

Strengthening Civil Society Role in Achieving Land Degradation Neutrality

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

10993

Countries

Global

Project Name

Strengthening Civil Society Role in Achieving Land Degradation Neutrality

Agencies

IUCN

Date received by PM

4/12/2023

Review completed by PM

5/2/2023

Program Manager

Ulrich Apel

Focal Area

Land Degradation

Project Type

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

04/13/2023: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

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

04/13/2023: Not fully.

General comment: Please ensure that mainly CSOs from the global South are supported by this project, especially in view of financing CSO participation to UNCCD COPs, CRIC, and DesertifActions.

05/02/2023: Comment on the proportionality of the PMC:

the co-financing contribution to PMC is not proportionate compared with the GEF contribution to PMC. If the GEF contribution is kept at 10%, for a co-financing of \$2,043,128 the expected contribution to PMC must be around \$204,312 instead of \$57,435 (which is 2.8%). As the costs associated with the project management have to be covered by the GEF portion and the co-financing portion allocated to the PMC, the GEF contribution and the co-financing contribution must be proportional, which means that the GEF contribution to PMC

might be decreased and the co-financing contribution to PMC might be increased to reach a similar level. Please ask the Agency to amend either by increasing the co-financing portion.

05/26/2023: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

IUCN response to GEF Sec 4/13/23 review:

The focus on CSOs from the global South has been further highlighted in the text of the ProDoc and CEO Approval Request, in the summary text, the stakeholder analysis, chapter 4 on Intervention strategy, and in the activity descriptions

IUCN response to GEF Sec 5/2/23 review:

Co-financing contribution to PMC revised upwards as advised.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request n/a

Agency Response

Co-financing

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

04/13/2023: Not fully.

Cofinancing from ?Both ENDS?, IUCN, and Indigo is defined as investment mobilized, which is not fully convincing to consider this in-kind cofinancing as investment mobilized. Please either justify or change the category.

05/02/2023: Addressed. However, we could not locate the co-financing commitment letters. Please provide.

05/26/2023: Letters have been uploaded.

Cleared

Agency Response

IUCN response to GEF Sec 4/13/23 review:

Co-financing reclassified to address error.

IUCN response to GEF Sec 5/2/23 review:

Co-financing commitment letters have been uploaded to the GEF portal
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

04/13/2023: Not fully. While Table D is adequate, the budget can not be reviewed as presented. Please present, as usual, in the GEF budget table format as stipulated in the project cycle guidelines. As usual, please also insert the budget in the portal template.

05/02/2023: Comment on the Budget:

- there are differences between the total amounts for the components stipulated in Annex E and Table B. Please correct where necessary to make that consistent.
- On monitoring and evaluation: please include a line that show the totals for M&E in section 9. As is stands it looks like $\$40,000 + \$15,000 = \$55,000$? this do not match what is stipulated in the budget in Annex E (\$58,750).
- Multiple Project Coordinators are being charged across components. Per Guidelines, the costs associated with the project's execution have to be covered by the GEF portion and the co-financing portion allocated to PMC. We understand that in absence of cash co-financing, these positions have to be charged to the project components. However, no TORs were found to show the specific deliverables of these positions ? please provide the TORs.

05/26/2023: Addressed as per responses below.

Cleared

Agency Response

IUCN response to GEF Sec 4/13/23 review:

The budget presented in GEF format is now uploaded on the Portal and attached as a supporting document.

IUCN response to GEF Sec 5/2/23 review:

Discrepancy between Annex E and Table B figures corrected.

All M&E costs detailed now in Section 9 and total matches with Annex E Budget (\$58,750 USD)

ToRs for the two Project coordinators and the Lead technical officer as well as those for a Communications officer and M&E expert have been uploaded to GEF Portal. See annex 9

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

04/13/2023: Not fully.

Amounts in table in Annex C do not exactly add up.

Agency fee is not to be reported here (only the \$50,000 PPG).

05/02/2023: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

IUCN response to GEF Sec 4/13/23 review:

Addressed.

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

04/13/2023: Not fully.

In the targets, 1,200 ha are entered under the CI 4.3 on SLM. Please, clarify how the number has been derived and whether co-financing contributes to it.

The number of beneficiaries was significantly scaled down to 5,000 beneficiaries with a ratio 2,550 females and 2,450 males, in comparison with 100,000 at PIF level. Please, confirm and clarify.

05/02/2023: Has been clarified.

