

# Restoration of ecosystems, integrated natural resource management and promotion of SLM in Mbuluzi River Basin of Eswatini

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

## Basic project information

**GEF ID**

10695

**Countries**

Eswatini

**Project Name**

Restoration of ecosystems, integrated natural resource management and promotion  
of SLM in Mbuluzi River Basin of Eswatini

**Agencies**

UNEP

**Date received by PM**

6/16/2022

**Review completed by PM**

2/3/2023

**Program Manager**

Jean-Marc Sinnassamy

**Focal Area**

Multi Focal Area

**Project Type**

FSP

**PIF**   
**CEO Endorsement**

**Part I ? Project Information**

**Focal area elements**

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Yes

Agency Response

Cleared on July 7, 2022

**Project description summary**

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes

Agency Response Cleared on July 7, 2022

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

## Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response **N/A**

### **Co-financing**

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

## Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request **November 7, 2022**

Addressed.

### **October 9, 2022**

- A letter of cofinancing from the Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs covers the different contributions from the Department of Forestry, the Climate change unit, the Eswatini National Trust Commission, the Eswatini Environment Authority, and the Eswatini Tourism Authority. Letters from the Ministry of Agriculture, the National Disaster Management Agency, and World Vision are available.

- We take note on the explanations given for considering cofinancing as investment mobilized (cf. note under the cofinancing table). However, with all the changes, there is a basically only \$50,000 from World Vision now considered as investments mobilized on a total cofinancing of more than \$31 million. It is an important decrease in comparison with the PIF (\$750,000 of investments mobilized). Please, justify this decrease that significantly weakens the reasoning and potentially the level of partnerships.

### **July 7, 2022**

#### Cofinancing

Letters are missing for the following entities:

- National Maize Agency
- ICRAF
- Ministry of Tinkuhndla Administration and Development
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Private Conservancies

## Agency Response

**Cleared on November 7, 2022**

### **Response to comments raised on 9 October 2022**

We agree that the level of co-financing as investment mobilized at PPG is lower than expected during PIF. This arose mainly as a result of the inability of some of the identified partners to raise such co-financing due to the effects of the global COVID19 pandemic and economic squeeze that they are currently facing. Nevertheless, the number of partners has not reduced per se. The implementing partners proposed at PIF stage were 9 while those identified at PPG with direct responsibility for project activities now stands at eight (8).

ICRAF (an NGO) and the Private conservancies whose economic outlook did not enable them to commit co-financing will remain as collaborating partners (who will work together with the implementing partners) and they hope that in future they may secure co-financing during project implementation, as the COVID19 situation normalizes. UNEP commits itself to report any extra co-financing that will be realised during project implementation. Therefore, while we agree that the level of investment mobilised is lower, we believe that the level of partnerships and commitment remains adequate to deliver this project.

### **Response for the comments raised on 7 July 2022**

The co-financing commitment letter from the Ministry of Agriculture has been obtained. It has not been possible to get co-financing commitment from ICRAF, National Maize Agency, Ministry of Tinkhundla administration, and Private Conservancies. However, the Ministry of Tourism and Environment Affairs has been able to mobilize \$24,818,000. Together with other partners e.g. Ministry of Agriculture and World Vision, the total co-financing mobilized is \$35,677,350, which is comparatively higher than what was anticipated at PIF. The CEO ER and ProDoc have been updated accordingly. Consequently, the mention of ICRAF, National Maize Agency, Ministry of Tinkhundla administration, and Private Conservancies, as co-financing partners has been revised in both the pro-doc and CEO ER.

#### **GEF Resource Availability**

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes

Agency Response **Cleared on July 7, 2022**  
**Project Preparation Grant**

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes

Agency Response **Cleared on July 7, 2022**  
**Core indicators**

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
**November 7, 2022**

Addressed.

**October 9, 2022**

Thanks for the clarifications and the EXACT table. However, a narrative is missing on the top of the excel annex to justify the assumptions and the reasoning. The calculated gains in carbon related to SLM and land restoration seems acceptable in the context of dry forests of Eswatini. However, the gains of 5 million tCO<sub>e</sub> from protected area improved management need more explanation, as well as the emissions of more than one million of tCO<sub>2e</sub> from improved manure and livestock management.

**July 7, 2022**

- Please explain the significant increase in carbon gains (from 827,477 tCO<sub>2e</sub> to more than 5.4 million tCO<sub>2e</sub>);
- Please, confirm the way you filled in the table of indicators. It seems that the carbon gains should be included under the 6.1 core indicator (AFOLU sector) and not the 6.2 (gains outside AFOLU). Please, clarify and correct.

Agency Response

**Cleared on November 7, 2022**

### **response to comments raised on 9 October 2022**

From Appendix 16 of the ProDoc, the results tab as well as the Forest degradation and Management tab indicate that effective management of 32,676 hectares comprising of three protected areas will actually result into sinking/sequestration of -5,377,385 tCO<sub>2</sub>e). This will result from vegetation recovery through improved management (from a 60% rate of biomass loss, down to 20% - see the Management tab in Appendix 16 of the ProDoc) arising from the GEF project interventions. There will be a 40% increase in carbon absorption from the atmosphere through increased net photosynthesis (see the Management tab in Appendix 16 of the ProDoc).

