



Mesoamerica Critical Forest Biome IP Regional Coordination, Knowledge Sharing and Support Project

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

11278

Countries

Regional

Project Name

Mesoamerica Critical Forest Biome IP Regional Coordination, Knowledge Sharing and Support Project

Agencies

IUCN

Date received by PM

5/31/2024

Review completed by PM

9/10/2024

Program Manager

Pascal Martinez

Focal Area

Multi Focal Area

Project Type

FSP

CEO

Part I - General Project Information

1. a) Is the Project Information table correctly filled, including specifying adequate executing partners?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

June 5, 2024:

GEF Agency Project ID is missing. Please complete.

August 5, 2024:

GEF Agency Project ID is added in the attached CEO endorsement in Word but it is still missing in the Project Information table. Please complete the information in the Portal.

August 30, 2024:

Thank you for adding the GEF Agency Project ID. Cleared.

Agency Response

July 25, 2024

Comment addressed. Agency number is P04458. Information adjusted into the CEO Endorsement (p.4,Table 1)

August 13th, 2024

Comment addressed. IUCN ID Number added into the GEF portal.

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

June 5, 2024:

Considering the role of primary forests in climate change mitigation and the rationale of this program, the Climate Change Mitigation objective should be tagged as "Principal Objective (2)" such as biodiversity. Please amend accordingly.

August 5, 2024:

The Rio Marker is correctly amended in the attached CEO endorsement in Word but it is still missing in the Project Information table. Please complete the information in the Portal.

August 30, 2024:

Not addressed. The Climate Change Mitigation objective is still tagged as Significant Objective (1) instead of "Principal Objective (2)". Please amend as requested in the previous reviews.

September 10, 2024:

Partially. The Climate Change Adaptation objective should be tagged as Significant Objective (1) or "no contribution", and not as "Principal Objective (2)". Nevertheless, as it is the only remaining comment and it is not critical for the project, in the interest of time, the response is accepted.

Agency Response

July 25, 2024

Comment addressed, this is adjusted according to the suggestion. (p.4, Table 1)

August 13th, 2024

Comment addressed. Please find the adjustment in the portal

September 5, 2024.

Comment addressed. CC mitigation objective adjusted.

2. Project Summary.

- a) 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 outcomes?
- b) Does the summary capture the essence of the project and is it within the max. of 250 words?
- c) [If a child project under a program] Does the project summary include adequate and substantive link with the parent program goal and approach?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

June 5, 2024:

- a) The RCP should indeed contribute to amplify the efforts of country projects, but it should be clear in the summary that the RCP needs to report at the whole biome level. Please, make it clear.
- b) The summary says the the main efforts of the RCP are focused on Component 4 while this component represents only 29% of the project budget. This looks contradictory and raise questions about the relative importance given to the other components. Please clarify what is meant to be said here about the component 4.
- c) Yes. cleared.

August 5, 2024:

- a) and b) Again, amendments are made in the attached CEO endorsement in Word but the comments are not addressed in the Portal. Please complete the information in the Portal.

August 30, 2024:

Thank you for the clarification in the Portal. Cleared.

Agency Response

July 25, 2024

- a) Please see changes in paragraph 1 and 3 of 'Project summary?'. (p.5)
- b) Please see changes in para 3 of the project summary. We removed the reference to avoid misunderstandings. The reference. - while not phrased properly - wanted to highlight the importance of component 4 to achieve the coordination objectives of the RCP. (p.6)
- c) N/A

August 13th, 2024

- a) B) Comment addressed. Adjustments already charged into the project summary.

3. Project Description Overview

- a) **Is the project objective statement concise, clear and measurable?**
- b) **[If a child project under a program] Is there a project Theory of Change that is aligned and consistent with the overall program goal and approach?**
- c) **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?**
- d) **Are gender dimensions, knowledge management, and M&E included within the project components and budgeted for?**
- e) **Are the GEF Project Financing and Co-Financing contributions to PMC proportional?**

f) Is the PMC equal to or below 10% (for MSP) or 5% (for FSP)? If above, is the justification acceptable?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

June 5, 2024:

a) The project objective should reflect more clearly the rationale and role of the RCP (as opposed to the national projects) which is to develop synergies and coordinate actions at regional level so that the results of the Program are higher than the sum of its part. Such clarification could be made changing "conserve" with "improve and consolidate the conservation of" and highlighting somehow the importance of regional coordination and support, synergies, capacity building... Please consider reformulating reflecting the specific objective of the RCP (rather than the general objective of the whole Program).

b) Yes but the TOC needs some clarification and correction as mentioned below. Please address the comments made below on the TOC.

c)

c.1. It is unclear how the outcome 1.2 (Key regional policy and regulatory instruments prioritize primary forest conservation) will be achieved through its only 2 identified outputs (improved information + gender consideration). How concretely key regional policy and regulatory instruments will be modified to prioritize primary forest conservation? Please clarify.

c.2. Similarly to the comment above, it is unclear how the outcome 2.1 (Improved protection of primary forests in protected areas) will be achieved through its only 2 identified outputs (collecting and sharing information). How can improved protection be actually achieved through only collecting and sharing information? Please clarify.

c.3. The title of component 2 includes the acceleration of restoration of primary forests (along with protection). Nevertheless, none of the outcomes and outputs under this component explicitly mentions restoration-related focus. Please make it clear in the name of the outputs/components, as well as in the component/activities description, how the restoration will be accelerated under component 2.

c.4 The output 2.2.1 only considers transboundary OECMs while the outcome 2.2 targets OECMs in general as it should be considering the IP expected main interventions. Will the RCP only support works on transboundary OECMs? Please clarify ensuring all OECMs are considered by the RCP.

c.5. The name of the output 3.2.1 is unclear. Will the business models be created, developed, identified or promoted? Please clarify what this output is about.

c.6. The output 4.2.5 includes Program monitoring and reporting while there is a specific M&E element (kind of specific last component) in the project structure. Isn't it a repetition of M&E activities? if not why splitting the M&E activities in 2 different parts of the project? Please clarify.

d) As commented below, the gender dimension needs to be clarified and strengthened.

e) and f) Yes, cleared.

August 5, 2024:

a) The summary is more relevant for the RCP but the amendment is not made in the Portal. Please copy the text in the Portal.

b) Thank you for clarifying the ToC. Cleared.

c) Thank you for all the clarification provided. But again, the amendments are not made in the Portal. Please amend the Project Description Overview table in the Portal as expected.

d) Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

August 30, 2024:

a) Thank you for the improvement. Cleared.

c)

c.1, c.2 and c.6. Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

c.3. The amendment is not made in the Child Project Description Overview table. Please amend this table too.

c.4. Thank you for the clarification in the review sheet. Nevertheless we don't see any amendment in the Portal entry where the formulation remains unclear. Please amend the output 2.2.1 in Portal entry to reflect what is clarified in the review sheet.

c.5. The change is not made in the Child Project Description Overview table. Please amend this table too.

September 10, 2024:

Thank you for the amendments. Cleared.

Agency Response

July 25,2024.

a) Comment addressed. Thank you, the objective is now adjusted to reflect better the regional knowledge management character of the program. New objective text is: ? Improve and consolidate the conservation of Mesoamerica's primary forests through strengthened governance, promote inter sectoral coordination and policy coherence, conservation, and restoration, while developing synergies and coordinating actions at the regional level to mobilize stable long-term funding and improve capacity-building activities. This will ensure a sustainable flow of ecosystem services for the region, its people, and the planet.? (p.6, table 2)

b) Comment addressed. Please see relevant comments a.1-a.4 under Section 5 that are focusing on the ToC. (p. 26)

c)

c.1 Please note that outcome 1.2 includes 2 identified outputs which refer to a) information and b) integration of strategic actions for primary forest protection in 3 key policies. Gender as a cross-cutting theme in the RCP will inform the transformation of the policies. To increase clarity the phrase ?gender transformative? was removed from the title and only clarified in the narrative.