Cleared

Agency Response

IUCN response to GEF Sec 4/13/23 review:

Co-financing does not contribute towards Core Indicator 4. Instead, the project will try to help beneficiary CSOs identify and evaluate initiative and/or projects which are not yet included in LDN targets (these will be showcased in the newsletter). As it tends to be smaller projects/initiatives that are underrepresented, the project would like to focus on getting these better represented. Through consultations with Drynet members, 400 ha was deemed a reasonable target based on their experiences. This was then multiplied by the three target regions ? Asia, Africa and LAC ? resulting in a total of 1,200 ha.

1. In terms of the direct beneficiaries, the revised number is 5,000. During the PPG phase it was determined that the types and number of beneficiaries proposed at PIF stage were inconsistent with the project activities. Rather ? smallholder farmers and other community members are better perceived as indirect beneficiaries.

The estimate of 5,000 was calculated as follows:

- 240 individuals from the global south (51% female) will take part in the two mentorship schemes, either as mentors or mentees.
- 500 individuals will benefit from the various webinar series / learning sessions offered throughout the course of this project.
- 1,500 individuals from the global CSO community will benefit from the platform and various knowledge products house there.

Other beneficiaries of knowledge products will include researchers, government officials, journalists, youth advocates, bringing the total number of people benefiting directly from the project to at least 5,000 people over the course of the three years. This is detailed under section 4.1 of the project document, and 1.6 (GEB) of the CEO Endorsement form.

As for the male:female ratio, women remain underrepresented within decision making bodies and CSO community (<50%). It was deemed necessary to recognize this, all while encouraging increased engagement of women, thus the overall 51:49 Female: male ratio.

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

04/13/2023: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

04/13/2023: Editorial comment:

Please remove: "In that time, the GEF has invested over USD 1 billion in over 200 projects and programs that promote sustainable land management. In particular, it should be noted that the GEF has supported 20 countries in LDN implementation, with more coming out of cycle 7, namely thanks to the Impact Programme."

(Numbers on our website will be updated, the above numbers are outdated).

05/02/2023: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

IUCN response to GEF Sec 4/13/23 review:

Text deleted as advised.

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

04/13/2023: Not fully. Please see comments:

Activity 1.1.1.2 4 publications per year is a lot. Please, Confirm. I wonder if it is worth putting so much efforts on this activity. One or two per year would suffice?

Activity 1.1.1.3 Establishment and maintenance of online portal: What will happen once the MSP is closed. What is the post-project sustainability approach?

Activity 1.1.3.2 IUCN World conservation Congress: I do not remember we agreed in financing CSO to the World conservation Congress. This activity can only be minor (much less than for COP and CRIC). It is justifiable only if there is an added value for the role of CSO in the LDN agenda and reserved to CSO from the global South. Please, clarify and explain.

Support or DesertifAction was agreed. The share may even be increased, if needed, as costs may have increased.

Activity 2.1.1.5 Convene a LDN Donor Roundtable and stakeholder meeting: We are not in favor of supporting the development of LDN projects by the CSO without identifying a donor first (cf. activities under 2.1). A global MSP should not be a PPG for other projects. However, proposing a LDN Donor roundtable is potentially promising. We would suggest to start with this forum and then support CSO for LDN project preparation.

05/02/2023: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

IUCN response to GEF Sec 4/13/23 review:

Activity 1.1.1.3 ? in order to provide more time and effort to coordinating the content in the newsletter (including identifying initiatives that could contribute towards Core Indicator 4), the number of newsletters has been reduced to three per year (9 in total for the project duration).

Activity 1.1.1.3 ? The choice of hosting the portal on the Drynet website was deliberate as it is a well-recognized within the CSO landscape and a self-funded platform that has been in existence since 2010. This is detailed in section 1.7 (Sustainability).

Activity 1.1.3.2 ? this activity was added to offer CSOs another opportunity to apply the skills that they are acquiring through the other activities. As with the activity below, there is a need to allow for practical applications to allow CSOs to build on the theoretical knowledge acquired, to troubleshoot specific issues/hurdles that they encounter. However, the overall cost is minimal compared to the other international meetings (only 2 travel costs covered vs >100 for COPs/CRICs and 30 for DesertifActions; ~22,500 for the whole activity).

The DesertifActions activity has been expanded to include additional support in the organisation and participation of various CSOs from the global south (both as participants and organisers).

Activity 2.1.1.5: The original justification of the ?writeshops? under Component 2 were to allow CSOs an opportunity to put into practice skills acquired. As noted above, practical

applications allows people to better master their skills as well as troubleshoot unexpected hurdles, and improve the lessons learned for the project.

The roundtable is now prior to the writeshop in order to help CSOs and donors connect before any formal project development. The text and workplan now reflects these changes.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

04/13/2023: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

04/13/2023: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

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

04/13/2023: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

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

04/13/2023: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

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

n/a

Agency Response

Child Project

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

n/a

Agency Response

Stakeholders

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

04/13/2023: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

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

04/13/2023: Gender action plan is referenced. Note that it has a writing error in the pdf format, 3rd page is truncated.

