

GEF-8 PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF)

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General Project Information

Project Title

Integrated landscape management in the Napo River Basin for sustainable land management and biodiversity conservation.

Region

Ecuador

GEF Project ID

11333

Country(ies)

Ecuador

Type of Project

FSP

GEF Agency(ies):

UNDP

GEF Agency ID

9648

Executing Partner

Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological Transition

Executing Partner Type

Government

GEF Focal Area (s)

Multi Focal Area

Submission Date

10/11/2023

Project Sector (CCM Only)

AFOLU

Taxonomy

Focal Areas, Climate Change, Climate Change Adaptation, Livelihoods, Climate resilience, Biodiversity, Protected Areas and Landscapes, Productive Landscapes, Land Degradation, Land Degradation Neutrality, Land Cover and Land cover change, Carbon stocks above or below ground, Land Productivity, Sustainable Land Management, Sustainable Livelihoods, Sustainable Agriculture, Influencing models, Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making, Stakeholders, Indigenous Peoples, Private Sector, Capital providers, Beneficiaries, Gender Equality, Gender Mainstreaming, Sex-disaggregated indicators, Capacity, Knowledge and Research, Capacity Development, Learning, Indicators to measure change

Type of Trust Fund

GET

Project Duration (Months)

60

GEF Project Grant: (a)

8,982,420.00

GEF Project Non-Grant: (b)

0.00

Agency Fee(s) Grant: (c)

853,330.00

Agency Fee(s) Non-Grant (d)

0.00

Total GEF Financing: (a+b+c+d)

9,835,750.00

Total Co-financing

51,641,021.00

PPG Amount: (e)

150,000.00

PPG Agency Fee(s): (f)

14,250.00

PPG total amount: (e+f)

Total GEF Resources: (a+b+c+d+e+f)

164,250.00

10,000,000.00

Project Tags

CBIT: No NGI: No SGP: No Innovation: No

Project Summary

Provide a brief summary description of the project, including: (i) what is the problem and issues to be addressed? (ii) what are the project objectives, and if the project is intended to be transformative, how will this be achieved? (iii), how will this be achieved (approach to deliver on objectives), and (iv) what are the GEBs and/or adaptation benefits, and other key expected results. The purpose of the summary is to provide a short, coherent summary for readers. The explanation and justification of the project should be in section B “project description”. (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

The Napo River Basin is the largest in the Ecuadorian Amazon region^[1], being the main axis for transportation, communication, and commercial exchange with populated centers. It is located in a cross-border area of water and ecological importance, where its forests, due to their high carbon content and biodiversity, are of global importance. Land degradation issues, mainly associated with deforestation and expansion of the agricultural frontier are present in the Napo river basin.

These issues will be addressed through the removal of the following barriers: 1) weak governance for sustainable land management, 2) limited technological capacity and incentives for application of Sustainable Land Management (SLM)/Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) practices, and 3) limited capacity to access and manage financial resources at the territorial level.

The objective of the project is to contribute to the integrated landscape management for sustainable land management, sustainable forest management and integrated management of water resources, through the diversification of livelihoods, improvement of the efficiency of productive systems and the conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity in the Napo River Basin. The project includes four main components:

1. Multilevel governance and articulation framework for territorial management: The project will support the development of policy instruments and ordinances of local governments, the strengthening of the Basin Councils within the intervention zone, and projects of indigenous peoples and nationalities aligned with their life plans. These initiatives contribute to sustainable land management and ecological transition, through a multilevel and multi-actor governance approach.
2. Adoption of practices that contribute to comprehensive landscape management for sustainable land management and biodiversity conservation. The adoption of SLM and SFM practices will encompass two key aspects: First, it will involve conserving and protecting areas through conservation mechanisms and establishing water protection zones that are conserved and sustainably managed. Second, it includes implementing sustainable and efficient production systems in designated areas, which enhance social, economic, and environmental benefits.
3. Access to financing mechanisms to scale up actions that contribute to LDN and climate change adaptation. This includes implementing incentive schemes for local governments, establishing financial sustainability mechanisms, expanding, and promoting financial services and products, and fostering national and international commercial links.
4. Knowledge management, dissemination of lessons learned, monitoring and evaluation. Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) processes will be implemented, ensuring gender mainstreaming and intersectionality in project implementation. Furthermore, the project will incorporate knowledge management strategies, the implementation of social and environmental safeguards, and the development of a comprehensive communication strategy to engage stakeholders and facilitate effective information exchange.

Through this project, 7,676 direct beneficiaries or people will benefit, with a minimum requirement of 40% of the beneficiaries being women. The project aims to legally protect and/or more efficiently manage a land area of 125,000 ha, thus preventing land degradation; of these, at least 25,000 ha will be designated as water protection zones, while 23,990 ha will be productive areas implementing SLM practices. Additionally, 21,188 ha of forest will be managed sustainably through SFM practices. Moreover, 4,020 ha will be restored through reforestation and land recovery processes after being released from productive use. These collective actions will result in the avoidance of 315,658 tons of CO₂e, primarily through the prevention of deforestation.

[1] <https://www.encyclopediadelecuador.com/rio-napo/>

Indicative Project Overview

Project Objective

To contribute to the integrated landscape management for sustainable land management, sustainable forest management and integrated management of water resources through the diversification of livelihoods, improvement of the efficiency of productive systems and the conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity in the Napo River Basin

Project Components

1: Multilevel governance and articulation framework for territorial management

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
1,219,378.00	7,010,376.00

Outcome:

1.1: Regulatory framework and local territorial planning instruments are strengthened through participatory methods for the integral management of the landscape, biodiversity, and water resource.

GEF Core indicator #11: 250 direct beneficiaries disaggregated by sex (40% women).

Output:

1.1.1. Implementation of policies and regulations for territorial management and LDN, validated by men and women in the territory.

1.1.2. Inter-institutional co-management agreements promoting the joint formulation of projects between MAATE, local governments and other relevant actors, including indigenous and women's groups.

1.1.3. Projects designed with criteria that contribute to the integrated landscape management and gender equality outlined in Life Plans.^[2]

2) “Life Plans” are instruments for planning and financing the development of indigenous peoples and nationalities. Life Plans are a key provision of the “Organic Law for the comprehensive planning of the special Amazon territorial circumscription”. Life plans address the following elements of great importance for indigenous communities: indigenous worldview, territory, diversity, bioeconomy, sacred basins, autonomy, and government.

2: Adoption of practices that contribute to comprehensive landscape management for sustainable land management and biodiversity conservation.

Component Type	Trust Fund
Investment	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
4,054,858.00	24,461,611.00

Outcome:

2.1: Native forests and basins are preserved with conservation and sustainable forest management mechanisms and gender mainstreaming.

GEF Core Indicator 1: 125,000 hectares of land cover are legally protected and/or improved in their management, avoiding land degradation.

GEF Core indicator #11: 961 direct beneficiaries disaggregated by sex (40% women).

GEF core indicator #6: GHG Emissions avoided 605,643 tCO₂eq

2.2: Sustainable and efficient agricultural production systems increase social, economic, and environmental benefits.

GEF core indicator 4: 23,990 hectares of productive areas under SLM practices in protected areas buffer zones.

GEF core indicator 11: 3,265 direct beneficiaries (40% women).

GEF core indicator 4: 21,189 hectares of forest under management that contribute to reversing land degradation.

GEF core indicator #3: 4,021 hectares under restoration processes that contribute to reversing land degradation.

Output:

2.1.1. Management plans formulated and/or updated for water protection areas and implementation of measures for sustainable management that contribute to avoiding LD and protecting water resources in the upper basin of the Napo River.

2.1.2. Training program for

land restoration and sustainable management that promote the participation of women through affirmative actions.

2.1.3. Management plans formulated and /or updated for protective forests or other forms of protection in territories such as forests of indigenous communities present in the lower Napo River basin, incorporating measures for SFM.

2.2.1. Training program on SLM/SFM for agricultural producers (male and female) with local partners.

2.2.2. Creation and strengthening of local entrepreneurship and/or business models of sustainable agricultural production in Collection Centers, supporting women's administrative skills within the centers.

2.2.3. Restoration practices for conservation purposes in areas released from production within farms.

2.2.4. Methodology for the collection of information - that integrates gender variables - on sustainable agricultural production that contributes to traceability mechanisms of Collection Centers.

3: Access to financing mechanisms to scale up actions that contribute to LDN and climate change

Component Type	Trust Fund
Investment	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
1,786,030.00	10,268,137.00

Outcome:

3.1 Scaling up of measures that contribute to land restoration and biodiversity conservation to improve the climate resilience of communities through financing and access to markets.

GEF Core indicator 11: 2,200 direct beneficiaries disaggregated by sex (40% women).

Output:

3.1.1. Training program on financial mechanisms for local governments and/or Commonwealths^[3] that emphasize the importance of gender equality allows them to apply to incentive schemes for access to financing.

3.1.2. Financial sustainability mechanisms identified and promoted by women and men for the protection and conservation of selected areas and water protection zones.

3.1.3. Financed projects linked to life plans of indigenous peoples and nationalities that support gender equality.

3.1.4. Expansion and promotion of financial products and services that support gender equality with financial institutions and local actors

3.1.5. National and international trade agreements favor products from sustainable and female production sources.

[3] Commonwealth: refers to the association of different parishes, cantons or towns, with their own legal status.

4: Knowledge management through capacity development and communication

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
965,722.00	4,798,311.00

Outcome:

4.1: Knowledge management for decision making and stakeholder empowerment

GEF Core indicator 11: 1,000 direct beneficiaries of institutions disaggregated by sex (40% women)

Output:

4.1.1. Strengthening of the hydrometeorological network and the information chain for the development of an early warning system.

4.1.2. Capacity development and training program on land degradation neutrality, climate change, biodiversity, gender equality (including masculinities), and intersectionality.

4.1.3 Communication strategy developed and implemented.

M&E

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
528,698.00	2,643,490.00

Outcome:

5.1 Monitoring and evaluation of project activities and indicators

Output:

5.1.1: Monitoring of risks identified by the social and environmental screening procedure and implementation of mitigation actions.

5.1.2: Monitoring and reporting of project results.

5.1.3: Mid-term Review and Terminal Evaluation of the Project.

Component Balances

Project Components	GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
1: Multilevel governance and articulation framework for territorial management	1,219,378.00	7,010,376.00
2: Adoption of practices that contribute to comprehensive landscape management for sustainable land management and biodiversity conservation.	4,054,858.00	24,461,611.00
3: Access to financing mechanisms to scale up actions that contribute to LDN and climate change	1,786,030.00	10,268,137.00
4: Knowledge management through capacity development and communication	965,722.00	4,798,311.00
M&E	528,698.00	2,643,490.00
Subtotal	8,554,686.00	49,181,925.00
Project Management Cost	427,734.00	2,459,096.00
Total Project Cost (\$)	8,982,420.00	51,641,021.00

Please provide justification

PROJECT OUTLINE

A. PROJECT RATIONALE

Briefly describe the current situation: the global environmental problems and/or climate vulnerabilities that the project will address, the key elements of the system, and underlying drivers of environmental change in the project context, such as population growth, economic development, climate change, sociocultural and political factors, including conflicts, or technological changes. Describe the objective of the project, and the justification for it. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

A. Project Rationale

Global environmental problems and/or climate vulnerabilities that the project will address

With an area of 283,560 km², Ecuador is one of the seventeen “megadiverse” countries in the world. Its heterogeneity of climatic and geographical conditions places it as the country with the second highest level of endemism on the planet. Its three continental natural regions, the Coast, Highlands and the Amazon, are home to 91 ecosystems, holding between 5 and 10% of the biodiversity of the planet. Likewise, in Ecuador, 2 of the 36 “hotspots” of global biodiversity can be found, in a country with the second highest population density in South America (55.4 inhabitants/km²) (2010 Census).

A total of 67% of the areas under conservation mechanisms in the country are located in the Napo river basin, which includes areas within the National System of Protected Areas, State Forest Heritage, and Biosphere Reserves, among others, meaning that 77% (5,042,518 ha) of the country’s natural wealth under several forms of conservation mechanisms^[4] is located in the Napo river basin. This basin makes an important contribution to the conservation of water resources, where five Water Protection Areas (WPA) have been identified so far, i.e., WPA of the Suno River, WPA Carlos Julio Arosemena Tola (under construction), WPA Flor del Valle, WPA Piatua Blanco River and WPA Aguarico. The integrated management of water resources in this area is vital, given that 59.16% (3,856,734 ha) of the surface of the Napo River Basin has a Very High- or High-water supply. However, within this area, environmental threats (climate, deforestation, and soil degradation) have been identified that affect the livelihoods of the population.