Regarding the over one million tCO<sub>2</sub>e emissions from improved manure and livestock, there are several contributing factors. First, the number of livestock in Eswatini is not expected to decrease as they are considered Eswatini gold. The most practical solution is to reduce the emission factors, which we expect to decrease with time after improved management. In the meantime, we expect emissions to be high. An example can be made with emission intensity for milk, which currently stands at 24 CO<sub>2</sub>e.yr<sup>-1</sup>.kg FPCM<sup>-1</sup> (FPCM - Fat and Protein Corrected Milk) in the country. The global average for this value is between 2.9 and 2.5 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e.yr<sup>-1</sup>.kg FPCM<sup>-1</sup>, and the regional value is 9 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e.yr<sup>-1</sup>.kg FPCM<sup>-1</sup> in sub-Saharan Africa (Gerber et al., 2013), which indicates the system inefficiencies, i.e., high GHG emissions per unit of milk produced. On another note, the same publication Africa (Gerber et al., 2013) estimates that the global average of emission intensity for meat is between 42.0 and 38.4 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e.yr<sup>-1</sup>.kg CW<sup>-1</sup>, and the regional value for sub-Saharan Africa is near 70 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e.yr<sup>-1</sup>.kg CW<sup>-1</sup>. The results show a value of 58 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e.yr<sup>-1</sup>.kg CW<sup>-1</sup>, indicating high levels of GHG emissions relative to meat produced.

#### **References:**

Gerber, P.J.; Steinfeld, H.; Henderson, B.; Mottet, A.; Opio, C.; Dijkman, J.; Falcucci, A.; Tempio, G., 2013. Tackling climate change through livestock ? A global assessment of emissions and mitigation opportunities. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Rome.

### **Response to comments made on 7 July 2022**

At PIF, it was roughly estimated that the carbon gains that would be realized from the project would be 827,477 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. However, during PPG, the exact areas of project intervention were determined to include: a) improvement of 20,000 hectares of pasture land (resulting in the sinking of -766,627 tCO<sub>2</sub>e), b) re-planting of 700 hectares of degraded indigenous forests and woodlands (resulting into the sinking of -322,194 tCO<sub>2</sub>e), c) improved livestock and

manure management (resulting into emissions of 1,086,511 tCO<sub>2</sub>e), d) implementation of SLM practices on 30,000 ha (resulting into the sinking of -89,438 tCO<sub>2</sub>e), and c) effective management of 32,676 hectares comprising of three protected areas (resulting into the sinking of -5,377,385 tCO<sub>2</sub>e). These together will realize a net sink of -5,469,132 tCO<sub>2</sub>e.

The carbon gains have been included in Indicator 6.1 (see Annex F of the CEO ER)

## **Part II ? Project Justification**

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Yes

Agency Response **Cleared on July 7, 2022**

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Yes

Agency Response **Cleared on July 7, 2022**

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Addressed.

Agency Response **Cleared on July 7, 2022**

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Yes

Agency Response **Cleared on July 7, 2022**

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Yes

Agency Response **Cleared on July 7, 2022**

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Yes

Agency Response **Cleared on July 7, 2022**

**7. Is there further and better elaboration to show that the project is innovative and sustainable including the potential for scaling up?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Yes - innovation, sustainability, and replication

Agency Response **Cleared on July 7, 2022**

**Project Map and Coordinates**

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Yes

Agency Response **Cleared on July 7, 2022**

**Child Project**

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

NA

Agency Response **N/A**

**Stakeholders**



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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
**October 9, 2022**

Addressed.

**July 7, 2022**

We did not find the nature and dates of meetings, consultations, ..., undertaken during the PPG.

We do not know how many participants were involved, to do what, and the main outcomes of these consultations.

Please, clarify.

Agency Response  
**Cleared on 9 Oct 2022**

**Response to comments raised on 7 July 2022**

The nature and dates of meetings and consultations during PPG are included in Appendix 12 ? Stakeholder analysis and engagement Plan (see Annexures 1 and 2 for the records of the meetings, attendance numbers, and photos from the meetings).

**Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment**

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
**July 7, 2022**

Gender issues, notably equality is well mainstreamed in the project, reflected in the formulation of outcomes and outputs (outcome 1, output 1.2, outcome 4, output 4.4, activity 4.1.2, 4.4.2). Gender issues are then reflected in the targets under the core indicator 11 (50% of women).

Addressed.

Agency Response **cleared on 7 July 2022**

**Private Sector Engagement**

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

**July 7, 2022**

Yes, the private sector is engaged, notably on sugar cane, forestry, and maize.

The private sector and parastatals are also involved through conservancies and game reserves.

Agency Response **cleared on 7 July 2022**

**Risks to Achieving Project Objectives**

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Yes, including about COVID-19.

Agency Response **cleared on 7 July 2022**

**Coordination**

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
**November 7, 2022**

Addressed.

**October 9, 2022**

The level of partnerships has decreased since PIF level as showed with the changes in cofinancing. Is there a chance to maintain a certain level of collaboration with entities as ICRAF, National Maize Corporation? Please, clarify.

