



Guinean Forests Regional Coordination and Learning Project

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

11147

Countries

Regional

Project Name

Guinean Forests Regional Coordination and Learning Project

Agencies

CI

Date received by PM

3/15/2024

Review completed by PM

10/18/2024

Program Manager

Jean-Marc Sinnassamy

Focal Area

Multi Focal Area

Project Type

FSP

CEO

Part I - General Project Information

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

June 27, 2024

Addressed

04/05/2024

No

- Some comments made below should impact the information in this table, notably about the executing partners. See further comments about FSC, FAO, and potential additional partners.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 07/30/2024

No action required.

CI-GEF 06/11/2024

Section updated

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

September 6, 2024

Addressed.

June 27, 2024

Sorry to not be clear. The point is not just to change a ranking for another, but it is to provide a clear reasoning about the project intent.

The CFB IP is conceived as a whole to provide a response to the double crisis of nature and climate. So, the starting point is to have BD and CCM as principal objectives. Now, depending on the drivers of environmental degradation and the proposed solution, these priorities can be adjusted, and other objectives can be significant, as CCA or LD.

Please, provide this reasoning and eventually adjust the Rio Markers,

04/05/2024

- Rio Markers: We suggest considering Biodiversity as the principal objective, keeping Land Degradation as significant objective. We are not sure Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation should be maintained as significant. To be demonstrated, or corrected.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 07/30/2024

Rio Markers adjusted, and the explanation below provided:

*Climate Change Mitigation is rated Principal (2) because the Guinean Forests Integrated Program is explicitly and directly designed to protect and enhance the conservation of the Guinean Forests of West Africa, which is a critical primary forest and carbon sink. Interventions under the Regional Coordination Project will promote coordination, learning, and sharing among countries and diverse stakeholders operating in this biome, thereby strengthening forest governance at country and regional levels. To achieve this, the RCP will deploy activities that seek to build or strengthen institutional and technical capacity, foster policy coherence, promote learning, knowledge exchange, multi-stakeholder dialogues, and mobilize financing. Notably, through these interventions, it is demonstrated that this program is explicitly designed to protect and conserve biodiversity in the Guinean Forests Critical Forest Biome, resulting in a rating of **Biodiversity as Principal (2)**.*

CI-GEF 06/11/2024

Rio Marker selections adjusted in Annex K as per reviewer suggestion.

2. Project Summary.

- a) Does the project summary concisely describe the problem to be addressed, the project objective and the strategies to deliver the GEBs or adaptation benefits and other key expected outcomes?**
- b) Does the summary capture the essence of the project and is it within the max. of 250 words?**
- c) [If a child project under a program] Does the project summary include adequate and substantive link with the parent program goal and approach?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

June 27, 2024

Addressed.

04/05/2024

Please, update the summary after having addressed the comments below.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 07/30/2024

No action required

CI-GEF 06/11/2024

The project summary has been updated

3. Project Description Overview

- a) Is the project objective statement concise, clear and measurable?**
- b) [If a child project under a program] Is there a project Theory of Change that is aligned and consistent with the overall program goal and approach?**
- c) Are the components, outcomes, and outputs sound, appropriate and sufficiently clear to achieve the project objective and the core indicators per the stated Theory of Change?**
- d) Are gender dimensions, knowledge management, and M&E included within the project components and budgeted for?**
- e) Are the GEF Project Financing and Co-Financing contributions to PMC proportional?**
- f) Is the PMC equal to or below 10% (for MSP) or 5% (for FSP)? If above, is the justification acceptable?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestOK

Agency Response

CI-GEF 07/30/2024

No action required

4. Project Outline

A. Project Rationale

- a) Is the current situation (including global environmental problems, key drivers of environmental degradation, climate vulnerability) clearly and adequately described from a systems perspective and adequately addressed by the project design?**
- b) Have the role of stakeholders, incl. the private sector and local actors in the system been described and how they will contribute to GEBs and/or adaptation benefits and other project outcomes? Is the private**

sector seen mainly as a stakeholder or as financier?

c) If this is an NGI project, is there a description of how the project and its financial structure are addressing financial barriers?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

June 27, 2024

Addressed.

Details:

- The CFB IP is financed at a height of \$306.5 million from the GEF and with \$1.7 billion of cofinancing. Please, correct.

04/05/2024

- A narrative about key initiatives and programs in the region is welcome. However, you need to make a distinction between those that are closed or will close in 2024 (and you are welcome to highlight lessons and best practices) and those that will be active at the same time than the Guinean Forests IP from 2025 to 2030. Please, correct.

- This expected change is deeper than a change in the text: all the reasoning and the justification of proposed activities should be additional to existing initiatives. Please, remember that the GEF finance additional activities to a baseline situation and cofinancing opportunities.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 07/30/2024

-Noted on the clearance.

-The details has been added on the Project Summary.

CI-GEF 06/11/2024

- The section has been reorganized to make clear the distinction between those that are closed or will be closed imminently, and those that will overlap with the GFIP. The subsequent section includes lessons learnt

- We have reviewed the reasoning and justification of the proposed activities and verified that they are additional to the baseline and co-financing opportunities.

5 B. Project Description

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

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

- c) Is there a description of how the GEF alternative will build on ongoing/previous investments (GEF and non-GEF), lessons and experiences in the country/region? [If a child project under a program] Does the description include how the alternative aligns with and contributes to the overall program goal and approach?
- d) Are the project components (interventions and activities) described and proposed solutions and critical assumptions and risks properly justified? Is there an indication of why the project approach has been selected over other potential options?
- e) Incremental/additional cost reasoning: Is the incremental/additional cost reasoning properly described as per the Guidelines provided in GEF/C.31/12? Has the baseline scenario and/or associated baseline projects been described? Is the project incremental reasoning provisioned (including the role of the GEF)? Are the global environmental benefits and/or adaptation benefits identified?
- f) Other Benefits: Are the socioeconomic benefits resulting from the project at the national and local levels sufficiently described?
- g) Is the financing presented in the annexed financing table adequate and demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objectives? Are items charged to the PMC reasonable according to the GEF guidelines?
- h) How does the project design ensure resilience to future changes in the drivers and adaptive management needs and options (as applicable for this FSP/MSP)?
- i) Are the relevant stakeholders (including women, private sector, CSO, e.g.) and their roles adequately described within the components?
- j) Gender: Does the gender analysis identify any gender differences, gaps or opportunities linked to project/program objectives and activities and have these been taken up in component design and description/s?
- k) Are the proposed elements to capture and disseminate knowledge and learning outputs and strategic communication adequately described?
- l) Policy Coherence: Have any policies, regulations or subsidies been identified that could counteract the intended project outcomes and how will that be addressed?
- m) Transformation and/or innovation: Is the project going to be transformative or innovative? [If a child project under an integrated program] Are the specific levers of transformation identified and described? Does it explain scaling up opportunities?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
September 6, 2024

Addressed.