Climate Threats:

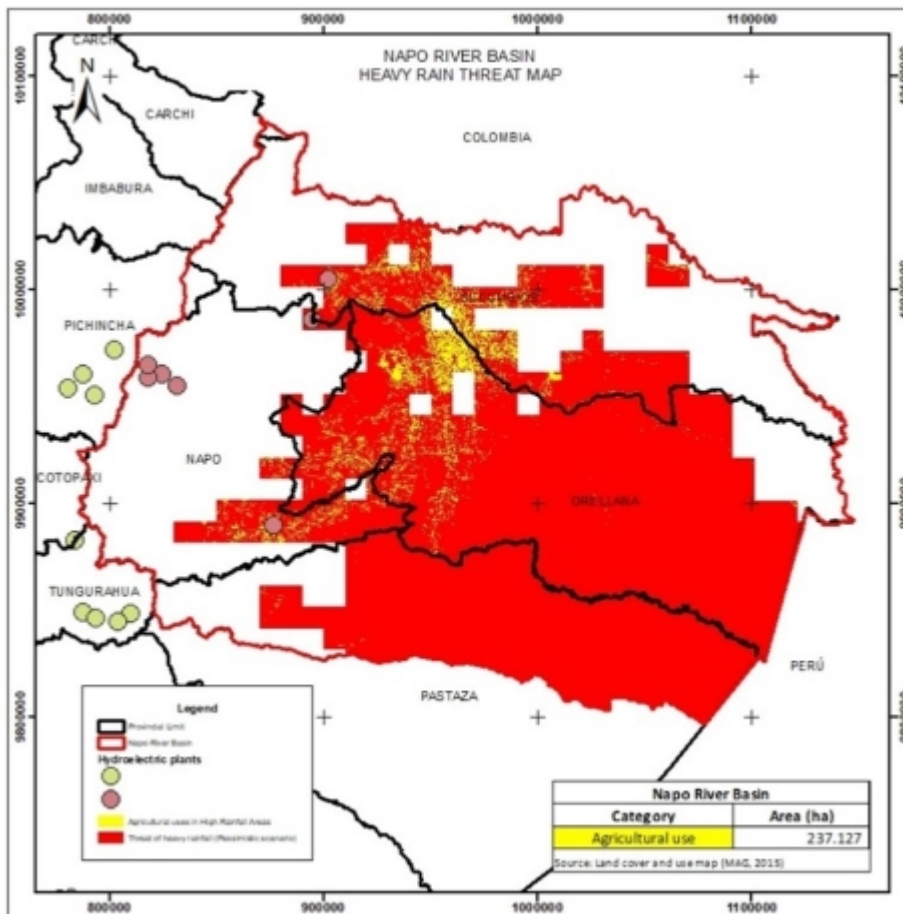


Figure 1. CLIMATE THREATS

65% of the surface of this hydrographic basin would be affected by intense rains caused by the effects of climate change, in a scenario where the current threat goes from moderate (historical) to high (Representative Concentration Pathways – RCP 8.5 scenario) (Figure 1). Within this area, 58% is occupied by agricultural uses (cocoa, oil palm, corn, plantain, among others), with production systems that have low levels of technology, which reduces their ability to respond to this type of risk which would affect 212,944 families.

Deforestation:

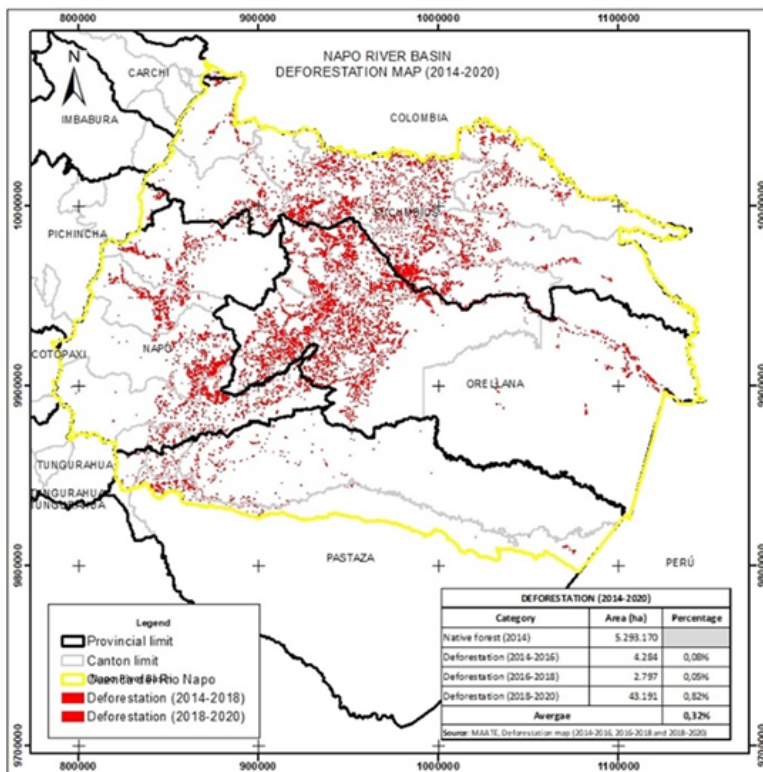


Figure 2. Deforestation

During the 2014 – 2018 period, 50,272 hectares (0.95%) were deforested in the study area (Figure 2), according to information from the Ministry of Agriculture (2015), 58.3% of this change in land use was related to commercial production systems and 39.1% in marginal systems. These productive systems are characterized by 1) unpaid family labor, 2) low levels of technification, and 3) market linkages through intermediaries.

Land Degradation:

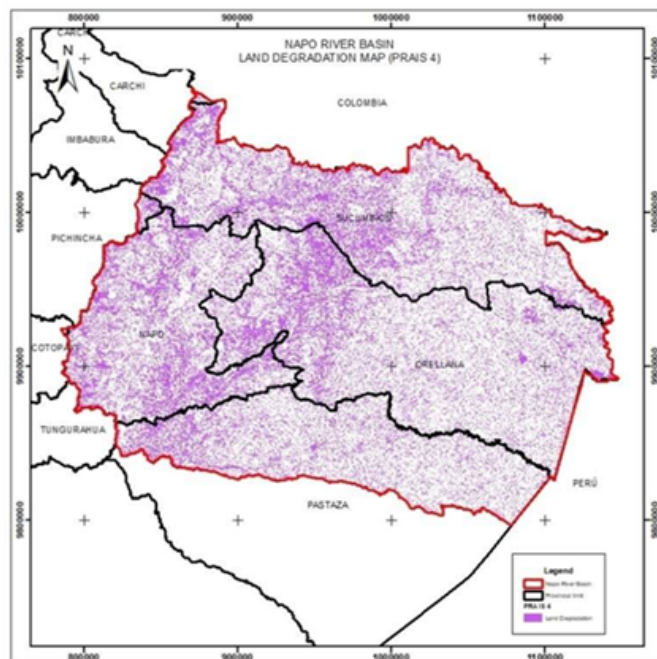


Figure 3. Land Degradation

Based on data retrieved from UNCCD’s “Performance Review and Implementation System – PRAIS” platform, it is evident that 31.20% of the Napo River basin area is classified as degraded (Figure 3). The vulnerability of livelihoods is significantly impacted

by degradation caused by traditional natural resource management practices, the expansion of agricultural activities and deforestation. In summary, land degradation is caused by: 1) unsustainable land-use practices that lead to deforestation, 2) overgrazing, 3) inadequate management of crops and pastures, 4) overexploitation of vegetation for domestic use, 5) urban development and infrastructure, and 6) other causes related to mining and industrial activities, natural events and contamination of water resources. This has a negative impact on ecosystems and livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs).

These threats, together with territorial planning that does not respond to local needs with respect to the sustainable management of natural resources, intensify the vulnerability of livelihoods and the conservation of biodiversity. An example of poor territorial planning is the opening of roads promoted by local governments, without considering mitigation and control measures for environmental and social impact.

The scenario described depicts a situation characterized by a high economic reliance on non-renewable natural resources and primary productive activities in Ecuador. This is accompanied by challenges such as unarticulated territorial planning, land degradation, deforestation, and biodiversity loss. To address these issues, an integrated intervention is necessary to strengthen the implementation of sustainable development alternatives. The primary goal of this intervention is to reduce land degradation, mitigate climate risks, and promote the conservation of biodiversity. By doing so, it aims to enhance the resilience of the population and their livelihoods.

Issues to be addressed and their rationale

Based on this context, the main problem identified at the level of the Napo River basin is the vulnerability of livelihoods to the effects of climate change. These effects are linked to the traditional management of natural resources such as the expansion of the agricultural frontier and deforestation, that cause processes of land degradation, generating loss of ecosystems and biodiversity. The main barriers are presented below:

- Governance: Limited linkage of national policy with territorial planning in the environmental axes, MST and MFS, accompanied by weak inter-institutional, multi-level and multi-stakeholder for the sustainable ordering of the territory.
- Field intervention: Low level of knowledge of ecosystem services benefits and limited access to knowledge, technological innovation, and incentives for implementation of MST/MFS practices.
- Financing: stakeholders have limited capacity to access and manage financial resources at the territorial level (i.e., access to financing from public and private banks, and promotion and dissemination aimed at specialized markets).

This confirms the need to incorporate measures and actions to mitigate and adapt to climate change in areas of hydrological importance, areas under conservation (outside SNAP), and buffer zones of protected areas. These actions are linked to incentive mechanisms (access to credit lines, national, and international trade opportunities, involvement of the private sector in sustainable development of production chains) that contribute to avoiding land degradation and promoting biodiversity conservation.

BASELINE

The baseline investments upon which the project will build include: the LDN Target-Setting and Restoration of Degraded Landscapes in Western Andes and Coastal Areas (GEF 7) project (US\$ 4,416,210), to respond to policy and territorial planning instruments with SLM, SFM, IWRM and LDN included, through the reporting of information generated from the intervention in the Napo river basin. This will contribute to the implementation of public policy instruments such as the Climate Change Adaptation National Plan and the Land Degradation Neutrality National Plan.

The REDD+ action Plan is an instrument to address the causes of deforestation and implement climate change mitigation actions for the transition to sustainable production systems, forest management, restoration, and conservation actions. In this context, PROAmazonia, a program led by the Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological Transition (MAATE) and the Ministry of

Agriculture and Livestock (MAG) with the technical assistance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), financed by the GCF and the GEF, implements REDD+ in Ecuador, contributing directly to the national goals established in the REDD+ Action Plan (REDD+ AP) and the NDC of Ecuador. This proposal will take the lessons learned from PROAmazonia and will scale up actions focused on incorporating, in addition to forest conservation and sustainable production criteria, the criteria that contribute to LDN in territorial planning instruments. It will also promote the transition to sustainable land management in agricultural areas that reduces land degradation and implementation of SLM/SFM practices in terrestrial areas under protection mechanisms and watersheds. Likewise, it will promote the traceability system for sustainable and deforestation-free production, as a mechanism for verifying SLM/SFM measures on farms, as well as biodiversity conservation.

The Results Based Payment (RBP) Project in Ecuador for Deforestation Reduction in 2014 (GCF FP110), which will run until 2026, complements REDD+ AP actions and is financed by the GCF (US\$ 18.5 m). This proposal will take into consideration innovative Results-based Payment (RbP) mechanisms to improve the compliance of Decentralized Autonomous Governments and producers with environmental goals.

[4] Areas under some form of protection that are not part of the official national protected areas system- SINAP: Intangible Zones: Tagaeri - Taromenane, Cuyabeno – Imuya; Ramsar Wetland: Llanganates – Sangay connectivity corridor; Buffer Zones: Tagaeri - Taromenane, Yasuni National Park; Water protection area: Aguarico - Chigual - Cofanes (the largest in the country).

B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project description

This section asks for a theory of change as part of a joined-up description of the project as a whole. The project description is expected to cover the key elements of good project design in an integrated way. It is also expected to meet the GEF’s policy requirements on gender, stakeholders, private sector, and knowledge management and learning (see section D). This section should be a narrative that reads like a joined-up story and not independent elements that answer the guiding questions contained in the PIF guidance document. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

B. Project Description

Project Location

The area proposed for the intervention of this proposal was defined based on analysis of information from the National Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change (PLANACC by its Spanish acronym), in terms of the problem of land degradation identified in UNDC’s “Performance Review and Implementation System – PRAIS” platform, also identifying aspects such as sociodemographic, environmental characteristics, productive systems and existing climate threats, whose results are described below:

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<p>Napo River Basin</p>	<p>Presence of Kichwa, Shuar, Secoya, Shuar, Siona, Waorani and Cofán nationalities.</p> <p>Projected population of 367,145 inhabitants by 2025.</p>	<p>77% (5,042,518 ha) of the area is under conservation measures and mechanisms.</p> <p>It represents 55% of the total national area covered by the National Protected Areas System (2,838,202 ha).</p> <p>It represents 87% of the national total area under State Forest Heritage.</p> <p>In addition, there are other conservation mechanisms:</p> <p>Intangible Zone^[5]: Tagaeri – Taromenane, Cuyabeno – Imuya</p> <p>Ramsar Wetland: Llanganates – Sangay connectivity corridor</p> <p>Buffer Zones : Tagaeri – Taromenane, Yasuni National Park</p> <p>Water protection area: Aguarico – Chigual – Cofanes (the largest in the country).</p>	<p>58.3% of deforestation is caused by commodity production systems and 39.1% by subsistence production systems.</p>	<p>65% of the Napo River Basin area is threatened by heavy rains and given that production systems have low levels of technification, this condition reduces the capacity to respond to this type of risk.</p>
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THEORY OF CHANGE

In order to define the Theory of Change, barriers have been defined at three levels: *weak governance, limited implementation of practices that reduce land degradation* and *limited access to finance*. In the area of 1) *Governance*, there is a weak link between national policy and territorial planning in the environmental, SLM and SFM axes, as well as weak inter-institutional, multilevel and multi-stakeholder coordination for sustainable land management. In the case of 2) *limited implementation of practices that reduce land degradation*, there is limited knowledge of the benefits of ecosystem services, and limited access to technological innovation and incentives for the application of SLM/SFM practices are identified. Finally, regarding level 3) *financing*, weak capacities of local governments and key stakeholders to access and manage financial resources, limited promotion and dissemination for interaction with specialized markets, limited access to financing, and lack of prioritization of investments have been identified.