We consider that on a regional level the ERAM and ERAS policies are key for addressing the barriers identified. Currently, these policies do not incorporate primary forests protection. Output 1.2.2 will ensure that the regional policies specifically incorporate and operationalise primary forest conservation objectives that also address the IPLC, women and youth needs. (p.7, table 2)

c.2 Comment addressed. Please note that collecting and sharing information is a step to inform policies and ensure that there can be evidence-based decision making. As mentioned above, key intervention of outcome 1.2 is the operationalisation of primary forests conservation in the flagship regional policies.

c.3 Comment addressed. Thank you, Output 2.1 title and description are now amended to address the comment. (p.7, table 2)

c.4. Narrative of outcome 2.2. updated: Please note that the Mesoamerica CFB IP and the RCP will not only specifically work to promote transboundary OEMCs and effectively utilize this tool on a biome level. In particular the RCP will provide regional trainings, webinars and specific tools to facilitate establishment and improved management of OEMCs addressing the different competencies, institutional frameworks between the countries. At the same time, it will promote the development of transboundary protocols to implement OEMCs in ecosystems shared between countries based on countries demands and support the elaboration of binational / regional roadmaps for supporting transboundary OEMC based on gap analysis between national frameworks for OEMCs. (p.34, para.2)

c.5 Comment addressed. The output 3.2.1 is now amended as ?Innovative business models for forest-friendly goods and services enhanced.?(p.8, table 2 and p. 36 para 1)

c.6 Comment addressed. Thank you. This has been clarified in the description of output 4.2.5 (p. 40 para 3). Please note that the output will focus on the IP level M&E while the M&E component will focus on the RCP M&E.

d) Comment addressed. Thank you, please see how gender was strengthened in the following :

- The result framework currently includes gender disaggregated indicators/targets. (p.59)
- The GAAP is now available

Please also see our response in the relevant questions below.

August 13th, 2024

a) Comment addressed. Adjustments already charged into the project summary.

b) cleared.

c) Comment addressed. Adjustments already charged into the project overview section.

d) cleared.

September 5, 2024.

c.3. Comment addressed. Project overview table adjusted in out

c.4. Please note that the amendment is included in the portal (see provided screenshot) and the CEO - Endorsement.

2.2: Increased area of OECMs that protect primary forests integrity and expand functionality

-----g.
2.2.1: Collaboration agreements for transboundary OECM within the framework of the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor.

		2.2: Increased area of OECMs that protect primary forests integrity and expand	making. 2.2.1: Collaboration agreements for transboundary OECMs within the framework of the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor.	GEF Trust Fund	724,461	3,863,111
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c.5. Comment addressed. Output 3.2.1 adjusted as in the CEO endorsement request adjustment.

4. Project Outline

A. Project Rationale

- a) Is the current situation (including global environmental problems, key drivers of environmental degradation, climate vulnerability) clearly and adequately described from a systems perspective and adequately addressed by the project design?
- b) Have the role of stakeholders, incl. the private sector and local actors in the system been described and how they will contribute to GEBs and/or adaptation benefits and other project outcomes? Is the private sector seen mainly as a stakeholder or as financier?
- c) If this is an NGI project, is there a description of how the project and its financial structure are addressing financial barriers?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

June 6, 2024:

a) Yes, the current situation is well and clearly described, including the problems, drivers and barriers justifying the regional approach in complement to the national CPs. Please consider the limited comments below:

a.1. The geographical scopes of the Forestry and Climate Change Fund and of the Mesoamerican Territorial Fund are not precised. Please clarify the countries where these Funds operate.

a.2. None of the barriers refer to restoration and IPLCs. Does it mean that there is no need for the RCP to intervene on these topics? Please clarify in the barriers what could justify RCP interventions to improve/accelerate/scale-up works being done at national level on restoration and IPLCs empowerment.

a.3. The project justification says the objective of the Program "will be achieved by the country projects of the three participating countries". There are 6 countries participating in the Program, not 3. Please correct accordingly.

b) The description of the role of stakeholders in the baseline and in the project is missing or very vague. Please identify the key stakeholders, clarify their current role in the baseline

(under the project rationale) and present their expected role in the description of all the outputs (under the project description).

c) N/A

August 5, 2024:

a) and b) Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

Agency Response

July 25, 2024

a.1 Comment addressed. Please see the amendments in paragraphs 4 and 5 of the "Regional initiatives" sub-section. (p.18)

a.2 Comment addressed. Please note that the restoration and IPLCs are now specifically included in barriers 1 (p.20, para 6) and 3 (p.21, para 3), and 4 (p.22, para 1) respectively.

a.3 Comment addressed. This was updated in of the Project justification sub-section (p.25, para. 4)

b) Comment addressed. Please see the Key Stakeholders sub-section added in the baseline. (p.19). Please also note that WCS is further involved in the CFB IP, in particular in the National Child project of Honduras and Guatemala.

August 13th, 2024

Cleared.

5 B. Project Description

5.1 a) Is there a concise theory of change (narrative and an optional schematic) that describes the project logic, including how the project design elements are contributing to the objective, the identified causal pathways, the focus and basis (including scientific) of the proposed solutions, how they provide a robust approach? Are underlying key assumptions listed?

b) [If a child project under a program] Is the Theory of change aligned with and consistent with the overall program goal and approach?

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? [If a child project under a program] Does the description include how the alternative aligns with and contributes to the overall program goal and approach?

d) Are the project components (interventions and activities) described and proposed solutions and critical assumptions and risks properly justified? Is there an indication of why the project approach has been selected over other potential options?

e) Incremental/additional cost reasoning: Is the incremental/additional cost reasoning properly described as per the Guidelines provided in GEF/C.31/12? Has the baseline scenario and/or associated baseline projects been described? Is the project incremental reasoning provisioned (including the role of the GEF)? Are the global environmental benefits and/or adaptation benefits identified?

- f) Other Benefits: Are the socioeconomic benefits resulting from the project at the national and local levels sufficiently described?**
- g) Is the financing presented in the annexed financing table adequate and demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objectives? Are items charged to the PMC reasonable according to the GEF guidelines?**
- h) How does the project design ensure resilience to future changes in the drivers and adaptive management needs and options (as applicable for this FSP/MSP)?**
- i) Are the relevant stakeholders (including women, private sector, CSO, e.g.) and their roles adequately described within the components?**
- j) Gender: Does the gender analysis identify any gender differences, gaps or opportunities linked to project/program objectives and activities and have these been taken up in component design and description/s?**
- k) Are the proposed elements to capture and disseminate knowledge and learning outputs and strategic communication adequately described?**
- l) Policy Coherence: Have any policies, regulations or subsidies been identified that could counteract the intended project outcomes and how will that be addressed?**
- m) Transformation and/or innovation: Is the project going to be transformative or innovative? [If a child project under an integrated program] Are the specific levers of transformation identified and described? Does it explain scaling up opportunities?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

June 7, 2024:

- a) There is a concise TOC but please consider the following comments:
 - a.1. There are inconsistencies in the TOC as compared to the project description. In the TOC diagram, the titles of the outcomes 1.1, 1.2 and 4.1 refer to local/national actions while it is not the case in the project description and not relevant for the regional coordination platform. Also the component 2 only refers to Trifinio Biosphere reserve. This is not consistent with the project description and the program includes the other primary forests in the Region. The title of component 3 and its outcomes 3.1 and 3.2 are different in the project description. The title of component 4 and its outcome 4.1 is different in the project description. Please amend the diagram and make sure it is consistent with the project description.
 - a.2. The identified causal pathways are unclear as the outputs/activities are missing. We don't know how the outcomes lead to the expected results. Please clarify how the proposed outputs/activities lead to the expected results in the narrative and in the diagram of the TOC.
 - a.3. There are 2 "Barrier 4" in the diagram of the TOC. Please correct.
 - a.4. Please update the TOC as needed to make it consistent with the project description after addressing GEF all Sec comments.
- b) Yes considering the adjustment requested above. Cleared.
- c) Yes, cleared.