June 27, 2024

- Please ensure that gender dimensions are monitored and reported on thoroughly during the project implementation and PIR/MTR/TE.

04/05/2024

- About the result framework: 19 outputs are identified in the result framework. Not all have the same weight, but it is a relatively high number of outputs and then activities. We remind that we would like to see the Regional Coordination Project be the last project under the Guinean Forests IP closing,

lasting one more year if possible. It is recommended to streamline the result framework and adjust the budget to focus on a smaller number of outputs and activities and allow a longer project duration.

- Based on the information presented in the document, it seems to us that the RCP needs to focus its role on governance and finance aspects.

- Output 1.1.1 about a gender-responsive and inclusive GFIP knowledge management, communications, and branding strategy is welcome. OK for a platform/portal (output 1.1.2). However, the outputs 1.1.3 to 1.1.6 should be streamlined/rationalized and the number of events, meetings, workshops, etc, reduced to a realistic number. The support to child projects may be a starting point, extending to the forest biome is better. We are not sure that Tailored technical assistance and capacity building to strengthen the technical capacity of state and non-state stakeholders? is needed (output 1.1.6). Please, revise.

- All the activities related to transboundary landscapes should be covered under the outcome 2.3.

- The Outcome 2.2 should be removed or rephrased. We recommend keeping a broad language highlighting that the RCP has a role at the biome level. Lessons, best practices, and opportunities (training, resources...) should be available to all participating countries, not only the Lofa-Gola-Mano Conservation corridor. Moreover, Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia have additional resources from IW to work together. Please, correct and revise not only the outcome, but also the outputs, the activities, and the indicators. Additional partners, as the International Corridor Initiative should be involved. It would be better to design the proposed outputs and activities on the top of existing actions. It will be the way to justify the added value of GEF on these actions. It should also a way avoid to propose too many actions in too many directions solely financed by GEF, with no long-term approach. Please, revise.

Outcome 4.1: we need clarification to understand this outcome and the GEF financed activities:

- what do you mean by establishing gender-responsive plans to guide continuous multi-country efforts for coherent policies for protection, conservation, and sustainable use of the Guinean Forest Biome.

- Clarify the target 4.1.

- Outcome 4.2: From a general point of view, we agree that the Guinean Forests IP RCP needs to organize global events and facilitate the participation of stakeholders from the region to global events, especially those who face difficulties to get financing (CSO, IPLC, women groups, Youth groups). The set of activities should be reflected in the budget.

- Please, consider that the GEF does not pay GEF agencies to participate to COPs and participate to side-events. Please, confirm.

- We expect cofinancing in cash or in-kind to co-organize these global events. Please, confirm.

- Organizing global events and participating is one thing. Please, confirm you included a budget to participate to other regional events under the CFB IP. Please, check if one or several events can be

organized with the other regional coordination projects from Amazon, Congo, Mesoamerica, and Indo-Malay regions in a South-South collaboration spirit.

- We can probably not mention at this stage the initiatives and programs to follow or attend (and it is not desirable). However, please well assess the added value and meaning of these initiatives and programs (AFR100 on restoration?).

- We recommend identifying initiatives and events related to the empowerment of local communities and indigenous people;

- as well as those helping to make progress on gender issues and woman empowerment. The role of woman as pillars of resilience against shocks may be better addressed.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 07/30/2024

-This is noted.

CI-GEF 06/11/2024

- The Results Framework has been revised
- Eliminating some Outputs in the Results Framework has sharpened the focus of the RCP on governance and finance aspects.
- The description of Output 1.1.1 has been elaborated with material from the eliminated Outputs listed above, including the knowledge portal, as these relate to elements of the KM, Comms & Branding strategy. With this formulation, the RCP will be able to maintain sufficient flexibility to ensure that it can address the reviewer?s concern over the number of events, meetings, workshops, etc.
- Output 1.1.6 relating to technical assistance and capacity building (now numbered 1.1.3) is deemed a vital role for the RCP. It is at the heart of the intervention to strengthen the capacity of stakeholders with a holistic view of the hotspot. It also aims to introduce innovation and promote scalable solutions (i.e., through the regional project versus national projects focused on issues that may not necessarily be of cross-cutting interest). This output greatly complements the capacity-building actions of the national child projects.
- All activities relating to transboundary landscapes are now covered under Outcome 2.3 (renumbered as 2.2).

- Outcome 2.2 has been removed. Language for the new Outcome 2.2 (previous 2.3) has been reviewed to ensure that it clearly relates to the entirety of the biome.
- The support to Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone's transboundary work has been kept per the explicit direction received previously from GEF, but is now included as Output 2.2.2 under the biome-wide work on transboundary matters in the new Outcome 2.2. We have also kept it as a standalone output so that the funds and activities covered by the IW resources can be tracked. The coordinating role of the RCP will include responsibility for ensuring that activities are additional to those supported by other IW resources, having noted the contents of the TDA and SAP prepared under the earlier IW-supported project through the MRU. The focus of this work will be to support the countries' efforts to activate tri-national committees created under the earlier IW project, link them to other transboundary actors, and provide technical guidance if requested for pilot/demonstration activities on the ground, in anticipation of a new IW-supported phase under development. We have noted that Climate Chance and its work on biodiversity corridors will be a key resource.
- Target 4.1 has been rephrased for clarity, and now reads: One gender-responsive roadmap for continuous regional efforts to enhance policy coherence for the protection, conservation, and sustainable use of the Guinean Forest biome.
- This reflects acknowledgement that enhancing policy coherence will be a long term process to advance on existing commitments, but that as yet a clear path for doing so has not yet been articulated. It also reflects that the roadmap itself will be shaped by the results of Output 4.1.1.
- We have made more explicit that the RCP will provide support for more inclusive representation at global events. This is also reflected in the budget once it is accomplished. Initially, budget allocations for civil society organisations (CSOs), indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs), women's groups and youth groups were included in the financial provisions for annual meetings, regional forums and the final workshop. However, these allocations have now been separated out and presented as separate budget lines. This change enhances transparency and clarity in financial reporting by ensuring that the specific funding for these groups is explicitly identified and tracked separately from general meeting expenses.
- CI self-sponsors its staff to participate in the COPs. CI and BirdLife will use this platform to raise awareness about the Program and coordinate countries present from the Biome to host side events.
- The CI self-sponsorship to participate in COPs and host side events/co-organize these global events is in-kind co-financing
- We confirm that we have included a budget allocation for BirdLife to participate in regional events organised by other CFB IP.