In relation to local governance, the overlapping of the Decentralized Autonomous Government (GAD) planning and management instruments at various levels with the sectoral actions of ministries in the same territory limit efficient resource management. In

this sense, the project intends, through dialogue and agreement mechanisms, to design and implement co-management actions and incentives aimed at local governments, indigenous peoples and nationalities for the inclusion of SLM/SFM criteria, climate change, sustainable land management in agricultural areas and REDD+ in projects, land use and life plans, respectively, for the harmonization and optimization of investments. In a complementary way, support will be given to the strengthening of Basin Councils, as well as support for the development of basin management plans in prioritized areas.

With the aim of addressing the second level of barriers, actions will be implemented to contribute to three elements: activities to reduce deforestation in prioritized landscapes, improvement of carbon content in the soil, and increase in productivity. These actions will be carried out along three axes: conservation of natural forest (-important areas for water), implementation sustainable agricultural practices (SLM and SFM), and restoration of degraded areas at the farm level. These axes will be operationalized with strengthening capacities processes addressing the GAP+DF[6] certification scheme, conservation, restoration, administration, and management thematics. Finally, monitoring and follow-up processes of the variables that reduce land degradation, adaptation and mitigation to climate change will be implemented.

Regarding the third level of barriers, the priority is to provide sustainability to the scaling up of financing actions through innovative mechanisms that enhance access and management of funds (public and private), such as the ones from the CTEA Common Fund, expansion of credit lines, and access to financing, thus enabling the strengthening of GADS and Commonwealths[7]⁶, management of conservation and water-important areas for water and the search for financing for Life Plan projects through operationalizing national and territorial policies. Finally, links with national and international markets will be supported, providing the option of selling differentiated products with added value, with a traceability process in place.

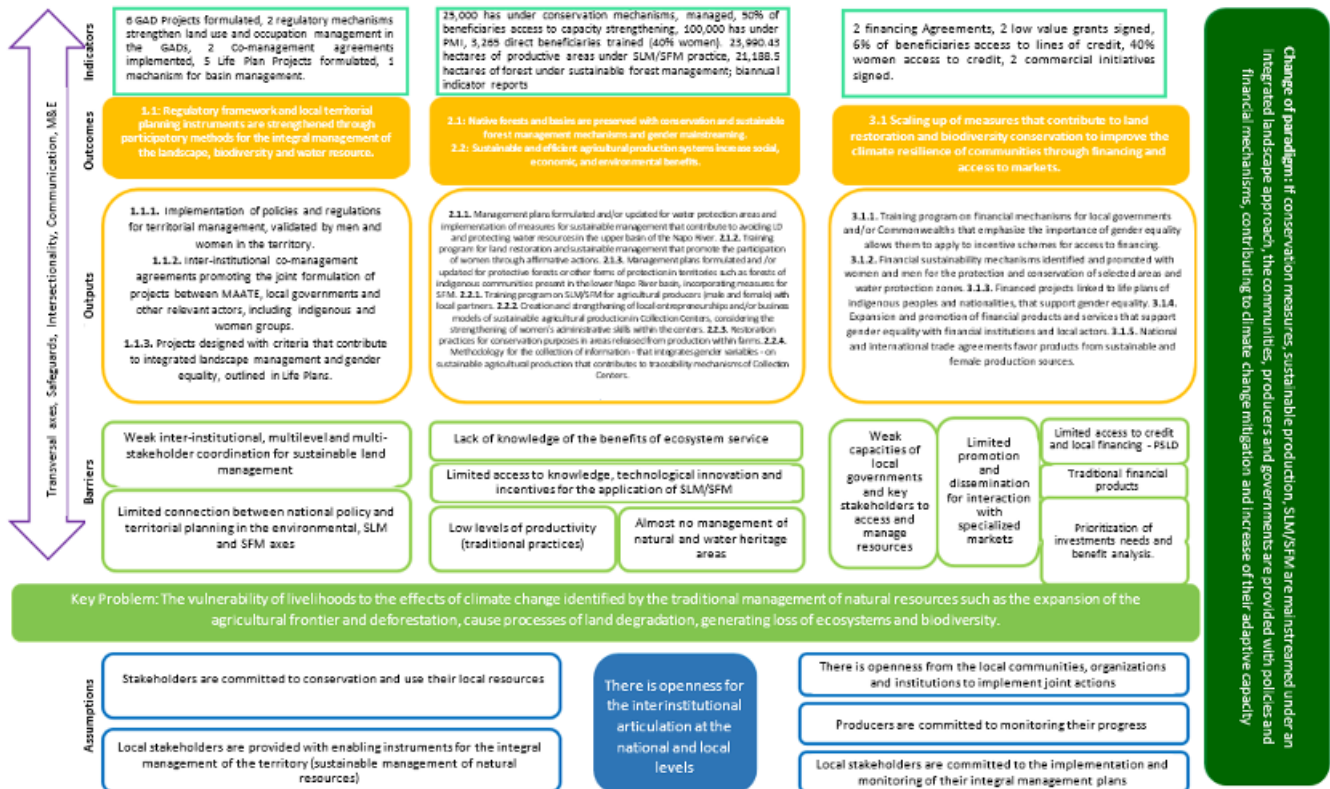
Regarding cross-cutting issues, actions have been contemplated to promote knowledge management, including capacity building, as well as an educational and communication strategy, prioritizing the implementation of social and environmental safeguards, as well as monitoring and following up on indicators and their contribution to public policy. Finally, strategic communication actions and mid-term and terminal evaluations of the project are contemplated.

The assumptions revolve around the correct inter-institutional articulation of stakeholders at the national and territorial level for the conservation and management of natural resources, for which:

- a. The intervention areas are managed sustainably through stakeholders and local resources that promote conservation.
- b. Local actors have enabling instruments for the integral management of the territory (sustainable management of natural resources).
- c. Communities, producer organizations and local institutions are willing to implement joint actions to strengthen their capacities.
- d. Producers are committed to monitoring its results and progress.
- e. The integrated management plans have an LDN approach, are implemented, and monitored by the local stakeholders involved.
- f. The effects of climate variability and change call for action and economic intervention, the economic importance allows the addition of co-financing for emerging and planned works of actors in the basin.

As a result, this intervention is expected to lead to a change of paradigm, if conservation measures, SLM/SFM are mainstreamed under an integrated landscape approach, and the communities, producers, and local governments are provided with policies and financial mechanisms, contributing to neutral land degradation, climate change mitigation and increasing their adaptive capacity. Please refer to Figure Theory of Change.

Figure 1. Theory of Change



Description of components and outputs

Under a climate change management approach, this proposal will contribute to reduce land degradation and facilitate biodiversity conservation. This will be achieved through various means, including the diversification of livelihoods, improvement in productive systems' efficiency, and conservation of biodiversity within the hydrographic basin of the Napo River. The proposal builds upon the experience gained from implementing approaches such as Sustainable Land Management, Sustainable Forest Management, integrated water resources management, and REDD+—all of which contribute to reduced land degradation and climate risk reduction, as well as biodiversity conservation.

Component 1: Multilevel governance and articulation framework for territorial management.

1.1: Regulatory framework and local territorial planning instruments are strengthened through participatory methods, for the integral management of the landscape, biodiversity, and water resource.

Output 1.1.1. Implementation of policies and regulations for territorial management and LDN, validated by men and women in the territory: The aim is to contribute to linking local public policy with national climate change policy included in the competencies of the Cantonal and/or Provincial Governments, taking into account Basin Councils within the intervention area and including criteria that contribute to land degradation, climate risk reduction, and biodiversity conservation. This output is focused on (i) capacity building in the formulation, financing, implementation and follow-up of six conservation and/or sustainable production projects framed in the REDD+ public policy (ii) at least two local regulatory mechanisms will be defined to strengthen the management of land use and occupation (partial plans[8], territorial intervention polygons, mechanisms of use and utilization) and at least one mechanism for basin management to strengthen and generate sustainability of project interventions. Moreover, this output will support land tenure regularization processes by strengthening capacities in updating statutes, registration, and negotiations with the Secretariat of Management and Development of Peoples and Nationalities and other instances. A sensitization process will be incorporated into these efforts on gender equity and social inclusion. A comprehensive methodology will be formulated to ensure the active involvement of men, women, young individuals, indigenous populations, and, when feasible, people with disabilities. This approach aims to guarantee that the development of regulatory mechanisms takes into account the diverse realities and specific needs of these groups.

Output 1.1.2. Inter-institutional co-management agreements promoting the joint formulation of projects between MAATE, local governments and other relevant actors, including indigenous and women groups: Multilevel management involves joint formulation of projects between MAATE, local governments and relevant actors, including civil society groups that represent women and indigenous peoples, such as (i) two co-management agreements will be defined; and (ii) implementation, follow-up, and monitoring will be undertaken through a participatory management model and agreed upon with civil society stakeholders involved in the intervention.

Output 1.1.3. Projects designed with criteria that contribute to integrated landscape management and gender equality outlined in Life Plans: Life plans serve as instrumental tools for both planning and financing the development of indigenous peoples and nationalities. These plans are explicitly outlined within the Organic Law for the Comprehensive Planning of the Special Amazon Territorial Circumscription. Key elements considered in these life plans encompass the indigenous worldview, territory, diversity, bioeconomy, sacred basins, autonomy, and governance. They serve as a holistic framework that acknowledges and integrates these critical aspects in the pursuit of comprehensive and sustainable development within the context of the Amazon region. This output aims to identify indigenous organizations that have life plans (i) to support capacity strengthening of people (male and female) with the potential to lead the formulation, management, and implementation of projects of their life plans, (ii) at least five conservation and/or sustainable production projects framed in the REDD+ public policy will be formulated with actions for LDN, mitigation and adaptation to climate change. In addition to incorporating safeguards, an intersectional and gender approach, and respecting the autonomy and governance of peoples and nationalities, it is mandatory to utilize their processes. Furthermore, at least one of the projects will be specifically focused on advancing gender equality. This underscores the emphasis on ensuring not only inclusivity but also a dedicated effort towards promoting and realizing gender equity within the overall initiative.

Component 2: Adoption of practices that contribute to the integrated landscape management for sustainable land management and conservation of biodiversity.

2.1: Areas under conservation and protection mechanisms and water protection zones are conserved and sustainably managed with a gender perspective.

Output 2.1.1. Management plans formulated and/or updated for water protection areas and implementation of measures for sustainable management that contribute to avoiding LD and protecting water resources in the upper basin of the Napo River: At least 25,000 hectares of areas under sustainable management and water protection will improve their management with actions to avoid land degradation caused by land use change of native vegetation cover. Management plans will be elaborated and/or implemented, strengthening sustainable forest management, valuing and monitoring biodiversity, natural resources and ecosystem services. These activities will contribute to the diversification of livelihoods and biodiversity conservation, as well as avoiding, reducing, and recovering degraded lands and reducing climate risk along these areas. The integration of gender mainstreaming into the plans will be ensured through participatory methods. These methods are designed to guarantee that the needs and experiences of women are actively considered and subsequently incorporated into the documents. This approach underscores a commitment to inclusivity and responsiveness to the unique perspectives and requirements of women, ensuring that their voices and concerns are an integral part of the planning process.

Output 2.1.2. Training program for land restoration and sustainable management that promotes the participation of women through affirmative actions: The project will strengthen the capacities of women and men to promote climate change-adapted livelihoods in protective forests and vegetation, state forest heritage, water protection areas and/or farms in conserved areas with high risk of biological degradation due to variation in the vegetation cover. Actions will be carried out that contribute to the mitigation and adaptation to climate change to achieve neutrality in land degradation in Ecuador and protect biodiversity. Accompaniment and technical assistance will be provided to strengthen forest governance and water resource mechanisms for the sustainability of previous investments, prioritizing territories of indigenous communities, diversifying the livelihoods of the inhabitants, and contributing to the conservation of forests and their biodiversity, under current forest normative. Additionally, efforts to encourage and facilitate women's participation in training spaces will involve implementing measures aimed at alleviating common barriers they encounter. These measures include: 1) Providing alternative childcare options during workshops; 2) Selecting accessible venues for the training sessions; 3) Designing schedules that take into account their domestic responsibilities; 4) Ensuring the selection of safe locations with gender role-friendly schedules; and 5) Collaboratively agreeing upon the dates for these spaces in advance, in consultation with the women involved. These actions are intended to create a supportive and inclusive environment, addressing specific challenges faced by women and enhancing their active involvement in training activities.

