



## Effective Management of Mchinji Ecosystems for Restoration of Upper Bua River Catchment

### Part I: Project Information

**GEF ID**

11019

**Project Type**

MSP

**Type of Trust Fund**

GET

**CBIT/NGI**

CBIT No

NGI No

**Project Title**

Effective Management of Mchinji Ecosystems for Restoration of Upper Bua River Catchment

**Countries**

Malawi

**Agency(ies)**

UNEP

**Other Executing Partner(s)**

Environmental Affairs Department in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Climate Change

**Executing Partner Type**

Government

**GEF Focal Area**

Multi Focal Area

**Taxonomy**

Focal Areas, Biodiversity, Mainstreaming, Forest, Influencing models, Demonstrate innovative approaches, Transform policy and regulatory environments, Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making, Stakeholders, Partnership, Type of Engagement, Consultation, Participation, Education, Communications, Awareness Raising, Public Campaigns, Private Sector, Individuals/Entrepreneurs, SMEs, Beneficiaries, Community Based Organization, Civil Society, Local Communities, Gender Equality, Sex-disaggregated

indicators, Gender Mainstreaming, Knowledge Generation and Exchange, Gender results areas, Capacity Development, Access to benefits and services, Capacity, Knowledge and Research, Learning, Knowledge Generation, Knowledge Exchange, Species, Wildlife for Sustainable Development

**Sector**

**Rio Markers**

**Climate Change Mitigation**

Climate Change Mitigation 0

**Climate Change Adaptation**

Climate Change Adaptation 0

**Duration**

48 In Months

**Agency Fee(\$)**

87,542.00

**Submission Date**

4/22/2022

**A. Indicative Focal/Non-Focal Area Elements**

<b>Programming Directions</b>	<b>Trust Fund</b>	<b>GEF Amount(\$)</b>	<b>Co-Fin Amount(\$)</b>
BD-2-7	GET	621,508.00	4,300,000.00
BD-1-1	GET	300,000.00	2,000,000.00
<b>Total Project Cost (\$)</b>		<b>921,508.00</b>	<b>6,300,000.00</b>

## B. Indicative Project description summary

### Project Objective

Effective management of forest ecological and biological resources to maintain the supply of important ecosystem services to contribute to the Bua River ecosystem restoration and sustainable livelihoods of surrounding communities

Project Component	Financing Type	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Amount(\$)	Co-Fin Amount(\$)
Component 1: forest management framework and capacity in enforcement of forest protection	Technical Assistance	Outcome 1: Effective management of Mchinji forest reserve strengthened through development management frameworks and improving capacity in enforcement for protection of forest reserve	<p>Output 1.1.1 Forest management plan for Mchinji forest reserve is developed and implemented including assessment of its biodiversity and ecosystem services and values</p> <p>Output 1.1.2 Updating of maps, opening of boundaries, establishment of surveillance systems, forest patrols are conducted to support law enforcement for protection of forest reserves</p> <p>Output 1.1.3 Capacity of forestry extension officers supported and applied in implementation of forest interventions and provision of forest extension services</p> <p>Output 1.1.4 Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) mechanism established</p>	GET	340,000.00	2,750,000.00

Project Component	Financing Type	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Amount(\$)	Co-Fin Amount(\$)
Component 2: supporting local government institutions and communities to enhance conservation and sustainable use of Forest resources to maintain and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in community forests and communal lands	Technical Assistance	Outcome 2. Conservation and sustainable use of Forest resources to maintain and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services is enhanced through supporting local government institutions and communities	<p>output 2.1 Gender responsive assessment of biodiversity and values in community forests and communal lands is conducted</p> <p>Output 2.2 District and habitat specific conservation and restoration plans and by-laws for endangered and threatened species including their habitats are developed and implemented</p> <p>Output 2.3 Capacity of district environmental officers to conduct red list assessments and enforce provisions of biodiversity related legislation is supported/strengthened</p> <p>Output 2.4 New village forest areas are created, and natural tree regeneration is promoted in community forests to improve the conservation status of threatened species</p>	GET	400,000.00	2,650,000.00

Project Component	Financing Type	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Amount(\$)	Co-Fin Amount(\$)
Component 3. M&E	Technical Assistance	Outcome 3: An effective project monitoring and evaluation system in place	<p>Output 3.1 The project Exit Strategy and a replication/upscaling strategy, are developed</p> <p>Output 3.2 Project gender-disaggregated M&amp;E system enables tracking of project progress</p> <p>Output 3.3: Development and implementation of communication strategy to also facilitate a better understanding of project activities amongst all stakeholders</p> <p>Output 3.4 Documentation, publication and information sharing procedures and dissemination of best practices and lessons learnt undertaken with equal participation of stakeholders</p> <p>Output 3.5 Mid-Term Review and the Terminal Evaluation are conducted</p>	GET	100,000.00	300,000.00
<b>Sub Total (\$)</b>					<b>840,000.00</b>	<b>5,700,000.00</b>
<b>Project Management Cost (PMC)</b>						
	GET		81,508.00		600,000.00	

**Project Management Cost (PMC)**

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<b>Sub Total(\$)</b>	<b>81,508.00</b>	<b>600,000.00</b>
<b>Total Project Cost(\$)</b>	<b>921,508.00</b>	<b>6,300,000.00</b>

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**Please provide justification**

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

<b>Sources of Co-financing</b>	<b>Name of Co-financier</b>	<b>Type of Co-financing</b>	<b>Investment Mobilized</b>	<b>Amount(\$)</b>
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Local Government	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	100,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Environmental Affairs Department	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Environmental Affairs Department	Grant	Investment mobilized	500,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Department of Disaster Management	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	100,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Malawi Drought Recovery and resilient Project	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	100,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Forestry Department	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	500,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Forestry Department	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Agriculture	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Agriculture	Grant	Investment mobilized	500,000.00
Recipient Country Government	District Fisheries Office	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	100,000.00



<b>Sources of Co-financing</b>	<b>Name of Co-financier</b>	<b>Type of Co-financing</b>	<b>Investment Mobilized</b>	<b>Amount(\$)</b>
Civil Society Organization	FOCCAD-Foundation for Community and Capacity Development	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	100,000.00
Civil Society Organization	TAPP- Trustees of Agriculture Promotion program	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	100,000.00
Civil Society Organization	Trees of Hope (Clinton Development Initiative)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	100,000.00
Civil Society Organization	Total Land Care	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	100,000.00
Civil Society Organization	World Vision	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	100,000.00
Civil Society Organization	Plan Malawi	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	100,000.00
Civil Society Organization	National Small Holder Farmers Association of Malawi (NASFAM)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	100,000.00
Civil Society Organization	Kulima Better	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	100,000.00
Civil Society Organization	CRECOM (Radio Committees)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	100,000.00
Civil Society Organization	Nkuyu Youth Club	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	100,000.00
Private Sector	Tobacco companies	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	100,000.00
Civil Society Organization	African Park	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	100,000.00
Civil Society Organization	Care Malawi	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	100,000.00

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)
Beneficiaries	Farmers? World	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	100,000.00
<b>Total Project Cost(\$)</b>				<b>6,300,000.00</b>

**Describe how any "Investment Mobilized" was identified**

Investment mobilized was defined based on amount of in-kind and grant contribution from the executing ministry, other contributing government institutions, civil society, private sector and other stakeholders active in sustainable land management and conservation initiatives. The different stakeholders were consulted on the monetary value of their contribution using market-value prices for the services they will provide. Where 'investment mobilized' has been indicated, it refers to co-financing that excludes recurrent expenditures, as defined in the guidelines. Malawi Government investments mobilized for activities being carried out in the Bua River basin by contributing agencies and ministries are extrapolated in the MTEF project/programme-based budget allocations. Also, Funds that need to be budgeted for annually or grants received from donors are considered as investment mobilized

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

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Trust Fund</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Focal Area</b>	<b>Programming of Funds</b>	<b>Amount(\$)</b>	<b>Fee(\$)</b>	<b>Total(\$)</b>
UNEP	GET	Malawi	Biodiversity	LD STAR Allocation	921,508	87,542	1,009,050.00
<b>Total GEF Resources(\$)</b>					<b>921,508.00</b>	<b>87,542.00</b>	<b>1,009,050.00</b>

**E. Project Preparation Grant (PPG)**

PPG Required **true**

**PPG Amount (\$)**

50,000

**PPG Agency Fee (\$)**

4,750

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Trust Fund</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Focal Area</b>	<b>Programming of Funds</b>	<b>Amount(\$)</b>	<b>Fee(\$)</b>	<b>Total(\$)</b>
UNEP	GET	Malawi	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	50,000	4,750	<b>54,750.00</b>
<b>Total Project Costs(\$)</b>					<b>50,000.00</b>	<b>4,750.00</b>	<b>54,750.00</b>

## Core Indicators

**Indicator 1 Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use**

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
1,966.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Indicator 1.1 Terrestrial Protected Areas Newly created**

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Name of the Protected Area	WDP A ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
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**Indicator 1.2 Terrestrial Protected Areas Under improved Management effectiveness**

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
1,966.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Name of the Protected Area	WDP A ID	IUCN Category	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)	METT score (Achieved at TE)
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Name of the Protected Area	WDA ID	IUCN Category	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)	METT score (Achieved at TE)
Akula National Park Mchinji FR	12568933183	SelectProtected area with sustainable use of natural resources	1,966.00						

**Indicator 3 Area of land restored**

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
3000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Indicator 3.1 Area of degraded agricultural land restored**

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

**Indicator 3.2 Area of Forest and Forest Land restored**

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
3,000.00			

**Indicator 3.3 Area of natural grass and shrublands restored**

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

**Indicator 3.4 Area of wetlands (incl. estuaries, mangroves) restored**

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
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**Indicator 4 Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas)**

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
13730.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

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

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
13,730.00			

**Indicator 4.2 Area of landscapes that meets national or international third party certification that incorporates biodiversity considerations (hectares)**

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
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**Type/Name of Third Party Certification**

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

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
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**Indicator 4.4 Area of High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) loss avoided**

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
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**Documents (Please upload document(s) that justifies the HCVF)**

