

GEF-8 PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF)

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General Project Information

Project Title

Unlocking Inclusive and Sustainable Conservation Financing in São Tomé and Príncipe through The Ecotéla Fund (Foundation for the conservation of biodiversity and protected areas of São Tomé and Príncipe)

Region

Africa

GEF Project ID

12319

Country(ies)

Sao Tome and Principe

Type of Project

MSP

GEF Agency(ies):

CI

GEF Agency ID

Executing Partner

BirdLife International

Ministry of Environment, Youth and Sustainable Tourism (MAJTS) (Directorate of Environment and Climate Action (DAAC) & Directorate of Forests and Biodiversity (DFB), Government of São Tomé and Príncipe)

Foundation for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Protected Areas of São Tomé and Príncipe (EcoTéla Fund)

Executing Partner Type

CSO

Government

CSO

GEF Focal Area (s)

Biodiversity

Submission Date

4/20/2026

Project Sector (CCM Only)

Taxonomy

Influencing models, Biodiversity, Protected Areas and Landscapes, Coastal and Marine Protected Areas, Terrestrial Protected Areas, Financial and Accounting, Conservation Trust Funds, Climate Change, Climate Change Mitigation, Financing, Land Degradation, Sustainable Land Management, Integrated and Cross-sectoral approach, Deploy innovative financial instruments, Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making, Convene multi-stakeholder alliances, Stakeholders, Private Sector, Capital providers, Type of Engagement, Partnership, Consultation, Participation, Information Dissemination, Civil Society, Non-Governmental Organization, Gender Equality, Gender Mainstreaming, Sex-disaggregated indicators, Gender-sensitive indicators, Beneficiaries, Gender results areas, Access to benefits and services, Participation and leadership, Capacity, Knowledge and Research, Enabling Activities, Learning, Adaptive management, Indicators to measure change, Theory of change, Knowledge Generation, Seminar, Knowledge Exchange, Peer-to-Peer, South-South, Focal Areas, Species, Threatened Species, Invasive Alien Species, Conservation Finance, Biomes, Tropical Rain Forests, Mangroves, Grasslands, Forest, Congo

Type of Trust Fund

GET

Project Duration (Months)

36

GEF Project Grant: (a)

823,069.00

GEF Project Non-Grant: (b)

0.00

Agency Fee(s) Grant: (c)

Agency Fee(s) Non-Grant (d)

74,076.00	0.00
Total GEF Financing: (a+b+c+d)	Total Co-financing
897,145.00	981,361.00
PPG Amount: (e)	PPG Agency Fee(s): (f)
45,852.00	4,127.00
PPG total amount: (e+f)	Total GEF Resources: (a+b+c+d+e+f)
49,979.00	947,124.00

Project Tags

CBIT: No NGI: No SGP: No Innovation: No Competitive Window: No

Project Summary

Provide a brief summary description of the project, including: (i) what is the problem and issues to be addressed? (ii) what are the project objectives, and if the project is intended to be transformative, how will this be achieved? (iii), how will this be achieved (approach to deliver on objectives), and (iv) what are the GEBs and/or adaptation benefits, and other key expected results. The purpose of the summary is to provide a short, coherent summary for readers. The explanation and justification of the project should be in section B “project description”. (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

São Tomé and Príncipe’s protected areas lack a predictable, sustainable biodiversity financing mechanism. The EcoTéla Fund was legally established in 2023 and launched in 2025 to address this funding gap, with its core governance framework defined but not finalised and tested. On this basis, the EcoTéla Fund is neither capital-ready nor operational-ready, given that its core governance structures and processes have not yet been finalised and tested. This, therefore, necessitates the finalisation, approval, capitalisation, testing, and practical demonstration of how the Fund’s structures will be operationalised, including its fiduciary management, grant-making, environmental and social safeguards, gender-responsive eligibility, investment, audit, donor engagement strategy, domestic resource mobilization and conservation-impact monitoring systems.

The project's objective is to capitalise and operationalise the EcoTéla Conservation Trust Fund to deliver sustainable, long-term financing for biodiversity conservation in São Tomé and Príncipe. The project is aligned with the GEF-8 Biodiversity Focal Area, Objective 3, on increasing mobilisation of domestic resources through finalising the establishment and operationalizing the EcoTéla Fund as a national biodiversity finance mechanism capable of mobilising, managing, and deploying domestic and blended financial resources for long-term biodiversity conservation. This project’s outcomes will transition the EcoTéla fund into a fully functional, credible, rules-based biodiversity finance mechanism whose governance structures are founded on recommendations and insights from the UNDP-BIOFIN process. This will be achieved through the preparation and implementation of the EcoTéla Domestic Resource Mobilisation and Capitalisation Roadmap, which will define the strategic, operational, and financial actions required to capitalise and operationalise the Fund, including testing initial low-risk financing mechanisms for priority protected-area and biodiversity needs.

