as before. Please address this comment.

6. Thank you for the additional information. Cleared.

May 30, 2023:

5. Thank you fro the amendment. Cleared.

Agency Response

Cleared on May 30th

Response to comments of 4 May 2023

5 . No, the relevant projects have not been moved and the "Coordination" section is exactly the same as before. Please address this comment.	the relevant projects under the baseline section have been moved to the "Coordination" section
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Response to GEF review comments of 22 March 2023

<p>1. The 2 paragraphs from "Inside Imatong CFR, ..." until "... migratory birds visiting the area." are repeated under 1.1.2 and 1.2.1. Please remove them in 1.2.1 and ensure the quality control allow to avoid such useless text before resubmitting the project in the Portal.</p>	<p>The repeated text has been removed and only left where it is relevant i.e. section 1.2.1.</p>
<p>2. The 4 paragraphs under the sentence "With respect to the proposed project components, the baseline scenario can therefore be summarized as:" are repeated in the section 1.4 Incremental/additional cost reasoning... of the Portal entry. Please remove them in 1.2.1.</p>	<p>The 4 paragraphs have been removed from section 1.2.1 and left only in the incremental cost reasoning.</p>
<p>3. Under "1.2.2 Associated baseline projects" we don't find only projects but also some presentation of institutional framework. Please separate these different kinds of information in different sections and ensure all the co-financiers and involved stakeholders and their respective role are briefly presented in this baseline section so that we can understand in the other appropriate sections of the Portal entry the relevance of their engagement in the project.</p>	<p>The text that outlines the institutional framework has been removed from section 1.2.2 - Institutional, sectoral and policy context. The respective roles of all the key co-financiers and stakeholders have been included in two new sections i.e. 1.2.2 and 1.2.3 ? Stakeholder mapping and analysis. The section ?Associated baseline projects? is now re-numbered to 1.2.4.</p>
<p>4. In relation to the comment above, please clarify the current local governance of the target landscape (PAs and productive areas) and how it articulate with the national level.</p>	<p>The current local governance of the target landscape has been included in the new section 1.2.2 - Institutional, sectoral and policy context.</p>
<p>5. The listed projects including a presentation of how they will be associated with this proposal need to be moved under the "Coordination" section which explicitly indicates in the Portal to "Elaborate on the planned coordination with other relevant GEF-financed projects and other initiatives".</p>	<p>This has been done</p>
<p>6. The Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) mechanism is an important element of the project strategy. Please present briefly in the baseline scenario this mechanism (what it is) and its justification in the context of this project.</p>	<p>The CFM mechanism and its justification in the context of the project has been included in section 1.2.1 ? Baseline scenario.</p>

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion
March 22, 2023:

Thank you for the detailed and very useful presentation of activities. Please consider the following comments:

1. As presented in the alternative scenario section, the GEF contribution to component 1, 2, 3 and 4 is different from table B and budget table. Please correct as needed to present consistent numbers.
2. The realization of the output 1.1.1 (National policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks governing the forest PAs) is crucial to enable a successful implementation of the project but depends on uncertain political decisions. Please clarify to which extent the full implementation of this output can affect the success of the project expected outcomes.
3. According to its title, the output 1.1.3 will establish multi-stakeholder co-ordination platforms (several platforms) whereas the description of the activities under this output is focused on one unique national platform. Please clarify if the project is expected to establish one or several multi-stakeholder co-ordination platforms and how it or they will articulate with the Collaborative Forest Management platform (output 1.1.2). Please clarify the difference between the multi-stakeholder co-ordination platforms and the Collaborative Forest Management platform.
4. Considering the activities of the the output 2.1.2 are focused on consultation and data collection, it is unclear how this output will be fully achieved including the actual implementation of the Imatong forest Management plan (even the title of this output is unclear: "Imatong forest Management plan developed and key priority actions and implemented..."). The implementation of the plan is key for the project success. Please clarify the activities which will concretely enable the implementation of the plan developed.
5. According to its title, the Outcome 3.1 seems only focused on enforcing regulatory frameworks. Nevertheless this outcome is much broader including evaluation of ecosystem services, elaboration and implementation of integrated land use plans, concrete actions on the ground, livelihood improvements... Please consider another title reflecting the main purpose this outcome.
6. The Output 3.1.3 includes restoration, which is a key action for the project to deliver its expected Global Environment Benefits. Nevertheless we don't see under this output clear implementation of actual restoration (the tasks under activity 5 are about data collection and analysis). Please include in the tasks actual works of restoration and clarify what kind of restoration will be conducted.
7. Please clarify what can be the "Payments for Environmental Services (PES) Scheme for timber, NWFPs, and community-based ecotourism" (who pays for what service and how?).
8. Timber activities are identified to support forest conservation (output 3.1.5). Could such activities increase the risk of degradation of the ICFR? Please clarify how forest harvesting activities are aligned with and contribute to forest conservation.

9. Along with the description of the activities, please indicate the Global Environment Benefits they will generate (GEF core indicators).

May 5, 2023:

1. No, GEF contribution to component 1, 2, 3 and 4 as indicated in the alternative scenario section still don't match what is in table B and budget table. Please ensure the numbers are consistent in the alternative scenario section, in table and in the budget table.

2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. Thank you for the clarification and amendments. Cleared.

