



# Integrated management of sustainable landscapes for the conservation of the forest biome and the maintenance of functional and ecosystem services in the state of Amazonas, Venezuela

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

## Basic project information

**GEF ID**

11199

**Countries**

Venezuela

**Project Name**

Integrated management of sustainable landscapes for the conservation of the forest biome and the maintenance of functional and ecosystem services in the state of Amazonas, Venezuela

**Agencies**

FAO

**Date received by PM**

6/28/2024

**Review completed by PM**

10/1/2024

**Program Manager**

Celine Augereau ep Coisy

**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

The GEF Agency Project ID is missing. Please complete.

September 19th 2024

Cleared

Agency Response

September 10th, 2024

Kindly note that in the GEF Portal, for this Child project there is no field to include the Agency project ID, which is GCP/VEN/11199/GFF. The Agency Project Document contains the ID in its cover page.

September 30th, 2024

The following comments from GEFSEC were addressed in the latest review, as communicated via email, as the GEF Portal did not upload the comment:

Thanks for all your feedback on our requests and the updated project document. Please, could you classify the ProdDoc CFB IP Document as public in the portal, so that I can select it for circulation ? Could you also ament all the yellow shadows in the CEO endorsement request portal view and please make sure that all the tables fit within the margins ?  
Thanks in advance for all your updates.

No further comments were received. Thank you.

October 7th, 2024.

The portal was reviewed to ensure that the CEO endorsement request pdf doesn't contain text out of margins or highlighted. Thank you.

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

CCM is one of the two most important rationale for the CFB IP (with biodiversity). Please tag the CCM Rio Marker as ?Principal Objective (2)?.

September 19th 2024

Cleared

Agency Response

September 10th, 2024

Thank you and noted, CCM as been marked as principal objective.

## **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

July 16th 2024

The environmental problems and the baseline are clearly presented and according to the project description overview the project looks well aligned with the ASL3. Nevertheless, project elements are very difficult to assess as the project description doesn't follow the usual format with components/outcomes/outputs (it's a long copy-paste of the Agency Prodoc). Potential executing role of the GEF Agency needs to be clarified. Please see detailed comments below.

a. yes cleared

b. The summary is too long (1 page). Please summarize the main elements including the importance of the area, the threats, drivers and barriers, the project approach with its components and the expected Global Environment Benefits.

c. No, the link with the regional Program is missing. Please one short paragraph summarizing how this child project will link with the rest of the regional program ; try to highlight components, outcome or points that are consistent with the main program.

September 19th 2024

b. Cleared

c. Cleared

Agency Response

September 10th, 2024

a. N/A

b. and c. Thank you for the comments, the project summary has been reviewed to simplify the description and a paragraph added as requested.

## **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

July 16th 2024

a. yes cleared

b. Consistently with the main program could you explain how the project will aim to develop financial incentives for the conservation of primary forests and how it will help to reduce perverse incentives that increase pressure on critical forests ? The figure 1 p.19 on the Toc is not readable : please provide a readable document.

c. Please summarize the formulation of each component to get the essential.

- Components :

Under component 4, the link with the regional coordination project is missing. Please complete as needed (we recommend adding a specific output). In general, please consider adding outputs in component 4 as any component should have several outputs.

c.3. The component 4 is a copy-paste of the M&E component. It must be a mistake. Please correct.

- Outcomes : each component should at least contents 2 outcomes. Please adjust the structure of the project consequently.

Outcome 2.1 : Please summarize the formulation to get the essential. This outcome plan to enhance their capacity for the effective co-management of landscapes. The outputs expected then are essentially training programs (outputs 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3). Please explain how the strengthening of the institutions and the capacity of management mainstream the other policies in a way to give coherence between the different ministries. Could you also give details on the way the private sector could be involved ? Could you integrate these aspects into the appropriate outputs ?

Outcome 2.2 is missing. Please precise what is the outcome 2.2

The Toc promote coherence and intersectoral integration which do not seem to be taken into account obviously in the outcomes and outputs.

The Toc also considers that another transformational leverage is the capacity to mobilize investment. This aspect is not clearly describe in the project structure. Please could you complete ?

