

Community Access and Urban Services Enhancement Project II (CAUSE II)

Review PIF and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID
12055
Countries
Solomon Islands
Project Name
Community Access and Urban Services Enhancement Project II (CAUSE II)
Agencies
World Bank
Date received by PM
9/18/2025
Review completed by PM

Program Manager
Juan Hoffmaister
Focal Area
Climate Change
Project Type
FSP

GEF-8 PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF) REVIEW SHEET

1. General Project Information / Eligibility

a) Does the project meet the criteria for eligibility for GEF funding?

b) Is the General Project Information table correctly populated?

Secretariat's Comments

a) Yes, the project meets LDCF eligibility criteria as a climate adaptation project in an LDC (Solomon Islands) with clear adaptation rationale and climate hazard analysis. b) General project information is correctly populated and consistent across documents.

Agency's Comments Thank you.

2. Project Summary

Does the project summary concisely describe the problem to be addressed, the project objective and the strategies to deliver the GEBs or adaptation benefits and other key expected results?

Secretariat's Comments

Oct 2025 update: Cleared

The project summary adequately describes the flooding problem in Honiara and the objective to improve climate-resilient infrastructure. However, the summary could better articulate the transformational aspects, and longer-term systems change beyond immediate flood mitigation. Suggest strengthening the description of how this project will contribute to systemic transformation of urban flood management approaches in Solomon Islands.

Agency's Comments

Thank you.

Additional narrative on the transformational and longer-term impact of the Project has been incorporated (see Concept Note para 28 and highlighted changes in the GEF datasheet).

3 Indicative Project Overview

3.1 a) Is the project objective presented as a concise statement and clear?

b) Are the components, outcomes and outputs sound, appropriate and sufficiently clear to achieve the project objective and the core indicators per the stated Theory of Change?

Secretariat's Comments

Oct 2025 update: Cleared. TOC has improved with clear problem statement, causal logic, and component integration. Transformation pathways could be further elaborated at CEO Endorsement.

a) The project objective is clear and appropriately focused.

b) Components and outputs are generally sound, but the theory of change could be strengthened to better articulate pathways to systems transformation. Suggest clarifying how integrated grey-green approaches will be institutionalized beyond the project period and mechanisms for scaling lessons to other urban centers.

Agency's Comments

Thank you.

The Concept Note Theory of Change (ToC) has been strengthened to clarify institutionalization of grey-green approaches and continuation of lesson sharing to other populated areas. The linkages between the activities of the various institutions are indicated; a new intermediate outcome highlighting the anticipated improvement in integrated planning is included (see Concept Note ToC, figure 2).

3.2 Are gender dimensions, knowledge management, and monitoring and evaluation included within the project components and appropriately funded?

Secretariat's Comments

Yes. Adequately included, and some suggestions to strengthen during CEO Endorsement phase are to provide consideration of how flood infrastructure design addresses women's specific needs and mobility patterns, ensure inclusion of detail on gender-responsive budgeting or specific allocation for gender activities, and consideration of how nature-based solutions training incorporates women's traditional ecological knowledge.

For CEO phase, KM could be strengthened given the innovation aspects of mainstreaming nature-based solutions, including by systematic documentation frameworks; learning exchange mechanisms; and development of technical guidance for regional application.

Agency's Comments Thank you, these recommendations will be addressed during CEO Endorsement phase.

3.3 a) Are the components adequately funded?

b) Are the GEF Project Financing and Co-Financing contributions to PMC proportional?

c) Is the PMC equal to or below 5% of the total GEF grant for FSPs or 10% for MSPs? If the requested PMC is above the caps, has an exception (e.g. for regional projects) been sufficiently substantiated?

Secretariat's Comments

Oct 2025 update: Cleared.

Budget allocations are within policy limits.

The co-financing is listed with clear sources (IDA Credit: \$13.2M, IDA Grant: \$7.0M, Australian PPIUF: \$17.35M), with no additional documentation.

Agency's Comments

Thank you.

Please note: Indicative budget in Table 2 of the Concept Note has been updated to reflect updated GEF envelope. A co-financing letter will be provided at CEO Endorsement as per GEF requirements.