- Output 1.1.2 covers the organization of regional events and has a budget tied to it. At the moment, we have discussed with UNEP (Congo Basin IP) about jointly hosting regional events and they have confirmed interest. We will also adopt the same approach when undertaking selected virtual webinars. We will start with the Congo IP and later approach the other critical forest IPs. The following paragraph is in the ProDoc: *“The Project will also engage with other GEF-8 IPs involved in closely related work, including the other four Critical Forest Biome IPs (Amazon, Congo Basin, Indo-Malaya/PNG, and Mesoamerica, for a total of \$357M), as well as the Ecosystem Restoration IP (\$184M), which will run concurrently to the Project. Coordination and collaboration with the Congo Basin IP will be particularly relevant; for example, the RCP will coordinate with UNEP as IA of the Congo Basin IP to invite the participation of Child Projects in selected webinars and other events and to jointly host a regional learning and exchange event.”*

- We have noted that these convenings offer important opportunities for Guinean Forest countries to contribute to setting of international policies, standards and targets, notably including those relating to financing for restoration and conservation, and thematic and geographical prioritization for financial and other international support. Under this Output, the RCP also will work with the region to identify those convenings with the highest added value and significance, so as to prioritize the investment of time and resources into preparation and attendance.

- Identifying events relating to the empowerment of IPLCs and women has been included as an explicit concern under Output 4.2.1. Budget to sponsor representatives from IPLCs, women groups, and youth groups to participate in key in-person events is also reflected in the budget.

5.2 Institutional Arrangements and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Project

- a) Are the institutional arrangements, including potential executing partners, outlined on regional, national/local levels and a rationale provided? Has an organogram and/or funds flow diagram been included?**
- b) Comment on proposed agency execution support (if agency expects to request exception). Is GEF in support of the request?**
- c) Is there a description of coordination and cooperation with ongoing GEF and non-GEF financed projects/programs (such as government and/or other bilateral/multilateral supported initiatives in the project area, e.g.).**
- d) [If a child project under an integrated program] Does the framework for coordination and collaboration demonstrate consistency with overall ambition of the program for transformative change?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

June 27, 2024

Addressed

04/05/2024

About the stakeholders:

- The GEF will not finance FSC to produce guidelines or certification recommendations at national level. This subject is out of the scope of the CFB IP and may lead to more timber exploitation, including in primary forests. Please, remove these activities and its budget.

- The GEF agencies are expected to provide targets for each core indicator, including a baseline, a method, and values. About carbon calculations, there is no reason for the GEF to pay a second time one GEF Agency (FAO) to proof-read or do a quality control of carbon calculations: please, remove this activity and its budget.

- There is a missed opportunity with the International Corridor Initiative supported by Climate Chance. This NGO includes politicians who can provide a high level support to move forward the conservation of primary forests and the restauration/management of buffer zones and corridors. They have a baseline project in Guinea with AFD and are active at the regional/global level to catalyze more interests on the design and management of corridors. They can also bring cofinancing. We recommend getting in touch with them and explore synergies and partnerships.

Agency Response **CI-GEF 07/30/2024**

No action required

CI-GEF 06/11/2024

- Besides BirdLife International, all the organizations (and ToRs) provided in the ProDoc are indicative executing partners and will only be engaged by the RCP if there is demand for their services by the countries. In the budget, we have removed the names of the potential executing institutions in order to ensure funds are not committed to any partner and that we have flexibility to work with other partners. FSC's role has been revised and the budget reduced to 50k.
- During the PPG Phase, the countries and consultants designing child project CEO endorsement packages flagged the need for support to calculate the carbon emissions target. CI organised a training where FAO guided the PPG consultants on how to fill the EX-ACT Tool. A similar need emerged in the Ecosystem restoration IP where FAO has been included to provide this support among other tasks. In the Guinean Forests IP, FAO will only come on board at the tail end of the Program to support the PMU at the country level and the RCP on how to update the EX-ACT Tool values and validate the final target carbon emissions that will be reported in the final PIRs. We have reduced FAO's budget to 10k.
- We have included Climate Chance and its International Coalition on Biodiversity Corridors in Africa in the ProDoc. Climate chance involvement will be in the Regional Forum

5.3 Core indicators

- a) Are the identified core indicators calculated using the methodology and adhering to the overarching principles included in the corresponding Guidelines (GEF/C.62/Inf.12/Rev.01)? [If a child project under a program] Is the choice of core indicators consistent with those prioritized under the parent program?
- b) Are the project's targeted contributions to GEBs (measured through core indicators and additional listed outcome indicators) /adaptation benefits reasonable and achievable? Are the GEF Climate Change adaptation indicators and sub-indicators for LDCF and SCCF properly documented?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
September 6, 2024

Addressed.

June 27, 2024

Addressed, but one: please remove the number of tons of CO₂e under the core indicator 6.1.

04/05/2024

- Remove the targets for all Core Indicators, but the CI 11 on beneficiaries.

Agency Response
CI-GEF 07/30/2024

Deleted the number of tons of CO₂e under the core indicator 6.1. Action undertaken throughout the document

CI-GEF 06/11/2024

Except for CI11, other core indicator targets have been removed from relevant sections. As guided, reference to Core Indicators has been retained under Global Environmental Benefits and under Consistency and Alignment with CI Institutional Priorities, as a summary of the Child Projects to be supported.

5.4 Risks

- a) Is there a well-articulated assessment of risk to outcomes and identification of mitigation measures under each relevant risk category? Are mitigation measures clearly identified and realistic? Is there any omission?
- b) Is the rating provided reflecting the residual risk to the likely achievement of intended outcomes after accounting for the expected implementation of mitigation measures?
- c) Are environmental and social risks, impacts and management measures adequately assessed and rated and consistent with requirements set out in SD/PL/03?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
September 6, 2024

Addressed.

June 27, 2024

Key Risk: Please adjust the rating under the "Environmental and Social" risk category in line with the ESS risk category. The ratings are not in line as is. Doing so would be in line with the description of the "Environmental and Social" risk category in Annex B of the GEF Risk Appetite document (GEF/C.66/13) stating that: "The rating reported by project under this category is identical to the Overall Safeguards Risk rating provided at PIF, CEO Endorsement, MTR and TE stage."

The project overall ESS risk is currently classified as low, and CI attached the Appraisal Environmental and Social Safeguard screening report. However, the environmental and social risk of the Key Risk section in the Portal said substantial risk. Please make these risks consistent and revise.