Considering the importance or the project area it would have been consistent to propose new protected areas created to fully achieve part of the KMGBF. Please explore this solution to provide more important GEBs.

d. In the Project Description Overview, the component 1 doesn?t mention any gender consideration. Please add make clear that the elaboration and implementation of the plans will take into account gender issues.

e. The GEF Project Financing to PMC is 4.8% while the Co-Financing contribution is higher at 5.2%. Cleared.

f. Yes cleared. The PMC is below 5% for FSP.

September 19th 2024

b. Cleared

c. Cleared

d. Cleared

Agency Response

September 10th, 2024

a. N/A

b. The project is proposing to diversify sources of income for the management of ABRAES within the context of the country, while also design a payment for ecosystem services mechanisms to complement public resources. This mention has been included into section B. No perverse incentives have been identified. The updated TOC has been uploaded again as Annex R and referenced in the CEO endorsement.

c. Thank you for the comments. The project structure has been reviewed to simplify the description as recommended, reviewing that outputs are linked with the corresponding outcomes, while also considering that the framework was the result of a participatory design process with several stakeholders, and considering lessons taken from several other projects already implemented in the country.

Regarding component 4, thank you for noting this, it has been corrected.

On the coherence between different ministries, the lack of coordination between institutions and other stakeholders with different visions on the use of the territory is one of the drivers of biodiversity loss identified in the theory of change of the project. Output 2.1.4 is being proposed for this reason, aiming to establish coordination platform among relevant stakeholders. The description has been updated to be more explicit on this, and the output is further described in Section B. The output involves generating mechanisms for coordination, articulation, information exchange, and decision-making among national, state, and municipal institutions, including MINEC and other ministries, the Governor's Office (GEA), municipalities, regional universities, communities, indigenous organizations, and other key actors (including NGOs and other private sector institutions). These mechanisms may take the form of Working Groups at different levels (state and local, including communities and the private sector) that will operate based on an integrative and multi-use approach. The aim is to promote coordination and alignment of plans and programs on the ground, develop a common vision, facilitate programmatic alignment and complementarities, and optimize the use of invested resources.

On outcome 2.2, thank you for noting this, it has been corrected in the portal.

Regarding coherence, output 2.1.4 was reviewed to better reflect that its purpose is to address the lack of a common ground where different stakeholders can develop a common vision on sustainable development of the Amazon State.

Regarding investments, output 1.2.3 aims to mobilize investments for the management of the protected areas, identifying different possible sources in the context of the country, while 3.1.3 aims to prepare indigenous communities in market plan that will be able to mobilize resources from different sources, such as public programs and sustainable entrepreneurship. Both outputs were reviewed to better reflect this, and they are further described in section B.

About new protected areas, kindly note that the creation of new areas is not considered a priority for the government, as over 70% of the territory of the Amazonas State (out of a total of 17,761,700 hectares) is already currently under ABRAE categories such as national parks, natural monuments, biosphere reserves, forest reserves, and protective zones of different regimes. The priority is to improve the effective management of existing areas, which is also one of the priorities of Target 3 of the KMGBF.

d. Thank you for the comment. Outputs have been reviewed to integrate gender equality and respect for cultural values when developing planning instruments.

e. N/A

f. N/A

#### **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

July 16th 2024

a. The environmental problems and the baseline are clearly presented. The current situation in its regional context is well described.

The key drivers of environmental problem are clearly outlined. It is clearly addressed at the local project area. Cleared

b. The main stakeholders are well described except at the local level and the private sector. Please, could you precise how the Private sector is implicated in the project and its role ? Could you precise the stakeholders implicated at the local level ?

c. N/A

September 19th 2024

b. Cleared

Agency Response

September 10th, 2024



a. N/A

b. Thank you for the comment. The description of local stakeholders has been updated. Due to the isolation of the area, private sector is represented mostly by touristic entrepreneurship and transportation, a brief description was added and also their role in complementing output 3.1.3 on market strategies. The Amazonas State Government and the Mayors of Atures, Autana and Rio Negro will also participate promoting touristic activities and supporting economic ventures.

c. N/A

## **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

July 16th 2024

a. The narrative of the TOC is unclear and mixed with the description of the project components. Please provide a separate and clear section for the narrative of the TOC describing the project logic, the identified causal pathways from the project elements to the expected results and the key assumptions.

b. This is the way the ToC is aligned with the program. The program goal and approach are as follows :

- Expand the coverage of protected areas in the critical forest biomes : yes

- Strengthen the management of existing forests : yes

- Promote Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) and various Nature-based Solutions to achieve conservation outside the protected areas : Could you be more precise on the NBs implemented in the project and how they can be considered as good tools for conservation of forests ?