May 30, 2023:

1. Thank you for the correction. Cleared.

Agency Response
Cleared on May 30th

Response to comments of 4 May 2023

1. No, GEF contribution to component 1, 2, 3 and 4 <u>as indicated in the alternative scenario section</u> still don't match what is in table B and budget table. Please ensure the numbers are consistent in the alternative scenario section, in table and in the budget table.	This has been corrected by removing wrong figures in the alternative scenario section
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Response to GEF review comments of 22 March 2023

1. As presented in the alternative scenario section, the GEF contribution to component 1, 2, 3 and 4 is different from table B and budget table. Please correct as needed to present consistent numbers.	The GEF contribution to component 1, 2, 3 and 4 matches what is in table B and budget table.
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<p>2. The realization of the output 1.1.1 (National policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks governing the forest PAs) is crucial to enable a successful implementation of the project but depends on uncertain political decisions. Please clarify to which extent the full implementation of this output can affect the success of the project expected outcomes.</p>	<p>While we agree that effective implementation of output 1.1.1 is important for the smooth implementation of the project, we believe that it is a complement rather than a strict requirement. At the moment, there are several policies, regulatory and institutional frameworks whose implementation the country is leveraging on. This output 1.1.1 will mainly enhance forest management of the Imatong and other areas in South Sudan. The other outputs are designed as linked but appropriately independent outputs. We therefore do not believe that full implementation of output 1.1.1 is the prerequisite for successful achievement of the rest of the project outputs.</p>
<p>3. According to its title, the output 1.1.3 will establish multi-stakeholder co-ordination platforms (several platforms) whereas the description of the activities under this output is focused on one unique national platform. Please clarify if the project is expected to establish one or several multi-stakeholder co-ordination platforms and how it or they will articulate with the Collaborative Forest Management platform (output 1.1.2). Please clarify the difference between the multi-stakeholder co-ordination platforms and the Collaborative Forest Management platform.</p>	<p>Output 1.1.3 will establish only one inclusive multi-stakeholder platform. The inference to several platforms has been corrected in the title and definition of the output. The differences between the CFM and multi-stakeholder platforms have been clarified in Activity 3 of output 1.1.2 and output 1.1.3. In essence, the multi-stakeholder coordination platform will bring together key stakeholders to discuss learning, and sharing challenges, experiences, opportunities and development planning for effective management of Imatong CFR. On the other hand, the CFM platform will aim to establish a mutually agreed upon and beneficial relationship between the local community CFM groups and the governing authority of Imatong CFR with regard to access to and sharing of benefits from the forest.</p>
<p>4. Considering the activities of the output 2.1.2 are focused on consultation and data collection, it is unclear how this output will be fully achieved including the <u>actual implementation</u> of the Imatong forest Management plan (even the title of this output is unclear: "Imatong forest Management plan developed and key priority actions and implemented..."). The implementation of the plan is key for the project success. Please clarify the activities which will concretely enable the implementation of the plan developed.</p>	<p>The activities in output 2.1.2 have been revised to include planning, literature review, data collection, development of the management plan, and eventual implementation of the management plan. To clarify on how the plan will be eventually drafted and implemented, two additional activities have been included i.e. activity 5. Draft an inclusive and gender responsive Forest Management Plan, and activity 6. Approval and implementation of the Forest Management Plan.</p>
<p>5. According to its title, the Outcome 3.1 seems only focused on enforcing regulatory frameworks. Nevertheless this outcome is much broader including evaluation of ecosystem services, elaboration and implementation of integrated land use plans, concrete actions on the ground, livelihood improvements... Please consider another title reflecting the main purpose this outcome.</p>	<p>The title for Outcome 3.1 has been revised to reflect the content of the outputs and activities envisaged. The new outcome 3.1 title is: "Reduced pressure on the Central Forest Reserve from unsustainable practices in the Imatong landscape?".</p>

<p>6. The Output 3.1.3 includes restoration, which is a key action for the project to deliver its expected Global Environment Benefits. Nevertheless, we don't see under this output clear implementation of actual restoration (the tasks under activity 5 are about data collection and analysis). Please include in the tasks actual works of restoration and clarify what kind of restoration will be conducted.</p>	<p>Activity 5 of output 3.1.3 has been revised and the tasks which will be implemented in the restoration of degraded agricultural land have been included and discussed.</p>
<p>7. Please clarify what can be the "Payments for Environmental Services (PES) Scheme for timber, NWFPs, and community-based ecotourism" (who pays for what service and how?).</p>	<p>Reference to payments for Environmental Services, which had been used in the text as an example of an alternative income generating activity, has been removed. After hindsight, identification of IGAs will be done in a participatory manner, in consultation with beneficiaries and stakeholders, without pre-empting whatever may be applicable. The identified IGAs will be those identified by the communities, and which will appropriately be applicable to the conditions in the project site.</p>
<p>8. Timber activities are identified to support forest conservation (output 3.1.5). Could such activities increase the risk of degradation of the ICFR? Please clarify how forest harvesting activities are aligned with and contribute to forest conservation.</p>	<p>Yes, output 3.1.5 makes provision for communities to indulge in NWFPs or NTFPs as likely products of the IGAs through the CFM approach (which has now been clarified in the text). Through appropriate training and awareness of especially organized CFM groups or SACCOS, harvesting of NWFPs or NTFPs such as mushrooms, fiber, etc., would encourage forest conservation. However, the modalities of this will be worked out through the CFM mechanism in output 1.1.2.</p>
<p>9. Along with the description of the activities, please indicate the Global Environment Benefits they will generate (GEF core indicators).</p>	<p>The contribution to each of the GEF core indicators has been indicated for each outcome, as appropriate.</p>

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
March 23, 2023:

1. The paragraph "The project is consistent with... and increase resilience in the wider landscape)." is a repetition of what of is written at the beginning of this section. Please remove it.