d)

d.1. Under component 2, we learn that "This component supports on-the-ground action to protect and restore primary forests". Also, under the outcome 2.1, we learn that "The program will provide direct support to improve the management effectiveness of the protected areas". Please note that the RCP is not expected to support such activities at country level. National child projects should do it. Please adjust the focus and clarify the content of this component to ensure activities of the RCP remain relevant at regional level.

d.2. The nature of activities related to KM in the C4 is interesting, especially how the MesoAmerica IP is going to work and exchange with the other CFB IP regions. However, the connection with the global level is not clear. Please, clarify.

d.3. The 1.1.2 is about reinforcing agreements for cross-border collaboration in protected areas. Nevertheless we don't see these agreements clearly presented in the baseline. Please clarify what these agreements are.

d.4. On IPLCs, we learn that in many cases the existing legal frameworks and its enforcement often fail to adequately recognize and protect indigenous land rights. IPLCs constitutes an important element of the CFB IP strategy and intervention. Nevertheless, beyond the integration of IPLCs (along with women and rural youth) into decision-making processes in the outputs 1.3.2, the project description remains unclear on its support to IPLCs. Please clarify under the description of the components how the project will support the capacity, rights and therefore power on land management, of the IPLCs.

d.5. An important focus is made on the rural youth strategy of the SICA region. Please clarify how this support is aligned with the IP objectives and why GEF support is needed in addition to what the CAC is already doing.

d.6. The limited capacity is identified as one of the key barriers. It is indeed a very important one. While we find some limited consideration of capacity building on specific topics (resource mobilization and value chains respectively under the outputs 3.2.1 and 3.2.2), it is not clear how the project will tackle this important barrier in a more systemic/general manner. Please clarify as needed in the relevant project outputs/outcomes.

d.7. On the interoperability with the other RCPs we do note the support to share knowledge and cooperate with the other biomes of the IP under component 4. While the proposal mentions the terms of "primary forests", "intact forest landscapes", "intact primary forests" and "intact forests" (we don't know the rationale for using one expression instead of the other depending on the paragraph...), please clarify how the project will ensure the information shared with the other RCPs is consistent and comparable.

d.8 The RCP is also expected to be able to represent the IP at global level in some selected and strategic opportunities. Please be more specific on what activities will be supported at global level.

e) The incremental/additional cost reasoning is unclear. While some baseline initiatives are presented, we don't know clearly what is lacking and how the project will build on and articulate with the baseline. Please clarify this point which is important for the project justification.

f) This is a regional coordination project. The socioeconomic benefits are indirect and are expected to be obtained at local/national level. Cleared.

g) Please see comments below on the project budget. Cleared.

h) The institutional arrangements and certain level of flexibility in the budget should ensure resilience to future changes in the drivers and adaptive management needs. Cleared.

i) No, as mentioned above, the relevant stakeholders and their roles are not adequately described within the components. Please complete the description of the outputs/outcomes as needed.

j)

j.1. We do find gender consideration in the project description but we don't find the gender analysis supporting how the gender approach should be designed. Please provide the gender analysis for this project. In addition, please consider the following comments:

j.2. Please reflect gender considerations beyond women's participation and ensure that the gender experts and women's groups are invited to decision making processes and facilitate their participation in consideration of their specific needs, for example, childcare, access to transport, time of consultations, meetings, etc.

j.3. Please reflect how gender inequalities with regard to women's access to and knowledge on financial access are going to be addressed by the project (Outputs 3.1.1, 3.1.3)

j.4. Under M&E and Output 4.2.5, please ensure that gender dimensions are integrated, reported, and monitored on. Please upload the GAP and ensure that it is budgeted.

k) Yes, this is one of the key project objectives and mainly embedded in Components 1 and 4. Cleared.

l) Vaguely, mentioning "policies promoting economic growth" and "policies that incentivize productive activities like large-scale agriculture, cattle ranching, forest production and mining". Please clarify in the component description how the RCP will contribute to combat such perverse incentives and more generally, promote policy coherence.

m) The description mentions "four key outcomes, which correspond with the four levers for systems transformation outlined in the GEF-8 strategy: governance and policies, financial leverage, innovation and learning, and multi-stakeholder dialogues". Nevertheless the project

includes 9 different outcomes (and not 4) and it is not clear how the project intends to achieve transformational change. Please elaborate further on how the project will seek systems transformation through the 4 levers.

August 5, 2024:

a), d), e) and i) Thank you for all the clarification provided. Cleared.

j) Thank you for uploading the GAAP and providing the requested clarification. Cleared.

l) Thank you for the clarification. While the inclusion of IPLCs is an important element in the project in its own right, it does not necessarily contribute to policy coherence. Alternatively, the RCP can consider the inclusion of decision-makers and policymakers from different sectors in the regional multisectoral meetings that will be organized (Output 1.3.1). These can contribute to the exchange of information, success, and best practices among the decision-makers across the different ministries in different countries. It might also be beneficial to establish a working group that includes representatives from different ministries from the countries in the region for additional opportunities for policy and priority alignment as well as knowledge and learning. Please consider these elements in the proposal. Please also note that the page number in the document is different from the page number indicated in the review sheet, which makes it difficult to check.

m) Thank you for the additional information. Cleared.

August 30, 2024:

l) Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

Agency Response

July 25, 2024.

a.1 . Comment addressed. The above changes have been made and the inconsistencies removed from the ToC diagram and narrative. (p.26, Figure 2)

a.2. Comment addressed. The causal pathways have been added in the ToC diagram and in the narrative of each component. (p.26, Figure 2). Please see arrows linking components and outcomes with Barriers and Natural System transformation.

a.3 Comment addressed; ToC is now updated with correct numbering of barriers. (p.26, Figure 2)

a.4 Comment addressed. TOC adjusted and inconsistencies removed. (p.26, Figure 2)

b/c) cleared

d)

d.1 Comment addressed. The work of the Regional Platform in coordinating child projects and its added value to regional decision-making processes was clarified in the narrative of Component 2. (p. 32, para.2). In particular, Component 2 ?will be responsible for ensuring that the protection primary forests are supported by Knowledge Management and learning at a regional biome level, allowing for collaboration and coordination at the regional level, while ensuring that child project achievements in terms of the protection and restoration outcomes at national levels are contributing to the general IP goals. The RCP will not directly support restoration activities in primary forests ? which will be implemented through the national child projects. That said, through the ad-hoc support to national child projects under out Outcomes 2.1, the RCP will contribute to improved fact-based decision-making processes for the identification of restoration areas.?

d.2 Comment addressed. Please note that Outputs 4.2.2 (p.39, para 3) and 4.2.3. (p.40, para 1) have been amended to clarify the points. Please note that the IP will be represented a global level through the high-level advocacy events (Output 1.1.1), the knowledge exchange and south-south cooperation exchanges between the CFB IP (Output 4.2.3), the IUCN and other stakeholders communications channels, and positioning of lessons learnt and knowledge generated under the Mesoamerica Forest IP in global events (CBD COP, Climate COP, IUCN World Conservation Congress, the World Forestry Congress etc).

d.3 Comment addressed. Please see the added sub-section ?Cross border agreements? in the baseline (p.17, para 1-3) that clarifies the relevant cross-border agreements.

d.4 . Comment addressed. Please see amended narrative of 1.3.2. (p.32, para.1). In particular it is clarified that ?The RCP will support the elaboration of a protocol to regulate and formalize the participation of the private sector, civil society, Indigenous peoples and forest communities in CCAD existing Technical Committee on Forests? as well as that This will enable stronger participation of these groups on the regional decision-making process. Moreover, the Technical Committee on Forests will work closely with the Territorial Working Group under the Regional Coordination Project in order to identify and promote lessons learned and good practices concerning decision-making and effective framework and their enforcement to adequately recognize and protect indigenous land rights at regional level. The RCP will promote such practices through the annual workshops to support the national child projects ensuring that IPLC rights and power on land at the national and local levels are enhanced.?

d.5. Comment addressed. Please see the amended narrative of 1.1.3 (p.29, para 1-2). In particular it is clarified that ?The Rural Youth Strategy and network encourage rural youth to participate in decision-making processes, giving them a voice in community activities and recognizing their significant role in the development of the agricultural sector as agents of territorial transformation. They are significant tools for promoting youth leadership in

developing sustainable livelihoods, facilitating access to capacity-building activities that contribute to their adaptation to climate change, and enabling active participation in regional discussions on these topics. Nevertheless, they do not include primary forests conservation within their scope.