- Develop integrated land-use planning, including information and monitoring systems : yes

- Support conservation-friendly livelihoods at the local level and improve the sustainability of the ?productive? sectors : yes

- Assist developing financial and other incentives for forest conservation : this aspect is not well describe. Please can you explain how the project will help to achieve this goal.

- Strengthen multi-scale and multi-stakeholder governance and law enforcement : the multi-stakeholders governance is not well describe, and the law enforcement as well. Please can you describe the improvement of forest conservation governance expected, and provide the list of stakeholders implicated.

- Improve land tenure rights and policies especially the legal recognition of the customary rights : Nothing in the project description describe the improvement in terms of law of the legal recognition of indigenous people. Can you explain how the implementation of legal territorial planning or how the institutional governance will improve the rights of the indigenous communities.

- Promote regional cooperation : The place of the Venezuelan project in the program is not very explicit. Could you explain how it fits into the overall program, and how it enables regional cooperation to be set up?

c. The project will built on 3 previous GEF projects : Project ID 5410 "Sustainable forest management and conservation of forests from an ecosocial perspective in the Imataca forest reserve", Project ID 1678 "Integrated Management of Multi-Use Landscapes and High Conservation Value Areas for the Sustainable Development of the Venezuelan Andean Region," Project GEF ID 720642. "Conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in the Caroní river basin of the Bolívar State." and on Small Grants Program of the GEF.

Working on these 3 experiences, can you explain how these projects and the new initiative will contribute to empower indigenous communities and help in the recognition of their customary rights, consistently with the main program.

d. The description is very confusing without a clear structure presenting each component. Please refrain from just copy-paste a long section of the Prodoc. The GEF Portal entry requires specific information. The description is mainly based on assumptions and the projection through ToC but not based on the activities implemented. Please present clearly all the components of the project including their outcomes, outputs and concrete activities contributing to the outputs.

There is no information about why this initiative has been selected over other options

There is no explication on the critical risks in this section but on the Key risks table.

e. There is no description on the incremental cost reasoning. Please precise this point.

The GEBs are no either identified and described. Please justify the production of GEBs.

f. The description explain that the project will contribute to enhance the socio economic aspects of the forests resources management by socio-economic initiatives implemented. Please explain with which activities and interventions.

g. The financing tables are filled.

We learn that the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) "has the authority to lead the day-to-day execution of the project, as well as to supervise and guide the management, administration, and technical quality of the project". Nevertheless, according to the budget table, only 5% of its cost is charged to the PMC. The described functions of the CTA should not be charged to the components but to the PMC. Please revise accordingly.

Please provide details on the costs for the restoration of 50 Ha or 1500 Ha which appeared high.

Please justify the important international travels planned while the project doesn't describe any consistent cooperation aspiration.

In comparison, trainings and workshops are very important (component 2) and the budget seems low. Could you justify ?

Could you precise what are the expected equipment for boats while no activities on water is described ?

h. The description doesn't clearly explain how the project design ensure resilience to future changes in the drivers and include adaptative management. Please elaborate on this aspect.

i. No. Please provide the list of stakeholders and their role in decision making, governance, activities... for each component and activities.

j. Please complete in the description the implication of women at the level of components, outcomes and outputs to see clearly the cross cutting approach described in the document. We would like to suggest to incorporate in your description the gender-related activities outlined in paragraph 65 of the Gender Action Plan to ensure the achievement of the outcomes. For instance, the Agency is requested to:

i) Please ensure that the plannings and financial strategies are gender responsive, e.g., Outputs 1.1.1, 1.2.1, 1.2.2 and 1.2.3

ii) Ensure that trainings actively include and target women and women's organizations, e.g. Output 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3.

iii) Ensure that women's voices and representation in governance processes are ensured, Output 2.1.4

iv) Please ensure during project implementation, that the PIRs, the MTE and the FE include an analysis and review of all dimensions of the GAP and relevant gender dimension of the project.

k. No, please describe the interventions and activities linked to the implementation of communication plan and knowledge dissemination.

l. No. The project do not identify policies or regulations that could counteract with it. Please identify the possible problems coming from other policies and bad incentives strategies .

m. The project is going to be transformative and the specific levers of transformation are identified and described. It does not explain scaling up opportunities. Please complete.