4 Project Outline

A. Project Rationale

4.1 SITUATION ANALYSIS

a) is the current situation (including global environmental problems, key contextual drivers of environmental degradation, climate vulnerability) clearly and adequately described from a systems perspective?

b) Are the key barriers and enablers identified?

Secretariat's Comments

Oct 2025 update: Cleared.

a) The situation analysis effectively applies systems thinking, describing climate vulnerabilities and the interaction between rapid urbanization, infrastructure deficits, and flood risks. The analysis appropriately references the 2014 flooding event and provides solid climate projections.

b) Key barriers are identified, though suggests for PIF to better articulate specific institutional and technical enablers needed for transformation.

Agency's Comments Thank you, additional information on the institutional enabling usage for transformation is now included (see Concept Note para 10 and highlighted changes in the GEF datasheet).

4.2 JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT

a) Is there an indication of why the project approach has been selected over other potential options?

b) Does it ensure resilience to future changes in the drivers?

c) Is there a description of how the GEF alternative will build on ongoing/previous investments (GEF and non-GEF), lessons and experiences in the country/region?

d) are the relevant stakeholders and their roles adequately described?

Secretariat's Comments

Oct 2025 update: Cleared.

c) The project builds well on ongoing investments, particularly CAUSE I's documented success and coordination with the parallel LDCF water resilience project. However, please provide more explicit details on: (i) specific lessons from CAUSE I that have been integrated; (ii) operational coordination mechanisms with the water supply project to maximize synergies; and (iii) how the additional financing modality enhances rather than duplicates existing efforts.

d) Stakeholder roles are described, with foundation from CAUSE I experience showing high female participation rates (81% in literacy training).

Agency's Comments

Thank you.

The team agrees that this information is highly pertinent. The lessons from CAUSE I, operational coordination mechanisms with the water supply project, and additional financing complementarity to the main project are now strengthened in the PIF and will be further developed at CEO Endorsement (see Concept Note para 28 and 30 and highlighted changes in the GEF datasheet). Further discussion is required on operational coordination mechanisms with the water supply project, and these will be provided at CEO Endorsement.

5 B. Project Description

5.1 THEORY OF CHANGE

a) Is there a concise theory of change that describes the project logic, including how the project design elements will contribute to the objective, the expected causal pathways, and the key assumptions underlying these?

b) Are the key outputs of each component defined (where possible)?

Secretariat's Comments

Oct 2025 update: Cleared.

a) While the theory of change addresses the core problem of rapid urbanization exacerbating flood vulnerability, it requires strengthening to better articulate transformation pathways beyond infrastructure delivery. Please enhance the narrative to explain: (i) how integrated planning approaches will be institutionalized across government agencies; (ii) mechanisms for establishing sustainable financing for nature-based solution maintenance; (iii) pathways for technical capacity to be applied in other urban centers; and (iv) how the project will shift from reactive post-disaster response to proactive flood management systems.

b) Key outputs are defined but could benefit from clearer articulation of transformational outcomes versus infrastructure deliverables.

Agency's Comments

Thank you.

The Concept Note Theory of Change has been strengthened as advised, including a clearer articulation of transformational outcomes (see Toc Figure and para 32 and highlighted changes in the GEF datasheet).

5.2 INCREMENTAL/ADDITIONAL COST REASONING

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

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

5.3 IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

a) Is the institutional setting, including potential executing partners, outlined and a rationale provided?

b) Comments to proposed agency execution support (if agency expects to request exception).

c) is there a description of potential coordination and cooperation with ongoing GEF-financed projects/programs and other bilateral/multilateral initiatives in the project area

d) are the proposed elements to capture and disseminate knowledge and learning outputs and strategic communication adequately described?

Secretariat's Comments

d) Oct 2025 update: Cleared. Concrete KM deliverables and dissemination channels identified. Regional learning platforms specified.

a) The PIF indicates national execution through Executing Partners: Honiara City Council and Ministry of Infrastructure Development Implementing Agency, no dual execution.

d) Knowledge management and learning elements could be strengthen. Given the innovation aspect of mainstreaming nature-based solutions in Honiara, please provide proposed approach/plans for, as relevant: (i) systematic monitoring and documentation of grey-green infrastructure performance; (ii) capture of community engagement and behavioral change processes; (iii) development of technical guidance for Pacific SIDS application; (iv) integration with regional knowledge networks; and (v) strategic communication of lessons learned beyond the immediate project context.