**July 7, 2022**

Yes: UNEP is the GEF Agency; The Eswatini National Trust Commission (ENTC) is the main executing partner.

The project partners are Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Tinkhundla Administration and Development, National Maize Corporation, Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs, International center for Research in Agro-Forestry (ICRAF) and World Vision.

Agency Response

**Cleared on November 7, 2022**

**Response to comments raised on 9 October 2022**

The partners identified during PIF will surely be maintained. The eight (8) partners that will make co-financial contribution have been listed as implementing partners at CEO endorsement. However, all other partners that were identified at PIF are considered very important for this project and will therefore be maintained as collaborating partners. Please also refer to our response in number 4 on co-financing (in part 1).

**Consistency with National Priorities**

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Yes

Agency Response **cleared on 7 July 2022**  
**Knowledge Management**

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
**July 7, 2022**

There is a Knowledge Management approach described in the component 4.

Agency Response **cleared on 7 July 2022**  
**Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS)**

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
Yes

Agency Response **cleared on 7 July 2022**  
**Monitoring and Evaluation**

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
Yes.

Agency Response **cleared on 7 July 2022**  
**Benefits**

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
**October 9, 2022**

- Sections 30-33 clarify the socioeconomic benefits. Cleared.

**July 7, 2022**

The existing information on potential socioeconomic benefits is disseminated all over the project document. We would like to see a better reasoning and description on the socioeconomic benefits just after the sections related to the GEB.

Please, complete.

Agency Response

cleared on 9 October 2022

**Response to GEFSEC review comments raised on 7 July 2022**

Global and local socio-economic benefits have been collated and included in section 1.5.2 of the CEO-ER and as paragraph 29 of section 2.2. of the ProDoc

**Annexes**

**Are all the required annexes attached and adequately responded to?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
**November 7, 2022**

Thanks for the budget in the portal. However, the table is getting out of the margins. It will not be readable by potential reviewers and readers. Please, correct.

**October 9, 2022**

We take note of the responses provided to the comments related to the budget. However, the budget has not changed in the portal and we did not find a revised budget in excel format in the Documents Tab. Please, correct. We will review the responses when they will be reflected in the table in the portal and an excel file.

**July 7, 2022**

**Budget**

Personnel

- 1103: there is a Finance and Administration Officer in the budget (\$72,000): we do not understand why this position is financed under the four technical components and the pmc. With this kind of formulation, we may expect this item under the pmc. Please, clarify and correct.
- 1104: Same comment for the driver: 1) Please justify the need for a driver (for the truck?), 2) this eventual position should not be financed under the technical components. Please, justify and correct.

#3300

- Project steering committee: We do not understand the level and the financing of the steering committee under the technical committee. Please, explain and correct.
- Annual review and planning meetings: We do not understand the financing of this item under the technical components. Please, correct.
- These annual review and meetings seem a duplication of the steering committee. Please, correct.
- All in all, \$208,851 budgeted for meetings seem excessive. Please, clarify and correct.
- #4201: We take note of the request and the justification for the purchase of a truck (\$62,000). However, the preferred option would be to see one of the cofinancing partners covering this request. Please, clarify.
- Please, describe the existing fleet from the main executing entity and the main cofinancing partners
- 5204: \$10,000 to ?implement and disseminate a communication and environmental programme?: please justify this expense in the pmc.

Agency Response

**Response to GEFSEC review comments raised on November 7, 2022**

The budget table in the portal has been re-posted and is now within the readable margins.

**Response to GEFSEC review comments raised on 9 October 2022**

The budget in the portal has been adjusted and reflects the revisions made.

The revised budget in excel format has also been provided in the documents tab.

## **Response to GEFSEC review comments raised on 7 July 2022**

The budget has been adjusted and the Finance and Administrative Officer is now charged from PMC.

We have requested GEF to support the acquisition of a vehicle for the project (see Appendix 18 for justification). This implies that there will be a need to hire a full-time driver. As advised by the reviewers, this position is now charged from PMC.

The technical committee has now been removed from the project implementation arrangements.

To avoid duplication, the annual reviews and project planning will be done by the steering committee as suggested.

The budget for this activity has now been reduced to \$110,000

The project partners that have made commitments for co-financing include 2 government ministries (made up of two departments and three public enterprises. During PPG, a discussion on vehicles revealed that, apart from project vehicles which have their specific duties and routines without any flexibility to work on other projects or assignments, government agencies have vehicles that are used by assigned officers. These vehicles normally run over 300,000 km and simply cannot operate in the Mbuluzi wilderness terrain. Apart from not being available (since they are used by specifically assigned officers), deploying vehicles in such states to such terrain is a recipe for stalling project progress through exorbitant repair costs. Where certain projects have vehicles, these are deployed on assigned parent project activities with specific use guidelines by the donor organizations. Our request for the acquisition of a 4x4 double cabin pickup vehicle (Appendix 18) is therefore made with the honest belief that this can greatly expedite (and not stall) project progress.

This expense is for implementing communication and environmental program and has been planned and will be financed under Component 4, Output 4.2 - Documentation, publication, and dissemination of best practices and lessons learned.