2. Considering the recent development of UNCBD, please briefly indicate how this project will contribute to the implementation of the newly established Global Biodiversity Framework and its targets.

May 5, 2023:

1 and 2. Thank you for the amendments and additional information. Cleared.

Agency Response

Cleared on 5th May 2023

Cleared on 5 May 2023

Response to GEF review comments of 22 March 2023

1. The paragraph "The project is consistent with... and increase resilience in the wider landscape)." is a repetition of what of is written at the beginning of this section. Please remove it.	The paragraph has been removed.
2. Considering the recent development of UNCBD, please briefly indicate how this project will contribute to the implementation of the newly established Global Biodiversity Framework and its targets.	The contribution of the project to the Kunming-Montreal global Biodiversity Framework and its targets has been indicated in section 1.3.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

March 23, 2023:

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

Cleared on 23 March 2023

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

March 23, 2023:

The text is the same as the one at PIF level. Please complete the presentation adding a brief description of the GEF core indicators this project will contribute to.

May 5, 2023:

We don't see any improvement in the text of the 1.5.1 section but the GEBs have been further elaborated in other parts of the proposal. Cleared.

Agency Response

Cleared on 4 May 2023

Response to GEF review comments of 22 March 2023

The text is the same as the one at PIF level. Please complete the presentation adding a brief description of the GEF core indicators this project will contribute to.	This has been done as indicated in the responses above
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7. Is there further and better elaboration to show that the project is innovative and sustainable including the potential for scaling up?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

March 23, 2023:

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

Cleared on 23 March 2023

Project Map and Coordinates

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

March 22, 2023:

The map provided is the one of the IMCFR. Does it also include the productive landscapes the project is also targeting? Please consider adding these productive landscapes so that the map provided includes the entire project area, if possible at this stage of CEO Endorsement Request and if not possible, then at the beginning of the project implementation.

May 5, 2023:

No, the map looks exactly the same as in the previous version of the proposal. We do see the counties of Ikotos, Torit and Magwi but as a dot, no as an area. Please clarify ensuring the project targeted area is visible.

May 30, 2023:

Thank you for improving the map. Cleared.

Agency Response

Cleared on 30th May 2023

Response to comments of 4 May 2023	
No, the map looks exactly the same as in the previous version of the proposal. We do see the counties of Ikotos, Torit and Magwi but as a dot, no as an area. Please clarify en sure the project targeted area is visible.	A better map has been provided

Response to GEF review comments of 22 March 2023

<p>The map provided is the one of the IMCFR. Does it also include the productive landscapes the project is also targeting? Please consider adding these productive landscapes so that the map provided include the entire project area, if possible at this stage of CEO Endorsement Request and if not possible, then at the beginning of the project implementation.</p>	<p>A better map with the counties where the project will be implemented, has been added. 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</p>
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Child Project

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

N/A

Agency Response

N/A

Stakeholders

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

March 23, 2023:

1. The categories of stakeholders "Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities" and "Private Sector" are tagged with a "Yes", meaning they have been consulted. Nevertheless, we don't see these stakeholders mentioned in the list of stakeholders consulted in the uploaded stakeholder engagement plan. Please clarify who exactly from these categories have been consulted, how and when.

2. In "Table 3: Overview of Stakeholder Engagement Plan highlighting purpose, approaches and activities and timing", we don't see the beneficiaries (farmers, IPLCs...), including women who are expected to benefit from a specific focus in this project (output 3.1.5). Please clarify the engagement of all the stakeholders including the beneficiaries.

May 5, 2023:

1. Thank you for the clarification. Nevertheless the section "1.2.3 Stakeholder mapping and analysis" is about the stakeholders consultations and their expected role in the project. So this section should be removed from the baseline scenario and merged with the text under the section "2. Stakeholders engagement plan (or equivalent assessment)". Please amend accordingly.

2. Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

May 30, 2023:

Thank you for the consideration. Cleared.

Agency Response

Cleared on 30th May 2023

Response to comments of 4 May 2023

1. Thank you for the clarification. Nevertheless the section "1.2.3 Stakeholder mapping and analysis" is about the stakeholders consultations and their expected role in the project. So this section should be removed from the baseline scenario and merged with the text under the section "2. Stakeholders engagement plan (or equivalent assessment)". Please amend accordingly.