04/05/2024

- Please, note that a change was recently made on risk management, addressing Council's recent endorsement of the GEF Risk Appetite (GEF/C.66/13). At CEO endorsement, you need to respond the following questions:

- Is there a well-articulated assessment of risk to outcomes and identification of mitigation measures under each relevant risk category?
- Are mitigation measures clearly identified and realistic? Is there any omission?
- Is the rating provided reflecting the residual risk to the likely achievement of intended outcomes after accounting for the expected implementation of mitigation measures?
- Are environmental and social risks, impacts and management measures adequately assessed and rated and consistent with the requirements set out in SD/PL/03?
-

Agency Response

CI-GEF 07/30/2024

The Environment and Social Risk in the ProDoc's Table 7 has been adjusted to **Low**. This is the same as the Overall Environmental and Social Safeguard screening rating. Additionally, the content in Table 7 has been improved

CI-GEF 06/11/2024

The questions have been inserted into the Risk section, with Yes No check boxes (per the format in the section on Policy requirements), followed by (See Table below).

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestNA

Agency Response
CI-GEF 07/30/2024

No action required

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

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

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes

Agency Response
CI-GEF 07/30/2024

No action required

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes

Agency Response
CI-GEF 07/30/2024

No action required

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes

Agency Response
CI-GEF 07/30/2024

No action required

7 D. Policy Requirements

7.1 Are the Policy Requirement sections completed?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes

Agency Response
CI-GEF 07/30/2024

No action required

7.2 Is the Gender Action Plan uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
June 27, 2024

Addressed.

Agency Response
CI-GEF 07/30/2024

No action required

7.3 Is the stakeholder engagement plan uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
June 27, 2024

Addressed.

Agency Response
CI-GEF 07/30/2024

No action required

7.4 Have the required applicable safeguards documents been uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
June 27, 2024

Addressed.

Agency Response
CI-GEF 07/30/2024

No action required

8 Annexes

Annex A: Financing Tables

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

STAR allocation?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
Addressed.

General comment on the annexes: pay attention to the format, some tables are out of margins (result framework, responses to STAP and GEFSEC comments).

NA

Agency Response

CI-GEF 10/14/2024

The margins have been adjusted.

Focal Area allocation?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes

Agency Response

CI-GEF 07/30/2024

No action required

LDCF under the principle of equitable access?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

CI-GEF 07/30/2024

No action required

SCCF A (SIDS)?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

CI-GEF 07/30/2024

No action required

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response
CI-GEF 07/30/2024

No action required

Focal Area Set Aside?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes

Agency Response
CI-GEF 07/30/2024

No action required

8.2 Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
September 6, 2024

Addressed.

Quality Control

- Status of utilization of PPG: project design is not an eligible category (it is an output) ? please provide detailed information by using the eligible categories included in Guidelines.

ANNEX D: STATUS OF UTILIZATION OF PROJECT PREPARATION GRANT (PPG)

Provide detailed funding amount of the PPG activities financing status in the table below:

Project Preparation Activities Implemented	GETF/LDCF/SCCF Amount (\$)		
	Budgeted Amount	Amount Spent To date	Amount Committed
Consultant for CEO Endorsement Package	58,888.00	30,000.00	28,888.00
Project Design	105,150.00	61,480.00	43,670.00
Travel and Workshops	35,962.00	21,734.00	14,228.00
Total	200,000.00	113,214.00	86,786.00

Agency Response
CI-GEF 07/30/2024

Annex D table is updated, with values as of Jun 2024 and activity detail is added to the category. Expenses associated with project design correspond to staff time spent in the validation workshop, stakeholder consultations technical inputs and review of the CEO Endorsement package.

Project Preparation Activities Implemented	GEFTF Amount (\$)		
	Budgeted Amount	Amount Spent to Date	Amount Committed
Consultant for CEO Endorsement Package	58,888	54,888	4,000
Personnel for Project Design and Coordination = (Personnel time for Stakeholder consultation, Validation Workshop, Technical review of the CEO Endorsement package)	105,150	59,099.56	46,050
Travel and Workshops	35,962	32,154.80	3,807.2
Total	200,000	146,142.36	53,857.64

8.3 Source of Funds

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

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

CI-GEF 07/30/2024

No action required

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

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request to be reviewed at quality control.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 07/30/2024

No action required

Annex B: Endorsements

8.5 a) If ? and only if - this is a global or regional project for which not all country-based interventions

were known at PIF stage and, therefore, not all LOEs provided:

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestNA

Agency Response
CI-GEF 07/30/2024

No action required

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestNA

Agency Response
CI-GEF 07/30/2024

No action required

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestNA

Agency Response
CI-GEF 07/30/2024

No action required

Annex C: Project Results Framework

8.6 a) Have the GEF core indicators been included?

b) Have SMART indicators been used; are means of verification well thought out; do the targets correspond/are appropriate in view of total project financing (too high? Too low?)

c) Are all relevant indicators sex disaggregated?

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

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
September 6, 2024

Addressed.

June 27, 2024

- Please, check the laying out as the result framework is getting out of the margins.
- Please, see the comment above on the CI 6.1 (AFOLU). Please, correct.

04/05/2024

Please, remove all targets for Core Indicators, but the C11 on beneficiaries.

It is OK to remind the expected targets in the text, though.

Agency Response
CI-GEF 07/30/2024

- The results framework table has been formatted.
- CI 6.1 has been deleted.

CI-GEF 06/11/2024

Except for C111, other core indicator targets have been removed from relevant sections. As guided, reference to Core Indicators has been retained under Global Environmental Benefits and under Consistency and Alignment with CI Institutional Priorities, as a summary of the Child Projects to be supported

Annex E: Project map and coordinates

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
Yes

We appreciate that the Guinean Forest IP lead agency provide the geographical coordinates of the landscapes targeted by the country projects (or child projects). However, as the RCP is mainly a KM and coordination project and will report at the biome level, with not action on the ground, this information is accessory.

Agency Response
CI-GEF 10/10/2024

Annex F: Geographical coordinates of the landscapes targeted by the country projects deleted.

CI-GEF 07/30/2024

Thank you. This is noted.

Annex F: Environmental and Social Safeguards Documentation and Rating

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

October 30, 2024

Addressed.

October 25, 2024

Please, you have not clarified or corrected that there was a difference between the overall ESS risk classification (low) and the evaluation in the portal of the Key Risks Section: Moderate.

Yes,

but, please, take note that the project overall ESS risk is still classified as low, however, the environmental and social risk of the Key Risks section in the Portal is listed as Moderate. Please make these risks consistent and revise.