Title	Submitted
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**Indicator 6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated**

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO <sub>2</sub> e (direct)	0	0	0	0
Expected metric tons of CO <sub>2</sub> e (indirect)	1297850	0	0	0

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

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO <sub>2</sub> e (direct)				
Expected metric tons of CO <sub>2</sub> e (indirect)				
Anticipated start year of accounting				
Duration of accounting				

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

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO <sub>2</sub> e (direct)				
Expected metric tons of CO <sub>2</sub> e (indirect)	1,297,850			
Anticipated start year of accounting	2024			
Duration of accounting	20			

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

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

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

Technology	Capacity (MW) (Expected at PIF)	Capacity (MW) (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Capacity (MW) (Achieved at MTR)	Capacity (MW) (Achieved at TE)



**Indicator 11 Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment**

	<b>Number (Expected at PIF)</b>	<b>Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)</b>	<b>Number (Achieved at MTR)</b>	<b>Number (Achieved at TE)</b>
<b>Female</b>	25,000			
<b>Male</b>	25,000			
<b>Total</b>	50000	0	0	0

Provide additional explanation on targets, other methodologies used, and other focal area specifics (i.e., Aichi targets in BD) including justification where core indicator targets are not provided

The project is now focusing on Mchinji forest reserve which is 19, 166 ha while customary forest cover 16,730 hectares. The project will aim to benefit 50,000 people (25,000 men 25,000 women) as communities living in Mchinji district with direct interaction with Mchinji forest ecosystem. The project will contribute to the country's National Biodiversity targets under the Aichi Biodiversity target as follows: ABT 1: The capacity building initiatives proposed under the project will contribute towards increasing knowledge and awareness of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use for communities around the project area. ABT 2: The project will undertake a biodiversity and ecosystem services assessments which will contribute towards ecosystem evaluation to inform decision-making. ABT 3: The promotion of innovative platforms and promotion of sustainable natural resources value chains will incentivise private landowners and communities to conserve their natural resources. ABT 5: The restoration of forests will result in reduction of loss, degradation and fragmentation of natural habitats ABT 6: The proposed activities in the project will promote application of ecosystem-based approaches and ensure that Malawi's natural resources are sustainably managed. ABT 7: The project will ensure conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in areas under forestry ABT 14: The intervention that will be undertaken under the project will contribute towards providing essential services related to water and livelihoods. Such services will be restored taking into account the needs of local women and community members along the catchment. ABT 15: The project will contribute to ecosystem resilience and carbon stocks through conservation and restoration of degraded forest ecosystems and thus contributing to climate change mitigation ABT 16: The project will contribute to forest-based value chains consistence with access to genetic resources and fair and equitable sharing of benefits where applicable. The project comes at an opportune time when Malawi is in the process of domesticating the SDGs into its umbrella development frameworks and sectorial policies. The centrality of SDG 15 creates direct linkages between biodiversity and other SDGs in the areas of poverty, food security, water and sanitation, environmental protection and sustainable use of natural resources. Implementing activities towards conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity therefore offers Malawi a chance to realize her potential of creating multiple benefits that will make a direct contribution to achieving these and other SDGs. In addition, this project will help Malawi to meet part of its commitments to restore 4.5 million hectares of degraded and deforested land by 2030 under

the Bonn Challenge and African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative. This commitment has also been made to the Climate Change Convention, as part of Malawi's contribution towards the global carbon emission reduction agenda under the Paris Agreement. Malawi also aligns itself to the Pan-African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for Increased Resilience which proposes policy measures, strategic actions, cooperation mechanisms and on-the-ground actions that advance land and ecosystem restoration in the region. Malawi identified forest reserves, national parks and wildlife reserves, community woodlands and plantations as some of the areas for potential restoration which the project is also targeting. In addition, the project will directly contribute to the fulfilment of Malawi Land scape restoration strategy and the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan whose vision is to ensure that by 2050 Malawi's biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and sustainably used with full participation of all stakeholders. . The project will directly contribute to the fulfilment of Aichi Targets and will directly or indirectly contribute to all 17 SDGs but in particular ?SDG 12 (Ensure sustainable production and consumption patterns); SDG15 (Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse LD and halt BD loss) by incorporating SLM into decision making and by conserving / restoring BD in terrestrial production landscapes. Importantly, the project has been designed to contribute to SDG target 15.3 on Land Degradation Neutrality and the integrated landscape approach being proposed by this project is considered essential to achieve this (and other multiple goals and targets) at the required scale. ?The project will also contribute to SDG13 (Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts). Using the EX-ACT tool, it has been calculated that the project will result in considerable carbon sequestration, due to restoration tree planting, natural regeneration and agroforestry.

## Part II. Project Justification

### 1a. Project Description

#### **PART II: PROJECT JUSTIFICATION**

##### **1a. Project Description. Briefly describe:**

1.1) the global environmental and/or adaptation problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed (systems description);

#### **Description of the Project Sites**

##### **Mchinji Forest Reserve**

Mchinji Forest Reserve, found in Mchinji District, in Malawi, is one of the protected areas that form the catchment of Bua River. Mchinji District has Mchinji Forest reserve which covers 19,166 ha and Thyolansanu forest reserve which is 2,219 hectares while customary forest cover 16,730 hectares. This project will focus on Mchinji Forest Reserve which was gazetted in 1924 to protect the headwaters of the Bua River. The forest is a miombo woodland dominated by *Brachystegia* species. It predominantly has rocky soils and sandy clay soils. Rainfall ranges between 862.4mm to 1016.8mm per annum. It has an altitude of 1,160m to 1,750m.

Mchinji Forest Reserve is dominated by *Brachystegia* species such as *Brachystegia floribunda*, *Brachystegia spiciformis*, *Brachystegia bomeii*, *Brachystegia utilis*, *Brachystegia microthyrso* and *Brachystegia longifolia*. Other tree species visible in the forest reserve include: *Uapaca kirkiana*, *Julberdenia paniculata*, *Terminalia sericea*, *Pericorpsis angolensis*, *Burkea africana*, *Pterocarpus angolensis*, *Bridelia micratha*, *Annona senegalensis*, *Diplorrynchus condylocarpin*, *Darbergia melanoxyton*, *Bauhinia thonningii*, *Parinari curatellifolia*, *Anisiphylla momifela*, *Ficus capensis*, *Flacourtia indica*, *Syzigium cordatum*, *Zizyphus mucronata*, *Pseudolachnostylis maprouneifolia*, *Combretum molle*, *Vitex doniana* and faurea species. Animals that are found in the forest reserve include birds, hare, tortoise, antelope, hyenas, snakes.

There are numerous perennial streams arising within the reserve. The streams from the western side all drain into the Bua River which is the boundary and then flows round the southern part of the reserve. It is also a source of important rivers for the district and beyond, including Bua, Ludzi, Liwerezi, Lusa and Matizi. It is also a habitat for wildlife and provides small-scale irrigation farming through the various rivers that spring from the forest reserve. As a catchment area, the reserve is very important and used for abstraction of water for the people of the district. Central Region Water Board extracts water for the supply of Mchinji boma and other areas through gravity fed systems from Mchinji Forest Reserve. Kamwankhuku is also another source within the forest, where Mchinji Rural piped water has been tapped.

The forest also provides timber, firewood, medicinal plants, fruits and mushrooms and other non-timber income generating opportunities like beekeeping for the community of Mchinji and other surrounding communities in neighboring Zambia. In addition, surrounding communities benefit from Mchinji Forest Reserve through collection of firewood for domestic use, collection of thatching grasses, for education purposes, for picnic, sight-seeing and trekking and collection of forest biodiversity for scientific purposes. There are few trees of timber value that exist in the forest because of over exploitation which has resulted in isolated pockets in the reserve leaving a lot of pockets suitable for afforestation and natural regeneration.

There has been a significant loss in biodiversity in the Reserve in terms of species diversity and richness. The forest reserve is being depleted due to encroachment for illegal settlements and farming

(both rain fed and irrigation farming), timber sawing, charcoal production, firewood and poles extraction, wildfires and poaching. The District Forestry Office conducts routine patrols against illegal activities in the reserve and customary land. In most cases, these have been ineffective due to inadequate resources to conduct joint patrols with the Malawi Police and Parks and Wildlife staff for effective management of the reserves. There is also need for these efforts to be coupled with extension services and intensification of activities in community forest areas to reduce pressure on the forest reserves and the number of illegal activities happening in the forest reserve.

The Table below shows hotspots for Mchinji forest reserve and the illegal activities mostly carried out in this forest. These illegal activities are classified in low, medium and high intensity levels and the possible reversal solutions. Mchinji District Forest Office (DFO) uses the National Forest Policy (2016), Forest Act (1997) and Forestry Amendment Act No 7 of 2020 to enhance sustainable utilization and management of forest resources for the benefit of future generations. However, the effective implementation of these policies is hampered by lack of a management plan for the forest reserve and inadequate capacity of the district forest staff to ensure effective enforcement of the legislation. The District Forest office works with local institutions including village natural resources management committees (VNRMCs) and youth clubs to implement activities in community forests and ensure conservation and sustainable use of government forest reserves where necessary.