This has been corrected in both the portal and the attached CEO ER

Response to GEF review comments of 22 March 2023

<p>1. The categories of stakeholders "Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities" and "Private Sector" are tagged with a "Yes", meaning they have been consulted. Nevertheless, we don't see these stakeholders mentioned in the list of stakeholders consulted in the uploaded stakeholder engagement plan. Please clarify who exactly from these categories have been consulted, how and when.</p>	<p>Indigenous peoples and local communities as well as private sector stakeholders have been included in section 1.2.3 ? stakeholder mapping and analysis. As indicated in the stakeholder engagement plan, the stakeholders, including local communities, were consulted through their representatives from 21st to 23rd November 2022. Consultations were through key informant interviews, group discussions and one workshop, all held in Juba on the above-mentioned dates.</p>
<p>2. In "Table 3: Overview of Stakeholder Engagement Plan highlighting purpose, approaches and activities and timing", we don't see the beneficiaries (farmers, IPLCs...), including women who are expected to benefit from a specific focus in this project (output 3.1.5). Please clarify the engagement of all the stakeholders including the beneficiaries.</p>	<p>Table 3 in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan has been revised to clarify the missing stakeholders e.g. farmers, indigenous people, women, youth, persons with disabilities, etc.</p>

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
March 23, 2023:

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response **Cleared on 23 March 2023**
Private Sector Engagement

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

March 23, 2023:

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

Cleared on 23 March 2023

Risks to Achieving Project Objectives

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

March 23, 2023:

1. A COVID-19 risks and opportunity analysis has been provided at PIF stage. Please indicate if this analysis is still up-to-date or provide an updated one if necessary.
2. On the climate risks, at PIF stage, the Agency indicated that "a deeper analysis of climate risks will be undertaken during the PPG". But we don't find this analysis. Please ensure such analysis is provided and clarify where it can be found in the submission package.

May 5, 2023:

1. The amendment is unclear. From the previous version, 3 lines related to COVID-19 related risks have been removed and 1 line remain unchanged. Please clarify what is the risk now for the PPG phase and implementation (even low), what are mitigations measures and what opportunities this project provides to mitigate the risk and effects of eventual future pandemic.
2. Thank you for providing a climate risk analysis. Cleared.

May 30, 2023:

1. Thank you for the COVID-19 analysis uploaded in the document tab of the Portal. Cleared.

Agency Response

Cleared on 30th May 2023

Response to comments of 4 May 2023

<p>1. The amendment is unclear. From the previous version, 3 lines related to COVID-19 related risks have been removed and 1 line remain unchanged. Please clarify what is the risk now for the PPG phase and implementation (even low), what are mitigations measures and what opportunities this project provides to mitigate the risk and effects of eventual future pandemic.</p>	<p>All COVID-19 related risks have been removed.</p>
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Response to GEF review comments of 22 March 2023

<p>1. A COVID-19 risks and opportunity analysis has been provided at PIF stage. Please indicate if this analysis is still up-to-date or provide an updated one if necessary.</p>	<p>The risk analysis (section 5) has been reviewed and updated as necessary.</p>
<p>2. On the climate risks, at PIF stage, the Agency indicated that "a deeper analysis of climate risks will be undertaken during the PPG". But we don't find this analysis. Please ensure such analysis is provided and clarify where it can be found in the submission package.</p>	<p>A rapid climate risk screening has been performed and is presented as Appendix 21 in the submission package.</p>

Coordination

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

March 23, 2023:

1. We learn that "this execution arrangement will be informed by a capacity assessment to be conducted by UNEP". Please clarify the possible consequences of this assessment on the

institutional arrangement, and in particular if this process could result in providing some executing functions to the Implementing Agency (UNEP).

2. In the budget table, please note that the Project Manager shouldn't be funded by the project components but only the PMC. Please amend the budget accordingly.

3. The budget includes the purchase of one 4x4 vehicle. Please note that as per GEF guidance, "The use of GEF funds to purchase vehicles is strongly discouraged. Such costs are normally expected to be borne by the co-financed portion of PMCs. Any request to use GEF funding to purchase project vehicles must be justified by the exceptional specific circumstances of the project/program.". Please provide the needed justification and as the vehicle is charged on the components, please confirm the vehicle would not be used by the Project Manager. Please refer to GEF Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy (GEF/C.59/Inf.03) to know the criteria the GEF will use to assess this request and make a decision to accept or reject it.

4. The GEF funded project 9551 includes a very similar objective of strengthening PA legislative and management systems through institutional strengthening. Please ensure there is no overlap and clarify the complementary between the 2 projects.

May 5, 2023:

1, 2, 3 and 4. Thank you for the clarification and amendments. Cleared.

June 7, 2023:

Further policy checking identified the need to address the following comments on budget issues:

a. As already mentioned in the previous review, the Project Manager should not be charged to the components. The agency responded that the PM was funded through the PMC. However this does not reflect on the budget table provided in Annex E. Please correct the budget table accordingly.

Salary and benefits / Staff costs	Project Manager	12,900	22,900	17,900	22,900	76,600	43,300	120,000	Ministry of Environment and Forestry
	Sustainable Land Management Officer	-		100,800		100,800		100,800	
	Biodiversity Conservation Officer	50,400	50,400			100,800		100,800	
	Monitoring and Evaluation Officer	-					100,800	100,800	

Response to GEF review comments of 22 March 2023

1. We learn that "this execution arrangement will be informed by a capacity assessment to be conducted by UNEP". Please clarify the possible consequences of this assessment on the institutional arrangement, and in particular if this process could result in providing some executing functions to the Implementing Agency (UNEP).	The planned capacity assessment to be conducted by UNEP will not lead to a decision on internal execution of this project. One possible consequence is that the assessment may identify some areas that need capacity building on project execution and the project will consider such needs at the inception phase.
2. In the budget table, please note that the Project Manager shouldn't be funded by the project components but only the PMC. Please amend the budget accordingly.	The project manager is funded only through PMC

b. Per guidelines the Finance Officer should also be charged to the PMC and not to the components. Please correct the budget table accordingly.