Overall Risk Rating	Moderate	44% of the identified risks are rated modest and substantial. While the mitigation interventions to address them have been provided, the impact on project delivery is significant.
---------------------	----------	---

Agency Response

CI-GEF 10/28/2024

Apologies for the error. This has been rectified under **Table 7 (Risks)**. The overall risk category is low, and a justification is provided. We have also made minor adjustments on the description of risks in Table 7.

CI-GEF 07/30/2024

No action required

Annex G: GEF Budget template

- 8.9 a) Is the GEF budget template attached and appropriately filled out incl. items such as the executing partner for each budget line?
- b) Are the activities / expenditures reasonably and accurately charged to the three identified sources (Components, M&E and PMC)?
- c) Are TORs for key project staff funded by GEF grant and/or co-finance attached?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

October 30, 2024

Addressed.

October 25, 2024

There are still small equipments covered by technical components and not by pmc (laptops, Project camera, microphone, printer, scanner, other equipment). If it would be acceptable for specific equipements (GIS, satellite imagery, for instance), but for latops and small basic office equipments, please transfer them to pmc.

October 15, 2024

Thanks for responding to most of items. However please address the following aspects:

- There are still differences in component sub-totals between the budget table and Portal?s component table as follows, please revise to make them match.

Component 1	Component 2		Component 3		Component 4		Component 5
Outcome 1.1	Outcome 2.1	Outcome 2.2	Outcome 3.1	Outcome 3.2	Outcome 4.1	Outcome 4.2	(05.1)
\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
1,499,819	748,998	664,343	569,302	571,161	521,415	597,642	566,391

Child Project Components	Component Type	Child Project Outcomes	Child Project Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing(\$)
Component 1: Learning, knowledge management, capacity building, and communication	Technical Assistance	Outcome 1.1: Enhanced knowledge management and learning and capacity among multi-sectoral state and non-state actors	Output 1.1.1: A gender-responsive and inclusive GFIP knowledge management, communications, and branding strategy developed	GET	1,570,590.00
Component 2: Governance and coordination	Technical Assistance	Outcome 2.1: Enhanced coherence and synergies between Child Projects and regional initiatives	Output 2.1.1: Gender-responsive and inclusive collaborative awareness campaigns	GET	1,334,116.00
Component 3: Financing solutions and innovation	Technical Assistance	Outcome 3.1: Enhanced donor and private sector partner coordination	Output 3.1.1: Donor roundtable activities organized/supported by the Project.	GET	1,148,584.00
Component 4: Support for regional policy coherence	Technical Assistance	Outcome 4.1: Enhanced policy coherence of national forest governance policy	Output 4.1.1: Options analysis for an ongoing regional policy coordination mechanism focused	GET	1,119,390.00

- Still, office expenses common areas, internet, IT and Consumables (Printing, etc) should be charged 100% to PMC but not to project components.

- You did not respond to the point related to the presence of four sub-grants, beyond KM and learning: agroforestry, transboundary watershed management, "coordination and synergies for enhanced forest governance and protection through private sector engagement & promotion of SFM practices, and carbon assessments.

- The TORs for ?Staff- Finance, Administration and Grants Management? and ?Technical Lead? are more in line with coordination, lead, review, oversee, - therefore, they should be charged 100% to PMC (GEF and co-financing portion), not to project components.

Here are the rules: For a position to be financed by the project's components, *clear Terms of Reference describing unique outputs linked to the respective components are required at the time of CEO Endorsement / Approval, for review by the Secretariat?* (paragraph 4 ? page 42 of the guidelines accessible [here](#)) ? currently the TORs do not reflect the unique outputs.

- If you cannot change enough the terms of reference, explore if some of co-financing resources can be explored to cover part of these positions.
- We could not find the TORs for many ?staff? positions highlighted below ? it is unclear whether several positions that are labeled as ?staff? are really ?staff? or ?consultants? ? please ask the Agency to clarify

Personnel and Professional Services	Birdlife Executing Staff- Technical Lead
	Birdlife Executing Staff- Monitoring and Evaluation Officer
	Birdlife Executing Staff- Finance, Administration and Grants Management
	Birdlife Executing Staff- Environmental and Social Safeguards, Gender and Inclusion
	Birdlife Executing Staff- Communications and Knowledge Management Officer
	Birdlife Executing Staff- Forest technical, Ecosystems Services, Spatial planning in-house experts
	Service Provider-Annual Project Audit
	Service provider - Online sharing platform (Website licensing, maintenance, IT support)
	Service Provider - Communications design and editing
	Service provider - Branding, communications strategy
	Service provider - Biodiversity Mainstreaming & Finance, Policy
	International Consultant - Mid-term Review
	International Consultant - Final Evaluation
	CI Community of Practice
	Service Provider - Annual Project Audit (CI)
	CI Executing Staff - Community Based Conservation
	CI Executing Staff - Resilience Capacity Building.
	CI Executing Staff - Policy and Government Affairs
	CI Executing Staff - Transboundary Watershed Management
	CI Executing Staff - Restoration
CI Executing Staff - CI Finance Lead	

- Check the coherence of language for the components between the summary, the result framework, and the explanations in the prodoc:
 - o In the summary, it is difficult to identify the main components of the RCP. Please, revise,

o The outputs 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 are the same in the result framework: "Tailored technical assistance and capacity building to strengthen technical and institutional capacity on collaborative management of transboundary watersheds". Please, correct.

o In the summary, the sentence "The CFB IP is financed at a height of \$306.5 million from the GEF and with \$1.7 billion of cofinancing" appears twice. Please, correct,

September 18, 2024

- There is a misunderstanding of the guidelines. There is a tolerance of assigning costs to technical components of technical positions that technically contribute to the concerned outcomes. Administrative and financing positions should be assigned to pmc. Only the grant manager may be assigned to technical components, if his/her terms of reference clearly mentions the contribution to the outcomes of considered components. Please, revise.

- About the level of CI staff, in-house consultants, or consultants recruited by CI: the level of Agency staff should be (largely) under 30%. Per comparison of other IP: Cities or ASL are around 10-12%. Only the Restoration IP with CI is about 30%. The level of consultants is around 10-20%. Please, revise and confirm.

- "Operating costs" is not an acceptable item in the budget.

- We do not see the need for a consultant on restoration. It is expected that the results from the ERIP will feed the CFB IP. Moreover, CI is both the Lead Agency for the Guinean Forests IP and the Ecosystem Restoration IP. There is a risk of duplication. Please, correct (in the budget, the narrative, and the result framework).

- Some savings seem possible as there are staff on a number of topic (topic (KM, communication, gender, monitoring, for instance, but here watershed management and finance, too) and you added at the same time consultants on the same topics. The duplication staff + consultants is raising questions. We are seeing the possibility to reduce the level of staff in these topics already addressed by consultants.