Hot spot	Illegal Activity	Intensity			Reversal Solutions
		Low	Medium	High	
Bua river source (Ndawambe)	Encroachment and charcoal production		✓		Eviction, forest patrols and enrichment tree planting
Liwelezi river source (Kapezi and Mzenga)	Encroachment and charcoal production			✓	Eviction, forest patrols and enrichment tree planting
Chikuta	Encroachment and charcoal production			✓	Community sensitisation, Eviction, forest patrols and enrichment tree planting
Mafuta	Charcoal production and wood theft			✓	Forest patrols and enrichment tree planting
Nkhomphola	Charcoal production and wood theft			✓	Forest patrols and enrichment tree planting
Namitete river source	Encroachment and wood theft	✓			Eviction, forest patrols and enrichment tree planting

**Source:** District Forestry Office, 2017

### Malawi's land tenure system

Malawi's population of 14 million people is 81% rural and 19% urban. Malawi is one of the more densely populated countries in Africa, with an average of 103 inhabitants per square kilometer; population density is highest in the south and central regions. Malawi's total land area is 94,100 square kilometers, of which 49% is agricultural land. Approximately 2% of Malawi's cropland is irrigated. Agriculture – especially tobacco, tea, and sugar – currently contributes more than 80% of the country's export earnings (World Bank 2009a; World Atlas 2010; Chirwa 2004; Chirwa and Chisinga 2008). Approximately 30,000 farms are of relatively large scale (10-500 hectares) and focus on the production of cash crops, with tobacco presently leading export earnings. These 'estates' were formed during colonial times, were controlled by white farmers, and included large tracts of underutilized land. At Independence in 1964, ownership of the estates passed into the hands of the Malawian elites. The autocratic Banda regime (Independence to 1994) reinforced the colonial-era dual structure of an agricultural sector made up of large estates and smallholders. At that time, agricultural policy was aimed at sustaining the productivity and export income generated on these properties. The conversion

of customary land (held by various ethnic groups) to leasehold land used for commercial farming also characterized this period (Chirwa 2004; Chirwa and Chisinga 2008; Holden et al. 2006).

Forest land comprises 36% of the total land area. Nineteen percent of the country's total land area is protected. Deforestation is occurring at an annual rate of 0.9% (World Bank 2009a).

Malawi's land distribution is highly skewed. An estimated 82% of Malawi's land is suitable for cultivation: 13% of total land (16% of cultivable land or 1.2 million hectares) is held by estates, and 69% of total land (84% of cultivable land or 6.5 million hectares) is either farmed by smallholders or considered by the government to be available for smallholder farming. The balance of Malawi's land is protected areas, steep hillsides, and urban areas unsuitable for agriculture. Fifty-eight percent of smallholders cultivate less than one hectare; 11% of these are near landless. The country's 30,000 estates have between 10 and 500 hectares. In 2004, approximately 11% of the population was landless (Chirwa 2004; Chirwa and Chisinga 2008; GOM 2002; Adams 2004; World Bank 2009b).

Customary law governs land allocation, land use, land transfers, inheritance, and land-dispute resolution related to Malawi's customary land. The 2002 Land Policy recognizes the authority of customary law and traditional authorities and calls for incorporation of the traditional authorities into the land-administration structure (Chirwa 2008; UNEP/UNDP 2001; GOM 2002).

The land act of 2016 designates land as public or private, with 'public land' meaning 'land held in trust for the people of Malawi and managed by Government, a local government authority or a Traditional Authority and includes land gazetted for national parks, recreation areas, forest reserves, conservation areas, historic and cultural sites.' This definition implies that Mchinji Forest Reserve is public land whose title is held by the government. The land act of 2016 deals with land access, use and disposal issues. The law categories land into public land with public land including government and unallocated customary land used for benefits of a whole community. Private land is composed of freehold land, leasehold and customary estates. The act also outlines the procedures for acquisition of customary land for public utilities and the conversion of customary land to registered land. In this project, both public and private land. The land policy of 2002 on the other hand ensures tenure security and equitable access to land and facilitates the attainment of social harmony and broad based social and economic development through optimum and ecologically balanced use of land and land-based resources. The policy presents the fundamental measures and processes to minimize and possibly eliminate the most constraining land problems and bring progress and prosperity to the country. Guiding principles of the national land policy include secure land tenure, sustainable land management, productive and efficient land use, land administration, vulnerable groups, institutional frameworks for land management, land information systems and will all be applied where relevant in the implementation of the project. The management of forest resources is increasingly becoming the right and duty of local people within the policies and laws of the country under customary land and forest reserves. However, the combined impact of widespread poverty, dependency on subsistence agriculture and wood-based energy has resulted in forest destruction on both customary and public land. Village Forest Areas (VFAs) are held in trust by the traditional authority (TA) for common use by the community living in an area of customary land; however, restrictions on harvesting from VFAs sometimes leads to encroachment onto government forest areas for wood fuel and charcoal making

#### **Barriers that need to be addressed.**

##### **Barrier#1: Lack of forest management frameworks and low capacity for management Mchinji forest reserve.**

Although Mchinji forest reserve is of great importance for the catchment of Bua River, it has no forest management plan. There is no document to guide the sustainable conservation and use of forests and related resources as well as to guide stakeholders on the conservation and restoration activities. Although there have been some interventions in the forest reserves, a lot of work has focused on collecting information on the inventory for population structures of living and dead tree biomass and wood volumes (USAID, 2019) and not much on determining the conservation status of species, valuation of the forest resources and their potential for GHG sequestration. This has resulted in inadequate information that can be used to develop the management plans and also inadequate information to determine the biodiversity potential in these forest reserves and the levels of threat. In addition, there is low capacity of the district staff, both in skills and equipment to effectively enhance

enforcement of national laws and regulations in the protection of forest. This has been worsened by lack of updated maps and clear boundaries as well as surveillance systems which are important for effective enforcement of laws that regulate protected areas. There is therefore a need to develop a management plan for the forest reserves coupled with the strengthening of forest officer to enhance enforcement and management of the reserve. This will ensure effective management of the reserve and its continued role as a catchment for Bua River.

**Barrier#2: Inadequate Support to local authorities for enhancing the Conservation and sustainable use of community Forests to maintain and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services**

While central forest reserves are managed by the central government, community forests and communal lands are managed by local government and local community institutions. Community based forest management (CBFM) for the well-being of the people of Malawi is a central theme of Government policy (Government of Malawi, 2003). Recent reports show the extent to which timber and non-timber forest products produced by small and medium forest enterprises contribute to income generation (Yaron et al, 2011). The National Forest Programme has as one of its 12 key strategies ?Support for community-based forest management: recognizing a broad range of village institutions and developing their capabilities, along with those of extension staff, for collaborative management?. Despite these supportive policies, standards and guidelines a recent study reveals that many district, field level staff members and forest dependent people do not understand how to implement all this (Kafakoma, 2008). This could be improved if a broad-based community empowerment approach is adopted to enable all community members, especially women, to participate, improve bylaws, and demand accountability from the established local forest institutions. It is recommended that well trained forestry extension workers on the ground are provided with the necessary technical support to facilitate such a process. In this regard, the District Forest Office and other service providers need to provide continued support in areas such as the technicalities of suitable SFM systems, organizational and financial management, law enforcement, and development of forest-based enterprises, including identification of markets and management plans. The staff in the District Forest Office (DFO) would have to first be trained on the management plans so that there is clarity in terms of governance at community level.

The decentralization process has meant that local authorities are to be fully involved in the management of their natural resources, the reality on the ground is that many of these local institutions struggle for a variety of reasons, most notably lack of regular engagement with communities and poor support of district officials, lack and/or inadequate capacity/training/skill set. Communities forest initiatives have also resulted in introduction of Invasive species and reduction in forest diversity since there is no proper coordinating and guidance in afforestation activities. Where community forest management is working there have usually been some common elements (e.g. Moyo and Epulani, 2001) ? but these have rarely been given adequate consideration in further attempts to develop Community forests elsewhere. There is a need to harmonize capacity at a local level, among districts and government departments to develop solutions that build effective institutions for community forest establishment to improve the status of biodiversity.

**1.2) the baseline scenario and any associated baseline projects/programmes/initiatives**

The project will identify and demonstrate practical, self-sustaining forestry and biodiversity management interventions in forest reserves and community forests, while simultaneously building the capacity of national and local-level institutions for management and sustainable use of ecosystems. It will have as its central aim management of forest and biodiversity in Mchinji district for the management and restoration of Mchinji forest ecosystem and services that it provides. The priority interventions considered for support under this project are consistent with existing government programs and policies and will be implemented including the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan as well as the Bua River Ecosystem Restoration Management Plan through existing structures at national, district and local levels, while supporting the district development framework in the identified district.

Target 6 of Malawi's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan aims at ensuring at least 50% of degraded terrestrial habitats are restored and protected by 2025. The Government of Malawi through Environmental Affairs Department with support from UNDP recently developed Bua River Restoration and management Plan as one of the actions towards achievement of this target. The Restoration and Management plan has mapped out all the priority hotspots and areas requiring interventions. The Restoration Plan was preceded by a detailed baseline analysis of the ecosystem, the socio-economic factors of the catchment and a detailed interactive mapping tool to visually present the hotspots and areas that require interventions. The Restoration and Management plan has proposed an investment cost of Twenty-Five Million USD in a phased approach. The plan has prioritized a number of areas that this project proposal seeks to address.

Both the Malawi Vision 2063 (2020) and Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) III (2015) recognize that Malawi must promote integrated and sustainable rural development in order to achieve its development potential and goals.

Malawi has a strong policy base regarding climate change, including its National Adaptation Plan of Action (2006, updated 2015), the National Resilience Strategy (2017), Intentional Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs; 2015), and the National Climate Change Management Policy (2016). In addition, its National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process is well under way, with a stocktaking report and Roadmap produced in 2016, and a NAP Framework in 2020. Awareness is present in communities thanks to national and project-led campaigns.

USAID, under PERFORM project (Protecting Ecosystems and Restoring Forests in Malawi), is playing a major role in the training of trainers (e.g. AEDOs, Forest Assistants, CEWs) on farmer-managed natural regeneration to support farmers interventions on FMNR. The European Union is supporting programmes to improve tree cover in farmland and forest land. Involvement of NGOs has also been and is still important as a driver for the spread of FMNR. For instance, Total Land Care (TLC), a regional NGO, is implementing FMNR projects in various districts, and World Vision Malawi is also actively promoting FMNR through trainings of farmers on how to manage regrowth of natural trees on farms and on community lands.

In the case of PES, The Clinton Foundation is supporting the carbon credits project (Trees of Hope) in the Neno and Dowa districts under Plan Vivo certification standards. The Clinton Development Initiative (CDI) has sold certificates for more than 30,000 tons of carbon and 875 farmers have received more than \$100,000 in Payments for Ecosystems Services, accessing carbon finance for River basin restoration activities such as the planting of woodlots to reduce fuelwood collection in natural forest and the implementation of income-generating agroforestry. The geographic proximity of 'Trees of Hope' will facilitate the extension of the PES activity to the project districts.