## **Project Results Framework**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
**November 11, 2022**

Addressed.

**October 9, 2022**

Please, verify that the indicators included in the result framework match the value of the core indicators (and these value are used for carbon calculations):

1.2: 32,676 (PA under improved management);

3.1: 20,000 ha of agricultural degraded lands under restoration

3.2: 700 ha of forest and forest land under restoration

4.3: 30,000 ha of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems

6.1: 5,469,132 tCO<sub>2</sub>e of carbon sequestered or emissions avoided in the AFOLU sector

11: Beneficiaries: 100,000, including 50,000 women and 50,000 men.

Agency Response

**Cleared on November 7, 2022**

**Response to GEFSEC review comments raised on 9 October 2022**

This has been verified

The indicators included in the result framework match the value of the core indicators (and these were the same values used for carbon calculations)

**GEF Secretariat comments**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
**October 9, 2022**

Addressed.

**July 7, 2022**

No.

A list of comments was made at PIF level to be checked at CEO endorsement.

Please, complete

Agency Response



**Cleared on 9 Oct 2022**

**Response to GEFSEC review comments raised on 7 July 2022**

The comments that were made at the PIF level and required to be addressed at PPG and CEO level have been worked on. The specific responses are included in Annex B of the CEO ER.

**Council comments**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
**October 9, 2022**

Addressed.

**July 7, 2022**

Council comments: We did not find the annex with the responses to Council comments (Germany, Canada). Please, correct.

Agency Response

**Cleared on 9 Oct 2022**

**Response to GEFSEC review comments raised on 7 July 2022**

The Council Comments have been reviewed and responded to. They are included in Annex B of the CEO ER.

**STAP comments**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
**October 9, 2022**

Addressed.

**July 7, 2022**

There were MINOR comments from the STAP to address.

<https://www.thegef.org/projects-operations/projects/10695>

Agency Response

**Cleared on 9 Oct 2022**

**Response to GEFSEC review comments raised on 7 July 2022**

A response to the STAP comments has been made and included in Annex B of the CEO ER.

**Convention Secretariat comments**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response **N/A**

**Other Agencies comments**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response **N/A**

**CSOs comments**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response **N/A**

**Status of PPG utilization**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes

Agency Response

**Cleared on 7 July 2022**

**Project maps and coordinates**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes

Agency Response **Cleared on 7 July 2022**

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

NA

Agency Response

N/A

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response N/A

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

**RESPONSES FOR COMMENTS MADE UNDER SECTION GEFSEC DECISION:  
RECOMMENDATION BELOW:**

**Responses to February 10, 2023 GEF Comments**

February 10, 2023  Some of the comments provided on November 17th 2022 were addressed, others were not:	
- M&E budget under section 9 is \$205,851 but under table B and the budget table uploaded in Portal Document section is \$210,651 ? please, correct.	This was a mistake, the M&E budget table in section 9 has been edited to read \$210,651
- The comments from STAP are available in the portal, but UNEP forgot to include responses to Germany and Canada (The correction was made in the annex B to the CEO endorsement template as requested during the technical review, but not in the portal).	A table of responses to GEF council comments has been included in the portal (in annex b) with answers to Germany and Canada comments.

<p>- The budget table cut and paste under Annex E of Portal entry seems to be the old one with different component totals than table B and the budget table dated December 9 uploaded in the Document section. Please cut and paste the correct budget table in Annex E.</p>	<p>the correct budget table has been pasted in Annex E of the portal</p>
<p>- ESS: I review the resubmission. However, I have not seen any ESS comment from the Project Manager in the CEO Endorsement Review sheet, and no response from the Agency. I cannot observe any changes in the Portal, CEO Endorsement section as well.</p> <p>Environmental and Social Safeguards: We understand that the project's overall ESS risk is classified as moderate, and UNEP attached the updated Safeguard Risk Identification Form (SRIF) in Appendix 10. SRIF identified risks related Safeguard Standard 6: Displacement and Involuntary Resettlement, and the safeguard team recommended that limited environmental or social analysis may be required to develop an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) to be implemented in support of the project. However, there is no clear plan to avoid or mitigate economic displacement related to the project and no clear plan to develop environmental and social management plan. Please provide clear plan of risk management or explain how the project carry out environmental and social assessment in this risk areas and develop environmental and social management plan in early stage of the project with appropriate budget.</p>	<p>The table of risks and their mitigation measures has been included in section 11 on Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) Risks, in the portal.</p> <p>We agree there will be some limited risks arising out change of economic means for some people who depend on invasive alien species. The project will, however, not result in physical displacement of people. At the time of preparing the project proposal we concluded that the livelihood benefits from the project interventions associated with agricultural production and land restoration would adequately mitigate this potential impact. Furthermore, there will be a stakeholder consultation process in the inception phase that could explore this in more detail and produce an environmental and social assessment report. In addition the project includes M&amp;E (activity 4.1) that will also inform any adaptive management of impacts (mitigation) that may be required as the project is implemented.</p>

**RESPONSES FOR COMMENTS MADE UNDER SECTION GEFSEC DECISION:  
RECOMMENDATION BELOW:**

**Responses to November 18, 2022 GEF Comments Comments**

<p>Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request</p>	<p>Agency response</p>
---	------------------------

**GEFSEC DECISION  
RECOMMENDATION**

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

**November 18, 2022**

Please address the comments below from the Quality control:

1. The GEF project financing at CEO Endorsement (\$3,932,192) is \$15,242 higher than the amount approved at PIF stage (\$3,916,950). Similarly, the Agency fee at CEO Endorsement (\$373,558) is \$1,495 higher than the amount approved at PIF stage (\$372,063) ? see the PIF Clearance ? PPG approval letter attached. Please ask the Agency to amend by including the amounts approved at PIF stage.