- In addition to staff and consultants, there are four categories of sub-grants, some of them for more technical assistance? (see agroforestry). All the RCPs under the CFB IP should mainly be KM, coordination, learning. I understand and find laudable the intent to be operational? but there are not enough resources for that and there are other ways (with cofinancing for instance). The challenge for the RCP is to install a solid and long-term platform, not to distribute sub-grants. Moreover, when you have staff and consultants on a topic, why would you need more technical assistance on agroforestry or additional coordination for transboundary aspects or governance? Here again, there are ways to reduce the budget and correct this misunderstanding. We would recommend to find a way to present budgets while maintaining a certain flexibility in view of responding to emergent issues, rather than trying to be operational with small grants.


- IT Equipment, offices, consumables,?, should be all under pmc, please.

- Please, take note that all administrative and financing positions should be assigned to pmc (The only exceptions are the technical positions (CTP for instance), You may include the grant manager connected to the concerned technical component if it is clear in his/her terms of reference.

- Detail: paying for three staff from ECOWAS for various international meetings, COP, etc, seem out of concerns, with unclear benefits. Please, revise

June 24, 2024

- Budget table in the Portal view is off the margins ? this project needs to be circulated, reason why the budget table must be readable. Please ask the Agency to resubmit a legible / complete budget table ? we will review the table and provide comments if appropriate.



Professional Services	International Consultant - Mid-term Review	21,574	21,574
	International Consultant - Final Evaluation	21,574	21,574
	ICT Consultant/ITP/PRAD	51,361	51,361
	Service Provider-Annual Project Audit (2x)	51,361	51,361
	Staff-IT Finance Cases	71,954	71,954
	Staff-IT Finance Consultant - Community Based Conservation	181,285	181,285
	Staff-IT Finance Consultant - Watershed Capacity Building	76,984	76,984
	Staff-IT Finance Consultant - Policy and Government Affairs	44,824	44,824
	Staff-IT Finance Consultant - Restoration	14,107	14,107
	Staff-IT Finance Consultant, Transboundary Watershed Management	36,375	36,375
	Forest Stewardship - donor engagement (public, private)	34,442	34,442
	Travel budget for project lead - Participation in Global events (x1 staff) and events for other IPs for lessons sharing	7,628	7,628
	Meeting - Committee Meetings	16,365	16,365
	Preparation of common policy position & participation in COP (3 staff + 3 ECOWAS members) (2 + stakeholder) (internal)	75,401	75,401
	Political engagement activities - participation in regional forums (3 staff + 3 ECOWAS rep)	12,535	12,535
	Workshop - workshop (6R participation)	39,550	39,550
	Facilitate participation (1pp) in Annual Meetings, Regional Forum, Closed of marginalised groups (CSO, WLC, women groups, Youth groups)	32,360	32,360
	Closed workshop/Final Regional Forum (60 participants)	31,431	31,431
	Capacity Building Trainings and Workshops (4)	225,000	225,000
	Sub-grant - Riparianity Redesign Assistance & Knowledge Dissemination	50,000	50,000
	Sub-grant - Regional Guinean Forests Forum (150 participants), sub-regional event for political and technical engagement including all stakeholders from national and local governments, NGOs, IPLCs, Women Groups, Youth groups, and forest sector private sector actors for coherent action for conservation Guinean Forests of West Africa	46,425	46,425
	Sub-grant - Transboundary Watershed Management, Collaboration, Coordination, and Cooperation	115,335	115,335
	Sub-grant - Coordination & Synergies for Enhanced Forest Governance and Protection through Private Sector Engagement & Promotion of Sustainable Forest Management Practices (e.g. Sustainable Timber exhibition through Forestry Standards)	25,000	25,000
	Sub-grant - Environmental Impact Assessment and Migration Benefits Quantification - Tools Training & Facilitation	10,000	10,000
	Project staff salaries (3)	1,636	1,636
	Project camera, microphone, printer, scanner, other equipment	2,081	2,081
	Office expenses (computer, internet, IT)	16,192	16,192
	Consumables (Printing, etc)	1,130	1,130
	Grand Total	1,580,122	1,580,122

- In the meantime, please see the following observations:

i. Staff- Finance, Administration and Grants Management should be charged 100% to PMC but not to project components (still we need to understand several positions that are labeled as ?staff? whether they are actually ?staff? or ?consultants?).

ii. Office expenses common areas, internet, IT and Consumables (Printing, etc) should be charged 100% to PMC but not to project components.

iii. There are differences in component sub-totals between the budget table and Portal?s component table as follows, please revise to make them match:

- Comments below are addressed, but please provide the excel version of the budget.

	Budget table	Component table in Portal entry	Difference
C1	1,590,122	1,520,147	69,975
C2	1,344,810	1,259,415	85,395
C3	1,196,602	1,307,750	-111,148
C4	1,099,140	1,136,370	-37,230
C5	508,397		508,397
M&E	186,661	702,050	-515,389
PMC	296,286	296,286	0
Total	6,222,018	6,222,018	0

04/05/2024

- The shares of staff for the Lead Agency are too high (#50%): please reduce the costs down to 30%.

- Remove the budget for FAO

- Remove the budget for FSC

- Include a budget for the International Corridor Initiative/Climate chance.

- All expenses related to overheads or additional fees are not eligible. See the following lines:

- Travel-CI In-House Consultants to workshops and trainings,

- CI in-house consultants operating costs" for instance.

- 13% on the top of Birdlife budget.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 10/28/2024

Addressed, all equipment has been charged to PMC. To achieve this, we reduced the number of computers from eight to five and adjusted the budget line for steering committee meetings. Only one specific item, a drone for aerial photography and videography, is charged to the technical components due to its specialized nature. Please refer to the revised budget to see these changes.

CI-GEF 10/10/2024

-1- We have one position that will handle Finance, Administration, and Grants Management. To clarify, the grants portion of this position is charged to the components, while the finance portion is charged to the PMC. Additionally, we have provided the Terms of Reference (ToRs) for further details.

-2- To clarify, CI is undertaking both implementing and executing functions in this RCP. This means that Agency staff from CI will only charge under agency fees, whereas the CI-Executing Teams will undertake the execution tasks. The CI-Executing Teams are the ones costed in this budget: \$604,335 equivalent 10% of the budget. The CI-Executing Teams will work closely with CI Agency Staff, BirdLife, and other organizations to execute their assigned tasks. Instead of relying on consultants or sub-granting tasks to other organizations where CI has expertise, we have opted to leverage our in-house experts to support the partners and countries in delivering the program. This approach ensures that CI is fully responsible and accountable for delivering the program. In addition, it is the priority of the EA (BirdLife) and CI to ensure that the project resources/budget are planned and utilized most efficiently. Noting your feedback, we have also analyzed other IP budgets to understand where can reduce and realign. Unlike other projects, CI as the IA, will have two separate agreements with CI and Birdlife. Given the structure, CI is kept under staff (in-house constant) which skews the percentages.