Finance and Administration Officer	2,100	2,100	10,500	2,100	16,800	79,200	96,000
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c. The M&E budget represents almost 9% of the overall budget. As per guidelines the observed M&E budgets in GEF-6 were between 3% to 5% for FSPs. We kindly review and clarify the total budget of the M&E plan.

Total M&E Plan Budget		295,800	532,782	
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June 8, 2023:

a and b. No, the Project Manager and the Finance Officer are still charged to the components in the Portal entry. Please address this comment.

Salary and benefits / Staff costs	Project Manager	12,900	22,900	17,900	22,900	76,600	43,400	120,000	Ministry of Environment and Forestry
	Sustainable Land Management Officer	-	-	100,800	-	100,800	-	100,800	
	Biodiversity Conservation Officer	50,400	50,400	-	-	100,800	-	100,800	
	Monitoring and Evaluation Officer	-	-	-	-	-	100,800	100,800	
	Community Development Officer/Social Worker	-	-	100,800	100,800	-	-	100,800	
	Finance and Administration Officer	2,100	2,100	10,500	2,100	16,800	79,200	96,000	
	Driver	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	20,000	8,800	28,800	
	Sub-Total	70,400	80,400	134,200	130,800	415,800	100,800	131,400	

c. No, the M&E budget hasn't been revised under the M&E section and in the project budget of the Portal entry (Annex E). Please address this comment throughout the project description.

Total M&E Plan Budget		295,800	532,782	
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Other Operating Costs	O&M of office and field equipment and tools	-	-	-	-	-	10,000	10,000	Ministry of Environment and Forestry
	Sub-Total	-	-	-	-	-	10,000	10,000	
Grand Total		852,400	687,942	823,200	682,226	3,045,768	295,800	161,400	3,502,968

June 8, 2023:

Thank you for addressing the remaining comments. Cleared

Agency Response

Response to GEF review comments of 8 June 2023

a and b. The budget table on the portal has been revised.

The Project Manager and the Finance Officer are now charged only on PMC.

This revision has been made in portal, in the CEO ER and the budget.

c. the M&E budget has been updated on the portal

Response to GEF review comments of 7 June 2023

<p>June 7, 2023:</p> <p>Further policy checking identified the need to address the following comments on budget issues:</p> <p>a. As already mentioned in the previous review, the Project Manager should not be charged to the components. The agency responded that the PM was funded through the PMC. However this does not reflect on the budget table provided in Annex E. Please correct the budget table accordingly.</p>	<p>a. The budget table has been revised. The project manager is now charged only on PMC. This revision has been made in portal, in the CEO ER and the budget.</p>
<p>b. Per guidelines the Finance Officer should also be charged to the PMC and not to the components. Please correct the budget table accordingly.</p>	<p>b. The finance officer is now charged only on PMC. This revision has been made in portal, in the CEO ER and the budget.</p>
<p>c. The M&E budget represents almost 9% of the overall budget. As per guidelines the observed M&E budgets in GEF-6 were between 3% to 5% for FSPs. We kindly review and clarify the total budget of the M&E plan.</p>	<p>c. The M&E budget has been revised and now covers slightly less than 5% of the total GEF funding. This revision has been made in portal, in the CEO ER and the budget.</p>

Cleared on 4th May 2023

Response to GEF review comments of 22 March 2023

<p>1. We learn that "this execution arrangement will be informed by a capacity assessment to be conducted by UNEP". Please clarify the possible consequences of this assessment on the institutional arrangement, and in particular if this process could result in providing some executing functions to the Implementing Agency (UNEP).</p>	<p>The planned capacity assessment to be conducted by UNEP will not lead to a decision on internal execution of this project. One possible consequence is that the assessment may identify some areas that need capacity building on project execution and the project will consider such needs at the inception phase.</p>
<p>2. In the budget table, please note that the Project Manager shouldn't be funded by the project components but only the PMC. Please amend the budget accordingly.</p>	<p>The project manager is funded only through PMC</p>

<p>3. The budget includes the purchase of one 4x4 vehicle. Please note that as per GEF guidance, "The use of GEF funds to purchase vehicles is strongly discouraged. Such costs are normally expected to be borne by the co-financed portion of PMCs. Any request to use GEF funding to purchase project vehicles must be justified by the exceptional specific circumstances of the project/program.? Please provide the needed justification and as the vehicle is charged on the components, please confirm the vehicle would not be used by the Project Manager. Please refer to GEF Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy (GEF/C.59/Inf.03) to know the criteria the GEF will use to assess this request and make a decision to accept or reject it.</p>	<p>The vehicle will be used for implementation of activities in the project site. A letter justifying the need for a dedicated project vehicle has been included as Appendix 22.</p>
<p>4. The GEF funded project 9551 includes a very similar objective of strengthening PA legislative and management systems through institutional strengthening. Please ensure there is no overlap and clarify the complementary between the 2 projects.</p>	<p>Although project GEF 9551 has the main objective of strengthening PA legislative and management systems, its main focus is on wildlife protected areas, while this proposed project is on forest protected areas, especially Imatong CFR. We specifically note in the associated baseline projects (section 1.2.4) that this project will share a lot of lessons from GEF 9551. Another difference between these two projects is in the area of focus. While this proposed project will focus on the Imatong forest landscape, project GEF 9551 specifically aims at (a) Improving Park management and wildlife protection in Nimule NP, and (b) Strengthening protection of Sudd ecosystem and associated PAs (Shambe, Meshra, Zeraf).</p>