The project will be implemented through three components: (1) Capitalisation (domestic resource mobilization) and operational testing of the EcoTéla Fund, including activation of governance structures such as approval of fiduciary, grant-making, environmental and social safeguard and gender procedures, establishment of investment arrangements, preparation of a donor capitalisation package, conditional transfer of catalytic seed capital upon verification of readiness and achievement of a 1:1 external cash match, and deployment of initial low-risk, safeguards-screened financing mechanisms; (2) targeted learning, knowledge management and peer exchange on conservation finance; and (3) monitoring and evaluation.

The GEBs from this project will arise from the conservation and sustainable use of globally significant biodiversity through sustainable financing and improved management effectiveness of two protected areas where financing from the EcoTéla Fund will be piloted, namely (a) Obô Natural Park of São Tomé (26,200 ha), a terrestrial protected area (Core Indicator 1.2), and (b) Obô Natural Park of Príncipe (4,500 ha), a marine protected area (Core Indicator 2.2). These GEBs will be further supported through capacity-building (Technical assistance) for approximately 100 technicians, of whom 45% are female (Core Indicator 11). This is critical for ensuring the long-term operationalisation of the EcoTéla Fund as a biodiversity finance mechanism; strengthening national capacity to mobilise public and private financing to further capitalise the EcoTéla; engaging donors; monitoring and reporting financial resources deployed to protected areas through the EcoTéla. Capacity Building will be delivered through targeted technical assistance on EcoTéla's governance and operational systems and processes, as well as learning and knowledge exchange with other best practice conservation trust funds in the region, thereby ensuring sustainable financing flows and sustained biodiversity outcomes beyond the project lifespan.

Indicative Project Overview

Project Objective

1. Area of terrestrial protected areas under improved management effectiveness (Core Indicator 1.2): Target: 26,200 ha
 2. Area of marine protected areas under improved management effectiveness (Core Indicator 2.2): Target: 4,500 ha
 3. Number of direct beneficiaries from GEF-financed investments disaggregated by sex (Core Indicator 11): Target: 100 direct beneficiaries, of which 45% women.

Project Components

Component 1: Capitalisation and operationalization of the EcoTéla Fund

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
671,245.00	850,517.00

Outcome:

Outcome 1.1: The EcoTéla Fund is capitalised and fully operational, enabling sustainable, inclusive, gender sensitive and predictable long-term financing for biodiversity conservation in São Tomé and Príncipe

Outcome Indicator 1.1:

Number of annual independent audits conducted on the Eco Téla Fund with a satisfactory fiduciary compliance rating by the end of the project

Outcome Target 1.1:

At least one annual independent audit conducted on the Eco Téla Fund with a satisfactory fiduciary compliance rating by the end of the project

Outcome 1.2: Strengthened inclusive biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in protected areas receiving financing from the EcoTéla Fund.

Outcome Indicator 1.2: Number of Hectares of protected areas with improved METT Score

Outcome Target 1.2.1.1: 22,600 Ha of Terrestrial protected areas with at least 5% increment in METT Score (hence the target is reaching 64 METT Score)

Outcome Target 1.2.1.2: 4,500 Ha of Marine protected areas with at least 5% increment in METT Score (hence the target is reaching 58 METT Score)

Output:

Output 1.1.1: Inclusive and gender sensitive governance, fiduciary and investment frameworks for the Eco Tela Fund established/strengthened and fully operationalised

Output Indicator 1.1.1: Number of inclusive and gender sensitive governance, fiduciary and investment frameworks for the Eco Tela Fund established/strengthened and fully operationalised

Output Target 1.1.1: At least 6 Inclusive and gender sensitive governance, fiduciary and investment frameworks for the Eco Tela Fund established/strengthened and operationalised

Output 1.1.2: Catalytic seed capital deposited in the EcoTéla Fund in accordance with approved conditions

Output Indicator 1.1.2: Amount (USD) of catalytic seed capital deposited in the EcoTéla Fund in accordance with approved conditions.

Output Target 1.1.2: At least USD 500,000 catalytic seed capital deposited in the EcoTéla Fund in accordance with approved conditions.

Output 1.1.3: EcoTéla Fund operationalized and tested through the deployment of initial financing mechanisms

Indicator 1.1.3:

Number of financing transactions/mechanisms deployed by the EcoTéla Fund in line with its approved inclusive and gender sensitive governance and investment framework.

Target 1.1.3: At least 3 financing mechanisms tested and operational, with funds disbursed in accordance with approved inclusive and gender sensitive governance and investment framework.