September 19th 2024

- a. Cleared
- b. Cleared
- c. Cleared
- d. Cleared
- e. Cleared
- f. Cleared
- g. Cleared
- h. Cleared
- i. Cleared
- j. Cleared
- k. Cleared
- l. Cleared
- m. Cleared

### Agency Response

September 10th, 2024

a. Noted. This section has been reviewed to facilitate the reading and presentation.

b. On Nature based solutions, mention to examples of nature based solutions has been included a part of the description of component, referencing ecosystem restoration, improve soil fertility and sustainable agriculture among others.

A description explaining the development of financial incentives in accordance with Venezuelan legal framework has been included as part of Component 3.

On governance and law enforcement: Section B has been updated to emphasize that, for aspects of governance and policy implementation within the project, the creation of an inter-institutional and community platform is proposed. This platform will facilitate dialogues among multiple stakeholders, including universities, NGOs, and the private sector

(Component 2 description), enabling the development of a scenario with shared goals and differentiated responsibilities. The purpose is to explore tools to identify synergies and instruments to be applied in the field, based on existing laws, to ensure the sustainability of all undertaken actions. Stakeholders will participate in a coordinated manner in governance processes and mechanisms for integrated management of sustainable landscapes, with particular interest in land use planning and sustainable productive practices. This platform will be designed to enhance trust and lead to a collective problem-solving process among the multiple stakeholders.

The list of stakeholders is in Annex J of the Agency Project Document which has been uploaded separately for easy reference..

The project is not expected to make improvements to laws related to the rights of indigenous peoples, as Venezuela has a solid legal framework that protects and recognizes these rights. Customary rights are fully recognized in the Constitution of the Republic (Chapter VIII on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Art. 119) and by the Organic Law of Indigenous Peoples and Communities, which in Article 1 emphasizes that "The Venezuelan State recognizes and protects the existence of indigenous peoples and communities as original peoples, guaranteeing the rights enshrined in the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, international treaties, pacts, and agreements, and other universally accepted norms, as well as other laws of the Republic, to ensure their participation in the life of the Venezuelan nation, the preservation of their cultures, the exercise of the self-determination of their internal affairs, and the conditions that make these possible. This Law defines indigenous lands as those in which indigenous peoples and communities, either individually or collectively, exercise their original rights and have traditionally and ancestrally developed their physical, cultural, spiritual, social, economic, and political life. These include land areas, cultivation areas, hunting, fishing, gathering, grazing, settlements, traditional paths, sacred and historical places, and other areas they have occupied ancestrally or traditionally and that are necessary to guarantee and develop their specific ways of life?."

On land tenure rights, the Project is fully framed within these legal guidelines, such that territorial planning and institutional and community governance processes will respect these rights already acquired by indigenous communities and endorsed by the Republic's Laws. As stated, the implementation of the project will respect indigenous rights and strengthen their governance for territorial planning and sustainable management of the Amazonian landscapes. Further details of the legal framework are shown in Table 10 (Legal, Political, and Regulatory Framework Related to Environmental and Social Safeguards of the Prodoc).

Regional cooperation: Noted. More explicit linkages with the program have been integrated along Section B.

c. Thank you for the comment. Section B1 has been updated to include an explanation on how experiences from previous projects will contribute to empower indigenous

communities. These previous projects recognize, promote, and respect community participation and governance. The project will implement successful experiences based on lessons learned in forest co-management, community organization through Direct Communal Social Property Enterprises (EPSDC), participatory monitoring, forest restoration, among others. This new initiative, along with ongoing projects, will contribute to empowering indigenous communities and supporting the recognition of their rights for the sustainable management of their resources, in accordance with the Republic's laws that recognize these rights and the guidelines of the ASL3 regional program. This will primarily be realized through forest co-management processes between MINEC and the Direct Communal Social Property Enterprises (EPSDC), as well as the formulation and implementation of participatory plans for improving livelihoods and developing sustainable ventures.

d. Noted. The description has been reviewed in order to make it simpler and clearer. Further details can be found on Annexes B and E of the Agency Project Document.