The RCP will support the prioritization of measures of the Rural Youth Strategy and the development of a work plan that will specifically address the needs of the rural youth for primary forest landscapes conservation. The RCP will also support the SICA youth network to include primary forests conservation by strengthening associative capacities, networks, and advocacy among rural youth to effectively engage in regional public policy dialogues on primary forest conservation. A key partner for this output will be CAC.?

d.6. Comment addressed. Please see the updated narrative of outputs 3.2.1(p.36, para.1)

Also please note that capacity building will be addressed through all relevant components. Components 1, 2, and 3 include identification of needs and targeted training (e.g. Outputs 1.2.1, 2.2.1, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.2.1.). Best practices and lessons learned for the thematic covered in Components 1,2,3 will also inform the 4.2.2 Program lessons and forest management and governance models documented and disseminated at regional and global levels and Output 4.2.4. Demand-driven gender-responsive annual regional knowledge exchange workshops of Component 4.

d.7 Comment addressed. We have streamlined the use of the term. For clarification, please refer to footnote 3 (p.10), which clarifies the terms used. Please note that recognizing the importance of compatible and comparable data collection and reporting, the RCP through Output 4.2.5 will ensure that there is a clear M&E framework at the IP level. Indicators, definitions, MoV, frequency of data collection, etc., will be streamlined across the IP and that is comparable with the other CFB programs. (p.42, para.1). Additionally, the M&E system in place will ensure that is aligned with GEF requirements and that will facilitate the exchange of experiences, lessons learned, and good practices.

d.8. Comment addressed. Please see the narrative on 4.2.2 and 4.2.3. (p.39, para.3- p.40, para.1). Please note that the IP will be represented a global level through the high-level advocacy events (Output 1.1.1), the knowledge exchange and south-south cooperation exchanges between the CFB IP (Output 4.2.3), the IUCN and other stakeholders communications channels, and positioning of lessons learnt and knowledge generated under the Mesoamerica Forest IP in global events (CBD COP, Climate COP, IUCN World Conservation Congress, the World Forestry Congress etc).

e) Comment addressed. Please review the update Future narratives and incremental cost reasoning sub-section that addresses the above points. (p.23, para. 2 and 3).

f/g/h) Cleared.

i) Comment addressed. Please note that the key stakeholders expected to be involved in the implementation of each output are now included in the narrative (p.41, Table 5)

j.1 Comment addressed. GAAP is now submitted in the platform

j.2 Comment addressed. Please note that there are specific outputs that support women participation in the decision-making process (in particular, 1.3.2: Affirmative actions to integrate IPLCs, women and rural youth in decision-making processes (p.32)). It is also clarified that gender considerations (as well as cultural considerations) will be cross-cutting in all components (e.g. the advocacy plan Output 1.1.1. (p.27-28) and the communication plan Output 4.1.2 (p.38) will be gender responsive).

Please also note that this is the regional coordination project. There will be annual meetings and workshops with the participation of national delegations, as well as online trainings. Gender specific needs are expected to be addressed through specific guidelines for the participation in the annual meetings, workshops and capacity building training. In particular, the GESI expert and the KMAL expert will ensure that the policy for equal representation of genders in the regional activities.

j.3. Comment addressed.

Please note that as mentioned in the CEO endorsement and the GAP women (IPLC and youth) groups will be participating in the events of Outputs 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 to ensure that women (but also IPLC and youth) specific needs are taken into consideration and addressed.

Also note that the above actions that contribute to address gender inequalities regarding women's access to and knowledge on financial access are complemented by actions in other outputs such as

? Output 3.2.1 where mechanisms that specifically address gender disparity will be identified and communicated.

? Output 1.3.2 that strengthens the participation of women (IPLC and youth) in the policy decision making processes at the regional level

? Output 4.1.1 that will facilitate the creation of a working group on women within the regional coordination platform

? Output 4.2.2 that will include regional lessons learned modules on gender and social inclusion addressing the knowledge gap.

? Output 4.1.2 communication plan and advocacy plan Output 1.1.1 will specifically address women and IPLC needs ensuring gender responsiveness and culturally appropriate use of information channels media, promotion of IPLC, women and youth advocacy.

j.4 Comment addressed. Thank you, the GAAP is now uploaded, along with the integration of gender dimensions in the M&E framework as core indicator 11. (p.60)

k) n/A

l) Comment addressed. Please note that some of the policies are included in a footnote (p.14-footnote 33). Please also note that improved policy cohesion and stronger focus on ESS mean that such practices are less common in the recent year. That said, the IP by strengthening IPLC representation in decision-making (O 1.3.2) and providing forest-friendly livelihood alternatives (O 3.2.1), will further contribute to combating such practices. Moreover, the RCP will address policy coherence with the incorporation of primary forest conservation objectives in two key regional policy instruments (ERAM and ERAS), contributing significantly to strengthening policy coherence (O 1.2.2).

m) Thank you this is now changed in p. 51 para 3. Please also see 'Project description?' p. 24-25 that details how the levers of transformation are incorporated in the project design.

August 13th, 2024

l) Thank you for your suggestions. Please note that we have updated the narrative of Output 1.3.1 to ensure that the multi-sector meetings will include policy and decision makers.

Concerning your suggestion to establish a working group that includes representatives from different ministries from the countries, please note that the project considered that such an WG might duplicate coordination efforts from CCAD and CAC without having the policy mandate and legitimacy. Please also note that the project will strengthen the CCAD and CAC coordination processes, including but not limited to the participation of key stakeholders in the CCAD Forest Technical Committee which is the main platform for the elaboration and development of forest policy.

That said, we acknowledge that additional needs may arise during the implementation of the project. For this reason, the project allows the creation of ad-hoc WG to accommodate such needs.

5.2 Institutional Arrangements and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Project

a) Are the institutional arrangements, including potential executing partners, outlined on regional, national/local levels and a rationale provided? Has an organogram and/or funds flow diagram been included?

b) Comment on proposed agency execution support (if agency expects to request exception). Is GEF in support of the request?

c) Is there a description of coordination and cooperation with ongoing GEF and non-GEF financed projects/programs (such as government and/or other bilateral/multilateral supported initiatives in the project area, e.g.).

d) [If a child project under an integrated program] Does the framework for coordination and collaboration demonstrate consistency with overall ambition of the program for transformative change?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

June 7, 2024:

a)

a.1. In the General Child Project Information table (beginning of the Portal entry), IUCN is the only Executing Agency of the project. Nevertheless, this is not so clear in the description under the Institutional Arrangement and Coordination section where other key partners are identified. Please note that the implication of regional organizations and roundtables such as CCAD, CAC, etc. is welcome, as well as the development of regional territorial roundtables with grassroots organizations and indigenous and community organizations with a regional focus, and scientific/advisory ad hoc groups. However, if IUCN is the only executing entity, it will not be consistent with one important purpose of the institutional arrangement which should be to help existing institutions and active regional partners to be actually present in the execution and not only invited in the Project Steering Committee. We would expect more tasks and responsibilities assigned to other partners. Please clarify the engagement of the identified relevant partners and reflect as needed in the budget.

a.2. In particular, please, explain the collaboration with WCS (cofinancier).

b) IUCN plans to play the dual role of implementing and executing Agency. This is accepted considering the specificities of such regional coordination project. Cleared.

c) There is an important GEF IW project under preparation in the region with CCAD. Please consider potential collaboration with this project.

d) Yes if the comment above on how the project will achieve transformational change is addressed.