In terms of green value chain development, a number of private sector companies are developing business around Miombo and Mopane NTFP, such as baobab products, bee products, moringa, *Azadirachta indica*, *Sclerocarya birrea*, *Uapaca kirkiana*, *Parinari curatellifolia*, *Strophanthus kombomondia whitei*, and *ziziphus mauritania*, among others. Several buyer companies active in the project target districts (e.g. Naturals Ltd, Honey Products Ltd, Moringa Miracles Ltd) are members of PhytoTrade Africa - the Southern African Natural Products Trade Association, and are benefiting from the SEED Programme for promoting entrepreneurship for sustainable development, and the WRI Land Accelerator Programme.

The participation of local producers in green value chains is also being promoted by several development projects including One Village One Project OVOP funded by JICA, JANEEMO agroforestry initiative funded by the Scottish government aiming at strengthening the organizations capacity in production and marketing. Local producers Innovation Platforms (IP) in southern Malawi (e.g. Balaka IP) is improving sustainable production and loan and market access for poor smallholder farmers through collaboration with relevant actors, such as the District Assembly, departments under the Ministry of Agriculture (DARTS, DLRC, DCP, DoI, DAES), research centers (e.g. CIAT, CIMMYT, LUANAR), NASFAM, the Agriculture Commodity Exchange (ACE), and the media.

USAID Modern Cooking for Healthy Forests (MCHF) Project: The purpose of MCHF is to promote sustainable energy options in Malawi in order to sustainably maintain forest cover and reduce land-based emissions. By increasing the demand for alternative and efficient energy options and technologies and the supply of sustainable wood fuels from well managed forest resources, the project aims at helping Malawi reduce unsustainable tree cutting in both public and customary forests, improve forest cover as well as conserve associated watersheds. MCHF's core objectives are the following: Objective 1- Alternative energy sources and efficient cooking technologies adopted to reduce unsustainable wood fuel demand; Objective 2 - Local delivery of forestry services and sustainable use of forestry resources in targeted areas improved; Objective 3 - Regulatory, and enforcement framework to support sustainable wood fuel production and use strengthened; Objective 4 - Government of Malawi's implementation capacity of low emissions development in REDD+ and/or other Land Use increased; Objective 5 - Interventions leveraged with other USAID and development partners resources. MCHF serves as USAID's primary support to the Government of Malawi (GoM) to implement some of its significant policies and strategies in the forestry and energy sectors. These include the Nation Forestry Policy (2016), Forestry Act (1997), National Charcoal Strategy, National Forest River basin Restoration Strategy, Malawi Renewable Energy Strategy, draft National Energy Policy, Sustainable Energy for All Action Agenda for Malawi, and National Cookstove Steering Committee Strategy 2018 /2020. During the project period in the target sites, the MCHF project will provide technical backstopping and training to participating institutions in delivery of forestry services and sustainable use of forestry resources in targeted areas and support in Regulatory and enforcement frameworks and that is here its investment will be.

Despite the fact that most policies express GoM's commitment to private sector development, yet there is limited engagement with the private sector and limited private sector participation in forestry investments, agricultural commodity marketing.

The project will liaise with GEF ID 10411 - AfDB -Malawi-climate resilient and sustainable capture fisheries, aquaculture development and watershed management project, which is notably set to pilot community-based soil and water conservation and improved fallow and agroforestry in the Bua river basin.

In addition, the project will liaise with GEF ID 10254 - FAO - Transforming landscapes and livelihoods: A cross-sector approach to accelerate restoration of Malawi's Miombo and Mopane woodlands for sustainable forest and biodiversity management, which targets other landscapes but will generate lessons and includes national-level interventions on which this PIF should build (e.g. training on LDN, LDN monitoring framework, information clearing house).

### **1.3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project;**

#### **Component 1: forest management framework and capacity in enforcement of protection of forest reserve**

This component will aim at effective management of Mchinji forest reserve and strengthening the capacity of reserve staff in management and law enforcement. The component will be achieved through one outcome and 4 outputs below:

##### ***Outcome 1: Effective management of Mchinji forest reserve strengthened through development management frameworks and improving capacity in enforcement for protection of the reserve.***

The National Forest Landscape Restoration Strategy (MNREM 2017) defines specific restoration objectives related to forests including community forests and woodlots and forest management. The loss of forest cover and hence loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services in Mchinji Forest reserves has resulted in loss of forest products such as mushrooms, wild fruits, firewood and poles, environmental problems like climate change, soil erosion, rivers' siltation and gully formation among others. Challenges faced include lack of management plans to guide forest reserve activities, inadequate extension support services, high cost for purchasing inputs, low survival of trees from



afforestation and forest fires. The project will thus ensure that capacity of extension services is enhanced, management plans are developed, and capacity is built for officers to ensure effective management of forest reserves. This outcome will be achieved through 4 outputs. Assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services and values for Mchinji forest reserve will be conducted and the results of which will be used to inform the development of the Forest management plan for Mchinji forest reserve.

There will be updating of maps, opening of boundaries and establishment of surveillance systems. The project will support conducting of forest patrols to support law enforcement for protection of forest resources. In addition, Capacity of forestry extension officers will be supported and applied in implementation of forest interventions and provision of forest extension services. Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) mechanism will be established with full participation of key stakeholders including strong community involvement.

## **Component 2: Supporting local government institutions and communities to enhance conservation and sustainable use of Forest resources to maintain and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in community forests and communal lands**

Under this component, the project will aim at supporting Mchinji district local government, specifically the communities surrounding the Mchinji forest reserve and local community institutions in management of Community forests and communal lands: Although interventions to enhance management of community forests are being implemented through support from other organisation, including Tobacco companies and non-governmental organisations, there is low ownership in most of the interventions as most of the work is done by the government officers and not effective involvement of the communities who are the beneficiaries of the ecosystem services provided by the forest reserves.

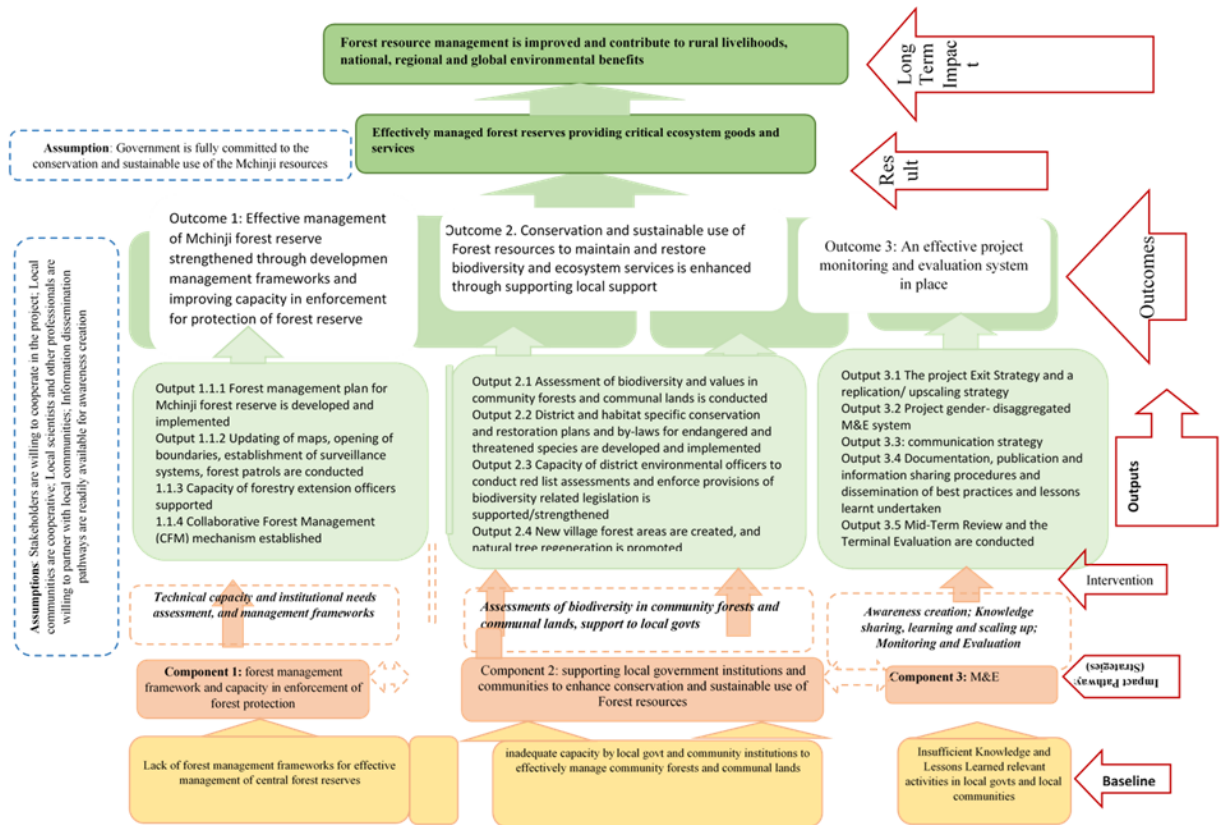
### ***Outcome 2. Conservation and sustainable use of Forest resources to maintain and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services is enhanced through supporting local government institutions and communities***

This component seeks to address the major drivers of loss of community forests and their impacts on the wellbeing of the communities. There is currently high wood demand for energy considering that the dependency on fuel wood. 96.7% of the population uses firewood, 1.6% use charcoal and 1.2% use crop residue for energy (BREREMP, 2021). The main source of energy for firewood is mainly community forests which are generally unmanaged forests. Presently, the distance for communities to collect firewood ranges from 1km to 5km and in worst cases people spend about 5 hours to collect firewood (BREREMP, 2021). Restoration of community forests and opening up new community forest will reduce the amount of time women spend on firewood and travelling for firewood. This will in turn free up time for communities to focus on other livelihood enhancing activities. In addition, the Growing population pressure is increasing environmental pressures and stress on the natural resource base. Agriculture, which is the most representative land use in the area is a major driver of the continued pressure on natural resources as expansion of agriculture areas continues in dambo areas and natural forests. The restoration activities in community forests and areas will focus on tree planting, enhancing management of existing individually owned natural forests, village forest areas, trees on farm and agroforestry. This will in turn enhance efforts to address deforestation and forest degradation by reducing pressure on natural forest reserves.