Agency's Comments

Thank you.

a) N/A

b) Thank you. Additional details on knowledge management and sharing activities have been added and will be further developed at the CEO Endorsement stage (see Concept Note para 58 and highlighted changes in the GEF datasheet).

5.4 a) Are the identified core indicators calculated using the methodology included in the corresponding Guidelines (GEF/C.54/11/Rev.01)?

b) Are the project's indicative targeted contributions to GEBs (measured through core indicators)/adaptation benefits reasonable and achievable?

Secretariat's Comments

d) Oct 2025 update: Thank you. Indicator framework adequate for PIF. Transformation indicators needed at CEO Endorsement as recommended.

b) While targeted contributions appear reasonable, the results framework would benefit from indicators that capture transformational aspects including: (i) institutional capacity changes in multi-hazard planning; (ii) behavioral changes in community flood preparedness; (iii) uptake of integrated approaches by other urban centers; and (iv) sustainability of revenue mobilization systems for infrastructure maintenance.

Agency's Comments

Thank you for this advice.

Following consultation with Project stakeholders and a technical review of what is feasible, the indicators will be added (see Concept Note para 24 and highlighted changes in the GEF datasheet):

- (i) Topographical information required for flood mapping available for planning, across implementing agencies. (Yes/No)
- (ii) Reduction in blockage of drainage channels by waste in target communities (Periodic surveys, treatment areas compared with other communities in a control group)
- (iii) Revenue administration systems developed and piloted in HCC

The GEF will not finance interventions in other centers. Hence, an indicator is not proposed beyond the target area. However, relevant data may be collected on the planning approach adopted in other activities involving the main implementing agencies and provincial governments.

5.5 NGI Only: Is there a justification of financial structure and use of financial instrument with concessionality levels?

Secretariat's Comments N/A

Agency's Comments

5.6 RISKS

a) Is there a well-articulated assessment of risk and identification of mitigation measures under each relevant risk category?

b) Is the rating provided reflecting the residual risk to the likely achievement of intended outcomes after accounting for the expected implementation of mitigation measures?

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

Secretariat's Comments

d) Oct 2025 update: Cleared. Risk framework strengthened with explicit fragility dimensions and detailed mitigation.

The project builds effectively on proven implementation arrangements. To further strengthen the proposal, the risk assessment framework would benefit from several targeted enhancements that can be addressed in the revised PIF or during CEO endorsement preparation.

Areas for Risk Enhancement

Fragile State Context Integration: While the PIF provides comprehensive background on Solomon Islands' development challenges, the risk assessment could better integrate this context into mitigation strategies. Please strengthen the analysis of how recent social tensions (2021 unrest) and underlying drivers might affect project implementation, with specific mitigation measures for maintaining community engagement and institutional coordination during potential disruptions.

Multi-Agency Coordination Risks: Given the project's multi-level implementation structure (national, city, provincial), please enhance the risk assessment to address potential coordination challenges and include specific protocols for decision-making, conflict resolution, and communication between implementing entities.

Technical Innovation Risks: The mainstreaming of nature-based solutions represents valuable innovation for Pacific SIDS. To support successful scaling, please include risk analysis for technical performance variability and contingency approaches if certain NbS interventions require adaptation during implementation. It is unclear if the assessments and ratings under the Innovation risk categories speak to actual innovative features to be implemented by the project. If not, then we suggest keeping this risk dimension blank. Otherwise, please clarify further the link with innovation risk.

Financial Sustainability Considerations: To support long-term project success, please enhance the risk assessment regarding sustainable financing mechanisms for infrastructure maintenance, particularly for the integrated grey-green systems. This could include scenario analysis for revenue mobilization performance and contingency funding arrangements.

Agency's Comments

Thank you for this knowledgeable advice. The team has enhanced the risk assessment framework for Stakeholder engagement taking into consideration the FCV context (see Concept Note para 62) and will further analyze these risks and present outcomes at CEO Endorsement phase.

No Technical Innovation risks category is evaluated as per GEF nor World Bank risks, but these will be considered for the more detailed assessment at Appraisal (CEO Endorsement).