August 6, 2024:

a), c) and d) Thank you for the clarification and consideration. Cleared.

Agency Response

July 25, 2024

a)

a.1 Please note that the RCP will engage key regional stakeholders in the implementation. The expected engagement of each key stakeholder in the implementation is included under each Output. Key regional stakeholders include all co-financiers, as well as regional coordination bodies (CCAD, CAC). Moreover, the RCP will contribute to strengthening already existing regional coordination bodies (O 1.3.1 multisectoral platform and 1.3.2 inclusion of youth, women and IPLC in the Technical Committee on Forests under CCAD).

That said, the RCP recognizes the need to broaden participation and engagement and addresses this need through the Regional Knowledge Management Platform. (p.32, para.1)

Concerning the reflection of the key stakeholder tasks in the budget, please note that since the exact contribution would be depended on the demands of the more than one country and child project as a regional priorities, the costs are included under consultancies.

a.2 As indicated in the stakeholder baseline WCS will be partners and contribute to the RCP implementation. Please see specific outputs for the participation of WCS (O 1.2.1 p. 32 para 1 O 2.1.1 p. 35 para 1 O 4.2.4 p. 41 para 3) Also note that the demand from regional priorities of more than one child project will define the exact contribution of WCS, though WCS will contribute with capacity building within their areas of expertise.

b) n/a

c) Thank you, the IW GEF project identified focuses on Circular Economy and Chemicals and Waste and would not directly contribute to the CFB IP objectives.

d) cleared.

August 13th, 2024

n/a

5.3 Core indicators

a) Are the identified core indicators calculated using the methodology and adhering to the overarching principles included in the corresponding Guidelines (GEF/C.62/Inf.12/Rev.01)? [If a child project under a program] Is the choice of core indicators consistent with those prioritized under the parent program?

b) Are the project's targeted contributions to GEBs (measured through core indicators and additional listed outcome indicators) /adaptation benefits reasonable and achievable? Are the GEF Climate Change adaptation indicators and sub-indicators for LDCF and SCCF properly documented?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

June 5, 2024:

a) and b) Being the Regional Coordination Project of a Program, this project is not expected to provide direct environmental benefits. Only people benefiting from the project are expected which is the case with a gender balance. We take note of the perfect balance proposed in the beneficiaries with 50% female (1,000). However, without accurate mechanisms and well-defined approaches, it is hard to believe that 50% of beneficiaries will actually be women. Please, clarify.

August 6, 2024:

Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

Agency Response

July 25, 2024

The RCP will promote equal gender representation in its activities and is taking into consideration the special needs of women into consideration in key outputs (please see 1.1.1, 1.3.2, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 4.1.2.). The above outputs will ensure that women (as well as IPLC and youth) needs will have a space to be heard, to be specifically addressed by project interventions, and communicated and advocated. Please also note the majority of the beneficiaries of this RCP will be participants in the capacity building, training sessions, and annual workshops. To ensure that the project will reach the representation target the RCP will provide guidelines to the child projects on the issue, while the GESI expert and the KMAL expert will monitor implementation. We consider, that at the RCP level the guidelines, together with the specific focus of outputs mentioned above be sufficient to ensure the proposed targets.

August 13th, 2024

n/a

5.4 Risks

- a) Is there a well-articulated assessment of risk to outcomes and identification of mitigation measures under each relevant risk category? Are mitigation measures clearly identified and realistic? Is there any omission?**
- 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 assessed and rated and consistent with requirements set out in SD/PL/03?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

June 10, 2024:

- a) Even is the climate risk may not directly affect the RCP, the proposed mitigation measure is very general. Please be more specific on how the RCP can support the national CP to mitigate climate risks based on STAP Guidelines for embedding resilience, adaptation, and transformation into sustainable development projects to address climate-related challenges effectively and by the RAPTA Framework.
- b) Yes, cleared.
- c) Please clarify that the RCP has no on-the-ground operations that could impact or be impacted by environmental factors. The relationship between the RCP and the local situation

is indirect and supportive. Considering the ES risks are considered as low, the ESIA is not warranted. Cleared.

August 6, 2024:

- a) Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.
- c) The risk rating is still "Moderate" in the Portal. Please amend as low.

August 30, 2024:

- c) Thank you for the amendment. Cleared.

Agency Response

July 25, 2024

- a) Comment addressed. Please see the updated answer. Please also note that the regional coordination platform is purposefully designed to allow for adaptive management and multi-stakeholder engagement. (p.49, table 8)
- b) cleared.
- c) Comment addressed. Thank you this is now clarified ?low risk? level adjusted for the regional platform. (p.50, table 8)

August 13th, 2024

n/a

- C) Comment addressed. Risk for Environmental and Social is now qualified as low as requested.

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestN/A

Agency Response

n/a

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

6.1 a) Is the project adequately aligned with Focal Area objectives, and/or the LDCE/SCCF strategy?

b) [If a child project under an integrated program] Is the project adequately aligned with the program objective in the GEF-8 programming directions?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

June 10, 2024:

- a) Yes, cleared.
- b) Yes when the above required clarifications on the project description are provided. Cleared.

Agency Response

July 25, 2024

- a) cleared.
- b) cleared.

August 14, 2024

n/a

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 comment at CEO Endorsement Request

June 10, 2024:

1. The alignment with priorities related the MEAs is not presented (UNCBD, UNFCCC and UNCCD). Please elaborate on how the RCP aligns with the MEAs.
2. The alignment with the GEF-8 Focal area alignment is not clear. In addition to only list the GEF-8 objectives (as it is the case for CCM and LD), please elaborate on how the RCP will align with the relevant FA objectives supporting the national CPs and beyond.
3. Again, the text says "The objectives of both the IP and the RCP will be achieved through four key outcomes". The RCP includes 9 outcomes. Please clarify what are the 4 outcomes mentioned here.

August 6, 2024:

1. Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.
2. Under land degradation and climate change, the sentences are cut "The RCP and the IP will contribute to the LD/BD focal area under Component 2, specifically to the" and doesn't seem to be complete as such. It seems to be a typo with a paragraph break. Please clarify the sentences.
3. Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

August 30, 2024:

2. We don't see the amendment but it may be a Portal problem and it is just a minor format issue. Cleared.

Agency Response

July 25, 2024

1. Comment addressed. Please see the updated GEF-8 Focal area and MEA alignment subsection. (p.53-54)

2. Comment addressed. Please see the updated section that includes a more detailed justification on the contribution. (p.52)

3. Comment addressed. Please see the change in the wording. Now we can read them as ?components?. The wording is now changed accordingly. (p.51, para 3)

August 13th, 2024

1. Cleared

2. Comment addressed. The phrase was complete but in the next line. We adjusted in the portal in the same way that in the CEO Endorsement.

3. Cleared.

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 comment at CEO Endorsement Request

June 10, 2024:

We note some outputs include consideration of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. As this IP aims to generate/enhance biodiversity benefits (indirectly through the national CPs), under the alignment section, please identify which of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework the project contributes to and explain how.

August 6, 2024:

The Portal entry is the main project document for the GEF. Please include a specific section addressing the comment summarizing the information provided in the so called "annex 1 of

Program Framework Document". Please also clarify where exactly this annex 1 is (we don't find it).

August 30, 2024:

Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

Agency Response

July 24, 2024

Please note that in the sub-section "GEF-8 Focal area and MEA alignment" the GBF targets and indicators are specified. Please also review the narrative of Outputs 1.2.1 where "the RCP will support the compilation of evidence generated from national child projects on information gaps such as the contribution of critical forest biomes to i) the protection of ecosystems in danger of collapse (GBF target 1)"; O2.1.1 (p.33) where "The regional coordination project will build upon previous regional assessment reports and data and updated national data on accurate primary forest area maps and Red List of Ecosystems conservation status ensuring the adherence and alignment with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) monitoring framework. "; and O 2.1.2 (p.33) where the conducted "analysis will include the contributions of PA and IPLC to achieve Targets 3 (area conservation) and 4 (halt human induced extinction) of the Kunming- Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework."