-3- To clarify, "Operating costs" is not a specific line item in the budget; there is no expense labeled under that description. However, two budget lines fall under the category of "Other operating costs," covering essential office expenses like internet, IT, utilities, and consumables (such as printing).

Office expenses and supplies refer to the costs of maintaining a functional office, such as utilities (electricity, water), office supplies (paper, pens), and equipment. These costs are crucial for the overall operation of the country office and support the implementation of all projects. Although they are not directly tied to any specific project, they benefit the entire portfolio. To ensure fairness, a consistent methodology was used to distribute these costs across different projects, ensuring equitable allocation to donors.

BirdLife, has demonstrated significant commitment by providing co-financing towards these operating costs, and we request GEF's support as well. For instance, BirdLife has committed

\$900,000 in in-kind co-financing, which includes contributions to Components 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6, as well as Project Management Costs (PMC), such as rent for existing offices. Shared office spaces and meeting rooms also incur costs for internet, IT support, and utilities.

-4- Apologies for the confusion. In past GEF projects, we referred to CI staff that undertake an execution function as 'In-house Consultants.' Since this term is confusing, we have renamed all CI staff that are executing as 'CI Executing Staff.' Additionally, we concur that the Ecosystem Restoration IP will inform the CFB IPs. However, the Guinean Forests IP falls under the CI-Africa Field Division, hence input and technical support from the CI-West and Central Africa Director will be required to deliver this program. The CI-Restoration Team at CI-HQ is also supporting the Ecosystem Restoration IP, hence there will be close coordination between the CI-West and Central Africa Director and the CI-Restoration team at HQ, which will ensure linkages between the 2 CI-Led IPs in terms of restoration activities.

-5- Further clarification:

-To clarify, the term 'in-house consultants' was referencing CI staff, and this has been changed to 'CI Executing Staff' to avoid confusion.

-The Communications and Knowledge Management Officer is a BirdLife staff. As the EA, BirdLife will be responsible for the day-to-day coordination, compilation, and dissemination of KM products. This is different from the following consultancies:

a) **Branding, communications strategy consultancy:** This is a one-time contract, initiated at the start of the RCP implementation phase. This consultant will work with CI and BirdLife to brand the program and design the program's KM and Communication Strategy, which will guide the program going forward. Any updates to the Program's Branding, KM and Communications will be undertaken CI KM and Communications Lead and the BirdLife KM Officer.

b) **Communications design and editing consultancy:** Learning from other IPs such as the GWP, there is a need to contract a professional to undertake the final review and editing of the Annual Program Newsletter/Progress Report before publishing, as well as support for graphic design and production of visuals (video editing, posters, etc) of communication materials. This is why we have a consultant named 'Communications design and editing.'

-6- We acknowledge that key political and technical organizations need to be involved in this program for it to be successful. This means these organizations will need clear Terms of Reference and budgets to ensure they perform their tasks, which will culminate in stronger coordination and exchange among the Guinean Forests countries and stakeholders, hence the delivery of the program. Some of these organizations have demonstrated goodwill by committing co-financing, but financial constraints coupled with weak institutional structures and incoherent policies impede these organizations from effectively performing their institutional mandates. This constraint will directly affect the delivery of the program, including the plan to set up a sustainable forest governance mechanism for West Africa, as well as obtaining high-level commitment and backing from West African governments to sustainably govern this critical forest biome, probably through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding among the

countries that fall within this biome. On this basis, grants are inevitable if we are to ensure we receive support from key partners. We, however, note the concern regarding the naming of the grants, and these titles have been revised to align with the support required to deliver the RCP. We do not know the full extent to which these partners will be supported hence the titles of the grants are indicative and place holders but could be revised.

To avoid duplication, we have moved the portion of the budget in the Service Provider budget line named *Watershed Transboundary* which was meant to strengthen weak institutional structures in existing regional bodies in the Sub grant called *Transboundary Watershed Management, Collaboration, Coordination, and Cooperation* and relevant capacity support will be assessed at project start

-7 In the case of ECOWAS, no dedicated budget is earmarked in the sub-grants but as a regional political and economic body, it will be key to involve some representatives to attend and input into the Regional Guinean Forest Forum and other regional and global technical meetings to be identified at the start of the project to foster a sense of ownership and collaboration. In addition, during the Regional Validation Workshop in October 2023, country representatives flagged the need for the RCP to address insufficient regional political coordination and preparation for common policy positions ahead of multilateral conventions, technical meetings or events related to forests. Relevant regional and global political bodies and events will be identified during the inception phase and can be re-assessed during Steering Committee Meetings. **These budget lines have been combined and do not mention ECOWAS anymore and the relevance of their involvement in selected events or that of other stakeholders will be determined based on identified events.**

-Office expenses, such as internet, IT, consumables, and other supplies such as laptops, are shared across components and PMC as these items directly contribute to delivering all outputs. Reallocation was made to increment the % allocated to PMC, but it was distributed to other components as it will benefit other activities

-We have one position that will handle Finance, Administration, and Grants Management. To clarify, the grants portion of this position is charged to the components, while the finance portion is charged to the PMC. Additionally, we have provided the Terms of Reference (ToRs) for further details.

CI-GEF 07/30/2024

-Budget table will be displayed in a user-friendly and easily comprehensible format (word), ensuring clarity for circulation.

-i: The role of the Staff - Finance, Administration and Grant Manager will support the delivery and compliance of Components 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 (M&E) and PMC. Following GEF guidelines for positions charging to both components and PMC, Terms of Reference outlining their contributions to each outcome can be found in Annex J. Additionally an adjustment in the allocation % for PMC has been made and reduced for other components.

Position names have been changed to: In-house Consultant. Following annex J description.

-ii: Office expenses internet, IT, consumables and other supplies such as laptops and other equipment are shared across components and PMC as these items directly contribute to the delivery of all outputs. Reallocation was made to increment the % allocated to PMC, but it was distributed to other components as it will benefit other activities.

-iii: The values have been revised and adjusted for this new version.

ANNEX I: Budget Table

Budget in Excel uploaded separately.