Consistency with National Priorities

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

March 23, 2023:

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response **Cleared on 23 March 2023**

Knowledge Management

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

March 23, 2023:

1. There is no information on how existing lessons informed the project concept and plan. Please clarify this aspect.
2. There is a specific component 4 on Knowledge Management. Nevertheless this is a cross-cutting issue and for better clarity, please provide in this section a table including the main deliverables and for each of these deliverables, a budget and a timeline.

May 5, 2023:

1. Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.
2. We don't see any table 8 in section 8 on Knowledge Management. Please complete providing a table with the main deliverables and for each of these deliverables, a budget and a timeline.

May 30, 2023:

Thank you for adding the table 6. Cleared.

Agency Response

Cleared on 30th May 2023

Response to comments of 4 May 2023

2. We don't see any table 8 in section 8 on Knowledge Management. Please complete providing a table with the main deliverables and for each of these deliverables, a budget and a timeline.	The table has been included in section 8 as table 6, in both the portal and the CEO ER
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Response to GEF review comments of 22 March 2023

<p>1. There is no information on how existing lessons informed the project concept and plan. Please clarify this aspect.</p>	<p>This aspect has been captured in many instances in the CEO ER. This occurs in 1.2.4 on associated baseline projects, where lessons from these projects, e.g. the Farm Africa/USAID Farmer Field School project in South Sudan informed the design of the proposed project,</p>
<p>2. There is a specific component 4 on Knowledge Management. Nevertheless, this is a cross-cutting issue and for better clarity, please provide in this section a table including the main deliverables and for each of these deliverables, a budget and a timeline.</p>	<p>Although there is a specific component on Knowledge management (specifically to (a) develop an interactive project M&E system, and (b) document and share best practices and lessons, the project will approach knowledge management as a cross cutting issue. Therefore, knowledge documentation and sharing of experiences and lessons will occur across all components. A table of the main deliverables and their allocated budget has been presented in section 8 of Knowledge Management as Table 8.</p>

Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS)

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

March 23, 2023:

We take note of the uploaded ESS supporting document. Thank you. Nevertheless the "Table 2: Risks and risk management measures" is repeated (it is already in the 5. Risks to Achieving Project Objectives) and is not relevant in this section about ESS screening. Please remove this table.

May 5, 2023:

Thank you for the amendment. Cleared.

June 7, 2023:

Further policy checking identified the need to address the following comment: We note that the project overall ESS risk is classified as moderate in the updated UNEP attached the Safeguard Risk Identification Form in Annex 13 of the project document. However, the project in South

Sudan may have serious local and community-based conflict. The Section 5. Risk section includes the risk related Political instability and armed conflict as moderate, and this political instability and post conflict situations may cause local conflict between local communities in the area and pastoralists escalated by seasonal flooding, drought, or other climate related disasters. Please consider including conflict analysis and management plan with budget during the early stage of project implementation.

June 8, 2023:

Thank you for the clarification and consideration. Cleared.

Agency Response

Response to GEF review comments of 7 June 2023

<p>June 7, 2023:</p> <p>Further policy checking identified the need to address the following comment: We note that the project overall ESS risk is classified as moderate in the updated UNEP attached the Safeguard Risk Identification Form in Annex 13 of the project document. However, the project in South Sudan may have serious local and community-based conflict. The Section 5. Risk section includes the risk related Political instability and armed conflict as moderate, and this political instability and post conflict situations may cause local conflict between local communities in the area and pastoralists escalated by seasonal flooding, drought, or other climate related disasters. Please consider including conflict analysis and management plan with budget during the early stage of project implementation.</p>	<p>This project is going to be implemented in the Imatong mountains landscape which is the highest part of South Sudan. The area is highly vegetated and wet throughout the year. Because of its high elevation, it doesn't experience flooding. 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. Although, there are still tensions between tribes in the northern part of the country, the project is focused in Imator landscape in the southern part of the country which is peaceful.</p> <p>In addition, this area is inhabited by cultivators and sedentary (permanently settled) cattle keepers. However, we have included a budget for conflict analysis and management in the budget table budget item #4.</p>
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Cleared on 4th May 2023

Response to GEF review comments of 22 March 2023

<p>We take note of the uploaded ESS supporting document. Thank you. Nevertheless the "Table 2: Risks and risk management measures" is repeated (it is already in the 5. Risks to Achieving Project Objectives) and is not relevant in this section about ESS screening. Please remove this table.</p>	<p>This has been done. Table 2 on risks has been removed from this section.</p>
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Monitoring and Evaluation

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
March 22, 2023:

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response
Cleared on 23 March 2023

Benefits

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
March 23, 2023:

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response
Cleared on 23 March 2023

Annexes

Are all the required annexes attached and adequately responded to?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
March 22, 2023:

All the required annexes are attached, some specific comments are made below depending on the annexes. In addition, please address the following comment:

In annex E, we don't see the responsible entity for each expense. Please complete as needed using the GEF budget template (as presented in Appendix A of the Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy - GEF/C.59/Inf.03).