Please also provide a short summary paragraph in the portal section as well.

05/02/2023: Follow-up comment:

As the Gender Action Plan and Core Indicator 11 already specifies that the project components will benefit women equally, please reflect these gender-responsive actions in the section on Project Components as well, in line with gender mainstreaming practice.

05/26/2023: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

IUCN response to GEF Sec 4/13/23 review:

A revised Gender Action Plan document has been uploaded to the GEF Portal, along with a summary paragraph.

IUCN response to GEF Sec 5/2/23 review:

Indicators were added in Results framework: # of side-events focusing on women leadership in land management; # of concepts with a gender focus. Narrative of the ProDoc (pages 33 and 35), and the narrative of the CEO endorsement form (pages 16 and 18) were revised to reflect gender-responsive actions. The Gender action plan was also revised accordingly.

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

04/13/2023: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

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

04/13/2023: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

Coordination

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

04/13/2023: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

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

04/13/2023: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response
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
04/13/2023: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response
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
04/13/2023: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response
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
04/13/2023: Yes. However, take out the audit costs from the table (as the table rightly indicates, these are PMC).

05/02/2023: Please include a line that show the totals for M&E in section 9. As is stands it looks like $\$40,000 + \$15,000 = \$55,000$? this do not match what is stipulated in the budget in Annex E (\$58,750).

05/26/2023: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

IUCN response to GEF Sec 4/13/23 review:

Revision made

IUCN response to GEF Sec 5/2/23 review:

All M&E costs detailed now in Section 9 and total matches with Annex E Budget (\$58,750 USD)

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

04/13/2023: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

Annexes

Are all the required annexes attached and adequately responded to?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

04/13/2023: Not fully.

Include Project log frame and budget table in portal.

05/02/2023: Has been included.

Cleared

Agency Response

IUCN response to GEF Sec 4/13/23 review:

Project log frame and budget have been uploaded to the GEF Portal

Project Results Framework

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

04/13/2023: Not fully.

Please insert project log frame in portal. Also include the GEF core indicator targets for consistency. When uploading to the portal, please make sure it fits into the margins (may need reformatting).

05/26/2023: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

IUCN response to GEF Sec 4/13/23 review:

The Project log frame has been uploaded to the Portal ? please let us know if it's still not readable.

GEF Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

04/13/2023: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

Council comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request n/a for MSP

Agency Response

STAP comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request n/a for MSP

Agency Response

Convention Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request none received

Agency Response

Other Agencies comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request none received

Agency Response

CSOs comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request none received

Agency Response

Status of PPG utilization

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request see comments above

Agency Response

Project maps and coordinates

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

04/13/2023: Yes. This is a global project capacity building project.

Cleared

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

n/a

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request n/a

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request n/a

Agency Response

GEFSEC DECISION

RECOMMENDATION

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

04/13/2023: No. please address comments made in this review. Please note that this is only a partial review based on the documentation presented. We will review the budget once it is submitted in the correct format.

05/02/2023: No. Please address remaining comments.

05/26/2023: Yes. Program Manager recommends CEO approval.

Review Dates

	Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review	4/13/2023	
Additional Review (as necessary)	5/2/2023	
Additional Review (as necessary)	5/26/2023	

**Secretariat Comment at
CEO Endorsement**

**Response to
Secretariat comments**

Additional Review (as necessary)
Additional Review (as necessary)

CEO Recommendation

Brief reasoning for CEO Recommendations

This MSP project is funded by global LD set-asides and is designed to enhance the role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in delivering Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN), and in promoting adherence to LDN principles, including environmental and social safeguards, in public and private investments. The project has a global scope and will strengthen the capacity and the level of engagement of CSOs in the 5 regional annexes of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), namely: Africa (Annex I), Asia (Annex II), Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) (Annex III), Northern Mediterranean (Annex IV), Central and Eastern Europe (Annex V). The project's objective is: "Increased capacities and recognition of the CSOs to contribute to the adherence of LDN principles in policies, programs and investments?". This will be delivered through capacities and support to CSOs to ensure that LDN is better aligned with established principles and practices and to lead investments in LDN. The project will consist of 2 components: 1) Influencing LDN and 2) Leveraging LDN. The project will influence LDN by increasing the recognition of CSOs as partners in delivering LDN, and strengthening the capacity of CSO actors to implement and to monitor LDN projects. The project will leverage LDN by developing CSOs capacities to develop LDN projects that include innovation in private sector engagement and to access suitable funding opportunities.