2. Per point 1. above, the amounts in each focal area have to be adjusted. Please guarantee that the amounts per focal area in Table A and Table D match (currently they don't match ? see below)

- **Table A:**

A. FOCAL/NON-FOCAL AREA ELEMENTS				
Objectives/Programs	Focal Area Outcomes	Trust Fund	GEF Amount(\$)	Co-Fin Amount(\$)
LD-2-1	Address direct drivers to protect habitats and species and improve financial sustainability, effective management, and ecosystem coverage of the global protected area estate	GET	2,200,000.00	11,346,033.00
LD-1-1	Maintain or improve flow of agro-ecosystem services to sustain food production and livelihoods through Sustainable Land Management (SLM)	GET	1,000,000.00	13,017,402.00
LD-1-4	Reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses and increase resilience in the wider landscape	GET	932,192.00	7,396,965.00
			<b>Total Project Cost(\$)</b> 3,932,192.00	<b>31,760,400.00</b>

- **Table D:**

D. Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds								
Agency	Trust Fund	Country	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Amount(\$)	Fee(\$)	Total(\$)	
UNEP	GET	Eswatini	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	2,155,708	204,792	2,360,500.00	
UNEP	GET	Eswatini	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation	1,776,484	166,766	1,943,250.00	
					<b>Total Grant Resources(\$)</b>	<b>3,932,192.00</b>	<b>373,558.00</b>	<b>4,305,750.00</b>

3. Subject to the adjustments in point 1. Above, the figures in component 1 and component 4 in table B (\$480,000 and \$273,593 respectively) don't match the figures in Budget Table (\$455,000 and 260,351 respectively). Please ask the Agency to amend.

4. There is no outcome neither outputs in the M&E component of Table B ? please ask the Agency to amend

M&E	Technical Assistance		GET	205,851.00	2,077,342.00
-----	----------------------	--	-----	------------	--------------

1. GEF project financing at CEO Endorsement has been harmonised with the amount approved at PIF stage which is \$3,916,950 in both the CEO ER attached and the portal. Similarly, the Agency fee at CEO Endorsement has been harmonised with the amount approved at PIF stage which is \$372,063 in both the CEO ER attached and the portal

2. Per point 1. above, the amounts in each focal area have been adjusted accordingly. The amounts per focal area in Table A and Table D are now matching in both the revised CEO ER attached and the portal

3. The figures in all the components in Table B have been adjusted and now match with the figures in the budget table in both the CEO ER attached and the in the CEO ER

4. M&E Outcomes and outputs as well as the budget have now been included in Table B both the portal and the in the CEO ER

<p>5. Core Indicators (comment provided by Omid): The targets for core indicators 1,3, and 4 in the core indicator table should be consistent with the results framework (annex A). Please request the agency to update these targets.</p>	<p>5. The core indicators in Annex A (ProDoc Results Framework) of the CEO ER have been harmonised and are now consistent with the targets in the Core Indicator table in the ProDoc.</p>
<p>6. Gender (comment provided by Verona): agree with the comment provided by the Program Manager. In addition, on ?Output 3.4: Protected Area Integrated fire management systems, that include participation of local communities, developed and implemented for Biodiversity and ecological infrastructure enhancement in Mbuluzi landscape? ? Please request agency to reflect: gender-responsive fire management systems (or similar wording) in this output. This is very important because women and girls are often ?forgotten? or their specific needs not attended to and they are the ones who are then impacted the most.</p>	<p>6. Output 3.4 has been appropriately revised to refer to ?Gender responsive integrated fire management systems. See Output 3.4 in the CEO ER and the ProDoc</p>







<p>11. Environmental and Social Safeguards (comment provided by Ikuko): We understand that the project's overall ESS risk is classified as moderate, and UNEP attached the updated Safeguard Risk Identification Form (SRIF) in Appendix 10. SRIF identified risks related Safeguard Standard 6: Displacement and Involuntary Resettlement, and the safeguard team recommended that limited environmental or social analysis may be required to develop an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) to be implemented in support of the project. However, there is no clear plan to avoid or mitigate economic displacement related to the project and no clear plan to develop environmental and social management plan. Please provide clear plan of risk management or explain how the project carry out environmental and social assessment in this risk areas and develop environmental and social management plan in early stage of the project with appropriate budget.  <b>Note:</b> The project PIF has been approved on June 18, 2021, after the Policy on ESS had been effective.</p>	<p>We agree there will be some limited risk of economic displacement due to change of economic means for some people who depend on invasive alien species. The project will, however, not result in physical displacement of people. At the time of the project proposal we concluded that the livelihood benefits from the project in combination with the restoration associated with agricultural production and ecosystem restoration would adequately mitigate the potential impact. Furthermore, there was a stakeholder consultation process in the early phase that could explore this in more detail in the next report. In addition the project includes a social assessment (activity 4.1) that will also inform any further management of impacts (mitigation) that may be required as the project is implemented.</p>
<p>12. Co-financing (comments provided by Seo-Jeong): All "Grant" entries "please change "Recurrent expenditures" to "Investment Mobilized"</p>	<p>The Entries changed</p>

**GEFSEC DECISION**

**RECOMMENDATION**

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
**March 14, 2023**

All points are addressed. The project is recommended for CEO endorsement.