5.7 Qualitative assessment

a) Does the project intend to be well integrated, durable, and transformative?

b) Is there potential for innovation and scaling-up?

c) Will the project contribute to an improved alignment of national policies (policy coherence)?

Secretariat's Comments

a) The project demonstrates good integration with existing efforts and durability through institutional strengthening components. Transformational potential could be further articulated in this PIF and/or CEO Endorsement phase articulating how approaches will catalyze broader systems change in Solomon Islands' urban flood management.

b) Innovation potential exists in mainstreaming nature-based solutions, but scaling pathways need strengthening with more specific mechanisms for replication across Pacific SIDS contexts.

c) Policy coherence is well-demonstrated through alignment with national strategies and NDCs.

Agency's Comments Thank you, the advice is noted and already actioned upon, including as per responses above (see para 28 and highlighted changes in the GEF datasheet) and will be further taken into account for CEO Endorsement phase

6 C. Alignment with GEF-8 Programming Strategies and Country/Regional Priorities

6.1 Is the project adequately aligned with focal area and integrated program strategies and objectives, and/or adaptation priorities?

Secretariat's Comments

Yes, the project is in alignment with LDCF focal area strategies and adaptation priorities. It directly supports the draft GEF-8 LDCF Programming Strategy's Infrastructure Theme by addressing persistent urban infrastructure gaps that increase flood vulnerability, while contributing to the Solutions and Approaches Theme through integrated grey-green infrastructure leveraging IDA resources. The approach appropriately addresses SIDS-specific vulnerabilities through integrated coastal zone management, disaster risk management, and nature-based solutions, while maintaining strong coherence with Solomon Islands' 2021 NDC adaptation priorities including urban risk reduction, climate-responsive planning capacity, and inclusive participation of vulnerable groups.

Agency's Comments Thank you.

6.2 Is the project alignment/coherent with country and regional priorities, policies, strategies and plans (including those related to the MEAs and to relevant sectors)

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

6.3 For projects aiming to generate biodiversity benefits (regardless of what the source of the resources is - i.e. BD, CC or LD), does the project clearly identify which of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework the project contributes to and how it contributes to the identified target(s)?

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

7 D. Policy Requirements

7.1 Is the Policy Requirements section completed?

Secretariat's Comments Yes, and relevant additional documentation has been made available as Annexes.

Agency's Comments Thank you

7.2 Is a list of stakeholders consulted during PIF development, including dates of these consultations, provided?

Secretariat's Comments Yes. It is well noted that annexed stakeholder engagement plan outlines consultations in project development as well as a stakeholder engagement strategy that discusses potential roles of different stakeholder related to project components. It is expected that further stakeholder engagement and consultation will be carried out during project development to inform project components and activities. In addition, please elaborate further in the risk table on stakeholders, key risks and specific measures to address these.

Agency's Comments

Thank you. Additional information on stakeholders risks and mitigation measures to address them has been included (see para 62 of Concept note).

Additional information also added under stakeholder risk

8 Annexes

Annex A: Financing Tables

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

STAR allocation?

Secretariat's Comments

This is compliant with standard GEF agency fee structures for the World Bank. PMC is compliant with GEF policy. PMC Percentage: 4.76% of GEF grant

Agency's Comments Thank you

Focal Area allocation?

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

LDCF under the principle of equitable access?

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

SCCF A (SIDS)?

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

SCCF B (Tech Transfer, Innovation, Private Sector)?

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

Focal Area Set Aside?

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

8.2 Is the PPG requested within the allowable cap (per size of project)? If requested, has an exception (e.g. for regional projects) been sufficiently substantiated?

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

8.3 Are the indicative expected amounts, sources and types of co-financing adequately documented and consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines?

Secretariat's Comments

Sources are identified in the PIF, not additional documentation presented, except Meeting minutes. **PO to advise**

Agency's Comments

Thank you.

Co-financing letter will be provided at CEO Endorsement in line with GEF policy

Annex B: Endorsements

8.4 Has the project been endorsed by the country? (ies) GEF OFP and has the OFP at the time of PIF submission name and position been checked against the GEF database?

Secretariat's Comments Letter has been provided by current OFP, **but the budget requested in the OFP letter does not match the budget of the PIFs. Please revise.**

Agency's Comments

Thank you.