May 5, 2023:

No, the budget table in Annex E doesn't follow the GEF budget template and is still missing the column informing the responsible entity for each expense. Please address this comment.

May 30, 2023:

Thank you for clarifying the budget. Cleared.

Agency Response

Response to comments of 4 May 2023

No, the budget table in Annex E doesn't follow the GEF budget template and is still missing the column informing the responsible entity for each expense. Please address this comment.	the budget has been redone as per the GEF budget template and now has the column of the responsible entity. The re-designed budget is also attached and has been posted in Annex E of the portal.
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Response to GEF review comments of 22 March 2023

All the required annexes are attached, some specific comments are made below depending on the annexes. In addition, please address the following comment: In annex E, we don't see the responsible entity for each expense. Please complete as needed using the GEF budget template (as presented in Appendix A of the Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy - GEF/C.59/Inf.03).	The corrected table has been uploaded
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Project Results Framework

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

March 23, 2023:

1. Please clearly identify under the "Objective Level Indicators" or "Outcome Indicators" the GEF core indicators using their exact name such as for instance " GEF Indicator 1.2 Terrestrial Protected Areas Under improved Management effectiveness".
2. The Objective Level Indicator "Number of sector policies and regulatory frameworks that promote inter-sectoral coordination and collaboration among stakeholders" is not clear as it is a number and the target is in %. What does the target of 60% exactly mean and how will it be calculated? Please clarify this indicator and its target.
3. The climate benefit of 7,665,906 tCO₂e is different in the Project Results Framework and in the core indicators section. Please correct.
4. The target for the GEF core indicator 4.4 is 20,000 ha while we find in the Project Results Framework targets for (1) 10,000 ha of Forest loss and forest degradation in Imatong CFR reduced/avoided and (2) 10,000 ha of landscapes bordering the Imatong FR restored and under sustainable land management practices. This is not consistent as avoided deforestation is very different from landscape sustainably managed or restored. Please clarify.

May 5, 2023:

1, 2, 3 and 4. Thank you for the clarification and amendments. Cleared.

June 7, 2023:

Further policy checking identified the need to address the following comment: GEF Core Indicators should be explicitly mentioned in the Results Framework in Annex A. Core indicators 3 and 4 are missing in the results framework (annex a). Please complete the results framework.

June 8, 2023:

Thank you for the confirmation and apologize for the confusion. Cleared.

Agency Response

[Response to GEF review comments of 7 June 2023](#)

<p>June 7, 2023:</p> <p>Further policy checking identified the need to address the following comment: GEF Core Indicators should be explicitly mentioned in the Results Framework in Annex A. Core indicators 3 and 4 are missing in the results framework (annex a). Please complete the results framework.</p>	<p>Core indicators 3 and 4 are already included in the results framework ? see indicators under outcome 3.</p> <p>This very comment was already raised and responded to in the first GEF review and even cleared.</p>
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Cleared on 4th May 2023

Response to GEF review comments of 22 March 2023

<p>1. Please clearly identify under the "Objective Level Indicators" or "Outcome Indicators" the GEF core indicators using their exact name such as for instance "GEF Indicator 1.2 Terrestrial Protected Areas Under improved Management effectiveness".</p>	<p>This has been done. See updated Results Framework.</p>
<p>2. The Objective Level Indicator "Number of sector policies and regulatory frameworks that promote inter-sectoral coordination and collaboration among stakeholders" is not clear as it is a number and the target is in %. What does the target of 60% exactly mean and how will it be calculated? Please clarify this indicator and its target.</p>	<p>This objective level indicator has been revised to: "Existence of sector policies and regulatory frameworks that promote inter-sectoral coordination and collaboration among stakeholders?". The mid-term and end of project target have also been accordingly revised to: "Existence of 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?" for the Mid-term, and "sector policies and regulatory frameworks are operational and reflect the diversity of needs and interests of key stakeholders thereby enhancing coordination and cooperation?".</p>
<p>3. The climate benefit of 7,665,906 tCO₂e is different in the Project Results Framework and in the core indicators section. Please correct.</p>	<p>This has been corrected.</p>
<p>4. The target for the GEF core indicator 4.4 is 20,000 ha while we find in the Project Results Framework targets for (1) 10,000 ha of Forest loss and forest degradation in Imatong CFR reduced/avoided and (2) 10,000 ha of landscapes bordering the Imatong FR restored and under sustainable land management practices. This is not consistent as avoided deforestation is very different from landscape sustainably managed or restored. Please clarify.</p>	<p>This has been corrected in the core indicator worksheet and corresponds with the information in the results framework. Core Indicator 4 - Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas) is 20,000 hectares, comprised of Indicator 4.3 "Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems" = 10,000 hectares, while Indicator 4.4 "Area of High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) loss avoided" = 10,000 hectares.</p>

GEF Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

March 23, 2023:

1. The taxonomy is still missing in the project description as mentioned above. In addition, it is informed that a taxonomy worksheet has been revised and uploaded in both the portal but we don't find it. Please complete as needed and ensure the taxonomy worksheet is uploaded in the Portal with the CEO Endorsement Request package.
2. The Agency indicated at PIF stage that "...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" Nevertheless we don't find this information. Please provide this information in the baseline scenario.
3. As mentioned above, "a deeper analysis of climate risks" was expected in this submission. Please complete.