**February 10, 2023**

Some of the comments provided on November 17th 2022 were addressed, others were not:

- M&E budget under section 9 is \$205,851 but under table B and the budget table uploaded in Portal Document section is \$210,651 ? please, correct.
- The comments from STAP are available in the portal, but UNEP forgot to include responses to Germany and Canada (The correction was made in the annex B to the CEO endorsement template as requested during the technical review, but not in the portal).
- The budget table cut and paste under Annex E of Portal entry seems to be the old one with different component totals than table B and the budget table dated December 9 uploaded in the Document section. Please cut and paste the correct budget table in Annex E.
- ESS: I review the resubmission. However, I have not seen any ESS comment

from the Project Manager in the CEO Endorsement Review sheet, and no response from the Agency. I cannot observe any changes in the Portal, CEO Endorsement section as well.

Environmental and Social Safeguards: We understand that the project's overall ESS risk is classified as moderate, and UNEP attached the updated Safeguard Risk Identification Form (SRIF) in Appendix 10. SRIF identified risks related Safeguard Standard 6: Displacement and Involuntary Resettlement, and the safeguard team recommended that limited environmental or social analysis may be required to develop an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) to be implemented in support of the project. However, there is no clear plan to avoid or mitigate economic displacement related to the project and no clear plan to develop environmental and social management plan. Please provide clear plan of risk management or explain how the project carry out environmental and social assessment in this risk areas and develop environmental and social management plan in early stage of the project with appropriate budget.

**November 18, 2022**

Please address the comments below from the Quality control:

1. The GEF project financing at CEO Endorsement (\$3,932,192) is \$15,242 higher than the amount approved at PIF stage (\$3,916,950). Similarly, the Agency fee at CEO Endorsement (\$373,558) is \$1,495 higher than the amount approved at PIF stage (\$372,063) ? see the PIF Clearance ? PPG approval letter attached. Please ask the Agency to amend by including the amounts approved at PIF stage.

2. Per point 1. above, the amounts in each focal area have to be adjusted. Please guarantee that the amounts per focal area in Table A and Table D match (currently they don't match ? see below)

- **Table A:**

**A. FOCAL/NON-FOCAL AREA ELEMENTS**

Objectives/Programs	Focal Area Outcomes	Trust Fund	GEF Amount(\$)	Co-Fin Amount(\$)
BD-2-7	Address direct drivers to protect habitats and species and improve financial sustainability, effective management, and ecosystem coverage of the global protected area estate	GET	2,000,000.00	11,346,033.00
LD-1-1	Maintain or improve flow of agro-ecosystem services to sustain food production and livelihoods through Sustainable Land Management (SLM)	GET	1,000,000.00	13,017,402.00
LD-1-4	Reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses and increase resilience in the wider landscape	GET	932,192.00	7,396,965.00
<b>Total Project Cost(\$)</b>			<b>3,932,192.00</b>	<b>31,760,400.00</b>

- **Table D:**

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

Agency	Trust Fund	Country	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Amount(\$)	Fee(\$)	Total(\$)
UNEP	GET	Eswatini	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	2,155,708	204,792	2,360,500.00
UNEP	GET	Eswatini	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation	1,776,484	168,766	1,945,250.00
Total Grant Resources(\$)					3,932,192.00	373,558.00	4,305,750.00

3. Subject to the adjustments in point 1. Above, the figures in component 1 and component 4 in table B (\$480,000 and \$273,593 respectively) don't match the figures in Budget Table (\$455,000 and 260,351 respectively). Please ask the Agency to amend.

4. There is no outcome neither outputs in the M&E component of Table B ? please ask the Agency to amend

M&E	Technical Assistance		GET	205,851.00	2
-----	----------------------	--	-----	------------	---

5. Core Indicators (comment provided by Omid): The targets for core indicators 1,3, and 4 in the core indicator table should be consistent with the results framework (annex A). Please request the agency to update these targets.

6. Gender (comment provided by Verona): agree with the comment provided by the Program Manager. In addition, on ?Output 3.4: Protected Area Integrated fire management systems, that include participation of local communities, developed and implemented for Biodiversity and ecological infrastructure enhancement in Mbuluzi landscape? ? Please request agency to reflect: gender-responsive fire management systems (or similar wording) in this output. This is very important because women and girls are often ?forgotten? or their specific needs not attended to and they are the ones who are then impacted the most.

7. M&E Budget Table is missed in Portal ? please ask the Agency to include it (totals have to match the totals in Table B and in Budget Table).