A paragraph explaining why this initiative has been selected has been integrated into section B.

Critical risks have been integrated into section B description.

e. A paragraph to explain the incremental reasoning has been included to clarify, as well as a description on the production of GEBs.

f. The socioeconomic benefits will be achieved through the implementation of Component 3, which aims to improve the livelihoods and food security of multi-ethnic communities in productive forests and savannas, considering gender equality, rural youth, and environmental sustainability. This component has the Outcome: Improving the use and exploitation of forest products and services by indigenous communities through the execution of the following outputs: Output 3.1.1: Participatory community action plans for restoration and co-management in ABRAE and other territories; Output 3.1.2: Sustainable ventures developed and implemented by indigenous communities; Output 3.1.3: Indigenous communities adopt marketing plans to improve their market strategies with local products.

The activities are detailed in Annex E (Detailed Description of the Components) and in Annex D (Budget and Work Plan) of the Agency Project Document.

g. Thank you for the comment. The TOR has been reviewed and corrected, as the leadership of the execution is performed by the National Director designed by the MINEC as main

execution entity. The Director is a staff from the government not charged to the project budget. The Chief technical advisor will provide support to the National Director primarily by providing technical expertise to ensure that the project is being executed to achieve the intended outcomes. This person will liaise with different stakeholders and provide inputs as needed, while also supervising the performance of the PMU. The tasks related to operational and administrative coordination will be performed by a person hired specifically for these matters and charged in their totality to the PMC. The estimated time dedicated to each component has been integrated into the TORs of the CTA, and also the PMC contribution adjusted to better the expected proportions of the technical guidance and coordination support.

On restoration, the strategy involves managing Letters of Agreement with national institutions present in the region and with indigenous communities. The restoration process includes costs for plant production, nursery construction and maintenance, and plant transportation (by foot and river, as there are no land routes for vehicle access and no pack animals in the area). The approximate cost of a plant in the field (planted and maintained) is estimated at around 1.0 USD per plant, with an estimated 400 plants per hectare. This results in an approximate required budget of 600,000 USD for planting 1,500 hectares.

Regarding International travels, is related to activities involving experience exchange, knowledge dissemination at regional events aligned with ASL3. It is justified as a requirement of the Regional Program, which recommends: "Share travel costs between the regional project and national projects. Estimation of the budget that national projects should plan for each year: send 4 people per country to the Annual Conferences and send 4 people to 3 annual events on specific topics to be defined" (ASL3 Workshop, March 2024).

On the cost of trainings, it is planned to carry out 51 training sessions and workshops with a budget of 320,000 USD. It is noteworthy that some of the training sessions will be conducted virtually, according to the design of the programs.

On boats: For the planned field activities, it is necessary to reach the indigenous communities. The distances are very long, and there are no land routes; the only access is by river. The pilot communities are located between 3 and 6 hours away by "curiara" (a type of boat). Outboard motors are required for the support boats, and the cost of fuel is high (ranging between 3 and 6 USD per liter).

h. A paragraph has been included into Section B.

i. Section B has been updated, and the full list of stakeholders is shown in Annex J of the Agency Project Document, "Stakeholder Engagement Plan and Grievance Redress Mechanism".



j. The cross-cutting role of women in the project is outlined in the general description, highlighting the gender dimensions addressed by the GEF and their relation to the project components. However, following the suggestions, the relationship with specific products was clarified, and references to the activities and indicators described in the Gender Action Plan (GAP) were added.

i), ii) and iii): A text to responds to these comments was included into Section B.

iv) The implementing agency confirms that relevant gender dimensions are covered during project implementation, PIRs, MTR and FE, being also part of the requirements and policies of FAO. A specialist in Gender and Indigenous Peoples will be part of the Project Management Unit (PMU), responsible for these aspects throughout the implementation, and will maintain constant communication with the FAO Gender Focal Point.

k. The description of Component 4 has been updated to mention activities on communication and knowledge dissemination. A more detail description of the knowledge and communication plan can be found on Section E.1 and in Annex E of the Agency Project Document.

l. During the baseline of the project formulation, no public policies or perverse incentives that promote the degradation of the critical forest biome were identified. There are no public policies that contradict the project's objectives.

m. Section B has been updated to explain scaling up opportunities identified.

