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## Conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in the Caroni river basin of Bolivar state

### Basic Information

**GEF ID**

10971

**Countries**

Venezuela

**Project Title**

Conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in the Caroni river basin of Bolivar state

**GEF Agency(ies)**

FAO

**Agency ID**

FAO: 720642

**GEF Focal Area(s)**

Biodiversity

**Program Manager**

Adriana Moreira

# PIF

## Part I – Project Informatic

### Focal area elements

1. Is the project/program aligned with the relevant GEF focal area elements in Table A, as defined by the GEF 7 Programming Directions?

#### Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

04-19-22: The project is aligned with the BD focal area priorities (BD 1.1 and 2.7), with substantial activities proposed for enhancing the conservation status of five protected areas (PAs) and their respective buffer zones in a key biodiversity area of global significance. The GEBs associated with the Biodiversity focal area is the improved management effectiveness of more than 7.7 million ha of high biodiversity value areas.

#### Agency Response

N/A

### Indicative project/program description summary

2. Are the components in Table B and as described in the PIF sound, appropriate, and sufficiently clear to achieve the project/program objectives and the core indicators?

#### Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

04-19-22: The project is aligned with the BD focal area priorities (BD 1.1 and 2.7), with substantial activities proposed for enhancing the conservation status of five protected areas (PAs) and their respective buffer zones in a key biodiversity area of global significance. The GEBs associated with the Biodiversity focal area is the improved management effectiveness of more than 7.7 million ha of high biodiversity value areas.

04-19-22: The proposed components and outputs described in Table B are appropriate. However, given the level of land use conflicts, illegal activities, deforestation and pollution it would be important to add specific outcomes related to implementation of surveillance and enforcement activities. Please also provide more detail on the proposed “financial plan for the system of five PAs”(Output 2.1.3) and “program for sustainable use of wildlife” (Output 3.1.2).

## **Agency Response**

**5 May, 2022**

Thank you for the comment which is welcomed. A new Output 2.1.4 has been included to address the issue of surveillance and enforcement mentioned in more detail, working upon existing mechanisms in place from the institutions in charge of the protected areas, while also considering the participation of local communities in monitoring activities. Likewise, the descriptions of Outputs 2.1.3 and 3.1.2 have been expanded in the "Proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of the expected results and project components" section, and will be further developed during project formulation.

## **Co-financing**

**3. Are the indicative expected amounts, sources and types of co-financing adequately documented and consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines, with a description on how the breakdown of co-financing was identified and meets the definition of investment mobilized?**

### **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

04-19-22: Proposed co-financing is substantial. There is a combination of investment mobilized (\$35 M) and recurrent costs (\$17.5 M).

According to the operational guidelines, typically, Grant and Public Investment is categorized as Investment Mobilized; and In-kind is Recurrent expenditures.

Each co-financing item reported as Investment Mobilized need to provide information in the Investment Mobilized description section, about the funding activities, disbursement timeframe (which needs to overlap the GEF project implementation period), and how the funded activities will support the GEF project.

Calculation of the reported Investment Mobilized amount needs to be proportional to the activities which will directly support the GEF project.

## Agency Response

5 May, 2022

Thank you for the comment.

CORPOELEC, MinAguas and CVG have attributions that allow these institutions to assign budget resources to support specific projects, and in this context will provide co-finance for the project that can be considered as Investment Mobilized. Regarding MINEC, INPARQUES, IVIC, MIDME and MINPPI, their contributions correspond to recurrent expenditures from regular programs with activities that will be reoriented to support the project intervention.

The co-financing classification from these institutions has been updated to in-kind to align better with the operational guidelines as mentioned.

At this preliminary stage, the exact distribution of the co-financing for activities is difficult to present, as there are studies that will be developed during the PPG stage that are required to define activities in more detail, and then through a consultation process with the co-financing institutions identify with more detail the specific contributions. However, as discussed in the preliminary consultations with the institutions, the Investment Mobilized will mostly be oriented to support field interventions in components 2 and 3, including reforestation, plant nurseries, restoration, vigilance, control and equipment, among others. For components 1 and 4, there will be a lesser contribution for the design of plans and programs, support capacity building and knowledge exchange.

In the case of MINEC and INPARQUES, as entities in charge of ABRAEs, the major investment will be in components 1 and 2, related to institutional strengthening, and MINPPI will contribute mostly to components 2 and 3, related to indigenous peoples programs.

The estimation of the co-financing has been updated to better reflect the contributions considering the mentioned proportions.

## GEF Resource Availability

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion 04-19-22: Proposed financing indicated in Table D is adequate and concurrent with guidelines.

**Agency Response N/A**

**The STAR allocation?**

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

04-19-22: Proposed financing is within the resources available for the BD focal area in the Country's STAR allocation.

**Agency Response N/A**

**The focal area allocation?**

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

04-19-22: Proposed financing is within the resources available for the BD focal area in the Country's STAR allocation.