**Describe the budgeted M and E plan**

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

The project M&E plan is consistent with the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation policy. The Project Results Framework presented in Appendix 4 of the Profile includes SMART indicators [I] for each expected outcome as well as mid-term and end-of-project targets. These indicators are designed according to the GEF indicator guidelines. These indicators along with the key deliverables and benchmarks included in Appendix 6 of the Profile will be the main tools for assessing project implementation progress and whether project results are being achieved. The means of verification and the costs associated with obtaining the information to track the indicators are summarized in Appendix 3 of the Profile. Other M&E related costs are also presented in the Costed M&E Plan and are fully integrated in the overall project budget.

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

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

Project supervision will take an adaptive management approach. The Task Manager will develop a project supervision plan at the inception of the project which will be communicated to the project partners during the inception workshop. The emphasis of the Task Manager supervision will be on outcome monitoring but without neglecting project financial management and implementation monitoring. Progress vis-à-vis delivery of the agreed project global environmental benefits will be assessed with the NSRF at agreed intervals. The quality of project monitoring and evaluation will also be reviewed and initial or part of the PIR. Key financial parameters will be monitored on a quarterly basis to ensure cost-effective use of financial resources.

Risk assessment and rating (Table 4) is an integral part of the Project Implementation Review (PIR). Perhaps the most information risk is that posed by COVID-19. Escalating is readily adapting to this new environment and remains very dedicated to support implementation of this GEF project despite the challenges faced from this pandemic. The project will take the following actions to mitigate negative results arising from COVID-19 or any other health related risk: a) Identify critical stakeholders the absence of whom can lead to orphaned deliverables; b) Consider legal and financial implications of COVID-19 and develop a mitigation plan at the inception stage; c) Communicate any disruptions due to COVID-19 to all stakeholders, including staff, NSRF, and UNEP; d) Conduct scenario analysis and consider alternative delivery methods, such as virtual or online meetings, video presentations, recorded messages and guidelines, personal protective equipment or any other steps that will allow the project to be completed on time and on budget, even if it is delayed at some stages by COVID-19.

A mid-term management review or evaluation will take place after 2 years of project implementation as indicated in the project outcomes. The review will include all parameters recommended by the GEF Evaluation Office for terminal evaluations and will verify information gathered through the GEF case indicator worksheet, as relevant. The review will be carried out using a participatory approach whereby parties that may benefit or be affected by the project will be consulted. Each party will be identified during the stakeholder analysis (see section 2 of the project document). The NSRF will participate in the mid-term review and develop a management response to the evaluation recommendations along with an implementation plan. It will be the responsibility of the UNEP Task Manager to monitor whether the agreed recommendations are being implemented.

In line with the GEF Evaluation requirements and UNEP's Evaluation Policy, GEF Full-Scale Projects and any project with a duration of 4 years or more will be subject to an independent Mid-Term Evaluation or management-led Mid-Term Review at mid-point. All GEF funded projects are subject to a performance assessment when they reach operational completion. This performance assessment will be either an independent Terminal Evaluation or a management-led Terminal Review.

In case a Review is required, the UNEP Evaluation Office will provide tools, templates, and guidelines to support the Review consultant. For all Terminal Reviews, the UNEP Evaluation Office will perform a quality assessment of the Terminal Review report and validate the Review's performance ratings. This quality assessment will be attached as an annex to the Terminal Review report, validated performance ratings will be captured in the main report.

However, if an independent Terminal Evaluation (TE) of the project is required, the Evaluation Office will be responsible for the entire evaluation process and will liaise with the Task Manager and the project implementing partners at key points during the evaluation. The TE will provide an independent assessment of project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine the likelihood of impact and sustainability. It will have two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to generate learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP staff and implementing partners. The direct costs of the evaluation (for the management-led review) will be shared against the project evaluation budget. The TE will typically be initiated after the project's operational completion, if a follow-on phase of the project is envisaged, the timing of the evaluation will be discussed with the Evaluation Office in relation to the submission of the follow-on proposal.

The draft TE report will be sent by the Evaluation Office to project stakeholders for comment. Formal comments on the report will be shared by the Evaluation Office in an open and transparent manner. The project performance will be assessed against standard evaluation criteria using a six-point rating scheme. The final determination of project ratings will be made by the Evaluation Office when the report is finalized. The evaluation report will be publicly disclosed and will be followed by a recommendations compliance process. The evaluation recommendations will be entered into a Recommendations Implementation Plan template by the Evaluation Office. Formal submission of the completed Recommendations Implementation Plan by the Project Manager is required within one month of its delivery to the project team. The Evaluation Office will monitor compliance with this plan every six months for a total period of 12 months from the finalization of the Recommendations Implementation Plan. The compliance performance against the recommendations in this regard to ensure management on a six-monthly basis and to exercise 'Notes in the Financial Evaluation System Report'.