Output 2.1.3. Management plans formulated and /or updated for protective forests or other forms of protection in territories such as forests of indigenous communities present in the lower Napo River basin, incorporating measures for SFM. Prior to the development of the management plans, an analysis about the participation of women throughout the SFM stages will be carried out to implement a more effective and context appropriate gender mainstreaming. These instruments will manage at least 100,000 hectares in protective forests and vegetation and State forest heritage, and/or areas under the Socio Bosque Program, prioritizing buffer zones of protected areas and indigenous communities, with at least 70% of intervened areas under indigenous community management, contributing to SFM (conservation, restoration, sustainable production, and monitoring of biodiversity). These activities will have incentives to promote sustainable management.

2.2: Sustainable and efficient agricultural production systems increase social, economic, and environmental benefits.

Output 2.2.1. Training program on SLM/SFM for agricultural producers (male and female) with local partners. To reduce the pressure on natural forests, work will be done with agricultural producers, promoting good agricultural practices, the BPA+ certification scheme (sustainable and deforestation-free production), and SFM. Training will be carried out considering the learning-by-doing approach and based on a Participatory Rural Diagnosis designed with a methodology to identify the differentiated experiences and needs of women and men. Prioritized commodities for this intervention will be determined at the PPG phase.

Output 2.2.2. Creation and strengthening of local entrepreneurships and/or business models of sustainable agricultural production in Collection Centers, supporting women's administrative skills within the centers: Collection Centers are commercial linkage spaces that bring producers closer to the market (without intermediation), where the implementation of entrepreneurship/business models will be encouraged (communal funds, bioeconomy, and agricultural service centers), ensuring that the benefits of differentiated marketing adequately reach producers. With this objective in mind, the diversification of income in the Collection Centers will be able to improve the profitability and the mobilization of investment capital of the organizations with the implementation of models of local enterprises/businesses linked to SLM in agro-productive areas. As part of an initiative to inclusively engage women already associated with the service centers, their training will focus on enhancing their skills in administrative and financial management. This targeted approach aims to empower women within the existing framework by providing them with valuable tools to effectively contribute to the administrative and financial aspects of the service centers.

Output 2.2.3. Restoration practices for conservation purposes in areas released from production within farms: During on-farm interventions, actions that contribute to LDN will be undertaken in areas released from agricultural and livestock uses without capacity to produce through processes of passive and/or active restoration. This will contribute to the national restoration goals for conservation purposes, as well as protection of water resources, if applicable.

Output 2.2.4. Methodology for the collection of information – that integrates gender variables – on sustainable agricultural production that contributes to traceability mechanisms of Collection Centers. This output will build a methodology, collect information, and report on the farm interventions to ensure that the information reaches potential markets for differentiated products. This information will be linked to traceability mechanisms managed by the Collection Centers (producer organizations). Moreover, this activity will provide support to complement the existing deficit of local information related to climate and management of production systems, including a gender approach.

Component 3: Access to financing mechanisms to scale up actions that contribute to LDN and climate change.

3.1 Scaling up of measures that contribute to land restoration and biodiversity conservation to improve the climate resilience through financing and access to markets.

Output 3.1.1. Training program on financial mechanisms for local governments and/or Commonwealths that emphasize the importance of gender equality allows them to apply to incentive schemes for access to financing: The work with local governments will be through the strengthening of capacities aligned with public policy to access financing at two levels: i) Common Fund managed by the STCTEA, ii) mechanisms for access to national and/or international financing, as previously identified. Furthermore, these spaces will serve as platforms to emphasize the significance of gender mainstreaming in projects, positioning it as a strategic approach for social transformation and facilitating access to new financial resources. The goal is to underscore the pivotal role that gender inclusivity plays in both project success and the broader context of securing additional funding opportunities.

Output 3.1.2. Financial sustainability mechanisms identified and promoted by women and men for the protection and conservation of selected areas, and water protection zones: Capacities will be strengthened –making sure that women and men are included- and support will be provided to local actors linked to protection and conservation area management, and water protection zones, for access to financing mechanisms, considering the incentives stipulated in current regulations.

Output 3.1.3. Financed projects linked to life plans of indigenous peoples and nationalities that support gender equality: Support will be provided in the implementation of projects included in the Life Plans, using programmatic tools, such as Low Value Grants

and other climate financing mechanisms which allow access to funds in a simplified way for direct use by communities. Gender mainstreaming will be mandatory in order to access financing.

Output 3.1.4. Expansion and promotion of financial products and services that support gender equality with financial institutions and local actors: Expansion and promotion of credit lines with BanEcuador, Ecuador Development Bank, Cooperatives for saving and credit, for the delivery of financial services and products focused on land degradation neutrality, climate risk reduction and biodiversity conservation, including incentives for the CTEA productive sectors. Two axes of support have been identified: first with financial institutions on the environmental benefits of the conservation of natural resources and opportunities to promote sustainable finance. Likewise, the project will strengthen actions to favor access to credit from BanEcuador's Sustainable and Deforestation-Free Production^[9] and the development of credit products with other financial institutions. Second, the project will provide educational and financial assistance to producers, as well as GAP+DF certification schemes, which will make it possible to link producers with sustainable credit, ensuring and facilitating women's access to credit from sustainable productive microenterprises. A gender sensitization process will be implemented for the staff of financial institutions associated with the project. Special efforts will also be undertaken to actively promote financial products tailored to the needs of women. This dual approach aims to foster a greater understanding of gender dynamics among financial institution personnel while concurrently advancing initiatives that enhance women's access to, and utilization of, financial products.

Output 3.1.5. National and international trade agreements favor products from sustainable and female production sources: Once differentiated products are obtained, it is important to connect them to national and international markets that recognize producers' efforts in carrying out the implementation of practices that contribute to the reduction of land degradation, climate change mitigation, and conservation of biodiversity. Within this output, strategic alliances will be made with the private sector through companies that support the dissemination and awareness of responsible consumption. Furthermore, these alliances will also contribute to the development of products led by women in the national market. This collaborative effort seeks to empower women entrepreneurs and facilitate the introduction of their innovative products into the broader marketplace, fostering diversity and inclusivity in the business landscape.

Component 4. Knowledge management through capacity development and communication

4.1: Knowledge management for decision making and stakeholder empowerment

Output 4.1.1. Strengthening of the hydrometeorological network and the information chain for the development of an early warning system: the project will contribute to the installation and maintenance of hydrometeorological stations in the intervention area to generate and disseminate information associated with the occurrence of extreme weather events. The information generated will be made accessible to every individual in the territory, irrespective of gender, with due consideration for their unique circumstances, geographical location, and access to technology. This approach underscores a commitment to inclusivity, ensuring that the produced information reaches and benefits all members of the community, regardless of their specific situations and resources.

4.1.2. Capacity development and training program on land degradation neutrality, climate change, biodiversity, gender equality (including masculinities), and intersectionality. Capacity building will give priority to topics identified during the project's PPG phase, with the goal of encouraging the active participation of beneficiaries in project activities, while also respecting their local life systems and decision-making mechanisms. This program will be reinforced by an educational tool designed to facilitate the transfer of knowledge. The educational material will be disseminated through various channels outlined in the communication strategy, ensuring widespread accessibility and engagement.

4.1.3. Communication strategy developed and implemented: The project will develop and implement a comprehensive communication strategy aimed at promoting and socializing its activities, achievements, workshops and more, considering diverse target audiences. This strategy will actively facilitate spaces for participation and knowledge exchange at the territorial level, engaging producer groups, associations, and public institutions. This work will play a crucial role in capturing and disseminating project information and results. In alignment with outputs 4.1.1 and 4.1.2, the communication strategy will ensure the distribution and dissemination of information derived from lessons learned, testimonials, and other key insights reflecting the project's implementation outcomes. A commitment to achieving equal representation for women, men, and indigenous people will be maintained throughout communication efforts. This will be realized through various channels such as digital platforms, media outlets, press releases, audiovisual materials, and strategies to position messages in the minds of the beneficiaries or target audiences through events, local newspapers, and radio with the support of strategic partners. The effectiveness of the communication strategy will be gauged through analysis and communication of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), including website traffic, the number of followers, news replicated in local and international media, interviews, and audiovisual materials produced. This approach aims to transparently showcase the project's impact and engage a diverse audience through a multi-faceted communication approach.

Component 5. Monitoring and Evaluation

5.1 Monitoring and evaluation of project activities and indicators

5.1.1: Monitoring of risks identified by the social and environmental screening procedure and implementation of mitigation actions: This output will include a thorough assessment of environmental and social risks at the beginning of the project, along with the corresponding mitigation actions, which will be monitored by regular assessments. Furthermore, it will integrate activities that actively support the implementation of REDD+ environmental and social safeguards, aligning with both national and international standards. These initiatives will be seamlessly incorporated into all project outcomes to ensure comprehensive adherence to environmental and social responsibility throughout the project's implementation.

5.1.2: Monitoring and reporting of project results: This activity will focus on five key areas designed for monitoring, evaluation, and follow-up, specifically tailored to gender-sensitive project indicators associated with LDN, greenhouse gas emissions mitigated, climate risk, biodiversity, and livelihoods. The objective is to generate valuable inputs and information that will contribute to demonstrating, in the medium term, the effectiveness of the project in realizing the desired paradigm shift. This comprehensive approach aims to assess and measure the project's impact across various critical dimensions, providing insights into its overall success and transformative outcomes.

5.1.3: Mid-term Review and Terminal Evaluation of the project, based on UNDP and GEF guidelines.

Stakeholder involvement and the role of private sector companies

For the implementation of these activities, the involvement of local stakeholders, peoples and nationalities, state institutions, NGOs, Water Funds, among others, is fundamental for project impact and knowledge sharing. This proposal is based on the experience of PROAmazonía, considering the presence of the program in the proposed areas of intervention. That is why this project identifies synergies with certain stakeholders and proposes to identify new ones.

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PUBLIC	MAATE	Governing body of environmental and water resources policy, as well as National REDD+ Authority. Governing body in charge of the implementation of the public policy for forest conservation REDD+ AP.
PUBLIC	MAG	Governing body of the agricultural sector, supporting Initiatives for sustainable land management in agricultural areas through the application of good agricultural and livestock practices.
PUBLIC	Cantonal and Provincial GADs	The GADs have their planning instruments, such as Development and Land Use and Management Plans (DLUMP). The implementation of the conservation and sustainable land management projects in agricultural areas are financed by GAD budgets. This project would finance 40% of the cost of prioritized projects. In this way, the GADs implement their DLUMP and the project implements mitigation and adaptation actions within their prioritized areas.
PUBLIC	OTHER INSTITUTIONS National Copyright Services, National Gender Equality Council, Secretariat for Women and Human Rights	The mandatory implementation of social and environmental safeguards generates the need to promote actions that guarantee the involvement and empowerment of women and peoples and nationalities in the areas of intervention.
PUBLIC	Financial institutions	This group of institutions are key to give sustainability to the deforestation-free productive initiatives. They provide financing according to the realities and needs of producers, based on the application of rules and regulations of the Popular and Solidarity Economy.
PUBLIC	STCTEA	STCTEA provides technical and budgetary support for the creation and implementation of life plans for peoples and nationalities in the Amazon.
PRIVATE	Organization of peoples, communities, and nationalities.	Population of peoples and indigenous nationalities benefiting from plans and projects linked to the implementation of the REDD+ AP.
PRIVATE	Civil Society (NGOs, Academia, Producers)	NGOs and other civil society entities involved in the conservation of biodiversity and forest protection, which participate in national discussions. They are allies in the implementation of initiatives in territories under responsible party schemes.
PRIVATE	Companies, banks, and cooperatives.	Economy stakeholders with potential links to transition actions towards sustainable, deforestation-free production and conservation through public-private partnerships, which may be beneficiaries of incentives, specialized markets and financing.
PUBLIC/PRIVATE	Water Funds	Funds involved in the design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation of the initiatives to be implemented to conserve river basins.

Private sector involvement will be based on two approaches. Firstly, the private sector will participate in the actions proposed around efficient agricultural production systems, which are aimed at a: i) strengthening initiatives of local enterprises, especially towards productive development that incorporates criteria of sustainable, deforestation-free production^[10] that contributes to LDN, ii) commercial linkages at national and international level, which includes traceability processes and certifications, compensation schemes under the Ecuador Zero Carbon Program^[11]private sector capacities in adoption of sustainable, deforestation-free production criteria

Secondly, the private sector will support SFM, water resource management and biodiversity conservation, through: i) analysis of differentiated markets at national and international levels and their accessibility; ii) promotion of local enterprises linked to the production of native forest seedlings for the recovery of degraded and deforested forest areas; and iii) application of tax incentives, according to Ministerial Agreement MAATE-2022-113, for the deduction of taxes from investments in programs, funds and/or projects associated with prevention, protection, conservation, restoration, and environmental remediation.