Under this outcome; assessment of biodiversity and values in community forests and communal lands will be conducted, District and habitat specific conservation and restoration plans will be developed and implemented. Also, by-laws for endangered and threatened species including their habitats will be developed and implemented. District environmental officers will be trained to conduct red list assessments and their capacity to enforce provisions of biodiversity related legislation will be supported/strengthened. New village forest areas will be created in communal lands and natural tree regeneration will be promoted in community forests to improve the conservation status of threatened species therein. It is estimated that approximately 3,000 hectares of forest will be restored and 13,730 hectares will be placed under improved management practices under this component.

### **Theory of change**

The above alternative scenario can be summarized into a Theory of Change (described and graphically presented below):



#### 1.4) alignment with GEF focal area;

The proposed project is designed to contribute to the GEF goals of biodiversity focal areas.

The project will aim at improving conservation and restoration of Mchinji forest resources thereby sustaining ecosystem services and rural livelihoods through conservation and sustainable use of forests and biodiversity.

The project will focus on the Mchinji forest reserve which covers the highest area of the catchment which will contribute to ecosystem restoration and achievement of Aichi Biodiversity targets. Updated biodiversity information for the reserve will be collected with a comprehensive biological inventory to be financed by the project. While routine reserve management activities such as foot patrols, anti-poaching and fire control vigilance will continue to be strengthened, the project will identify and implement priority monitoring, management and capacity building activities, such as intensified law enforcement to allow natural regeneration of biological resources and monitoring of key species. These priority activities will be presented in the 5-year management plan to be developed under the project, the proposed project will also contribute to the GEF biodiversity focal area strategy and the synergetic implementation of multiple objectives and in particular SDG 15.

Under component 1, the project will further deliver global environmental benefits through improved management of protected areas (Forest reserves) leading to species conservation in the basin. Hence making the project aligned with BD2.7. In addition, global environmental benefits will extend beyond the forest reserve, as efforts to scale up biodiversity conservation in Mchinji district will be attained through component 2 in which tree planting in degraded communal lands and along riverine areas will be promoted to enhance restoration and also in which Capacity building of district governments and local structures for community biodiversity conservation will be enhanced. Reforestation of degraded communal lands and along riverine areas will cause biodiversity enrichment and the return of species in these areas.

In addition, work to be under Component 2 on improvement of forest and biodiversity on communal lands is aligned to BD1-1 which is dedicated to biodiversity mainstreaming outside of protected areas.

#### 1.5) incremental/additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline, the GEFTF, LDCF, SCCF, and co-financing;

##### *Baseline Scenario*

Mchinji forest Ecosystem Restoration is not yet effectively addressed in Malawi in terms of Habitat Specific Restoration Plans, professional capacity and active management to enhance restoration efforts and measure impact on biodiversity, climate change mitigation and land degradation reduction. Although some activities have happened in some areas, not much has happened in Mchinji and there is little reference material to effective enforcement or implementation of management activities. Although the NBSAP and reports to the CBD outline some interventions on ecosystem, restoration, none of them points to Mchinji.

##### *Alternative Scenario with GEF*

Project interventions will strengthen implementation of existing policies especially through development of forest management plans, development and implementation of habitat and species-specific restoration plans, improved coordination between various sectors especially at the local level. The project will also develop capacities of extension officers and environmental officers to effectively assess, implement and monitor activities, will increase knowledge base on ecosystem restoration and reduce overdependency on natural resources through livelihood promotion. The Table below summarizes the incremental reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline.

Component	Without GEF project support	With GEF project support	The incremental and global benefits
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<p>Component 1: forest management framework and capacity in enforcement of protection of forest reserve</p>	<p>Without GEF project support, effective forest management at national, district and community levels will continue to be faced with challenges. Without enhanced enforcement of protection of forest reserves and enhanced forest management the activities happening in the forest reserves that have led to its degradation and loss of biological diversity will continue to affect the ecosystem services that forests provide. Without investments in the forest protection and enforcement, the Forest Department and District Forest Offices will continue to struggle in undertaking their tasks to manage the forest reserves effectively and timely. Without enhancing the capacity of Forest Staff and communities their will remain a capacity gap that is needed for enhancing forest protection and management.</p>	<p>With GEF support, assessments of the value of forests and their ecosystem services will be conducted which will provide a basis for raising awareness on the value of biodiversity and ecosystem services, and the economic contribution which will provide material for make a business case for biodiversity conservation. This assessment will also provide a basis for the development of 3 forest management plans for the forest reserves which are important for guiding their conservation and sustainable use.</p> <p>With GEF support their will be enhanced protection of the forest reserves through updating of maps and boundaries including promotion of surveillance and increased patrols. This will result in restoration of respect for laws and regulations and enhanced enforcement of regulations. This will in turn result in an improved reduction of forest crimes and illegal forest activities.</p> <p>With GEF support the capacity of forest extension officers and other staff will be enhanced to enable them undertake forest duties effectively. This will result in improved implementation of forest extension services.</p> <p>With GEF support the collaborative Forest Management will be formed which will allow the establishment of methodologies for integrated Management Effectives to track protected areas. This will enhance decision making of management and responding timely to relevant emerging issues.</p>	<p>The incremental benefits will be: (i) Reduced Pressure on forest reserves resulting in reduced deforestation and degradation; (ii) Restoration of biological diversity in the forest including improved species conservation status; (iii) increased resilience of forest-dependent communities.</p>
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<p>Component 2: Supporting local government institutions and communities to enhance conservation and sustainable use of Forest resources to maintain and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in community forests and communal lands</p>	<p>Without GEF support the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Value of community forests will not be assessed and there won't be an incentive for communities to sustainably use and conserve their community forests areas or expand on the area under forest cover in their community lands.</p> <p>Without GEF support there won't be development of district and habitat specific restoration plans and by laws for endangered and threatened species developed which will result in uncoordinated and inexistant restoration activities implemented.</p> <p>Without GEF support there will not be capacity developed for Environmental officers and species experts in different taxonomic groups to undertake red list assessments important for informing regulatory and management actions.</p> <p>Without GEF support new village forest areas will not be established and natural tree regeneration in community forests will not be promoted.</p>	<p>With GEF project support;</p> <p>(i) Community Forests will be assessed in terms of their Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services value</p> <p>(ii) Red List assessment of species</p> <p>(iii) Development of Species and Habitat specific restoration plans</p> <p>(iv) Capacity of environmental officers in red List Assessments and</p> <p>(v) establishment of new village forest areas and natural regeneration in existing forest reserves.</p> <p>The focus on community forest areas will allow the community forests to be improved providing essential services for the communities and good catchment for Bua River. The assessment of the value and status of the species in these forests will enable the understanding of the conservation status and what actions and which species should be prioritized in restoration and conservation efforts. The enhancement of natural regeneration will improve the conservation status of the species and hence improve the ecosystem services that are provided by these ecosystems to the communities. This will also enhance greater understanding and awareness amongst the community on the importance of community forests and species habitats that are existing in the area as well as their contribution to the bigger Bua River Ecosystem.</p>	<p>The critical community forest Areas habitats will be safeguarded and restored, and species therein will thrive, and their populations will increase. A well-managed community forest area will have improved ecosystems, that can play a vital role in providing essential ecosystem services to people and the environment. When managed in collaboration with nearby communities, local economies benefit from the community forest areas through directly benefiting communities in firewood and non-timber forest products. The restoration of forest land and the increased area of forest under improved land management practices will lead to an increase in forest carbon stocks and reduction in GHGs emissions and climate change mitigation. A well-managed community forest reserve will mean that communities will now depend on their forests and not conduct illegal activities in protected areas as they will get their basic energy and forest needs from their forest's areas. Women and girls will not have to travel long distances to fetch firewood and microclimate will improve resulting in reduced climate related diseases. Finally, the managed community forests will protect watersheds that ensure a clean water supply among many other benefits to environment and human wellbeing.</p>
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**1.6) global environmental benefits (GEFTF) and/or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF); and**

Under components 1 the project will deliver global environmental benefits through improved management of the forest reserve leading to species conservation, hence making the project aligned with BD2.7. In addition, global environmental benefits will extend beyond the forest reserves as efforts to scale up biodiversity conservation in the area will be attained through components 2. This project will reduce biodiversity loss and increase biodiversity conservation potential of the forest reserve in Malawi. It is targeting areas of high biodiversity value where deforestation and degradation persists as an ongoing threat but where conventional exclusionary measures are neither socially acceptable nor operationally viable.

Mchinji Forest Reserve is one of the protected areas that form the upper catchment of Bua River which is an important tributary to Lake Malawi, a world heritage site that has the most diverse species of any fresh water lake in the world. Bua River is specifically an important breeding ground for potamodromous fish species like *Opsaridium microlepis* (Tweddle, 1982) which is currently an endangered fish species (Kazembe et al., 2006) and also endemic to Lake Malawi. Additionally, the river harbors a diverse and unique species, habitats and ecosystems (Allan and Flecker, 1993, including thirty-three fish species belonging to 9 families that have been recorded. Mchinji Forest reserve, the catchment of Bua contains a number of important tree species including several tree species like *Prunus africana* and *Pterocarpus angolensis* among others. By addressing the direct drivers to protect habitats and species the project will reduce pressures on Mchinji forest resources and increase resilience in the wider River basin

#### **1.7) innovation, sustainability and potential for scaling up. ?**

Innovation: Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) mechanism is not yet a widespread practice in Malawi, and the methodologies of establishing the Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool (IMET) to track Protected Area Management Effectiveness (PAME) and to inform management decisions will be applied for the first time in the Bua Basin landscape. The equipment, devices and intervention strategies that are proposed for adoption by the Forestry department at both national and state levels and at the site level are innovations in the national context. Innovation will also be infused in the training and capacity building methods that the project will promote.