**Agency Response N/A**

**The LDCF under the principle of equitable access?**

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion N/A**

Agency Response N/A

**The SCCF (Adaptation or Technology Transfer)?**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion N/A

Agency Response N/A

**Focal area set-aside?**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion N/A

Agency Response N/A

**Impact Program Incentive?**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion N/A

Agency Response N/A

**Project Preparation Grant**

**5. Is PPG requested in Table E within the allowable cap? Has an exception (e.g. for regional projects) been sufficiently substantiated? (not applicable to PFD)**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion 04-19-22: Proposed PPG request is within the allowable limits for FSPs.

Agency Response N/A

#### Core indicators

**6. Are the identified core indicators in Table F calculated using the methodology included in the corresponding Guidelines? (GEF/C.54/11/Rev.01)**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion 04-19-22: Please include estimates for restoration into Core Indicators table:

14,349 ha restored forests and grasslands (11,349 ha management of natural grasslands, 2,000 ha restoration and plant succession, 1,000 ha SFM).

Agency Response

5 May, 2022

Noted. The mentioned areas have also been included into the Core Indicators table as requested (Core indicator 3).

#### Project/Program taxonomy

**7. Is the project/program properly tagged with the appropriate keywords as requested in Table G?**

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

04-19-22: The proposed project taxonomy is adequate. Please consider triggering the Rio Marker "Climate Change Mitigation", considering the substantial objectives of "protection and/or enhancement of GHG sinks and reservoirs" GFG mitigation estimates under core indicator 6.

**Agency Response**

**5 May, 2022**

Thank you for the comment. While the project is not focused on Climate Change, it will significantly contribute to GHG mitigation so the suggestion is welcomed and the Rio Marker has been updated.

**art II – Project Justification**

**1. Has the project/program described the global environmental/adaptation problems, including the root causes and barriers that need to be addressed?**

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

04-19-22: Barriers and threats are adequately described and substantiated by data and references.

**Agency Response N/A**

**2. Is the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects appropriately described?**

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**



04-19-22: Baseline scenario indicates a good understanding of national circumstance and ongoing related projects and initiatives in the region.

**Agency Response N/A**

**3. Does the proposed alternative scenario describe the expected outcomes and components of the project/program?**

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

04-19-22: Alternative scenario is adequately described.

**Agency Response N/A**

**4. Is the project/program aligned with focal area and/or Impact Program strategies?**

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

04-19-22: Proposed project is well aligned with focal area strategies.

**Agency Response N/A**

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

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

04-19-22: Incremental cost reasoning is adequate.

**Agency Response N/A**

**6. Are the project's/program's indicative targeted contributions to global environmental benefits (measured through core indicators) reasonable and achievable? Or for adaptation benefits?**

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

04-19-22: Proposed project includes significant targets for core indicators and potentially will deliver important biodiversity conservation and climate mitigation benefits.

**Agency Response N/A**

**7. Is there potential for innovation, sustainability and scaling up in this project?**

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

04-19-22: Description of potential for innovation, sustainability and scaling up is adequate for PIF stage.

**Agency Response N/A**

**Project/Program Map and Coordinates**

**Is there a preliminary geo-reference to the project's/program's intended location?**

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

04-19-22: Maps of project areas are satisfactory.

**Agency Response N/A**

**Stakeholders**

**Does the PIF/PFD include indicative information on Stakeholders engagement to date? If not, is the justification provided appropriate? Does the PIF/PFD include information about the proposed means of future engagement?**

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

04-20-22: It is well noted that the submission includes indicative roles of different stakeholder groups as well as some information on additional plans for further stakeholder consultations/engagement during project development. Additional information, however, should be provided on stakeholder consultations carried out during the initial project design that have informed the current proposal.

**Agency Response**

**5 May, 2022**

Thank you for the comment. Table 11 has been included into paragraph 137 with the stakeholders that were consulted during project design. As mentioned, during project formulation in the PPG the stakeholders consultation and engagement will be expanded and reported in the Agency Project Document.

**Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment**

## **Is the articulation of gender context and indicative information on the importance and need to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, adequate?**

### **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

04-20-22: It is well noted that the PIF includes information on plans to address gender in project development. Additional information, however, should be provided on indicative gender dimensions relevant to the project and project components, including preliminary ideas on how the project expects to contribute to gender results areas including (1) closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources; (2) improving women's participation and decision-making; and (3) generating socio-economic benefits or services for women.