In both approaches, the participation of the private financial sector will be very important to implement financial instruments that contribute to the sustainability of the proposed actions and the involvement of the national financial system in SLM/SFM.

Incremental cost reasoning

The baseline investments described above will not be sufficient to address land degradation issues in the Napo River Watershed. The GEF alternative will enable the implementation of sustainable land management and sustainable forest management practices that otherwise would remain limited under the baseline. This will contribute to the indicators of Land Degradation Neutrality in the country, as well as the mainstreaming of criteria for adaptation and mitigation to climate change and conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity. This GEF investment will complement the efforts achieved by the Ministry of the Environment, Water and Ecological Transition (MAATE) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG) through the PROAmazonía, REDD for Early Movers, REM Ecuador and REDD+ Results Based Payment in Ecuador, as well as actions that contribute to the country's initial steps in neutral land degradation through articulation with the project "Establishment of LDN Objectives and Restoration of Degraded Landscapes in the Western Andes and Coastal Areas", as well as the fulfillment of measures defined in the National Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change and other national policies.

Component 1: the GEF increment will serve to manage and co-finance 6 local government projects to complement the local financing of land management plans and at least 5 projects designed within the framework of the life plans that have been developed with Indigenous Peoples and Nationalities. The co-financing will come from the Provincial and Cantonal governments and local actors through allocated public budgets for the implementation of Development and Territorial Management Plans (PDOTs), Life Plans and Ordinances, as well as the technical contribution and leadership of the field technicians of each government. The strengthening of Basin Councils and support for the implementation of management plans for prioritized hydrological zones will be considered

Component 2: GEF increment will expand the area under conservation mechanisms by 25,000 hectares and the processes of capacity building with producers on topics, such as sustainable forest management, conservation and restoration and distinctions such as: GAP+ DF (Deforestation Free), Good Forestry Practices - GFP and certification of legal origin - CLO. In addition, GEF will fund the implementation of enterprises/businesses related to sustainable production, promotion of responsible national consumption, linking to the traceability system elements of LDN, adaptation and mitigation to climate change, as well as the release of areas from production in order to implement restoration processes. Co-financing will come from contributions from water funds through investments made for management plans, ordinances and technical assistance, as well as from coffee, cacao, and livestock producer associations that work in the intervention areas. Additionally, there is co-financing for research, piloting and technical assistance generated through the "Preparation of Financial and Land Use Planning Instruments" project for the reduction of emissions and deforestation, and the "Establishment of LDN Objectives and the Restoration of Degraded Landscapes in the Western Andes and Coastal Areas" project.

Component 3: the GEF incremental funding will encourage the application of incentive schemes to access climate financing and capacity building that will allow access and management of funds to enable the self-financing of life plan projects. This will encourage local governments with financing anchored to compliance with environmental indicators, contributing to the promotion and expansion of credit lines that encourage sustainable and deforestation-free production, as well as promoting national and international trade agreements that allow sustainable production to be linked to differentiated markets. The co-financing will originate from the local and provincial GADs through investment in their PDOTs, work with IFIs, public banking and Saving Credit Unions with funds for credit collation and investment for the implementation of Environmental and Social Risk Management System (ESRMS) criteria in their product portfolio.

Component 4: GEF funding will promote cross-cutting actions that include the monitoring and follow-up strategy to the project's indicators, as well as alignment with national goals, knowledge management and capacity building on issues of gender, climate change, land degradation, REDD+ and other relevant issues. Priority will be given to actions for the implementation of environmental and social safeguards, the development of a communication and dissemination strategy, as well as the project Mid-Term Review and Terminal Evaluations. Specifically, regarding **Gender equality**, publications such as "Diagnosis of the Situation of Amazonian Women", "Socio-economic diagnosis of women in intervention areas of the Results Based Payments Project (RBP)" and the "Gender Sensitive Cocoa, Coffee, Palm and Livestock Value Chains" point to the existence of gender gaps in the Amazon Region. This evidence supports the imminent need to continue with specific actions to transform the conditions that generate inequality between men and women. The main gaps focus on the low participation of women in decision-making and capacity-building spaces, limited access to livelihoods that allow their economic empowerment, the use of time allocated to care activities at home (unpaid work) and the predominance of acts of violence against them. Undoubtedly, in addition to the above, in the Amazon, the gap in individual land ownership stands out, which is mostly owned by men (88.2%). Community lands are also mostly managed by men.

With this context, which evidences the situation in the areas of intervention, the project will apply the following macro strategies: 1) Collection and systematization of information disaggregated by sex that allows the identification of gender gaps present in the area of intervention and monitoring of the impacts resulting from the actions implemented; 2) Affirmative actions that meet the specific needs of women and guarantee their inclusion in the planned project actions, the equitable participation in financing mechanisms for Life Plan projects, and the establishment of a minimum percentage of access to direct incentives to women for productive and conservation axes; 3) Strengthening of women's knowledge, skills and mechanisms for their active participation in decision-making spaces in production, social and environmental processes for biodiversity conservation and climate change actions and 3) Strengthening of capacities of the technical project teams and implementing partners in all the areas for mainstreaming of the gender approach in the execution of their actions.

[1] https://www.proamazonia.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/DIAGNOSTICO.ONU_MUJERES.PROAMAZONIA.FEB_2022.pdf

Innovation

There are two key innovative aspects of this project:

Policies:

- The project will improve the capacity of local governments to mobilize national and international resources with innovative incentive schemes and distinctions such as: GAP + DF (Deforestation free) Good Forestry Practices - GFP and certification of legal origin - CLO that enable financing of local actions to prevent, reduce and reverse land degradation, contributing to the reduction of GHG emissions (due to non-deforestation) and the improvement of adaptive capacity in the face of the effects of climate change.
- As for the credit line that incorporates environmental and sustainable production criteria created in conjunction with BanEcuador, the project will promote and facilitate access to such credit (especially for women) and will extend its coverage to the implementation areas and other financial institutions.

Environmental standards and good practices:

- The project will increase the efficiency of agro-productive systems through the implementation of SLM/SFM practices, which will reduce degradation in the intervention areas, scaling up the approach of sustainable and deforestation-free production. Capacities will be strengthened with assistance to improve product quality, articulate with specialized markets (which recognize sustainable land management and biodiversity conservation), linking them with BPA+LD certification products, traceability, and carbon quantification.
- Additionally, monitoring will be performed in the intervention areas for the collection of information that will allow the impact of the actions implemented in productive areas, forest ecosystems and water ecosystems to be measured in terms of the contribution to the conservation, reduction of deforestation (vegetation cover) and increase of productivity, retention of carbon in soil and adaptive capacity.
- As a result of the aforementioned monitoring, this information will be linked to a traceability system^[12], which would be a positive attribute for producer organizations that facilitates the marketing of sustainable products both in the national and international markets.

- Carbon quantification in the forest areas, productive systems, and restoration areas for the compensation mechanism- Ecuador Zero Carbon Program– PECC, which will allow linking the private sector interested in being certified as carbon neutral, complementing the income of associations or communities that implement SLM/SFM actions and conserve biodiversity.

[5] Presidential Decree 552/1999 gave rise to the Tagaeri Taromenane Intangible Zone (ZITT) within the Yasuní National Park. These zones represent protected spaces of great cultural and biological importance in which no type of extractive activity can be carried out due to the high value they have for the Amazon, Ecuador, the world and present and future generations.

[6] This GAP + Deforestation Free certification is made up of two recognitions: 1) the certification of Good Agricultural Practices issued by AGROCALIDAD (Resolution No. 0041) https://www.agrocalidad.gob.ec/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/resolucion-041-24-04-2017_v2-1.pdf and 2) the Deforestation-Free Green Initiative Distinction issued by MAATE (regulations to be issued).

[7] Commonwealth: refers to the association of different parishes, cantons or towns, with their own legal status.

[8] It refers to specific interventions within a polygon in a certain territory (based on Land Use Plans) as an instrument defined in the Land Management Law.

[9] Credit product designed by MAATE and BanEcuador, whose catalog of financeable products focuses on the implementation of good agricultural practices, in line with SLM and SFM practices.

[10] Sustainable and deforestation-free production considers two elements: implementation of Good Agricultural Practices (certification granted by AGROCALIDAD) and demonstrating that since 2014 the area under natural forest cover has not been reduced (distinctive granted by MAATE – Distinctive Free Green Initiative of Deforestation).

[11] Ecuador Zero Carbon Program (PECC, in Spanish): includes a compensation processes for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, generated by a product, organization, event, among others

[12] Through PROAmazonía, a traceability system was implemented (software), which incorporates, in addition to the productive variables, the non-deforestation variable, facilitating the commercialization of coffee and cacao at the international level (Italy and Belgium).

Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Project.

Does the GEF Agency expect to play an execution role on this project?

Yes

If so, please describe that role here. Also, please add a short explanation to describe cooperation with ongoing initiatives and projects, including potential for co-location and/or sharing of expertise/staffing

The government of Ecuador has requested UNDP to facilitate the services under the UNDP's Support to National Implementation Modality (NIM) for this GEF-8 project. In this context, UNDP will create an account and facilitate payments for all expenses authorized by the Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological Transition (MAATE). MAATE will have complete control over the project, one of its functions being to review and approve all project documents (TDRs, products, strategies, etc.), but they would not be responsible for managing contracting or being contract administrators, which allows them to have all the knowledge of the technical processes and become empowered/strengthened without having to spend their time on administrative and financial processes.

Also, UNDP will hire a Project Management Unit, comprised of a national team, employing an open and transparent hiring process, which will be in charge of the execution of the project's activities and there will be full separation of functions between oversight and execution.

The Environment and Energy Unit of the UNDP Ecuador Country Office has a Coordinator and Associate that provide oversight, with the support of Senior Management, including the Resident Representative and Deputy Resident Representative who will participate on the project's Steering Committee. In addition, the CO has a technical team that ensures proper monitoring and high standards of implementation with strong coordination with national implementing partners. Finally, audit and evaluation exercises ensure independent analysis of operational processes and programmatic results. An effective firewall is thus in place.

The alternative to a support to NIM would be a full NIM, where the funding would be transferred to the government, and the government would need to create an account for the project. It should be noted that when the GEF fund is managed through State accounts (Full NIM), it must comply with all the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Finance and Economy for all public institutions. Some of the limitations associated with these guidelines include:

- Impossibility of increasing the current government expenditure on staff, meaning that project personnel cannot be hired. This would mean that the project would have to be implemented with staff already working for the MAATE, further increasing their workload.
- Impossibility of contracting consultancies, leaving only the purchase of goods viable. This would make the project unable to meet several of its objectives for which companies and consultants are needed to support the implementation.
- Complexities of setting up a single exclusive account within the public system that the project must have for managing the funds.

In addition, it should be noted that public processes are complex and usually take a long time, which is often unattractive for companies and individuals due to high costs and time-consuming processes. It is a known fact that few bids are received for goods and services in the public sector due to these limitations, coupled with a lack of trust in payment schedules. This would severely limit the ability of the project to deliver and comply with UNDP/GEF project guidelines.

These issues and limitations are the ones that lead the Government of Ecuador to request the "Support to NIM" modality as their preference due to efficiencies, transparency, and the ownership that they retain. With UNDP support to the NIM modality, the government partners remain accountable for the implementation of projects and their alignment with national priorities and policies (country ownership); however, the operational support relies on UNDP, ensuring efficiency and transparency. Moreover, UNDP support to implementation enables the government to count on technical and administrative personnel to support execution, in close coordination with them.

It is important to emphasize that the selection of UNDP for project execution by the government was not arbitrary. Information collected from various NGOs capable of delivering procurement services indicates that UNDP provides the most cost-effective solution. The expenses associated with UNDP's support for procurement and payment processes, under the Support to NIM implementation modality, amount to only 2% of the GEF STAR project amount. These costs would be allocated to the PMC within the project budget. In contrast, other NGOs charge considerably higher percentages, ranging from 7% to 10%.