August 13th, 2024

Comment addressed. Please note that the alignment with the UNCBD is described in p. 54 in the CEO Endorsement and the reference to the annex 1 of the PFD is removed.

UNCBD

The RCP will result in major biodiversity benefits, including reductions in the rates of loss and degradation of globally primary moist tropical forest ecosystems; enhancement of the habitat and connectivity value of the ecosystems and their surrounding production landscapes; as well as enhanced biodiversity.

In particular, the RCP will directly contribute to the following indicators:

? GBF Target 1: Plan and Manage all Areas To Reduce Biodiversity Loss - Conservation status for Mesoamerican Forest biomes using the Red List of Ecosystems

? GBF Target 3: Conserve 30% of Land, Waters and Seas- Coverage of protected areas and OECMs

? GBF target 4: Halt Species Extinction, Protect Genetic Diversity, and Manage Human-Wildlife Conflict- Realized contributions of IPLCs, OECMs and PAs in addressing the loss of IFL to reduced risk of extinction of threatened species.

7 D. Policy Requirements

7.1 Are the Policy Requirement sections completed?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

June 10, 2024:

Partially. Please address the comments below.

August 6, 2024:

Please address the remaining comments below.

September 10, 2024:

Thank you for addressing the remaining comments. Cleared.

Agency Response^{n/a}

7.2 Is the Gender Action Plan uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

June 7, 2024:

No. Please upload the Gender Action Plan.

August 6, 2024:

Thank you for uploading the GAAP. Cleared.

Agency Response

July 25, 2024

Comment addressed. The Gender Analysis and Action Plan is now uploaded.

August 13th, 2024.

Cleared.

7.3 Is the stakeholder engagement plan uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

June 7, 2024:

No. The Agency answered "Yes" to the statement "We confirm that key stakeholders were consulted during Project Preparation as required per GEF policy, their relevant roles to project outcomes have been clearly articulated in the Child Project Description (Section B) and that a Stakeholder Engagement Plan has been developed before CEO endorsement." Nevertheless, we don't find any description of the consultations that have been carried out and their results. Also the role of the stakeholders is poorly or not described. In addition, we don't find the Stakeholder Engagement Plan. Please complete with: 1- a synthetic report of the consultations that have been carried out (when, where, with whom and what were the main outcomes); 2- a clear description of the role of the stakeholders in the project outputs/outcomes; and 3- the Stakeholder Engagement Plan to be uploaded in the document tab of the Portal.

August 6, 2024:

1. We don't find the Stakeholder Engagement Plan uploaded as a separate document in the document tab of the Portal. Please upload this document.
2. We take note in the review sheet of the description of the consultations carried out. Nevertheless, we don't find this description in the Portal entry. Please make sure this information is included in the Portal entry as it is the main GEF project document.
3. Please clarify how the comment 2 above has been addressed on the clear description of the role of the stakeholders in the project outputs/outcomes. We don't see the response in the review sheet.

August 31, 2024:

- 1, 2 and 3. Thank you for the clarification and additional information. Cleared.

Agency Response

July 25, 2024.

Comment addressed. Please note that the Stakeholder Engagement Plan is now uploaded. Please note that the following workshops and meetings took place in 21 and 22 November 2023 in the city of San Salvador, the inception workshop was held, where the concept note of the regional project, its components and activities were presented, with the aim of identifying information gaps, recommendations and comments on each component, in order to formulate the project proposal. During January to March 2024, multiple virtual interviews were scheduled with the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD), the Central American Agricultural Council (CAC), the Tropical Forest Alliance (TFA), the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and the Forest and Climate Change Fund (FCCF). The interviews were conducted under a semi-structured scheme which aimed to clearly establish a comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement Plan that will guide interactions with key stakeholders throughout the project life cycle. On April 9th, a half-day virtual validation workshop was held to receive comments from all stakeholders included in the

inception workshop and other cofinancing organizations, with an attendance of 50 individuals. The CEO Endorsement request was shared for a one-week online consultation to ensure stakeholders had sufficient time to provide feedback after the workshop. (p. 56)

August 13th, 2024

1. Comment addressed. Please find in addition to the Stakeholder plan included into the section of Environmental and Social Safeguards as an annex, a paragraph related to the consultation process done during the designing phase.

2. Please see description in p. 56 "Stakeholder Engagement" We confirm that key stakeholders were consulted during Project Preparation as required per GEF policy, their relevant roles to project outcomes have been clearly articulated in the Project Description (Section B) and that a Stakeholder Engagement Plan has been developed before CEO endorsement. In 21 and 22 November 2023 in the city of San Salvador, the inception workshop was held, where the concept note of the regional project, its components and activities were presented, with the aim of identifying information gaps, recommendations and comments on each component, in order to formulate the project proposal. During January to March 2024, multiple virtual interviews were scheduled with the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD), the Central American Agricultural Council (CAC), the Tropical Forest Alliance (TFA), the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and the Forest and Climate Change Fund (FCCF). The interviews were conducted under a semi-structured scheme which aimed to clearly establish a comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement Plan that will guide interactions with key stakeholders throughout the project life cycle. On April 9th, a half-day virtual validation workshop was held to receive comments from all stakeholders included in the inception workshop and other cofinancing organizations, with an attendance of 50 individuals. The CEO Endorsement request was shared for a one-week online consultation to ensure stakeholders had sufficient time to provide feedback after the workshop.

3. Please see the following table that is also include as Table 5 in the CEO Endorsement and also into the Environmental and Social safeguards attachemnts in the portal.

Please also see at the end of each output narrative which stakeholders will be engaged in the implementation.

Actor	Role of the Actor	Outputs involve	Effect/Affect of the project on the stakeholder
CCAD	Implementing Organisation	1.1.1- 1.2.2- 1.3.2- 2.2.1- 4.1.1	? Improve cross-sectoral policy and governance conditions at the regional level. ? Create enabling conditions to attract investment in NR.

CAC	Implementing Organisation	1.1.1- 1.1.3- 1.2.2- 1.3.2- 2.2.1- 4.1.1	? Diplomatic incidents in cross-border areas. ? Technical disputes due to contradiction of national regulations vs. regional guidelines.
IUCN	Implementing Organisation	1.2.2- 2.1.1- 2.2.1- 3.1.1- 3.1.2- 3.2.1- 3.2.2- 4.1.1	? Fulfil the institutional mission through relevant technical processes. ? Consolidate its operation through a regional portfolio. ? Reputational impact and impact on the fulfilment of project goals, due to decisions of the national and regional political system.
WCS	Implementing Organisation	1.2.1- 2.1.1 ? 4.2.4	
FCCF	Implementing Organisation	3.2.1	
TFA	Implementing Organisation	1.2.1- 3.1.1- 3.1.2- 3.2.2	
The Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests (AMPB) Central America Indigenous Council (CICA)	Key stakeholder	3.1.1- 3.1.2	

7.4 Have the required applicable safeguards documents been uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

June 7, 2024:

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

July 25, 2024

Cleared.

8 Annexes

Annex A: Financing Tables

8.1 GEF Financing Table and Focal Area Elements: 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 comment at CEO Endorsement Request

June 10, 2024:

Please round all financial numbers in all tables to the nearest dollar and don't include decimal places.

August 6, 2024:

Thank you for the consideration. Cleared.

Agency Response

July 25, 2024.

Comment addressed. Decimals are now removed.

August 13th, 2024.

Cleared.