	Project budget by component (in USD)							
	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	Component 4	Component 5	M&E	PMC	Total budget
Personnel and Professional Services	1,197,489	990,697	740,320	876,857	552,310	115,751	203,412	4,676,836
Grants and Agreements	301,275	186,750	311,425	91,425	0	0	0	890,875
Travel, Meetings and Workshops	59,733	132,483	72,653	129,997	12,000	70,910	58,760	536,536
Other Operating Cost	8,475	16,950	16,950	16,950	0	0	24,170	83,495
Equipment	3,618	7,236	7,236	4,161	2,081	0	9,944	34,276
TOTAL GEF FUNDED PROJECT	1,570,590	1,334,116	1,148,584	1,119,390	566,391	186,661	296,286	6,222,018

CI-GEF 06/11/2024

- After careful deliberation, certain staff positions, i.e. Watershed Transboundary, Biodiversity Mainstreaming & Finance, Policy, have been reclassified as service delivery (consultancy). These are short-term assignments that respond to specific project deliverables and adapt to stakeholder needs. This adjustment allows for a more flexible and efficient allocation of resources based on project needs. This reduces the PMU's personnel costs to 36%. It covers essential needs for the effective management of the Action, and we expect it to be maintained for the successful implementation and impact of the Programme, ensuring that it meets its strategic objectives and delivers on its commitments.
- Bullets 2 and 3: The specific names of sub-grantees have been replaced by a general description of their role and contribution. This approach allows for greater flexibility during the implementation phase. The ProDoc facilitates a potential list of sub-grantees,

but this is not definitive and will need to be assessed at the outset during the implementation phase in terms of value for money and technical and administrative relevance.

- We have included Corridor Initiative/Climate chance in the ProDoc as a potential executing partner. We will hold further discussions with Climate Chance during implementation phase to determine role and allocate a budget accordingly.
- Overhead line has been removed
- CI travel budget removed

CI-GEF October 25, 2024

- Apologies for the error. This is corrected and now there is consistency in the figures in the ProDoc and Portal.

- Addressed. Expenses have been allocated solely under PMC, with the remaining costs covered by co-financing. Please refer to the revised budget for details.

- Thank you for your observation. This comment was addressed in the previous response sheet, but we would like to reiterate our response here:

We acknowledge that the four sub-grants play a crucial role beyond knowledge management (KM) and learning.

Each sub-grant has been specifically designed to target key areas essential for the successful implementation of our project:

- Agroforestry Knowledge & Best Practice Dissemination promotes sustainable agricultural practices that enhance forest conservation and community livelihoods.
- Transboundary Watershed Management, Collaboration, Coordination, and Cooperation focuses on fostering collaborative efforts among neighboring countries to manage shared watersheds effectively.
- Coordination & Synergies for Enhanced Forest Governance and Protection through Private Sector Engagement & Promotion of Sustainable Forest Management Practices seeks to strengthen partnerships with the private sector to promote sustainable forest governance.
- Tools Promotion, Training & Facilitation for Carbon Assessments provides necessary tools and training for stakeholders to assess and manage carbon stocks effectively.

We recognize that the successful engagement of key political and technical organizations is vital for the project's success. These organizations will require clear Terms of Reference and appropriate budgets to ensure they can perform their tasks effectively. This engagement will foster stronger coordination and enhance the exchange of knowledge among the Guinean Forest countries and stakeholders.

While some organizations have committed to co-financing, they face financial constraints and institutional challenges that can impede their ability to fulfill their mandates. Therefore, grants are essential for mobilizing support from these partners.

We have revised the naming of the grants in the budget file to better align with the specific support needed to deliver the Regional Coordination Platform (RCP). The titles currently serve as placeholders, and we are open to adjustments as we gain further insight into the support required by our partners. We appreciate your feedback and are committed to ensuring that these sub-grants contribute effectively to the overarching goals of the program.

- The ToRs of the Technical lead and The Finance, Administration and Grants Management have been updated to reflect the unique outputs linked to the respective components. (See changes in Annex J in Prodoc)

- We have uploaded the ToRs for BirdLife and CI which describe the general role of the staff from both organisations that will execute in the Project. We also assure the GEF that our intent is to have long term investment in the Guinean Forests of West Africa by leveraging both institutions technical capacity as opposed to depending on consultants which is not sustainable. Additionally, in our budget template, consultancies are budgeted under the 'professional services' sub-category and not under Personnel -where we have budgeted the staff. Lastly, to clarify, the reason as to why we do not have ToRs for the staff is because of the GEF guideline which requires agencies to only provide ToRs for positions that charge to both PMC and Components. On this basis, these staff positions are only charging to Components hence no ToRs provided. Reference "[Guidelines on the GEF Project and Program Cycle Policy](#)", Annex 7, Section II, Paragraph 4: *'If project staff are charged to both PMC and project components (i.e. not only to PMC), clear Terms of Reference describing unique outputs linked to the respective components are required at the time of CEO Endorsement/Approval, for review by the Secretariat. Project staff refers to the following: i) personnel of the Executing Entity carrying out long-lasting tasks funded with GEF resources; ii) GEF Agency staff funded with GEF resources when the GEF Agency is also acting as an Executing Entity'*. Nevertheless, we have uploaded the ToRs of the positions requested.

- This is noted. The summary section has been updated to include the components of the RCP.
- Apologies. This is a mistake in the portal entry. We have corrected.

Thank you. The repetitive sentence in the Project summary section has been omitted .

Annex H: NGI Relevant Annexes

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

b) Does the project provide a detailed reflow table to assess the project capacity of generating reflows? If not, please provide comments.

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestNA

Agency Response
CI-GEF 07/30/2024

No action required

Additional Annexes

9. GEFSEC DECISION

9.1.GEFSEC Recommendation

Is the project recommended for approval

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

October 30, 2024

All technical comments are addressed. The project is recommended for Council information, with PO quality control before.

October 25, 2024

One comment on risks and one in the budget have not been addressed. Please, check the review above (risks, budget). Please, note that the quality control will only take place after the technical clearance, in view of facilitating the management of the flow of projects for CEO endorsement. Thanks for your understanding.

October 15, 2024

Please, address the pending comments in the review above.

September 20, 2024

All technical comments have been addressed, but some questions about the budget remain. Please, address them before we sent the revised package to the Quality Control.

June 24, 2024

Thanks for the improvement. Please address the remaining comments and those from the Quality Control.

04/05/2024

The project cannot be CEO recommended for approval and Council circulation. Please, address the comments above.

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

9.3 Review Dates

	CEO Approval	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review	4/5/2024	
Additional Review (as necessary)	6/27/2024	
Additional Review (as necessary)	9/20/2024	
Additional Review (as necessary)	10/15/2024	
Additional Review (as necessary)	10/25/2024	