The following are relevant cooperation initiatives, which are led by MAATE and promote mechanisms to achieve land degradation neutrality, as well as the implementation of REDD+ AP actions, with which collaboration will be established and synergies will be identified:

- Results Based Payments (RBP) to Ecuador for Deforestation Reduction in 2014 (GCF FP110). This initiative supports implementation of the REDD+ AP, complementing actions promoted by PROAmazonia, such as the financing granted to the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon (CONFENIAE) for primary forest conservation and protection, restoration and reforestation, incorporating the indigenous worldview in the implementation of REDD+ actions, among others. This RBP project will integrate and leverage existing efforts, promoting the application of successful experiences and methodologies to the GEF 8 project across various processes. These include land tenure regularization (Component 1), the establishment of service centers (Component 2), conservation and forest restoration actions (Component 2), enhancement of bio-enterprises and ancestral knowledge (Component 2), implementation of life plan projects (Component 3), and the capacity strengthening of indigenous peoples and nationalities (Component 4). By combining resources and replicating proven approaches, the aim is to enhance the effectiveness and impact of the GEF 8 project, fostering a more cohesive and synergistic implementation across its diverse components.
- Connectivity corridors in two priority landscapes of the Ecuadorian Amazon region: GEF-7 Project implemented by WWF and executed by Conservation International. This project seeks to promote the conservation of biodiversity, strengthen ecological connectivity, and promote sustainable economic productive activities. The cooperation with this project will be focused on the lessons learned in conservation and biodiversity protection areas linked to the Component 2 intervention of the GEF 8 project. Project Setting LDN Objectives and Restoring Degraded Landscapes in the Western Andes and Coastal Zones: A GEF-7 Project implemented by FAO, which promotes the adoption of SLM/SFM for the recovery and restoration of prioritized landscapes that support environmental services and food security, establishing support mechanisms to achieve and monitor LDN. The GEF 8 project will contribute valuable information to the GEF 7 initiative, particularly focusing on key LDN indicators established in the GEF-7 Project. These indicators include (i) land cover and changes in land cover, (ii) land productivity, and (iii) soil organic carbon. Ecuador, as a signatory to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), is obligated to report on these indicators. The collaboration between GEF 8 and GEF 7 aims to enhance the monitoring and reporting mechanisms related to land degradation, aligning with international commitments and promoting sustainable land management practices.
- The GEF Project 'Towards a better understanding of Amazonian Aquifer Systems for their protection and sustainable management' presented by the Permanent Secretariat of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (PS/ACTO) and jointly implemented by the eight ACTO Member Countries: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname, and Venezuela. The Implementing agencies are The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). Its objective is to promote the governance and sustainable management of the Amazon aquifer systems. Both projects will engage in the exchange of information regarding the integrated management of groundwater for the protection and sustainable use of watersheds. This collaborative effort includes a focus on enhancing ecosystem resilience in the project sites of both initiatives. The sharing of knowledge and practices related to groundwater management aims to contribute to the overall protection and sustainability of watersheds, fostering a synergistic approach to address common challenges and promote effective environmental stewardship across project areas.
- Socio Bosque Project (SBP) that deliveries economic incentives to producers, peoples and indigenous communities that voluntarily commit to the conservation and protection of their native forests, paramo or other native vegetation. The GEF 8 project, specifically through Component 2, will collaborate with the SBP to align efforts in supporting local communities. The focus of this coordination is to ensure that the economic incentives provided by the SBP are directed towards investments in sustainable production, conservation, and actions outlined in the national REDD+ Action Plan. This collaborative approach aims to maximize the positive impact of these economic incentives, promoting environmentally-friendly practices and contributing to the overarching goals of sustainable development outlined in the REDD+ Action Plan.
- National Landscape Restoration Project that aims to recover the ecological integrity and improve human well-being in natural landscapes that have been degraded or deforested through the promotion of local restoration processes of the landscape in the territory and the execution of compensation measures linked to the socio-environmental responsibility of the private sector. Given that the GEF 8 project is a government initiative, it will actively coordinate with the National Landscape Restoration Project to harmonize efforts in forest restoration (Component 2) within the designated intervention areas. The aim is to complement and synergize actions, ensuring that resources invested in forest restoration are maximized and aligned to achieve common goals. This collaborative approach seeks to optimize the impact of both projects, fostering a unified and coordinated strategy for effective forest restoration efforts across the specified regions.

Core Indicators

Indicator 1 Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
125000	0	0	0

Indicator 1.1 Terrestrial Protected Areas Newly created

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
10000	0	0	0

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
Zona de amortiguamiento del Parque Nacional Llanganates	97512 (Llanganates)	Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources	10,000.00			

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)
115000	0	0	0

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)
Zonas de amortiguamiento del Parque Nacional Llanganates y Parque Nacional Yasuni	97512 (Llanganates) 186 (Yasuni)	Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources	115,000.00						

Indicator 3 Area of land and ecosystems under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
4020	0	0	0

Indicator 3.1 Area of degraded agricultural lands under restoration

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
Cropland	1,895.00			
Rangeland and pasture	2,125.00			

Indicator 3.2 Area of forest and forest land under restoration

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

Indicator 3.3 Area of natural grass and woodland under restoration

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

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

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

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

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
45178	0	0	0

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

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
21,188.00			

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

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

Type/Name of Third Party Certification

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

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
23,990.00			

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

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

Indicator 4.5 Terrestrial OECMs supported

Name of the OECMs	WDPA-ID	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
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Documents (Document(s) that justifies the HCVF)

Title

Indicator 6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (direct)	605643	0	0	0
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (indirect)	0	0	0	0

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

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (direct)	605,643			
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (indirect)				
Anticipated start year of accounting	2026			
Duration of accounting	4			

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

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (direct)				
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (indirect)				
Anticipated start year of accounting				
Duration of accounting				

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

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

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

Technology	Capacity (MW) (Expected at PIF)	Capacity (MW) (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Capacity (MW) (Achieved at MTR)	Capacity (MW) (Achieved at TE)
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Indicator 11 People benefiting from GEF-financed investments

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
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Female	3,070			
Male	4,606			
Total	7,676	0	0	0

Explain the methodological approach and underlying logic to justify target levels for Core and Sub-Indicators (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

Indicator 1. This indicator encompasses a total of 125,000 hectares, comprising 10,000 hectares of newly established terrestrial protected areas and 115,000 hectares under improved practices.

Indicator 3. Land and ecosystems under restoration: 4,020 hectares under restoration processes on farms undergoing a transition to sustainable production, with integral landscape criteria, implementing active and passive restoration activities promoting the diversification of livelihoods, the generation of new areas of vegetation cover for the migration of fauna and rescue of flora species in the management of these areas.

Indicator 4. Landscapes under improved practices: 45,178 hectares under productive actions with schemes of good agricultural practices in buffer zones and sustainable forest management to reduce land degradation through integral implementation under a shared territorial perspective among all the stakeholders settled in the different territories.

Indicator 6. GHG emissions mitigated: The methodology used to estimate the reduction of emissions in the period of implementation of project actions was determined in three steps: 1) collection of information on average annual gross deforestation of the provinces of Napo, Orellana and Sucumbíos; 2) deforestation projection from 2021 to 2030, considering a period of implementation of field actions of the project from 2027 – 2030; and 3) an estimate of 5% of the emissions mitigated as a result of the project’s impact, with respect to the baseline (2026 is taken as the base year).

Indicator 11. People benefiting from GEF-financed investments: 7,676 beneficiaries at different levels, from the population linked to sectoral and local government institutions, Indigenous Peoples and Nationalities, as well as stakeholders associated with academia and non-governmental organizations.

Risks to Project Preparation and Implementation

Summarize risks that might affect the project preparation and implementation phases and what are the mitigation strategies the project preparation process will undertake to address these (e.g. what alternatives may be considered during project preparation—such as in terms of consultations, role and choice of counterparts, delivery mechanisms, locations in country, flexible design elements, etc.). Identify any of the risks listed below that would call in question the viability of the project during its implementation. Please describe any possible mitigation measures needed. (The risks associated with project design and Theory of Change should be described in the “Project description” section above). The risk rating should reflect the overall risk to project outcomes considering the country setting and ambition of the project. The rating scale is: High, Substantial, Moderate, Low.

Risk Categories	Rating	Comments
Climate	Moderate	In anticipation of climate risks in the Napo River basin by 2050, which are primarily associated with intense

		<p>rainfall leading to floods and adverse impacts on crop production, the project will address these challenges. Specifically, under Component 2, drainage works on farms will be implemented, coupled with capacity-building processes. This approach aims to enhance the resilience of agriculture in the face of climate fluctuations. Additionally, under Component 3, the project will utilize financial incentives to support drainage actions within farms, along with training processes focused on the management of waterlogged soils. These activities are designed as mitigation measures to alleviate the impact of climate-related challenges on agricultural productivity in the region.</p>
<p>Environment and Social</p>	<p>Substantial</p>	<p>The Project will operate in areas of high biological and cultural diversity, in territories with the presence of several stakeholders from civil society, the public, private, and academic sectors with interests, strategies and differentiated impacts on the territory. The project will be implemented under a scheme of social and environmental safeguards that are based on the 7 REDD+ safeguards and the UNDP Social and Environmental Standards that have been implemented in previous processes in experiences that have resulted in the strengthening of participation structures in the four project target provinces. In this scenario, the project will develop a proposal for the implementation of environmental and social safeguards based on the evaluation, monitoring, follow-up and reporting of specific actions to mitigate risks that will be incorporated into the project thanks to the “know how” acquired by the</p>

		<p>country during the implementation phase and payment for results of REDD+. Likewise, Ecuador has an Environmental and Social Safeguards Information System that will contribute to the monitoring and reporting of these elements, a Grievance Mechanism enabled for the dissemination and use of beneficiaries, as well as instruments to generate consultation processes from MAATE. The experiences of previous projects in the South-Central landscape of the Napo Basin will be recovered, especially what was carried out by the GEF NAPO Project in previous years by FAO, the lessons learned by PROAmazonia in the provinces of Orellana, Sucumbíos, and Pastaza; and, the progress and experiences achieved by the GAD of Pastaza with its REDD+ Implementation Plan. The main environmental risks in the project intervention areas are associated with extractive activities, artisanal mining and contamination of water sources in the tributaries of Jatunyacu, Ansu, Talag, Yutzupino, Piocullin and Napo rivers. These risks can be mitigated with the implementation of management plans, strengthening of water funds (FODESNA) and commonwealths (Río Suno Commonwealth) with the aim of generating adequate management of Water Protection Areas existing in the territory of the Napo basin, such as the APH of the Suno River, or the creation of new water conservation areas.</p>
Political and Governance	Moderate	The change of Governments and authorities both at the level of the Central Government, Local Governments and Authorities of Indigenous Peoples and

		<p>Nationalities, will likely represent a constant challenge for the project. In this sense, the National Government has experience in the generation of strategies for the consolidation of programmatic agendas with local stakeholders. This allows anticipating scenarios with possible political changes that affect the implementation of the project.</p>
Macro-economic	Moderate	<p>Ecuador has shown recovery figures and economic growth as of 2022, with a growth of 2.7% (ECB, 2022). By 2023, growth is expected to be 3.1% according to the Chamber of Industries and Production. Exports grew by 5.6% compared to 2021 and for 2023 a very similar scenario of around 5.1% is expected (ECB, 2022). However, in terms of inflation, the average annual producer inflation in 2021 increased to 0.89%, however, for the period January-November 2022 there was an average annual inflation of 6.79% that is attributed to several causes such as the pandemic, the container crisis, low agricultural production, the war in the Ukraine, among others. Added to this are the challenges involved in reaching markets such as Europe and Pacto Verde, which Ecuador has interpreted as an opportunity to improve not only the quality of its exports but also the origin of them from producers who are now certified as deforestation free. These conditions complicate in some way the competitiveness of products that seek international markets; however, the project will develop commercial links that are focused on markets that seek products with a differentiated</p>

		value based on the management and conservation of biodiversity.
Strategies and Policies	Moderate	<p>The project will be implemented in areas where the institutional overlap is likely, i.e. projects and governmental and non-governmental initiatives operate under the same territory. This can lead to confusion for beneficiaries and a disconnection about the relevance of conservation and sustainable production initiatives by beneficiary organizations that do not allow for their effective involvement. However, in recent years a better articulation of activities between ministries of the environmental and productive sectors has been achieved through the intervention carried out by the PROAmazonia program. In the same way it has been possible to carry out activities articulated with the Technical Secretariat of the Special Amazon Circumscription. It is important to establish a possible scenario where the project will be executed during a possible change of government, which represents a challenge to link the actions of the project to these coordination dynamics that have been established between MAATE and MAG over the last few years with the PROAmazonia program.</p> <p>Additionally, the presence of Government investments that promote the use of non-renewable natural resources, such as oil and mining, may be inconsistent with national objectives for biodiversity conservation and sustainable production. It is essential in this scenario to activate an Operation/Coordination Plan that allows articulating efforts between different ministries so that the actions</p>

		are aligned with the socio-economic dynamics of the territory. For this, it is necessary to develop an adequate mapping of stakeholders in the preparation phase and potential action scenarios based on the identified stakeholders and their levels of influence in the territory.
Technical design of project or program	Low	The project design can respond to the specific needs of the current national government, limiting the potential impacts generated during project execution if there is a change in government. The project will fully socialize the project with any new administration to ensure that they are on board with its technical design and targets.
Institutional capacity for implementation and sustainability	Moderate	The National Government has highlighted the need to consolidate a national REDD+ team as part of the Undersecretariat of Climate Change of MAATE that can assume the role of coordination, monitoring and assessment of projects that contribute to the REDD+ AP. However, currently this team is not consolidated in MAATE. Sources of fiscal financing may be affected by the economic crisis that Ecuador has suffered in recent years due to the impact of the pandemic. Faced with this scenario, it is expected that during the implementation phase of the Payment for Results initiative in Ecuador, it will be possible to identify and define the appropriate conditions for the creation and institutionalization of the national REDD+ team as part of MAATE. Additionally, MAATE has several tools, instruments, and platforms that have been institutionalized and that contribute to several elements of the project, including forest cover

		<p>monitoring, reporting on safeguards and the grievance mechanism, capacity building, among others. In addition, the financing mechanisms proposed in component 1 that are articulated with the STCTEA, are directly linked to local capacity building for access to financing, which by law, is designated for the generation of projects and initiatives consistent with this project's objectives and that are directly associated with indigenous peoples and nationalities.</p>
Fiduciary: Financial Management and Procurement		
Stakeholder Engagement	Moderate	<p>The project will implement activities with various local partners and stakeholders, including local governments, producer associations, indigenous peoples and nationalities, the financial sector, central government institutions and universities, among others. The diversity of stakeholders and the lack of cohesion between them can generate, on the one hand, overlap of activities in the territory and confusion about the dynamics and axes of work promoted by the project in coordination with different institutions, and on the other hand, little involvement of stakeholders of they are not clear about the impacts and benefits of the project. In this sense, it is proposed to work based on instruments, spaces and methodologies that have been tested by UNDP and MAATE in past experiences. The Project will coordinate activities through coordination mechanisms such as a Steering Committees, and specific instruments such as an Operational Plan that clearly delimits and structures the governance of the</p>

		project. Furthermore, participation spaces that are consolidated in the territory will be used, such as the commodities round tables, and the REDD+ Working Group. Finally, the project will map stakeholders and spaces for participation and a stakeholder engagement plan will be generated to define stakeholder involvement and ensure effective participation.
Other		
Financial Risks for NGI projects		
Overall Risk Rating	Substantial	

C. ALIGNMENT WITH GEF-8 PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES AND COUNTRY/REGIONAL PRIORITIES

Describe how the proposed interventions are aligned with GEF- 8 programming strategies and country and regional priorities, including how these country strategies and plans relate to the multilateral environmental agreements.