8. The Table on Responses to project reviews is missed in Portal ? please ask the Agency to include it.

**ANNEX B: RESPONSES TO PROJECT REVIEWS (from GEF Secretariat and GEF Agencies, and Responses to Comments from Council at work program inclusion and the Convention Secretariat and STAP at PIF).**

9. Executing Partners: only the Eswatini National Trust Commission is mentioned in Project Information as the Executing Partner. However, in section 6 (Institutional Arrangement and Coordination) there are other Executing Partners (i.e. Min of Agriculture, World Vision). Please ask the Agency to include all Executing Partners in the Project Information section ? the executing partner type has to be also adjusted accordingly.

10. Budget Table:

(i) It misses the column of ?Responsible Entity? ? please ask the Agency to include it and fill it out accordingly. Also the budget line ?Integrated Land ?? overlaps the numbers in the table ? please ask the Agency to amend.

(ii) In Section 6 there is a mention to a Project Manager as part of the Project Management Unit (which one could assume is the Integrated Land Expert) ? this position is charged to the project components. Per Guidelines, the costs associated with the project's execution have to be covered by the GEF portion and the co-financing portion allocated to PMC. The co-financing allocated to PMC is 2.0 million, and 7.7 million of co-financing is represented in grants - please request the agency to review.

**ANNEX E: Project Budget Table**

Please attach a project budget table.

From: 2023		Expenditure by project component/activity						
To: 2026		1	2	3	4	M&E	PMC	Total
UNEP Budget Line								
10	PERSONNEL COMPONENT							
1100	Project personnel							
1101	Integrated Land Management Expert/Project Manager	66,000	5,500	5,500	15,500		62,000	144,000
1102	Monitoring and Evaluation Officer					48,000		48,000
1103	Finance and Administration Officer						72,000	72,000
1104	Driver						36,000	36,000
1199	Sub-total	7,500	29,500	29,500	15,500	48,000	170,000	300,000
1200	Consultants							
1201	Policy and legal expert to update SLM institutional and legislative frameworks	40,000	-	-	-	-	-	40,000
1202	Strategic plan	40,000	-	-	-	-	-	40,000

11. Environmental and Social Safeguards (comment provided by Ikuko): We understand that the project's overall ESS risk is classified as moderate, and UNEP attached the updated Safeguard Risk Identification Form (SRIF) in Appendix 10. SRIF identified risks related Safeguard Standard 6: Displacement and Involuntary Resettlement, and the safeguard team recommended that limited environmental or social analysis may be required to develop an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) to be implemented in support of the project. However, there is no clear plan to avoid or mitigate economic displacement related to the project and no clear plan to develop environmental and social management plan. Please provide clear plan of risk management or explain how the project carry out environmental and social assessment in this risk areas and develop environmental and social management plan in early stage of the project with appropriate budget.

**Note:** The project PIF has been approved on June 18, 2021, after the Policy on ESS had been effective.

12. Co-financing (comments provided by Seo-Jeong): All "Grant" entries ? please change "Recurrent expenditures" to "Investment Mobilized"?

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

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)	Evidence
Recipient Country Government	Eswatini National Trust Commission	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	7,150,000.00	
Recipient Country Government	Eswatini National Trust Commission	Grant	Recurrent expenditures	2,500,000.00	
Recipient Country Government	Eswatini Environment Authority	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	4,000,000.00	
Recipient Country Government	Eswatini Environment Authority	Grant	Recurrent expenditures	1,000,000.00	
Recipient Country Government	Eswatini Tourism Authority	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1,500,000.00	
Recipient Country Government	Eswatini Tourism Authority	Grant	Recurrent expenditures	500,000.00	
Recipient Country Government	Forest Department, Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	3,500,000.00	
Recipient Country Government	Forest Department, Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs	Grant	Recurrent expenditures	1,668,000.00	
Recipient Country Government	Climate Change Unit, Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	2,000,000.00	
Recipient Country Government	Climate Change Unit, Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs	Grant	Recurrent expenditures	1,000,000.00	
Recipient Country Government	National Disaster Management Agency	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	4,500,000.00	
Recipient Country Government	National Disaster Management Agency	Grant	Recurrent expenditures	1,000,000.00	
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Agriculture	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	845,000.00	
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Agriculture	Grant	Recurrent expenditures	27,400.00	
Civil Society Organization	World Vision	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	500,000.00	
Civil Society Organization	World Vision	Grant	Investment mobilized	50,000.00	

**November 14, 2022**

Addressed. The project is recommended for technical clearance and quality control, before CEO endorsement.

**November 7, 2022**

Please, check the comment on the margins (out of the margins). When this change will be made, the project will be recommended for technical clearance and quality control.

**October 9, 2022**

The project cannot be recommended yet for CEO endorsement. Please, address the remaining comments, especially on cofinancing, indicators, budget, and partnerships.

**July 7, 2022**

The project cannot be recommended yet for CEO endorsement. Please, address the comments above.

**Review Dates**

	<b>Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement</b>	<b>Response to Secretariat comments</b>
<b>First Review</b>	<b>7/7/2022</b>	<b>7/7/2022</b>
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>10/9/2022</b>	<b>10/9/2022</b>
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>11/7/2022</b>	<b>11/7/2022</b>
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>11/14/2022</b>	<b>2/10/2023</b>
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>2/10/2023</b>	

**CEO Recommendation**

**Brief reasoning for CEO Recommendations**