As per PPO advise, "Letters of Endorsement can allocate more than the amount in Portal, but not the other way around. For this project, as long as in Portal the GEF Financing is not above \$9,333,000, and the Agency Fee does not go above \$886,000, no new LoE is required."

Please see email exchange with PPO enclosed in the roadmap.

Are the OFP endorsement letters uploaded to the GEF Portal (compiled as a single document, if applicable)?

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's CommentsThank you

Do the letters follow the correct format and are the endorsed amounts consistent with the amounts included in the Portal?

Secretariat's Comments[see comment above, letter does not match PIF]

Agency's Comments

Thank you.

Noted, please see response above and emails from PPO.

8.5 For NGI projects (which may not require LoEs), has the Agency informed the OFP(s) of the project to be submitted?

Secretariat's Commentsn/A

Agency's Comments
Annex C: Project Location

8.6 Is there preliminary georeferenced information and a map of the project's intended location?

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

Annex D: Safeguards Screen and Rating

8.7 If there are safeguard screening documents or other ESS documents prepared, have these been uploaded to the GEF Portal?

Secretariat's Comments

d) Oct 2025 update: Cleared Designation corrected, fragility dimensions integrated into risk assessment and mitigation strategies and Comprehensive documentation of consultations with vulnerable groups provided. **Subject to OP review**

•We note that WB attached the Environmental and Social Review Summary Appraisal Stage, and the project classified the ESS risk as moderate. In the PIF, "This Project involves at least one fragile and conflict affected state" said "false". However, Solomon Islands is one of the countries listed under the Institutional and Social Fragility in the World Bank's FY26 List of Fragile and Conflict-affected Situations. In addition, it is not clear in the PIF whether additional consultations with informal settlements, waste pickers, and persons with disabilities were conducted for CAUSEII and results of the consultations were reflected in the concept of CAUSEII

- Please correct project involvement in fragile and conflict affected state and provide conflict and fragility assessments and strategies applied for this project.
- Please provide more information about consultations with vulnerable populations particularly with informal settlements, waste pickers and persons with disabilities at this stage and information of how the project concept integrated into results of these consultations.
- Please elaborate further consultation and engagement process with these vulnerable populations during the project preparation stage.

Agency's Comments

Thank you

Noted. In Basic Information sheet, 'Fragile States' is marked as applicable for Solomon Islands. Additional information on consultations with vulnerable groups and strategies related to the fragility context have been added (see para 57 and 62). This will be further strengthened with consultations carried out for CEO Endorsement.

Annex E: Rio Markers

8.8 Are the Rio Markers for CCM, CCA, BD and LD correctly selected, if applicable?

Secretariat's CommentsN/A

Agency's Comments

Annex F: Taxonomy Worksheet

8.9 Is the project properly tagged with the appropriate keywords?

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

Annex G: NGI Relevant Annexes

8.10 Does the project provide sufficient detail (indicative term sheet) to take a decision on the following selection criteria: co-financing ratios, financial terms and conditions, and financial additionality? If not, please provide comments. Does the project provide a detailed reflow table to assess the project capacity of generating reflows? If not, please provide comments. Is the Partner Agency eligible to administer concessional finance? If not, please provide comments.

Secretariat's CommentsN/A

Agency's Comments

9 GEFSEC Decision

9.1 Is the PIF and PPG (if requested) recommended for technical clearance?

Secretariat's Comments Thank you for the submission. Please address comments and suggestions in a revised version

Agency's Comments

9.2 Additional Comments to be considered by the Agency at the time of CEO Endorsement/ Approval

Secretariat's Comments

Kindly note several comments with suggestions for the next phase.

Also, please include relevant gender-specific indicators in the RF; 2) In the development of the Gender Action Plan, please include specific budget lines, as appropriate and plans for monitoring and reporting on the GAP. Under M&E, please reflect that reports submitted (MTR and TE) include gender-specific results and progress in the implementation of the Gender Action Plan.

Agency's Comments

Thank you.

Noted. GAP presented at CEO Endorsement will ensure sufficient budget for implementation. M&E section updated in portal to include tracking of gender indicators. Results framework will include gender specific indicators

Review Dates

First Review

Additional Review (as necessary)

Additional Review (as necessary)

Additional Review (as necessary)

Additional Review (as necessary)

PIF Review
9/28/2025

Agency Response