### **Agency Response**

**5 May, 2022**

The comment is much welcomed and the point taken. At the current state, the information of gender dynamic and relations at the local level is scarce, and to provide a more accurate proposal into gender activities, a gender diagnostic is required, to be carried out by an anthropologist with gender expertise during the project formulation stage, considering that a large portion of the beneficiaries are indigenous people. Nonetheless, the project will ensure the participation of a minimum proportion of women in all the activities, to be determined in the gender analysis and reflected into the Gender Action Plan. This will include training for national institutions and at the local level, in ecotourism, use of wood and non wood forest products, co-management of ABRAEs, and in process with several stakeholder such as the definition of the Management Plans and Regulations of Use (PORU). As the amount of information regarding cultural gender relations, the markers have been updated, focusing on "improving women's participation and decision-making" and "generating socioeconomic benefits or services for women". During project formulation, it will be assessed if the project can also address the "closing of gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources" and report that in the Agency Project Document.

## **Private Sector Engagement**

### **Is the case made for private sector engagement consistent with the proposed approach?**

### **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

04-20-22: Please include a few examples of potential engagement with existing private sector in the project area.

## **Agency Response**

**5 May, 2022**

Noted, examples of potential private sector engagement have been included, and the identification of other partners will also be carried out during project formulation and considered into the financial plan to be developed under Output 2.1.3.

## **Risks to Achieving Project Objectives**

**Does the project/program consider potential major risks, including the consequences of climate change, that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved or may be resulting from project/program implementation, and propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the project design?**

### **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

04-20-22: Description of risks and mitigation approach is adequate for PIF stage.

**Agency Response N/A**

## **Coordination**

**Is the institutional arrangement for project/program coordination including management, monitoring and evaluation outlined? Is there a description of possible coordination with relevant GEF-financed projects/programs and other bilateral/multilateral initiatives in the project/program area?**

### **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

04-20-22: Description of proposed institutional arrangements and coordination is adequate for PIF stage.

Agency Response N/A

### **Consistency with National Priorities**

**Has the project/program cited alignment with any of the recipient country's national strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions?**

#### **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

04-20-22: Proposed project is well aligned with the country's national strategies. Please, check the "yes" box in the PIF template.

#### **Agency Response**

5 May 2022

Thank for you for the comment, although we see the box marked, possibly an issue with the Portal.

### **Knowledge Management**

**Is the proposed "knowledge management (KM) approach" in line with GEF requirements to foster learning and sharing from relevant projects/programs, initiatives and evaluations; and contribute to the project's/program's overall impact and sustainability?**

#### **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

04-20-22: Knowledge management is an important element of the proposed project. Please indicate how the lessons learned from previous

projects have been incorporated into the current project design. Will the project include plans for strategic communications?

Please, it would also be important to consider some knowledge exchange activities or products to share project experience with national and/or global indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) since the project includes strong engagement with IPLCs in the project areas.

### **Agency Response**

**5 May, 2022**

Thank you for the comment. The knowledge management section has been expanded to provide a more clear explanation of the intended strategies.

Regarding the comment on the exchange activities, the comment is much appreciated. The project has preliminary identified networks for exchange of knowledge, such as REDPARQUES, where national institutions in charge of Protected Areas in Latin America participate and FAO is the Secretary. The project will also work liaise with other international institutions and identify other potential knowledge exchange networks during project formulation, as it is expected that the project can provide valuable information regarding involvement of IPLCs in PAs.

### **Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS)**

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

#### **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

04-20--22: The information provided on environmental and social safeguards description is adequate for PIF stage. Given the work in PAs and participation of IPLCs, please make sure grievance redress mechanisms are included in the preparation of safeguards provisions.

### **Agency Response**

**5 May 2022**

Thank you for the comment. The grievance redress mechanism is part of the standard project document for FAO, so it will be prepared during project formulation.

### **art III – Country Endorsements**

**Has the project/program been endorsed by the country's GEF Operational Focal Point and has the name and position been checked against the GEF data base?**

#### **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

04-20-22: The Letter of Endorsement is adequately signed by the current country's GEF Operational Focal Point listed in the data base.

#### **Agency Response N/A**

### **Termsheet, reflow table and agency capacity in NGI Projects**

**Does the project provide sufficient detail in Annex A (indicative termsheet) to take a decision on the following selection criteria: co-financing ratios, financial terms and conditions, and financial additionality? If not, please provide comments. Does the project provide a detailed reflow table in Annex B to assess the project capacity of generating reflows? If not, please provide comments. After reading the questionnaire in Annex C, is the Partner Agency eligible to administer concessional finance? If not, please provide comments.**

#### **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

N/A

#### **Agency Response**

N/A



**EFSEC DECISION**

**RECOMMENDATION**

Is the PIF/PFD recommended for technical clearance? Is the PPG (if requested) being recommended for clearance?

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

04-20-22: Please address the comments provided above and resubmit for review. Thanks!

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

Additional recommendations to be considered by Agency at the time of CEO endorsement/approval.

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

**Review Dates**

**PIF Review    Agency Response**

<b>First Review</b>	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	

**Additional Review (as necessary)**

**PIF Recommendation to CEO**

**Brief reasoning for recommendations to CEO for PIF Approval**