Sustainability: The overall sustainability of the project results will be supported by embedding capacity into the institutions and entities that need and can make good use of strengthened abilities and resources. Capacity building will strengthen the on-going ability of law enforcement and protected area agencies with jurisdiction over species and their habitats, and of rural communities dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods, to continue to carry out activities that can benefit wildlife, forestry and ecosystem services. Building good policies, strong legislation and the capacity to implement them will establish the enabling environment for Protected Area Management Effective (PAME). Securing alternative development pathways that rely on a resilient and healthy wildlife stock and forestry resource base that benefits communities will reduce the incentives for rural populations to engage in poaching, hunting, illegal harvesting of forestry products or destructive ecosystem management practices. The project will seek to create stable situations on the ground where there is proper enforcement along with local communities engaged in conservation-compatible activities that generate local benefits while generating global environmental benefits.

Potential for scaling-up: The proposed project will address capacity building for staff within the department of Forestry on Protected Area Management Effective (PAME), managing information systems, monitoring; training on implementing monitoring, enforcement; and training on PA management for staff at the targeted PA sites, which together will allow for best practices and lessons learned through national and on-site enforcement activities to be easily and be widely up-scaled to overall national forest management operations. The Project will catalyze different innovations that can be deployed at speed and scale across other sites. Training of local communities within and adjacent to the targeted Mchinji Central Forest Reserve (CFR) and community co-management processes will be crucial for developing models that can be replicated elsewhere in the country, and replication of lessons and best practices may be enabled in areas such as monitoring, enforcement, ecotourism and other

biodiversity-compatible livelihood opportunities. International exchanges with other countries practicing Community Based Natural Resource Management will be used to further strengthen skills in these technical areas among stakeholders in Mchinji district, who can then provide peer training to their colleagues at other sites in Malawi.

#### **1b. Project Map and Coordinates**

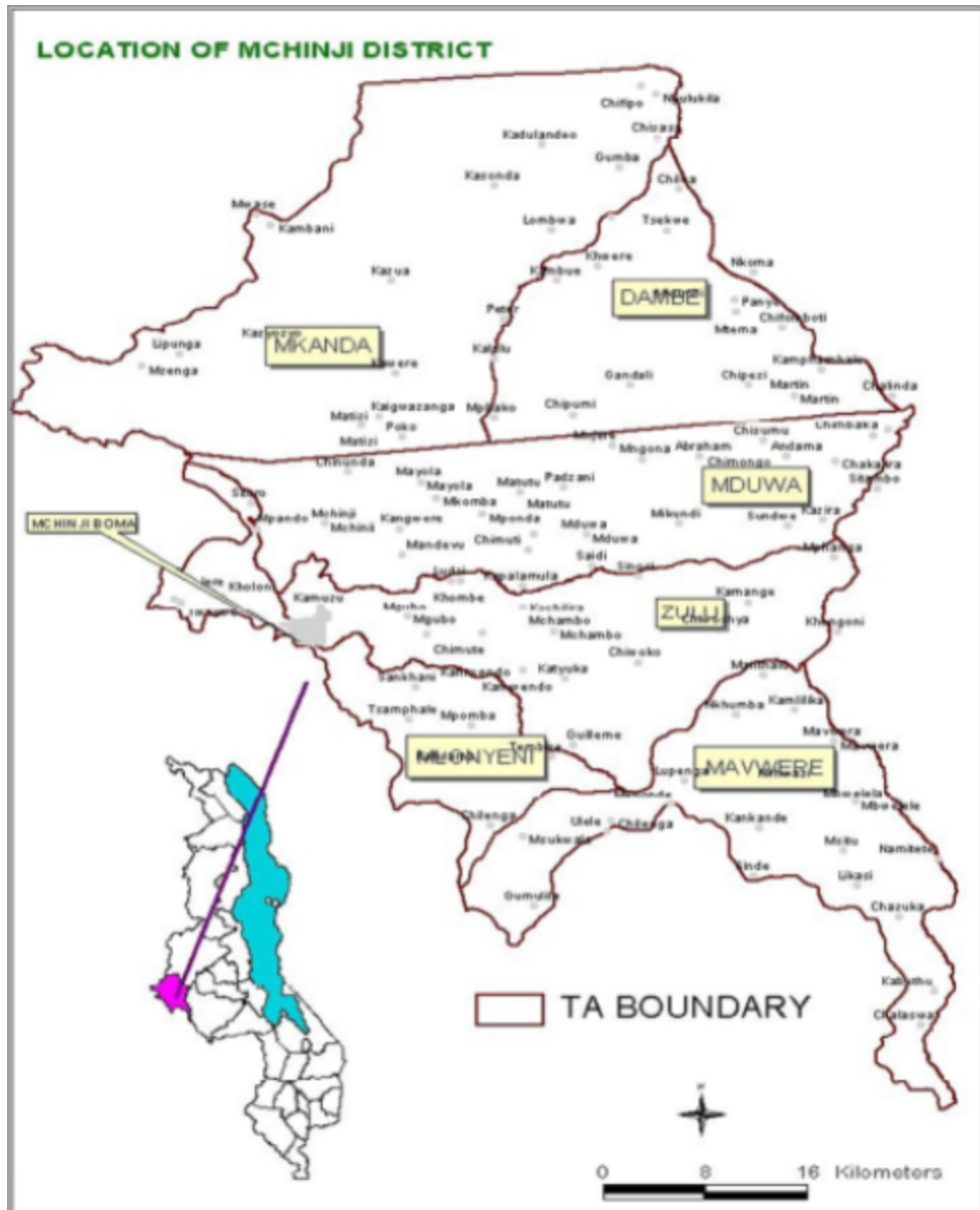
**Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.**

The coordinates are Latitude: -13°40'32.05"

Longitude: 32°51'26.35"

See the attached annex for the map

The superior administrative division is Central Region.



## 2. Stakeholders

Select the stakeholders that have participated in consultations during the project identification phase:



## **Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities**

**Civil Society Organizations** Yes

**Private Sector Entities** Yes

**If none of the above, please explain why:**

N/A

**In addition, provide indicative information on how stakeholders, including civil society and indigenous peoples, will be engaged in the project preparation, and their respective roles and means of engagement**

Stakeholder participation across a range of sectors is critical in ensuring the success of the project. In order to garner support for proposed interventions the project will work with local governments, village chiefs and established NGOs, as well as local communities living around Mchinji Forest reserve, who will be major beneficiaries of the project. National institutions will play a critical role in providing in-kind and financial support for the project, and the support of government ministries and their respective departments and agencies, especially with regard to the implementation of strategies and action plans, is also essential.

The National Executing Agency will be the Environment Affairs Department (EAD) within the Ministry of Natural Resources and Climate Change. Staff from EAD will be involved in coordinating activities within country while UNEP will provide guidance and technical backstopping. The two key Ministries involved in the Project will be the MoNREM and the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development (MoAIWD), Forestry Department, Department of Land Resources Conservation and the Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW). The Forestry Department is responsible for management of the Forest Reserves which are catchment areas for Bua River while the DNPW managed National Parks and Wildlife Reserves.

Other important Ministries will be Local Government and Rural Development (MoLGRD); and Finance and Economic Planning and Development (MoFEPD). The MoFEPD is critical in ensuring that financial investments be made in Bua River Restoration, both at national and local level. The National Herbarium and Botanical Gardens, a parastatal, and the Forest Research Institute within the Forestry Department will contribute to collating/contributing data on ecosystems and their biodiversity. A number of international and national organizations active in social and environmental aspects of biodiversity conservation and climate change management in Malawi will contribute to the project in various ways: UNDP which is working on other aspects of the project and was involved in the development of the Bua River Ecosystem Restoration Management Plan will also be instrumental in this project.

In terms of the academia, these include Chancellor College (Biology Department, Mzuzu University (Biological Sciences Department and Forestry Department, the Malawi College of Forestry and Wildlife and the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) and other relevant academic institutions will be engaged in relevant research and information generation activities as need be.

The Table Below provides a list of some relevant stakeholders and their functions;

### **Project Stakeholders? Roles or Functions**

Stakeholder	Role or Function
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<b>Ministry of Local Government</b>	Lead in development of project through VDCs and ADCs
<b>Environmental Affairs Department</b>	Involved in promotion of natural resources management
<b>Department of Disaster Management</b>	managing disasters at community level
<b>Malawi Drought Recovery and resilient Project</b>	Promotes use of solar energy in irrigation
<b>Forestry Department</b>	Formation of Village Natural Resource Management Committees (VNRMCs) in all areas. Committee that promote tree planting and management of natural resources.
<b>Malawi Police</b>	Law enforcement in the management of natural resources
<b>Ministry of Agriculture</b>	Soil and land management
<b>Department of Lands</b>	Promote afforestation and natural resource management
<b>District Fisheries Office</b>	Promote sustainable fish farming
<b>FAO</b>	Promotion of irrigation and rain-fed farming
<b>FOCCAD- Foundation for Community and Capacity Development</b>	Disaster relief management
<b>TAPP- Trustees of Agriculture Promotion program</b>	Tree planting, provide farmers with livestock and promote farmyard gardens
<b>World Relief</b>	Train farmers in nutrition and provide livestock and training in hygiene and sanitation
<b>Trees of Hope (Clinton Development Initiative)</b>	Promote tree planting and livestock production

<b>AICC- African Institute of Corporate Citizenship</b>	Promote drip irrigation
<b>Total Land Care</b>	Promote water conservation measures including tree and vetiver planting and promotion of energy saving stoves
<b>World Vision</b>	Drill community boreholes, construction of dams and tree planting
<b>Plan Malawi</b>	Promote modern agricultural technologies, farmer field school and promotion of irrigation and rain fed farming
<b>National Small Holder Farmers Association of Malawi (NASFAM)</b>	Support farmers in agricultural commercialization, tree planting and forest management.
<b>CRECOM (Radio Committees)</b>	Formation of radio listening clubs and investigating issues in the community
<b>Nkuyu Youth Club</b>	Nursery management and tree planting
<b>Tobacco companies (JTI-Japanese Tobacco International, Alliance one, Pyxus Limbe Leaf and small extent Premium Tobacco)</b>	Promote tree planting and support forest management
<b>African Park</b>	Tree planting and forest management and focus on protecting wildlife reserves
<b>Care Malawi</b>	Promotion of savings and loan and livelihoods
<b>Farmers? World</b>	Promotion of irrigation farming and distribution of farm input and club level

A number of stakeholders have been consulted to develop the PIF including those involved in the implementation of the Bua Management Plan and those working under the GEF Steering Committee. This is to ensure that there is no duplication in efforts and also make sure that the project tackles the relevant priorities for government as outlines in the management plan. Officials from Mchinji district council have also been consulted and have provided relevant information for the development of the project. The consultations have also extended to project coordinators of other projects like the Sustainable Drylands management project and National climate resilience project and the Invasive alien species management project among others to identify areas of synergies and linkages.