Confirm if any country policies that might contradict with intended outcomes of the project have been identified, and how the project will address this.

For projects aiming to generate biodiversity benefits (regardless of what the source of the resources is - i.e., BD, CC or LD), please identify which of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework the project contributes to and explain how. (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

Alignment with GEF-8 Programming strategies and country/regional priorities

GEF-8 Land Degradation Focal Area (LDFA).

The project will be implemented through a landscape approach to avoid and reduce land degradation through sustainable land management, responding to LDFA Goal 1. In the agro-productive systems, capacities of producers and collection centers will be strengthened in SFM/SLM, GAP + certification distinctions such as GAP, GFP and certification of legal origin - CLO, conservation, restoration, and management, with local partners, GADs, MAG, MAATE, and the implementation of models of sustainable local production enterprises/businesses will be promoted in collection centers.

The project will contribute to reversing land degradation through landscape restoration, responding to LDFA Goal 2, by intervening in prioritized landscapes in river basins with REDD+ actions for biodiversity conservation and climate change adaptation.

With respect to LDFA Goal 4: Improve the regulatory and institutional framework for LDN, this project will contribute at the national and local level. This project will be linked to the LDN Target-Setting and Restoration of Degraded Landscapes in Western Andes and Coastal Areas (GEF 7) project, to respond to the strategic policy and territorial planning. From this intervention, regulatory mechanisms will be developed that strengthen the management of land use in GADs with SLM/SFM criteria.

Biodiversity Focal Area (BDFA).

BDFA Objective 1: To improve conservation, sustainable use, and restoration of natural ecosystems.

The project will promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, through the conservation of forests and water resources, implementing specific activities that promote: i) access to national and international financing for the implementation of actions with strengthened GADs for the protection of forests and biodiversity, ii) protection of river basins, capacity building, implementation of comprehensive management plans and restoration actions. In this way, opportunities are generated to achieve a local-regional development that reduces the risk of biodiversity loss, with a direct benefit in mitigation and adaptation.

Furthermore, the project will contribute to the mobilization of domestic resources for biodiversity conservation. This will be performed through the support to GADs in mobilizing of national and international resources to implement local actions that protect forests and biodiversity and contribute to improving the adaptive capacity in the face of the effects of climate change and promote the efficient use of resources (identifying their possible negative/positive impacts on the CC, deforestation, REDD+, etc).

Climate Change Focal Area (CCFA)

This project plays a significant role in contributing to Pillar 1 of CCFA, which aims to promote innovation, technology transfer, and favorable policies for mitigation options with systemic impacts. Specifically, it aligns with objective 1.4 of CCFA, focusing on promoting nature-based solutions with high mitigation potential. By emphasizing sustainable land management practices, reforestation, and the adoption of nature-based approaches such as agroforestry, the project actively supports and advances the overarching goal of integrating nature-based solutions into the broader climate change mitigation framework.

Under Component 2, the project will actively promote the adoption of SFM and SLM practices, contributing to integrated landscape management for sustainable land use. These actions will be executed through two distinct approaches:

1. **Terrestrial Areas under Protection Mechanisms and Hydrographic Basins:** This involves preventing deforestation and encouraging reforestation activities among local communities and indigenous peoples in the Amazon intervention areas. The goal is to mitigate climate change.
2. **Sustainable Agro-Productive Systems:** The project will advocate for the adoption of sustainable practices, including agroforestry, to maintain biodiversity and enhance soil health. Additionally, it will incorporate deforestation-free practices into various products, aligning them with the specific needs and market demands of each intervention area.

Furthermore, the involvement of various strategic stakeholders from the private sector, financial institutions, NGOs, local communities, and indigenous peoples in Components 3 and 4 is crucial to achieving climate change mitigation results. This collaborative approach recognizes the importance of integrating environmental and socio-economic considerations. The project emphasizes the need to engage local communities, governments, NGOs, and the international community to develop enduring and effective solutions in line with Ecuador's REDD+ Action Plan. The overall objective is to ensure a comprehensive and sustainable approach to climate change mitigation in the Amazon region.

Alignment with national policies

The Constitution of Ecuador grants a preponderant role to biodiversity and genetic heritage, considering them a natural resource of inalienable, imprescriptible and unseizable state property. Article 313 considers biodiversity among the strategic sectors, under the decision and exclusive control of the State, which, due to its importance and magnitude, has decisive economic, social, political or environmental influence, and must be oriented towards the full development of rights and social interest.

Similarly, in order to reduce climate risk in various sectors of the country, Ecuador developed the National Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change in Ecuador (2023-2027), a public policy instrument that provides inputs and tools for proper management of adaptation to climate change at the national and local scale. This proposal will consider actions and measures of the Natural Heritage sectors: Water Heritage; Agriculture and Livestock for adaptation to climate change.

In this context, the proposed project will contribute to Land Degradation Neutrality through actions that avoid, reduce and reverse land degradation, which contributes to adaptation to climate change in the land sector, natural heritage, water heritage, and agriculture.

The country has a commitment under its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) for an additional 4% reduction in GHG emissions in the LULUCF sector. The project will contribute to the conditional scenario in the LULUCF sector of the NDC by implementing forest and biodiversity conservation actions, aligned with the REDD+ AP and will align with several other previously mentioned national policies and commitments related to biodiversity and land degradation.

The implementation of the project is aligned with current regulations and national policies aligned with the Plan for the Creation of Opportunities 2021-2025, that establishes in its Guideline 2: 'Territory Management for the Ecological Transition'. This involves the inclusion of adaptation and mitigation to climate change actions, the preservation of the environment and the management of natural heritage in a sustainable manner.

Ecuador issued the "National Biodiversity Strategy 2015-2030", elaborated in the framework of the "National Planification of Biodiversity to support the implementation of the Strategic Plan of the CDB 2011-2020 in Ecuador" project. The present project will contribute to the following main results of the National Biodiversity Strategy 2015-2030:

Result 1: The Ecuadorian population has reached an adequate level of knowledge, appreciation and awareness regarding the importance of biodiversity and implements actions for its conservation and sustainable use.

Result 9. Ecuador ensures the sustainable management of agricultural, agroforestry and forestry production systems, through the use of clean technologies and energy, guaranteeing the conservation of biodiversity.

Moreover, the project is aligned with the Organic Environmental Code and its regulations, in relation to the exercise of the environmental powers of the National Environmental Authority, which includes the powers of stewardship, planning, regulation, control and management related to natural heritage, biodiversity, climate change, and other related areas in accordance with the Constitution and the law.

Finally, the project is aligned with the “Organic Law on Water Resources, uses and exploitation of water” and its regulations, which states the responsibility of the government for water resources management, with an ecosystem and hydrographic basin approach, which will be coordinated with the different levels of government according to their areas of competence.

Multilateral Environmental Agreements

Ecuador is a party to several international agreements related to LDN, climate change and biodiversity conservation, such as the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Paris Agreement, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), among others.

This project endeavors to advance objectives 5, 8, 9, and 10 outlined in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework by implementing sustainable forest management, conservation, restoration, and agroproductive practices. Through capacity building and technical assistance, particularly through free and prior informed consultation processes with indigenous peoples and local communities, the project aims to ensure the sustainable management of diverse flora and fauna species in the Amazonian ecosystem, thereby preserving nature's vital contributions.

The project will contribute to the fulfillment of strategic objectives 1, 2, 4 and 5 of the UNCCD. It will also contribute to national efforts to achieve biodiversity targets under the CBD, including contributing to targets 2, 3, 4, 10, 14, 19, 22 and 23. In addition, it will contribute to the efforts to meet the commitments stipulated in Article 4 of the UNFCCC, as well as the specific objectives of the Paris Agreement, especially the second of Article 2.

On the other hand, Ecuador ratified its commitment to the SDGs and declared the 2030 Agenda as a public policy of the National Government. The National Assembly, for its part, adopted a resolution in which it commits to the implementation of the SDGs and establishes them as a mandatory reference for its work. At the local level, several decentralized autonomous governments have articulated their planning to comply with the global agenda. The private sector, civil society and academia have also joined this national commitment, under the premise of working together towards common objectives to ensure equal opportunities and a dignified life for all people. This proposal will mainly contribute to SDGs 15, 13, 12, 1, and 5.

D. POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment:

We confirm that gender dimensions relevant to the project have been addressed as per GEF Policy and are clearly articulated in the Project Description (Section B).

Yes

Publications such as “Diagnosis of the Situation of Amazonian Women”, “Socio-economic diagnosis of women in intervention areas of the Results Based Payments Project (RBP)” and the “Gender Sensitive Cocoa, Coffee, Palm and Livestock Value Chains” point to the existence of gender gaps in the Amazon Region. This evidence supports the imminent need to continue with specific actions to transform the conditions that generate inequality between men and women. The main gaps focus on the low participation of women in decision-making and capacity-building spaces, limited access to livelihoods that allow their economic empowerment, the use of time allocated to care activities at home (unpaid work) and the predominance of acts of violence against them. Undoubtedly, in addition to the above, in the Amazon, the gap in individual land ownership stands out, which is mostly owned by men (88.2%). Community lands are also mostly managed by men. With this context, which evidences the situation in the areas of intervention, the project will apply the following macro strategies: 1) Collection and systematization of information disaggregated by sex that allows the identification of gender gaps present in the area of intervention and monitoring of the impacts resulting from the actions implemented; 2) Affirmative actions that meet the specific needs of women and guarantee their inclusion in the planned project actions, the equitable participation in financing mechanisms for Life Plan projects, and the establishment of a minimum percentage of access to direct incentives to women for productive and conservation axes; 3) Strengthening of women's knowledge, skills and mechanisms for their active participation in decision-making spaces in production, social and environmental processes for biodiversity conservation and climate change actions and 3) Strengthening of capacities of the technical project teams and implementing partners in all the areas for mainstreaming of the gender approach in the execution of their actions. [1] https://www.proamazonia.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/DIAGNOSTICO.ONU_.MUJERES.PROAMAZONIA.FEB_.2022.pdf

Stakeholder Engagement

We confirm that key stakeholders were consulted during PIF development as required per GEF policy, their relevant roles to project outcomes and plan to develop a Stakeholder Engagement Plan before CEO endorsement has been clearly articulated in the Project Description (Section B).

Yes

Acknowledging the indispensable role of stakeholder consultation in project development, we would like to clarify that this process commenced in tandem with the closure procedures of the PROAmazonia project (GEF ID 9055) for this year. Throughout this phase, a series of meetings took place, focusing on critical areas of work and activities in the region, particularly addressing environmental challenges. The engagements with stakeholders led to the establishment of a collaborative and trustworthy relationship. Subsequently, the GEF 8 PIF “Integrated landscape management in the Napo River Basin for sustainable land management and biodiversity conservation” was meticulously crafted, aligning with the needs identified through these discussions. Additionally, a meeting was conducted by UNDP on December 14th, engaging stakeholders from NGOs, the private sector (including banks), indigenous communities, and local governments. The purpose of

this meeting was to present and validate the project's objectives, components, activities, and budget of the GEF 8.