## **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

July 16th 2024

a. The institutional arrangements are provided at national and local level. Could you complete the coordination with the regional level ?

b. A letter from the OFP is uploaded to support executing functions undertaken by the GEF Agency such as procurement, recruitment, contracts... This is not consistent with the description of the institutional Arrangements and with the budget table and needs to be strongly justify and budgeted to allow the GEF assess the request. Please clarify and confirm that these executing functions are with no additional costs to the project budget.

c. yes cleared

d. Please complete and elaborate the framework for coordination at the regional level and how this new initiative will fully strengthen and be consistent with the other plans and projects at the regional level.

September 19th 2024

a. Cleared

b. Cleared

## Agency Response

September 10th, 2024

a. The narrative in section B.1 has been updated to include a regional level. The project design was developed in alignment with regional development policies, guided by the Social and Economic Development Plan for the state of Amazonas 2021 - 2025, known as "Nueva Amazonas".

The plan aims to promote sustainable economic and social development. The GEA will be a key partner for anchoring the project, providing technical and methodological capacities to the involved actors, and supporting the implementation of sustainable productive practices compatible with forest conservation. According to the Forest Law, the GEA must allocate at least 1% of its annual budget to the promotion and improvement of forest ecosystems.

The Project Management Unit will be located within the project's action area. Preferably, the offices will be within the facilities of the Territorial Unit for Ecosocialism (UTECE), which is the regional branch of MINEC. This will facilitate project actions in the territories, according to the work plans.

Additionally, at the regional level, the GEA's support through the Nueva Amazonas Plan will strengthen direct and indirect employment in the regional economy through private sector companies associated with the Governor's Office, as well as artisanal companies processing forest foods and partnerships with state-owned companies such as tourism operators and indigenous communities.

b. Kindly note that Section "Will the GEF implementing agency play an execution role in this project?" contains the arrangements as mentioned in the OFP letter, and also already mentions that FAO does not charge any costs to the project budget for the execution support services provided, and as such, the project budget does not contain charges related to the support services. The implementation arrangement section has been reviewed to ensure consistency. The justification is provided in OFP letter, being this a request from the country.

c. N/A

d. The narrative in section 5.2 on institutional arrangements has been strengthened. The project aligns with the objectives of the Regional ASL3 Program, which focuses on strengthening capacities and coordination to achieve integrated landscape management and Amazon conservation. Coordination from the Regional Program is envisioned through two perspectives: internal coordination via a steering committee and an annual conference in which Venezuela participates, and external coordination through partners, donors, and other regional initiatives.

### **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

July 16th 2024

a.

Indicator 3 : The 50 ha area of "intensively managed landscapes actively restored by communities for the conservation of their values" seems to be missing in the core indicator

table if the planned activity is restoration as indicated in the Project Description Overview. Please clarify.

Indicator 3.3 : Please complete the table at the expected CEO endorsement level.

Indicator 4 : 50 Ha of landscapes are indicated on indicator 4 as landscapes under improved practices. But they are also describes as restoration through natural succession process for natural recovery purpose. Please clarify actions and activities on this land areas and use the targeted indicator. The objective of 50 Ha is weak at the project level and to be consistent with the main program.

Indicator 6 : For the core indicator 6.1, please consider 2025 as anticipated start year of accounting (instead of 2024).

b.

The project doesn't consider any activities to develop OECMs while it is a potential important element in the Program strategy. Please justify. Please also note that if OEMCs are finally considered in the project, the sub-indicator 4.5 (OECMs) is contextual and needs to be also reported in another sub-indicator under the core indicator 4 so that it can be actually accounted in the GEF Portal. The total OECMs area can be reported under either core indicator 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 or 4.4 where it is best relevant.

The objective of 50 Ha for indicator 4 is very weak at the project level and to be consistent with the main program. Please explore the capacity to work on more important areas.

September 19th 2024

a. Cleared

b. Cleared

Agency Response

September 10th, 2024

a. Thank you for the comment. After due revision, the 50 hectares constitute areas of landscapes under improved practices (which are external to the ABRAE), and as such, they are counted in Core indicator 4.

On Indicator 3.3, during project formulation and with field visits, it was corroborated that the 300 hectares previously identified as grassland correspond to forest land, so indicator 3.3 in CEO endorsement is zero, with the surface reclassified as 3.2.