### 3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

**Briefly include below any gender dimensions relevant to the project, and any plans to address gender in project design (e.g. gender analysis).**

Understanding gender relations and the power dynamics behind them is a prerequisite for understanding individuals' access to and distribution of resources, the ability to make decisions and the way women and men, boys and girls are affected by political processes, social development and environmental degradation. A baseline study conducted in 2021 revealed that all gender groups, men, women, girls and boys benefit and contribute to ecosystem degradation of the Bua River catchment ecosystem. Both men and Women are affected because of their various responsibilities in the household. Other studies however reported that women and girls are more affected with environmental degradation as they walk long distances fetching water and firewood resulting into limited time for personal development. The involvement of women in the project is key because women generally have a great bearing on the success of restoration projects. The project will apply guidelines to target fair gender distribution on its capacity building activities e.g. selection of trainees, as well as decision making fora, which in most cases will be near 50:50 throughout all strata of the project stakeholder groups. At pilot sites, where communities will be directly involved in management activities, at least 50% of field workers will be women. Additional efforts will also be made to enhance capacity and awareness amongst women gender sensitive awareness material will be developed and separate workshops will be held for women and men based on their availability, but more importantly to allow women in male dominated communities to comment and participate more freely in issues pertaining to Ecosystem restoration and building resilience.

High population growth, gender inequality, HIV/AIDS, and the Covid-19 pandemic have all had a significant impact on the lives of the villages around the Bua river. As a result, their livelihoods and community economic recovery and empowerment will be investigated using non-natural resource-based methods, particularly for communities who rely on natural resources for their survival. This project will diversify livelihood and economic opportunities for women, men, and youth by promoting micro-entrepreneurship for on-farm and off-farm opportunities, village savings and loans for financial literacy and easy access to credit, and producer group strengthening for increased productivity and access to input and output markets. The output will also contribute to achievement of target 15 of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2015-2025) that states that by 2025 the supply of important ecosystem services is safeguarded and restored, taking into account gender roles and responsibilities of the youth, the poor and the vulnerable. The target is aimed at enhancing participation of vulnerable groups including women and the youth in management of biodiversity and ecosystems. There is currently a Youth Forest Restoration project that the project will take advantage of to enhance the role and participation of the youth in the project.

The majority of women in Malawi are informally employed in the natural resource sector and consequently, their livelihood and food security are more likely to be adversely affected by land degradation. 90% of women above the age of 15 are reliant on natural resources for domestic activities (e.g. collecting firewood, water and NTFP for home consumption) in comparison to 24% of men. It is estimated that gender inequality (e.g. lower access to finance, equipment, inputs and extension services) in the agriculture sector alone is costing the country USD 100 million and 7.3% in crop production annually, due to 25% lower production than male-headed households. In general, Malawi's female farmers are less productive (by 28 percent on average) compared to their male counterparts, mainly because of unequal access to key agricultural inputs such as land, labour, knowledge, fertilizer, improved seeds, and mechanization. However, according to a report on 'The Cost of the Gender Gap in Agriculture'. Malawi stands to gain if women are more involved in the entire agricultural value chain. The report estimates that closing this gap has the

potential to increase 7.3% in crop production, increase USD 100 million in GDP, and alleviate poverty for as many as 238,000 people. There are substantial differences between how men and women use forest resources: men are typically engaged in commercial use of natural forests, cutting wood for poles or other building materials, manufacturing charcoal, or making furniture; women, in contrast, use trees and forest resources for household purposes, including cooking, food, and traditional medicines. They also put much time and labor into gathering wood fuel for cooking. Women's activities often involve illegal extraction of resources from forest reserves, which can expose them to greater vulnerability

**Does the project expect to include any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women empowerment?** Yes

**closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources;** Yes

**improving women's participation and decision-making; and/or** Yes

**generating socio-economic benefits or services for women.** Yes

**Will the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators?**

Yes

#### **4. Private sector engagement**

**Will there be private sector engagement in the project?**

Yes

**Please briefly explain the rationale behind your answer.**

Collectively, the private sector has continuously invested in the natural resources management and promoted ecosystem services. Mchinji forest reserve is used as a water source for Southern Region Water Board and other private users that benefit from the ecosystem services provided. In addition, the forest houses towers of mobile service providers and other institutions including hosting of cultural sites and tourist attraction sites. These private institutions will continuously be engaged in the activities of the project. In addition, Mchinji district is a home to a number of private estates that have private forests and woodlots and have worked with government in conservation and sustainable use of forests. The engagement of private sector will continue through development and maintenance of tourism facilities, protected areas planning, law enforcement and biodiversity monitoring and staff development. Involvement of the private sector in conservation has increased over the past decade and is set to increase further through initiatives such as the River basin management structures, the OECMs and Biosphere Reserve initiatives. With financial and technical support from previous project/programme initiatives, this has seen an increase in the viability of ecotourism, increased financial returns to the investments in biodiversity conservation. The project will cultivate sustainable relationships with stakeholders, policymakers and community leaders in an effort to ensure that policies are in place and applied for the effective management of the protection of the ecosystems. The private sector is expected to contribute towards the protection of the ecosystems as they benefit immensely from the ecosystem services. A few private sector companies are operating in ecotourism activities in

and around the selected forest reserves and their participation will best be documented during the PPG phase.

#### 5. Risks to Achieving Project Objectives

**Indicate risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the Project objectives from being achieved, and, if possible, propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the Project design (table format acceptable)**

#### 5. Risks.

Risk	Rating	Risk mitigation measures
Agriculture which is the most representative land use in the area continues pressure on land and other natural resources	Low	Generation of high value income due to the availability of certain ecosystem services. Existence of natural areas outside of protected areas that can be enhanced
Rapid Changes in climate conditions and related extreme weather events can outstrip the ability of the project to successfully contributing sustainable use of natural resources and sustainable to agriculture production which can translate into food insecurity and increasing of vulnerability	Medium	Enhancing the resilience of ecosystems through restoration will strengthen the health of these ecosystems and their resilience to the impacts of climate change which will eventually provide a cost-effective means of protecting human and productive landscapes against impacts of climate change. . In addition, project interventions will enhance adaptation through enhancing of diversification of livelihoods, climate smart agriculture and protecting of water catchments.
Lack of interest and support from Key national stakeholders? groups and communities in Ecosystem Restoration and activities of the project	Low	By designing management plan, the project will be ensuring that both forest reserve and community forests are managed and human impacts are limited in scope. Training and awareness raising as well as proper coordination arrangements will improve communication and coordination as well as increasing stakeholder engagement, including communities involved through support towards community forest and sustainable agriculture practices. Communities and stakeholders will be eager to participate if the project is benefiting their day to day interest. The development and implementation of communication strategy will also facilitate a better understanding of project activities amongst all stakeholders

<p>Insufficient funding and Government support to continue implementation of activities after the project ends</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Several factors will increase the likelihood that increased funding and support will be available. Firstly, Ecosystem Restoration is one of Malawi's priority areas in its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and seen by the development of the National Ecosystem Restoration Strategy and Action Plan. Being a project focusing on Malawi's priority conservation area indicates that there is political commitment at National level for ecosystem restoration. Secondly, the government has developed a climate change fund which has prioritized restoration projects among the priority project to be funded through the fund. In addition, the project will increase awareness and understanding of the decision makers on the full range benefits of ecosystems, not only in terms of hydrological services or agricultural production and livelihoods, but also in terms of ecological services. This will be demonstrated by undertaking valuation of ecosystem services in the target areas and assessing their contribution to the economy and livelihoods. which together will incentivize local communities to continue these practices even in the absence of external support</p>
<p>Some ecosystem services as income generating options poorly understood by communities</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Development partners will be engaged in strengthening the capacity of the government in conducting environmental assessments and valuations. Through the project steering committee and other coordination mechanisms, the project will ensure that the project outcomes are supported by this critical baseline.</p>
<p>Lack of adoption or engagement by local communities</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>The project will develop participative community consultation, educational and awareness programmes, and will use the partnership approach with indigenous peoples and local communities to ensure full involvement in the project.</p>
<p>Risks that COVID-19 and health related emergencies</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Mix of virtual and physical options where necessary and adaptive management to ensure that project activities continue even under lock down scenarios. Further procurement of PPE for project participants and staff.</p>

## 6. Coordination

**Outline the institutional structure of the project including monitoring and evaluation coordination at the project level. Describe possible coordination with other relevant GEF-financed projects and other initiatives.**

The National Executing Agency will be the Environment Affairs Department (EAD) within the Ministry of Natural Resources and Climate Change. Staff from EAD will be involved in coordinating activities within country while UNEP will provide guidance and technical backstopping. The two key Ministries involved in the Project will be the MoNREM and the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development (MoAIWD, Forestry Department, Department of Land Resources Conservation and the Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW). The Forestry Department is responsible for management of the Forest Reserves which are catchment areas for Bua River while the DNPW managed National Parks and Wildlife Reserves.