Were the following stakeholders consulted during project identification phase:

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities: Yes

Civil Society Organizations: Yes

Private Sector: Yes

Provide a brief summary and list of names and dates of consultations

Acknowledging the indispensable role of stakeholder consultation in project development, we would like to clarify that this process commenced in tandem with the closure procedures of the PROAmazonia project (GEF ID 9055) for this year. Throughout this phase, a series of meetings took place, focusing on critical areas of work and activities in the region, particularly addressing environmental challenges. The engagements with stakeholders led to the establishment of a collaborative and trustworthy relationship. Subsequently, the GEF 8 PIF "Integrated landscape management in the Napo River Basin for sustainable land management and biodiversity conservation" was meticulously crafted, aligning with the needs identified through these discussions. Additionally, a meeting was conducted by UNDP on December 14th, engaging stakeholders from NGOs, the private sector (including banks), indigenous communities, and local governments. The purpose of this meeting was to present and validate the project's objectives, components, activities, and budget of the GEF 8.

List of stakeholders consulted during the PIF development process:

	Stakeholders	Date
1	Undersecretary of Natural Heritage - MAATE	June 28, 2023
2	Undersecretary of Water Resources - MAATE	June 28, 2023
3	Undersecretary for Climate Change	June 28, 2023
4	Hivos	November 27, 2023
5	APROCASH (Association of Cocoa Producers)	November, 07 to 10, 2023
6	Kallari (Kichwa Association of Cocoa Producers)	
7	Association of Cattle Breeders '11 de Abril'	
8	Wiñak (Kichwa agriculture association)	
9	Waylla Kuri (Coffee producers from the Rukullakta Indigenous People)	
10	Rukullakta Indigenous People - PKR	
11	Yamanunka Shuar Community	
12	The Pilchi (Quichua community working on sustainable tourism)	
13	BanEcuador	06 November and 05 December 2023,
14	FONAG water fund	November 06, 2023
15	GAD Napo	June 06, 2023
16	GAD Pastaza	June 08, 2023
17	GAD Orellana	June 27, 2023
18	GAD Sucumbios	July 12, 2023
19	GAD Zamora Chinchipe	July 20, 2023
20	GAD Morona Santiago	August 07, 2023
21	GAD Shushufindi	November 08, 2023
22	UK Embassy	November 07 to 10, 2023
23	WWF	December 14, 2023
24	FONAG water fund	
25	Association of Cattle Breeders '11 de Abril'	

26	Yamanunka Shuar Community
27	FODESNA
28	Shushufindi Cocoa and Coffee Agricultural Production Association
29	Association of Guayusa Producers from Limoncocha
30	Waylla Kuri (Coffee producers from the Rukullakta Indigenous People)
31	AMWAE (Association of Waorani Women)

(Please upload to the portal documents tab any stakeholder engagement plan or assessments that have been done during the PIF development phase.)

Private Sector

Will there be private sector engagement in the project?

Yes

And if so, has its role been described and justified in the section B project description?

Yes

Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) Risks

We confirm that we have provided indicative information regarding Environmental and Social risks associated with the proposed project or program and any measures to address such risks and impacts (this information should be presented in Annex D).

Yes

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
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High or Substantial

E. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Knowledge management

We confirm that an approach to Knowledge Management and Learning has been clearly described in the Project Description (Section B)

Yes

ANNEX A: FINANCING TABLES

GEF Financing Table

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

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Grant / Non-Grant	GEF Project Grant(\$)	Agency Fee(\$)	Total GEF Financing (\$)
UNDP	GET	Ecuador	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: LD-1	Grant	3,132,713.00	297,607.00	3,430,320.00
UNDP	GET	Ecuador	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation: CCM- 1-1	Grant	1,763,995.00	167,580.00	1,931,575.00
UNDP	GET	Ecuador	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: BD-1	Grant	4,085,712.00	388,143.00	4,473,855.00
Total GEF Resources (\$)						8,982,420.00	853,330.00	9,835,750.00

Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

Is Project Preparation Grant requested?

true

PPG Amount (\$)

150000

PPG Agency Fee (\$)

14250

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Grant / Non- Grant	PPG(\$)	Agency Fee(\$)	Total PPG Funding(\$)
UNDP	GET	Ecuador	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: LD-1	Grant	52,315.00	4,970.00	57,285.00
UNDP	GET	Ecuador	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation: CCM-1-1	Grant	29,457.00	2,798.00	32,255.00
UNDP	GET	Ecuador	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: BD-1	Grant	68,228.00	6,482.00	74,710.00
Total PPG Amount (\$)						150,000.00	14,250.00	164,250.00

Please provide justification

Sources of Funds for Country Star Allocation

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Sources of Funds	Total(\$)
UNDP	GET	Ecuador	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation	3,487,605.00
UNDP	GET	Ecuador	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation	1,963,830.00
UNDP	GET	Ecuador	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	4,548,565.00
Total GEF Resources					10,000,000.00

Indicative Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing(\$)	Co-financing(\$)
LD-1	GET	3,132,713.00	18010343
CCM-1-1	GET	1,763,995.00	10141422
BD-1-1	GET	4,085,712.00	23489256
Total Project Cost		8,982,420.00	51,641,021.00

Indicative Co-financing

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)
Recipient Country Government	MAATE	Grant	Investment mobilized	3314300
Recipient Country Government	MAATE	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	313980
Recipient Country Government	Other governmental institutions	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	3527147
Recipient Country Government	Other governmental institutions	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	6357009
Recipient Country Government	Decentralized Autonomous Governments	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1742172
Civil Society Organization	Non-governmental Organizations	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1268108
Others	Water Funds	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	605429

Beneficiaries	Indigenous Organizations	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	135840
Beneficiaries	Academia	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	35698
Private Sector	Private banks, Credit Unions, Companies	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	3027147
Beneficiaries	Producer Organizations	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	3247517
Beneficiaries	Public Banks	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	2033212
Beneficiaries	Other beneficiaries	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	3027147
Recipient Country Government	REDD's Early Movers (REM)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	8476011
Recipient Country Government	Results Based Payments Project	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	14530304
Total Co-financing				51,641,021.00

Describe how any "Investment Mobilized" was identified

- Ministry of Environment (in-kind) includes: US\$ 500,000 from Socio Bosque Program; US\$ \$2,814,300 investment made in Land Use Planning Instruments, collection centers, sustainable forest management implemented plans from PROAmazonia Program (GCF FP019).
- Water funds (in kind) includes: US\$ 305,429 in staff and services and US\$300,000 in infrastructure from FODESNA Water Fund mainly, among other Water Funds located in the intervention area.
- Indigenous Organizations (in-kind) includes: US\$ 67,920 labor to implement MST/MFS practices and use of space and infrastructure to provide technical assistance; US\$ 67,920 non-monetary incentives already provided by PROAmazonia Program (GCF FP019).

ANNEX B: ENDORSEMENTS

GEF Agency(ies) Certification

GEF Agency Type	Name	Date	Project Contact Person	Phone	Email
Project Coordinator	UNDP		Alexandra Fischer, Senior Regional Technical Advisor		alexandra.fischer@undp.org

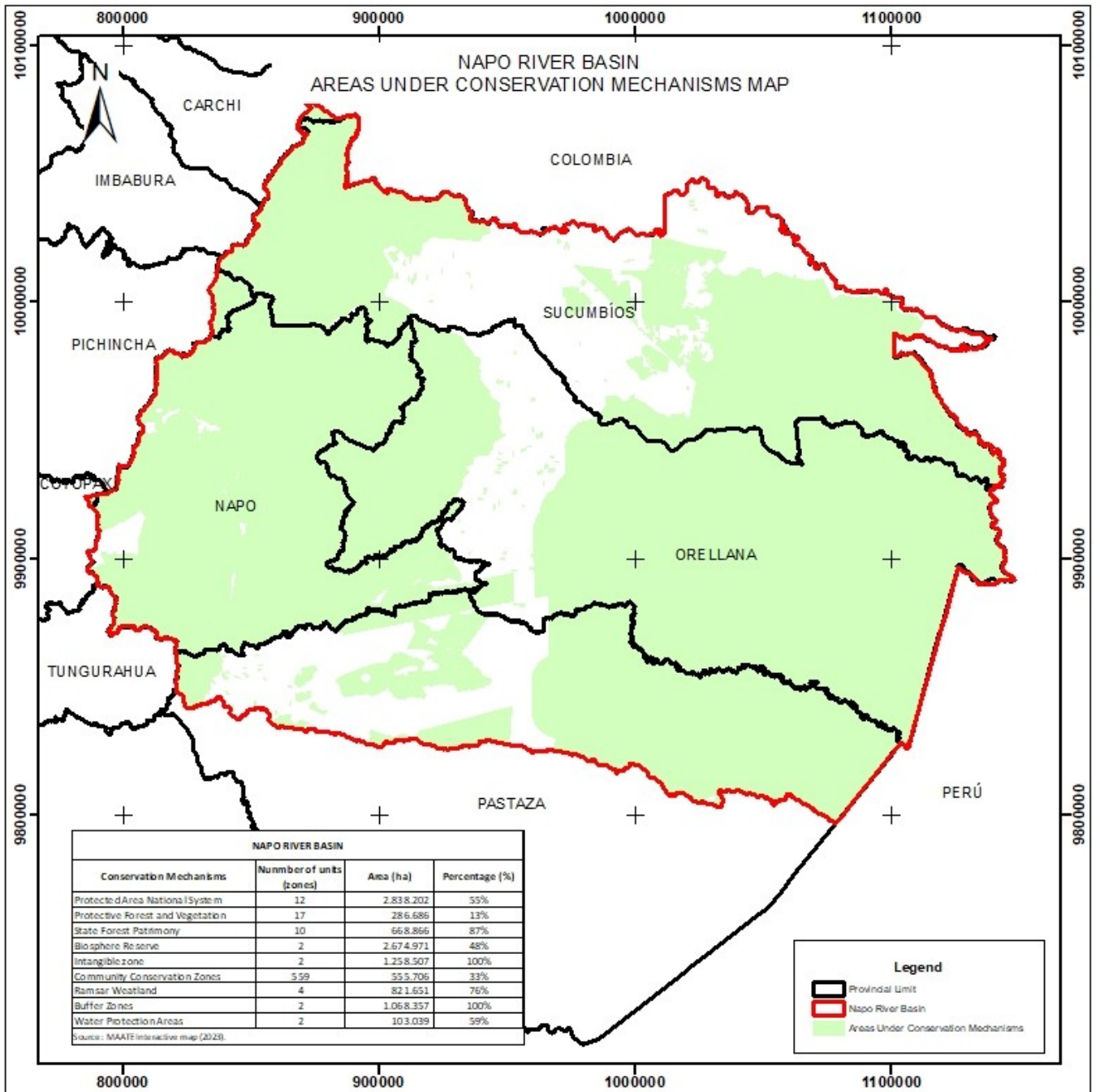
GEF Agency Coordinator	UNDP	Pradeep Kurukulasuriya	pradeep.kurukulasuriya@undp.org
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Record of Endorsement of GEF Operational Focal Point (s) on Behalf of the Government(s):

Name	Position	Ministry	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)
Irene Schudt Espinel	Director of International Cooperation	Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological Transition of Ecuador (MAATE)	11/19/2023

ANNEX C: PROJECT LOCATION

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



ANNEX D: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS SCREEN AND RATING

(PIF level) Attach agency safeguard screen form including rating of risk types and overall risk rating.

Title

SESP_ ENG_GEF8 Proamazonia (Julio 2023)

ANNEX E: RIO MARKERS

Climate Change Mitigation	Climate Change Adaptation	Biodiversity	Land Degradation
Principal Objective 2	Significant Objective 1	Principal Objective 2	Principal Objective 2

ANNEX F: TAXONOMY WORKSHEET

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Influencing Models	Deploy innovative financial instruments		
	Strengthen institutional capacity/decision-making		
Stakeholders	Beneficiaries		
	Indigenous Peoples		
	Private Sector	Capital Providers	
	Local communities		
	Type of engagement		
		Information dissemination	
		Consultation	
		Participation	
	Communications	Education	
Capacity, Knowledge and Research	Capacity development		
	Knowledge generation and exchange		
	Learning	Indicators to measure change	
		Theory of change	
		Adaptative Management	
Gender Equality	Gender mainstreaming	Beneficiaries	
		Sex disaggregated indicators	
	Gender results areas	Capacity development	
		Awareness raising	
		Knowledge generation	
Focal Area/Theme	Biodiversity	Protected areas and landscapes	Productive Landscapes
			Terrestrial protected areas
		Mainstreaming	Forestry (including HCVF and REDD +)
	Land Degradation	Sustainable Land Management	Sustainable Livelihoods
			Sustainable Agriculture

		Land Degradation Neutrality	Land Productivity
			Land Cover and Land cover change
			Carbon stocks above or below ground
	Climate Change	Climate Change Adaptation	Climate Resilience
			Mainstreaming adaptation
			Livelihoods
		Climate change mitigation	Agriculture, Forestry, and other Land Use
		United Nations Framework on Climate Change	Nationally Determined Contribution