Focal Area allocation?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

June 10, 2024:

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

July 25, 2024

Cleared

LDCF under the principle of equitable access?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestN/A

Agency Response^{n/a}
SCCF A (SIDS)?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestN/A

Agency Response^{n/a}
SCCF B (Tech Transfer, Innovation, Private Sector)?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestN/A

Agency Response^{n/a}
Focal Area Set Aside?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestN/A

Agency Response^{n/a}
8.2 Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

a) Is the use of PPG attached in Annex: Status of Utilization of Project Preparation Grant (PPG) properly itemized according to the guidelines?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
June 5, 2024:

No. The table only includes one line corresponding to the sum of budgeted amount, amount spent to date and amount committed. Please provide a table including details about PPG activities and related eligible expenditure categories as included in Guidelines to report under Annex D.

August 6, 2024:

Thank you for the additional information. Cleared.

Agency Response
July 25, 2024

Comment addressed. Please find a complete table included in page 58

August 13th, 2024.

Cleared.

8.3 Source of Funds

Does the sources of funds table match with the amounts in the OFP's LOE?

Note: the table only captures sources of funds from the country's STAR allocation

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

n/a

8.4 Confirmed co-financing for the project, by name and type: Are the amounts, sources, and types of co-financing adequately documented and consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines?

e.g. Have letters of co-finance been submitted, correctly classified as investment mobilized or in-kind/recurring expenditures? If investment mobilized: is there an explanation below the table to describe the nature of co-finance? If letters are not in English, is a translation provided?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

June 5, 2024:

1. The amount of co-financing in the letter from EU is different than the one reported in the co-financing table. Please correct amend as needed to ensure the information provided is consistent.
2. The co-financing letter from UNESCO is missing. Please upload this letter in the document tab of the Portal.

August 6, 2024:

1. The letter from EU indicated a support of 25.5 million Euros while the co-financing table indicates 25.5 million dollars. This is not consistent. Please indicate in the co-financing table the equivalent of the EU support in dollars and inform under the co-financing table about the exchange rate used to convert Euros in dollars.
2. Thank you for providing the co-financing letter from UNESCO. Cleared.

August 30, 2024:

1. Thank you for the amendment. Cleared.

Agency Response

July 25, 2024.

1) Comment addressed. Thank you, this is now updated accordingly in the table Confirmed Co-financing for the project, by name and type. (p.59)

2) Comment addressed. Cofinancing letter is now upload in the portal

August 13th, 2024.

Comment addressed. A note was included into the section regarding investment mobilized adjusting the USD value of the EU cofinancing and the exchange rate according to OANDA webpage with the date of may 13th 2024.

?Please note that financing from EU in euros was calculated in USD through OANDA to an exchange rate of may 13th 2024. (1 EUR- 1.076 USD) (EUR: 25.500.000 /USD 27,462,735)?

Changes have been reflected also in the co-financing table and the relevant tables of the main document: [\(General Project Information and Table 2\)](#)

Annex B: Endorsements

8.5 a) If ? and only if - this is a global or regional project for which not all country-based interventions were known at PIF stage and, therefore, not all LOEs provided:

Has the project been endorsed by the GEF OFP/s of all GEF eligible participating countries and has the OFP name and position been checked against the GEF database at the time of submission?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestN/A

Agency Responsen/a

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestN/A

Agency Responsen/a

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestN/A

Agency Responsen/a

Annex C: Project Results Framework

8.6 a) Have the GEF core indicators been included?

b) Have SMART indicators been used; are means of verification well thought out; do the

targets correspond/are appropriate in view of total project financing (too high? Too low?)

c) Are all relevant indicators sex disaggregated?

d) Is the Project Results Framework included in the Project Document pasted in the Template?

e)[If a regional/global coordination child project under an integrated program] Does the results framework reflect the program-wide result framework, inclusive of results from child projects and specific to the regional/global coordination child project? [If a country child project under an integrated program] Is the child project result framework inclusive of program-wide metrics monitored across child project by the Regional/Global Child project?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

June 7, 2024:

a) Yes but there is no mid-term target for the GEF core indicator 11 as it is the case for all the other indicators of the Project Results Framework. Please add a mid-term target for this indicator too.

b) Yes, cleared.

c) Gender consideration is unclear in the projects result framework, showing a lack of mainstreaming. Please, complete.

d) Yes, cleared.

e) The Project Results Framework doesn't mention clearly results linked to its support to national CPs. Please clarify how the interaction and linked activities with the national CPs will be captured and monitored, including as regard to the national capacity building.

f) Editorial comment: Please fit the Logframe into the portal margins by narrowing the columns.

August 6, 2024:

a) and c) Thank you for the consideration and clarification. Cleared.

e) Please clarify where exactly the comment is addressed in the Project Results Framework.

f) Thank you for adjusting the format. Cleared.

August 31, 2024:

e) Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

Agency Response

July 25, 2024

a) Comment addressed. This is now added as the core indicator 11 with the respective mid-term target and final target. (p.60).

b) cleared.

c) Comment addressed. Please review the GAAP that is now uploaded. Also note that under 4.2.5. the IP level M&E framework will be confirmed with the support of the RCP gender expert. Please also note that the RCP results framework has more clearly incorporated gender considerations, while the GAP also includes gender ? specific gender targets.

d) cleared

e) Comment addressed. Please see the proposed M&E plan that clarifies the point.

f) Comment addressed. Logframe is now within the portal margins

August 13, 2024

a, c,f) cleared.

e) Please note that the RCP under 4.2.5 will develop a regional level M&E framework that will ensure alignment and monitoring between the IP projects, including capacity building. That said, we have now included a specific indicator on the results framework? Indicator 24. Level of capacities, technical cooperation and technology transfer within and between participating countries (measured by tailor-made KAP survey among participants)?. You will find the changes in the Results framework highlighted in yellow.

Annex E: Project map and coordinates

8.7 Have geographic coordinates of project locations been entered in the dedicated table? Are relevant illustrative maps included?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

June 10, 2024:

The GEO location information is missing:

GEO LOCATION INFORMATION

The Location Name, Latitude and Longitude are required fields insofar as an Agency chooses to enter a project location under the set format. The Geo Name ID is required in instances where the location is not exact, such as in the case of a city, as opposed to the exact site of a physical infrastructure. These IDs are available on the [GeoNames' geographical database](#) containing millions of placenames and allowing to freely record new ones. The Location & Activity Description fields are optional. Project longitude and latitude must follow the Decimal Degrees WGS84 format and Agencies are encouraged to use at least four decimal points for greater accuracy. Users may add as many locations as appropriate. Web mapping applications such as [OpenStreetMap](#) or [GeoNames](#) use this format. Consider using a conversion tool as needed, such as: <https://coordinates-converter.com> Please see the Geocoding User Guide by clicking [here](#).

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	Geo Name ID	Location & Activity Description
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

Please, either complete the missing information or add a sentence saying "The Geo location information reported at PFD stage may change during the elaboration of the fully developed national CPs. Therefore, the location of the supported project activities at country level will be gathered and confirmed by the Regional Coordination Project once the child projects are endorsed".

August 6, 2024:

Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

Agency Response

Comment addressed. Phrase included in GEO location section. Though the RCP does not directly work on the ground, it coordinates the implementation of all country projects of the Mesoamerica CFB IP, which in turn have target landscapes. An overview map of all target landscapes of the six country projects under the Mesoamerica CFB IP is presented below.

The Geo location information reported at PFD stage may change during the elaboration of the fully developed national CPs. Therefore, the location of the supported project activities at country level will be gathered and confirmed by the Regional Coordination Project once the child projects are endorsed. (p.66)

August 13th, 2024.

Cleared.

Annex F: Environmental and Social Safeguards Documentation and Rating

8.8 Have the relevant safeguard documents been uploaded to the GEF Portal? Has the safeguards rating been provided and filled out in the ER field below the risk table?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

June 10, 2024:

Yes, noting the RCP has no on-the-ground operations that could impact or be impacted by environmental factors. Cleared.

Agency Response

July 25, 2024

cleared.