The project will be implemented by UNEP and executed nationally by Environment Affairs Department (EAD) within the Ministry of Natural Resources and Climate Change. UNEP ? through its GEF Task Manager (TM) and Funds Management Officer (FMO) - will monitor the implementation of the project, review progress in the realization of the project outputs, and ensure the proper use of GEF funds. The UNEP TM will be directly responsible for: (i) providing consistent and regular project oversight to ensure the achievement of project objectives; (ii) liaising between the project and the GEF Secretariat; (iii) ensuring that both GEF and UNEP policy requirements and standards are applied and met (i.e. reporting obligations, technical, fiduciary, M&E); (iv) approving budget revisions, certifying fund availability and transferring funds; (v) organizing mid- and end-term evaluations and reviewing project audits; (vi) providing technical, legal and administrative guidance if requested; and (vii) certifying project operational completion. Environment Affairs Department (EAD) within the Ministry of Natural Resources and Climate Change will be the Executing Agency on behalf of the Government of Malawi and will provide overall coordination and supervision. The EAD will be accountable to UNEP for the achievement of the project objective and outcomes, according to the approved overall project work plan. EAD will implement the project in collaboration with project partners. To expedite delivery of outputs, the EAD will sign Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with project partners to implement specific activities of the project. These memoranda will clearly spell out the activities agreed upon and responsibilities of each party in the execution of the project. The mandate, expertise and competencies of the partners are some of the criteria that will be used in identifying activities to be implemented by project partners. A Project Management Unit (PMU) will be established in the EAD. A Project Steering Committee (PSC) will be established to provide policy and strategic guidance for project implementation. The ministry of agriculture will also provide technical support with regard to land use plan development and implementation.

In addition the project will link with existing projects through the National bodies like the National Biodiversity Steering Committee and will be making periodic presentations at the GEF Steering Committee where other related GEF projects are also required to make presentations on progress to identify areas of synergy and learning from each other. The project will further conduct exchange visits to other areas implementing similar projects to upscale best-case studies.

## 7. Consistency with National Priorities

**Is the Project consistent with the National Strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions?**



**If yes, which ones and how: NAPAs, NAPs, ASGM NAPs, MIAs, NBSAPs, NCs, TNAs, NCSAs, NIPs, PRSPs, NPFE, BURs, INDCs, etc**

Malawi Government ensures that the protection and sustainable management of environment and natural resources is encouraged through legal framework, policies and strategies. The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS III) is a medium national development strategy intended to contribute to Malawi's long-term development aspirations. The Bua River Ecosystem Restoration is linked to the Agriculture, Water Development and Climate Management Priority key area of the MGDS III. The Agriculture, Water Development and Climate Management priority area's main goal is to achieve a sustainable agriculture transformation that is adaptive to climate change and enhances ecosystem services.

The Environment Management Act (No. 19 of 2017 on the other hand supports this priority area of the MGDS iii as it aims at the protection and management of the environment and the conservation and sustainable utilization of natural resources. With regards to the Bua River Ecosystem Based Management Plan, the Act provides direction on Regulations of use and management of rivers, lakes including protection along banks of rivers and shores of a lake as it may be necessary to protect them from deleterious human activities. Considering the three main land use of Bua River (crop land, forest land, wetland), the Act further regulates the use and management of wetlands, including protection of wetlands by protecting traditional uses of wetlands by excluding or limiting human activity. The Act is in line the National Environmental Policy which encourages restoration, maintenance and enhancement of the ecosystems and ecological processes essential for the functioning and use of renewable resources. These goals are also reflected in other frameworks such as the Land Resources Management Policy and Strategy, National Parks and Wildlife Act, National Climate Change Management Policy, National Disaster Risk Management Policy, Malawi National Forestry Policy and Forest Act, Fisheries Conservation and Management Act and Regulations and National Agriculture Policy among others. The Wildlife Policy in particular acknowledges that 60% of wildlife habitat occurs in customary land. Since most of Bua River's Ecosystem lies in customary land, the strategies outline in the Wildlife Policy to enhance community based wildlife management on customary land will assist communities in Bua Catchment area to establish Multiple Use Wildlife Areas and strengthen community based wildlife conservation and management.

With regards to climate change, the main policies and programmes regarding climate change and risks include the National Climate Change Management Policy (2016), the National Climate Resilience Programme (2021) and the National Disaster Risk Management Policy. Through the National Climate Change Resilience Programme, the government engaged all districts within Bua River Ecosystem to develop Ecosystem Management Plans, some of which this project intends to implement.

The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan is also another important policy document that benefits the Bua River Ecosystem Restoration and Management. Target 7 of Malawi's NBSAP indicates that by 2020 aquatic biodiversity is managed and harvested sustainably within safe ecological limits. Management of aquatic biodiversity in Malawi has been compromised over the years and this target aims at enhancing their management including watershed management, wetland management and rehabilitation and restoration of aquatic ecosystems. Target 11 further aims at minimizing the anthropogenic pressures on vulnerable ecosystems thereby improving ecosystems resilience to climate change which the project will be responding to. Target 6 of Malawi's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan aims at ensuring at least 50% of degraded terrestrial habitats are restored and protected by 2025. The Government of Malawi through Environmental Affairs Department with support from UNDP recently developed Bua River Restoration and management Plan as one of the actions towards achievement of this target. The Restoration and Management plan has mapped out all the priority hotspots and areas requiring interventions. The Restoration Plan was preceded by a detailed baseline analysis of the ecosystem, the socio-economic factors of the catchment and a detailed interactive mapping tool to visually present the hotspots and areas that require interventions. The Restoration and Management plan has proposed an investment cost of Twenty-Five Million USD in a phased approach. The plan has prioritized a number of areas that this concept note seeks to address.

The National Forest River basin Restoration Strategy on the other hand, is meant to help Malawi deal with the challenges presented in unpredictable climate shifts and consequent River basin degradation. The main goal of the strategy is to regain ecological functionality and enhance human well-being across deforested or degraded forested River basins by outlining priority opportunities and interventions that can translate the potential of restoration into multiple benefits such as improved food security, increased biodiversity, improved water supply, job creation, income, carbon sequestration and enhanced resilience to climate 1,063,603 ha has been defined as potential area for priority restoration interventions in the Bua Catchment.

The Fisheries Conservation and Management Act of 1997 and National Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy of 2016 aim at promoting regulation, conservation, management and sustainable fisheries and aquaculture development respectively. The Policy identifies seven main priorities related to fisheries and aquaculture which are relevant for the Bua Catchment including capture fisheries, aquaculture, fish quality and value addition, governance, social development and decent employment, research and capacity development.

Malawi's recently revised National Agricultural Policy (NAP) of 2016 is focused on sustainable agricultural production and productivity; sustainable irrigation development; mechanization of agriculture; agricultural market development, agro-processing and value addition. With NAP, the GoM hopes for improved management of agricultural resources, increased agricultural exports and incomes, and improved food and nutrition security. Other NAP priority areas are empowerment of youth, women and vulnerable groups in agriculture; and institutional development, coordination and capacity strengthening; which is supported through the project by e.g., the partnership on Bua River Ecosystem management through Conservation Agriculture.

With regard to International Conventions, Malawi is a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), UNCCD the provisions of which will be implemented through the project. In addition, the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (the Ramsar Convention), which provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources; the convention calls upon all Contracting Parties to, wherever possible, address the environmental, economic and social impact on wetlands within their jurisdictions. The Bua River feeds into Lake Malawi which has globally important biodiversity and hence there will be a global contribution through the project in enhancing adaptation, biodiversity and resilience efforts

## **8. Knowledge Management**

**Outline the knowledge management approach for the Project, including, if any, plans for the Project to learn from other relevant Projects and initiatives, to assess and document in a user-friendly form, and share these experiences and expertise with relevant stakeholders.**

The project will facilitate and enhance knowledge acquisition and experience sharing through better access to information, knowledge, learning and networking. This will be achieved by; (i) developing and operationalizing an interactive M&E system to track implementation of project activities for purposes of scaling out in similar areas in Malawi, (ii) documenting, packaging and sharing best practices and lessons learned at landscape, national and regional levels to inform uptake of good practices and lessons learned, and policy influencing.

National and site specific awareness and communication strategies will be developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders to facilitate and enhance knowledge acquisition and experience sharing at local, landscape, national, regional and global levels through better access to information, knowledge, learning and networking for purposes of catalyzing coordinated implementation of PAME and biodiversity loss reduction. The knowledge will be managed and shared intentionally to contribute to the long-term sustainability of project interventions. This will be achieved by; (i) developing and operationalizing an interactive M&E system to track implementation of project activities for purposes

of scaling out in similar areas in Malawi. Monitoring and evaluation will be critical in measuring the success of project interventions, and an M&E will continue throughout project implementation, especially with regard to changes in awareness levels. All monitoring and evaluation activities will collect gender-disaggregated data, and where appropriate, women-only focus group discussions will be held regarding the impact of project activities on women (ii) documenting, packaging and sharing best practices and lessons learned at landscape, national and regional levels to inform uptake of good practices and lessons learned, and policy influencing and, (iii) establishing and enhancing the functionality of national, county and PA level multi-stakeholder platforms to champion protected area management effectiveness (PAME) and restoration of community forests.

## 9. Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) Risks

Provide information on the identified environmental and social risks and potential impacts associated with the project/program based on your organization's ESS systems and procedures

### Overall Project/Program Risk Classification \*

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
Low			

#### Measures to address identified risks and impacts

Provide preliminary information on the types and levels of risk classifications/ratings of any identified environmental and social risks and potential impacts associated with the project (considering the GEF ESS Minimum Standards) and describe measures to address these risks during the project design.

#### Supporting Documents

Upload available ESS supporting documents.

Title	Submitted
SRIF Mchinji Forest ecosystem in Malawi - 13 June 2022	

**Part III: Approval/Endorsement By GEF Operational Focal Point(S) And GEF Agency(ies)**

**A. RECORD OF ENDORSEMENT OF GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT (S) ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT(S): (Please attach the Operational Focal Point endorsement letter with this template).**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Ministry</b>	<b>Date</b>
Ms. Shamiso NAJIRA	Operational Focal Point and Chief Environmental Officer, Environmental Affairs Department	Ministry of Natural Resources, Malawi	6/13/2022

**ANNEX A: Project Map and Geographic Coordinates**

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project intervention takes place

**Annex A: PROGRAM/PROJECT MAP AND GEOGRAPHIC COORDINATES**

**Latitude: -13°40'32.05"**

**Longitude: 32°51'26.35"**

**The superior administrative division is Central Region.**