On Indicator 4: Thank you for the comment. After due consideration and review of the interventions, the 50 hectares correspond to areas under improved management, so they have been reported in Indicator 4. Indicator 4: the 50 hectares constitute areas of landscapes under improved practices (which are external to the ABRAE). The area proposed for this indicator cover surrounding areas of the large protected areas where the project will be implemented, is an effort to align the project to the landscape approach of the ASL program, but also it must be noted that there are several challenges to increase the area due to the isolation, geography and population of the area, which makes it difficult to access and monitor: no vehicle access to degraded areas; low local population; high costs of river transportation; pack animals in the project intervention area, so all plant transportation must be manual; increasing the number of hectares to restore raises the cost for establishment, exceeding the budget available.

Indicator 6: Noted.

b. The project is implemented with indigenous communities within ABRAE's, which are areas particular to the Venezuela context, with special administration regime, complementing protection and use. In this context, it is not a priority for the country to create another administration figure for OEMCs, and also considering that more than 70% of the Amazonas state territory is already designated as protected areas (NP, NM, PZ, and BR), priorities are on improving the management of these areas. As mentioned before, the area proposed for this indicator cover surrounding areas of the large protected areas where the project will be implemented, is an effort to align the project to the landscape approach of the ASL program, but also it must be noted that there are several challenges to increase the area due to the isolation, geography and population of the area, which makes it difficult to access and monitor: no vehicle access to degraded areas; low local population; high costs of river transportation; pack animals in the project intervention area, so all plant transportation must be manual; increasing the number of hectares to restore raises the cost for establishment, exceeding the budget available.

#### 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

July 16th 2024

a. Key risks and realistic mitigation measures have been identified. A comprehensive climate risk analysis including specific project mitigation measures is uploaded in the Portal. Cleared.

b. Yes cleared

c. Yes, the environmental and social screening document has been completed and uploaded in the Portal. Cleared.

Agency ResponseN/A

**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 ResponseN/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 LDCF/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

July 16th 2024

a. Yes cleared

b. No. Please describe clearly how the project is adequately aligned with the program objective in the GEF8 Programming directions.

September 19th 2024

b. Cleared

Agency Response

September 10th, 2024

a. N/A

b. Noted. The description has been improved in section C regarding alignment with the Focal Area Strategies of the GEF 8 and national/regional priorities.

**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

July 16th 2024

The project is aligned with National Strategy for the Conservation of Biological Diversity (ENCDB) 2010 - 2020. Please precise if the project is also aligned with the other policies, like land planning, energy, industrial... national strategies.

September 19th 2024

Cleared

Agency Response

September 10th, 2024

Thank you for the comment. Section C has been updated to include the alignment with the regional policies and strategies.

**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

July 16th 2024

The alignment with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework is very succinct and needs to be strengthened. Please identify the main relevant targets of the Framework and elaborate on how the project contributes to their implementation.

September 19th 2024

Cleared

Agency Response

September 10th, 2024

Duly noted. Section C has been strengthened accordingly.

**7 D. Policy Requirements**

**7.1 Are the Policy Requirement sections completed?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

July 16th 2024

The role of civil society is missing. Please complete

September 19th 2024

Cleared

Agency Response

September 10th, 2024

The role of civil society is marked in the portal, and also described with more detail in Annex J "Stakeholder engagement Plan" of the Agency Project Document.

**7.2 Is the Gender Action Plan uploaded?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

July 16th 2024

Yes cleared

Agency ResponseN/A

**7.3 Is the stakeholder engagement plan uploaded?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

July 16th 2024

No please provide the stakeholder management plan and upload it in the portal.

September 19th 2024

Cleared

Agency Response

September 10th, 2024

The stakeholder engagement is contained in Annex J of the Agency Project Document, "Stakeholder Engagement Plan and Grievance Redress Mechanism", it has been uploaded separately for easy reference.