Annex G: GEF Budget template

8.9 a) Is the GEF budget template attached and appropriately filled out incl. items such as the executing partner for each budget line?

b) Are the activities / expenditures reasonably and accurately charged to the three identified sources (Components, M&E and PMC)?

c) Are TORs for key project staff funded by GEF grant and/or co-finance attached?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

June 7, 2024:

a)

a.1. Please paste the budget in Annex G of the Portal entry so that we can see it directly in the project description.

a.2. If possible please upload the budget in Excel format to make calculations easier.

b)

b.1. The expenses "Offices supplies" and "Rental offices, licenses etc." should be charged to the 100% to PMC but not to project components. Please amend the budget accordingly.

b.2. The salary of the Regional Programme Coordinator should be charged to the PMC and not to the components. Please amend the budget accordingly.

b.3. Please clarify what "Salary and benefits / Staff costs" includes and provide the details of the expense of \$309,427 charged to the PMC.

b.4. Please clarify what are the equipments purchased under Component 4 and ensure they are eligible for GEF funding.

b.5. The costs in consultants seem high (+50% of the project budget). Please justify.

b.6. The level of travel costs is excessive: \$676,000 (288K + 18K + 40K + 50K + 280K). Please clarify and consider reducing this amount.

c) We don't find the TORs for key project staff funded by GEF grant and/or co-finance. Please provide the TORs for key project staff.

August 6, 2024:

a) GEF Sec has uplodaded the Excel version of the budget in the document tab of the Portal. Please paste the budget in Word version in Annex G of the Portal entry.

b)

b.1. Not addressed. As previously mentioned, the expenses "Offices suplies" and "Rental offices, licenses etc." should be charged to the 100% to PMC but not to project components. Please amend the budget accordingly.

b.2. Not addressed. It's difficult to understand how the Regional Programme Coordinator will be able to manage the project with only 20% of his/her time. Some technical contribution of the project manager could be acceptable to some extent (but not 80% of his/her time) and would need to be strongly justified. In addition the uploaded document "Annex - TORs v2" includes a CTA, not a Regional Programme Coordinator. Are they the same person? Please clarify and address the comment. The Agency may wish to seek guidance from GEF Sec on this point.

b.3, b.4, b.5 and b.6. Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

c) Thank you for providing the TORs for key project staff. Nevertheless, the document provided is in review mode. Please provide the final version of the document. Also, as mentioned above the document is not consistent with the budget regarding the CTA and Regional Programme Coordinator. Please clarify.

August 31, 2024:

a) Thank you for uploading the budget in Excel format. We take note the budget is accessible in the Portal entry through a link. Cleared.

b)

b.1. Thank you for the consideration. Cleared.

b.2. We understand the Regional Programme Coordinator has been replaced by a Chief Technical Advisor who is 40% charged to the PMC. Nevertheless we note in the ToRs that his/her technical outputs will be very limited. Please clarify in his/her ToR the concrete technical productions of the Chief Technical Advisor to justify the level of his/her funding by the components.

b.3. We note the very high cost of the "Policy advocacy and coordination expert": \$855,000. Please justify such a cost for an expert (higher than the CTA's one). Sorry for not having raise this point in the previous review.

c) Thank you for the consideration. Cleared.

September 10, 2024:

Thank you for the clarification and amendments. Cleared.

Agency Response

July 25, 2024

a)

a.1 Please note that GEF Portal does not allow to upload the document in excel. Please find project budget in excel inside the document of CEO Endorsement attached to this section. you can find it in page 68. Please note that GEF system only allows to include word documents in annex G. Excel budget will be upload as part of the annexes and also within the same CEO endorsement document as excel attachment in the corresponding section.

a.2 Budget excel uploaded as attachment in the section of the portal related to budget. inside the CEO endorsement (page 68) . GEF Portal does not allow to include excel format as attachment in this section.

b)

b.1 Comment addressed. Offices supplies will be needed to support the implementation of all components (e.g. workshops, meetings etc.)

b.2 Comment addressed. Please note that the 20% of the total of the salary of the Regional Programme Coordinator was included into the PMC. The rest of the Reg coordinator cost are assigned to the components represent the technical support that the Regional Programme Coordinator will provide for the implementation of these components as descried in the ToRs. This Regional coordinator will combine technical and management expertise.

b.3 Please note that the costs correspond to Staff costs only as it is now indicated.

b.4 Please note that the information is now included. The purchase refers to laptops, printers and computer peripherals needed for the implementation of the project.

b.5 The RCP is a knowledge management platform. It will support a significant number of workshops, trainings, capacity building which leads to increased consultancy costs for their development and delivery, as well as potential contracts with other key partners. Please also note that studies linked with Component 1 and Component 2 (indicatively see Output 1.2.1 and 2.1.1) are also increasing the need for consultancies.

b.6 Please take into consideration that the project includes the participation of 6 national child projects as well as the region countries without a national child project to support

key stakeholders travelling. The RCP also agreed to cover the participation costs for part of the delegation of the national child projects to ensure effective coordination and knowledge exchange at the regional level. That said, we have decreased the costs for travel and increased the relevant costs for workshops.

c) The TORs are now uploaded

August 13th, 2024.

a) Comment addressed. Please find enclosed in annex G, word version of the budget due to the portal does not allow to include excel version in this section. You can find the excel version into the documents and roadmap section and also attached as an object into the more recent CEO endorsement as an object in the corresponding section.

b.1) Please see the amendments in budget. The proposed changes have been included.

b.2) Please note that following your suggestions the budget and breakdown of the Regional Programme Coordinator has been amended.

b.3, b.4, b.5, b.6) Cleared.

c) Please also note that the TORs refer to the Regional Programme Coordinator. Changes have now been included to reflect this point.

September 5th, 2024.

b.2. Comment addressed. Please note that the ToRs for the CTA have been updated and specific contribution to each outcome has been included.

b.3. Comment addressed. Please note that there are several consultants including into this category. This package includes policy advocacy and coordination work with key stakeholder institutions CCAD and CAC. The budget line includes services for all the outputs that the two institutions will engage in and not only one particular consultancy. Budget category have been update to reflect it more self explanatory.

Comments of countries: Please note that we included STAP comments and Council responses into annex in the roadmap as part of the document. To make it easier, please also find it into Annex i into the CEO endorsement document. This information is also included into the Annex I: Response to project reviews in the portal.

Annex H: NGI Relevant Annexes

8.10 a) Does the project provide sufficient detail (indicative term sheet) to assess the following criteria: co-financing ratios, financial terms and conditions, and financial additionality? If not, please provide comments.

b) Does the project provide a detailed reflow table to assess the project capacity of generating

reflows? If not, please provide comments.

c) Is the Agency eligible to administer concessional finance? If not, please provide comments.

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestN/A

Agency Responses/a

Additional Annexes

9. GEFSEC DECISION

9.1.GEFSEC Recommendation

Is the project recommended for approval

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

June 10, 2024:

1. Not yet. Please address the comments raised above. In doing so, please indicate in the review sheet where exactly the changes have been made and highlight them in yellow in the Portal entry to facilitate the review process.

2. In addition, the Annex I "Responses to project reviews" is missing. Please complete this annex providing responses to Council and STAP comments at PFD stage that are relevant for the RCP.

August 6, 2024:

1. Not yet, please address the remaining comments. In doing so, please remove the highlights in yellow for the comments already addressed.

2. In addition, the Annex I is still lacking the responses to Council comments (from Canada, Germany and USA). Please complete this annex with the responses to Council comments.

August 31, 2024:

1. Not yet, please address the remaining comments. In doing so, please remove the highlights in yellow for the comments already addressed.

2. In addition, the Annex I is still lacking the responses to Council comments (from Canada, Germany and USA). Please complete this annex with the responses to Council comments.

September 10, 2024:

Thank you for addressing the remaining comments. The CEO Endorsement is now recommended.

9.2 Additional Comments to be considered by the Agency during the inception and implementation phase

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

9.3 Review Dates

	CEO Approval	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review	6/27/2024	7/25/2024
Additional Review (as necessary)	8/7/2024	8/14/2024
Additional Review (as necessary)	8/31/2024	9/5/2024
Additional Review (as necessary)	9/10/2024	
Additional Review (as necessary)		