May 5, 2023:

1. We don't find the taxonomy worksheet uploaded in the Portal. Please ensure it is uploaded.
- 2 and 3. Thank you for the additional information. Cleared.

May 30, 2023:

1. Thank you for the uploaded taxonomy worksheet in the Portal. Cleared.

Agency Response

Cleared on 30th May 2023

Response to comments of 4 May 2023

1. We don't find the taxonomy worksheet uploaded in the Portal. Please ensure it is uploaded.	The taxonomy worksheet has been uploaded in the portal
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Response to GEF review comments of 22 March 2023

1. The taxonomy is still missing in the project description as mentioned above. In addition, it is informed that a taxonomy worksheet has been revised and uploaded in both the portal but we don't find it. Please complete as needed and ensure the taxonomy worksheet is uploaded in the Portal with the CEO Endorsement Request package.	The taxonomy worksheet is included and uploaded in the portal.
2. The Agency indicated at PIF stage that "...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" Nevertheless we don't find this information. Please provide this information in the baseline scenario.	A detailed description of the land tenure system in the project area, Eastern Equatoria, has been described in section 1.2.1 (Baseline scenario).
3. As mentioned above, "a deeper analysis of climate risks" was expected in this submission. Please complete.	This has been done as noted above.

Council comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request March 23, 2023:

Comments were made by Denmark, Germany and Austria. Nevertheless, these comments are not reported nor addressed in the Annex B. Please complete this Annex as needed indicating how the comments have been addressed and where exactly in the project description of the Portal.

May 5, 2023:

Thank you for addressing Council comments. Cleared.

Agency Response

Cleared on 4th May 2023

Response to GEF review comments of 22 March 2023

<p>Comments were made by Denmark, Germany and Austria. Nevertheless, these comments are not reported nor addressed in the Annex B. Please complete this Annex as needed indicating how the comments have been addressed and where exactly in the project description of the Portal.</p>	<p>These comments have been addressed. See Annex B attached on the responses to GEF Council comments</p>
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STAP comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

March 23, 2023:

The STAP review sheet is included in the Annex B but there is no response from the Agency to the comments made by STAP. Please provide a response to these comments indicating how they have been addressed and where exactly in the project description of the Portal.

May 5, 2023:

Thank you for addressing STAP comments. Cleared.

Agency Response

Cleared on 4th May 2023

Response to GEF review comments of 22 March 2023

<p>The STAP review sheet is included in the Annex B but there is no response from the Agency to the comments made by STAP. Please provide a response to these comments indicating how they have been addressed and where exactly in the project description of the Portal.</p>	<p>The responses to the STAP review have been made. Please see attached Annex B on the STAP review.</p>
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Convention Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response N/A

Other Agencies comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response N/A

CSOs comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response N/A

Status of PPG utilization

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

March 22, 2023:

Please see the comment already made above on the status and utilization of the PPG. Cleared.

Agency Response

Cleared on 4th May 2023

Response to GEF review comments of 22 March 2023

Please see the comment already made above on the status and utilization of the PPG. Cleared.	The right table of status and utilization of PPG has been added. See Annex C of the CEO ER.
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Project maps and coordinates

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

March 23, 2023:

Please see the comment above on maps.

May 5, 2023:

Please see the comment above on maps.

May 30, 2023:

Thank you for providing an improved map. Cleared.

Agency Response

Cleared on 30th May 2023

Response to comments of 4 May 2023

May 5, 2023: Please see the comment above on maps.	A better map has been provided
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Response to GEF review comments of 22 March 2023

Please see the comment above on maps.	The project maps and coordinates have been included. See Annex D of the CEO ER.
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Does the termsheet in Annex F provide finalized financial terms and conditions? Does the termsheet and financial structure address concerns raised at PIF stage and that were pending to be resolved ahead of CEO endorsement? (For NGI Only)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

N/A

Agency Response

N/A

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response **N/A**

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request **N/A**

Agency Response **N/A**

GEFSEC DECISION

RECOMMENDATION

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

March 23, 2023:

Not yet. Please address the comments made above and, to facilitate the next review, please highlight in yellow the added and modified text (except for the responses to Council and STAP comments as this text will be very easy to find).

May 5, 2023:

Not yet, please address the remaining comments and again, please highlight in yellow the added and modified text (this has not been done by the Agency in the previous iteration). Please resubmit the project with all the comments addressed rapidly before the end of May considering the fast approaching cancellation date (June 10, 2023).

June 7, 2023:

Not yet. Please address the remaining comments.

June 8, 2023:

Not yet. Please address the remaining comments.

June 8, 2023:

The remaining comments have been addressed and the CEO endorsement is now recommended.

Review Dates

	Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review	3/23/2023	3/22/2023
Additional Review (as necessary)	5/5/2023	5/4/2023
Additional Review (as necessary)	6/7/2023	6/7/2023
Additional Review (as necessary)	6/8/2023	6/8/2023
Additional Review (as necessary)	6/8/2023	

CEO Recommendation

Brief reasoning for CEO Recommendations