**7.4 Have the required applicable safeguards documents been uploaded?**



Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
July 16th 2024

yes cleared

Agency ResponseN/A

**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  
July 16th 2024

Yes cleared

Agency ResponseN/A

**Focal Area allocation?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
July 16th 2024

Yes cleared

Agency ResponseN/A

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestN/A

Agency ResponseN/A

**SCCF A (SIDS)?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestN/A

Agency ResponseN/A

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestN/A

Agency ResponseN/A

**Focal Area Set Aside?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestN/A

Agency ResponseN/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 RequestYes cleared

Agency ResponseN/A

**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

July 16th 2024

The letter of endorsement shows total of GEF resource 6 666 667 USD while in the project document the amount is 6 666 666 USD. Please correct.

September 19th 2024

Cleared

Agency Response

September 10th, 2024

Kindly note that the difference of 1 USD is explained by the difficulties in doing an exact match using GEF calculations considering the amounts from focal areas and incentives for IPs. During the child concept note formulation, a query was raised with GEFSEC on this issue that was common for several projects part of IPs. GEFSEC answered FAO that it was allowed to present the project for a value lower (1 USD, rounded down) than the OFP Letter. This was reaffirmed in the CEO PFD endorsement letter dated June 1st, 2023, where the project total is 6,666,666, and it is the amount being used henceforth.

**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

July 16th 2024

One letter of co-financing is missing from the MINEC on the review form. Please complete the portal by uploading the letter.

September 19th 2024

Cleared

Agency Response

September 10th, 2024

The letter from MINEC is uploaded, but due to limitations of the portal, it not possible to assign the same letter to two lines (in kind and grant). To accommodate the request, the same letter from MINEC has been uploaded again to both lines.

**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 Request

July 16th 2024

Yes cleared

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 Request

July 16th 2024

The letter of endorsement shows total of GEF resource 6 666 667 USD while in the project document the amount is 6 666 666 USD. Please correct.

September 19th 2024

Cleared

Agency Response

September 10th, 2024

As explained before, the difference of 1 USD is explained by the complexities in doing an exact match using GEF calculations considering the amounts from focal areas and incentives for IPs. During the child concept note formulation, a query was raised with GEFSEC on this issue that was common for several projects part of IPs. GEFSEC answered FAO that it was allowed to present the project for a value lower (1 USD, rounded down) than the OFP Letter. This was reaffirmed in the CEO PDF endorsement letter dated June 1st, 2023, where the project total is 6,666,666, and it is the amount being used henceforth.

**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

July 16th 2024

a. Yes cleared

b. Yes cleared

c. Yes cleared

d. Yes cleared

e. N/A

Agency Response N/A

**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

July 16th 2024

Some project locations are not completely filled for Geo name ID. Please complete the table

September 19th 2024

Cleared

Agency Response

September 10th, 2024

Noted. Geo names IDs have been filled.

**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

July 16th 2024

yes cleared

Agency Response N/A

**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

July 16th 2024

a. Please copy the budget in Annex G of the Portal entry and as indicated in GEF guidelines, consider providing the budget in Excel format uploaded in the document tab of the Portal.

b. Cleared

c. No please provide the TORs for key project staff.

September 19th 2024

a. Cleared

c. Cleared

Agency Response

September 10th, 2024

a. Kindly note that the Portal does not allow for excel files to be uploaded in the budget section. To accommodate the request, the excel file contained in the Agency Project Document has been uploaded separately as Annex D.

b. N/A

c. TORs are provided as Annex L of the Agency Project Document, they were uploaded separately for easy reference.

**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 Request N/A

Agency Response N/A

**Additional Annexes**

## **9. GEFSEC DECISION**

### **9.1. GEFSEC Recommendation**

**Is the project recommended for approval**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

July 16th

Not yet. Please, address the comments raised above.

24th September 2024

Thanks for all your feedback on our requests and the updated project document. Please, could you classify the ProdDoc CFB IP Document as public in the portal, so that I can select it for circulation ?

Could you also amend all the yellow shadows in the CEO endorsement request portal view and please make sure that all the tables fit within the margins ?

Thanks in advance for all your updates.

4th October 2024

Thank you for addressing most of the comments provided on September 24th. But, CEO Endorsement Request Portal view still has tables off the margins, and there are sections with green and yellow shadow. Please amend these last comments.

10th October 2024

Thanks for addressing the last comments. The project 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

	<b>CEO Approval</b>	<b>Response to Secretariat comments</b>
<b>First Review</b>	<b>7/16/2024</b>	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>9/20/2024</b>	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>10/4/2024</b>	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>10/9/2024</b>	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>		