Output 1.1.4: Inclusive Institutional and technical capacity building on the operationalisation and management of the EcoTéla Fund

Indicator 1.1.4: Number of national and protected area staff trained and applying enhanced skills in biodiversity finance, fund management, and protected area management effectiveness (disaggregated by sex).

Target 1.1.4: At least 100 technicians trained, of whom 45% females, with demonstrated application of skills in EcoTéla Fund operationalisation, including financing mobilisation, fiduciary management, and protected area resource allocation.

Output 1.2.1: EcoTéla Fund operationalised with robust fiduciary, governance, safeguards, and financial management systems enabling transparent financing to protected areas.

Indicator 1.2.1: Percentage of funds disbursed through the EcoTéla Fund to protected areas transparently tracked, utilised, and reported in accordance with approved governance, fiduciary, and safeguards systems.

Target 1.2.1: 100% of funds disbursed to 2 protected areas through the EcoTéla Fund transparently tracked, utilised, and reported in accordance with approved governance, fiduciary, and safeguards systems.

Component 2: Strengthening knowledge sharing, learning and synthesis of best practices and lessons learnt

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET

GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
40,000.00	13,046.00

Outcome:

Outcome 2.1: Strengthened coordination, learning and knowledge exchange between the EcoTéla Fund and similar financial mechanisms

Outcome Indicator 2.1: Number of Financial mechanisms/
initiatives coordinating with the EcoTéla Fund

Outcome Target 2.1: The São Tomé & Príncipe EcoTéla Project coordinating, learning and sharing with at least 5 initiatives at national and regional levels

Output:

Output 2.1.1: Knowledge management and communications strategy developed and implemented

Output Indicator 2.1.1: Number of knowledge management and communications strategies for the Project developed and implemented

Output Target 2.1.1: At least 1 knowledge management and communications strategy for the project developed and implemented

Output 2.1.2.: Knowledge products on conservation finance, governance, safeguards and inclusion generated and disseminated at national and regional levels

Output Indicator 2.1.2: Number of knowledge products generated and disseminated

Output Target 2.1.2: At least 3 policy/technical briefs, 4 applicant or donor-facing fact sheets and 2 short learning stories / videos prepared and disseminated by the end of the project

Output 2.1.3: Gender-sensitive learning, exchange and coordination events between EcoTéla and similar financial mechanisms in the region, with at least 45% women representatives

Output Indicator 2.1.3: Number of learning and exchange events between EcoTéla and financial mechanisms in the region

Output Target 2.1.3: At least 2 learning and exchange events between the Eco-Tela Fund with at least 45 total participants, of which at least 45% are women

M&E

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
37,000.00	28,583.00

Outcome:

Outcome 3.1: An effective and gender-sensitive M&E system for the project

Outcome Indicator 3.1: Number of gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation frameworks developed for the project

Outcome Target 3.1: At least 3 Annual Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) approved by CI-GEF and submitted to the GEF.

Output:

Output 3.1.1: Periodic M&E reports submitted to CI-GEF Agency.

Output Indicator 3.1.1: Number of periodic M&E Reports submitted to CI-GEF Agency.

Output Target 3.1.1: 3 Annual Workplan and Budget, 10 technical and financial quarterly reports and 3 Core Indicator worksheets.

Output 3.1.2: Independent evaluations conducted in accordance with the GEF and CI-GEF Evaluation Policies

Output Indicator 3.1.2: Number of Terminal Evaluation Reports

Output Target 3.1.2: One Terminal Evaluation Report approved by CI-GEF and submitted to the GEF

Component Balances

Project Components	GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
Component 1: Capitalisation and operationalization of the EcoTéla Fund	671,245.00	850,517.00
Component 2: Strengthening knowledge sharing, learning and synthesis of best practices and lessons learnt	40,000.00	13,046.00
M&E	37,000.00	28,583.00
Subtotal	748,245.00	892,146.00
Project Management Cost	74,824.00	89,215.00
Total Project Cost (\$)	823,069.00	981,361.00

Please provide justification

PROJECT OUTLINE

A. PROJECT RATIONALE

Briefly describe the current situation: the global environmental problems and/or climate vulnerabilities that the project will address, the key elements of the system, and underlying drivers of environmental change in the project context, such as population growth, economic development, climate change, sociocultural and political factors, including conflicts, or technological changes. Describe the objective of the project, and the justification for it. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

Global environmental significance of the project

1. São Tomé and Príncipe is a globally significant island biodiversity hotspot with exceptionally high levels of endemism and ecological integrity. The entire country is designated as a Biosphere Reserve, and its protected-area system – including the São Tomé Obô Natural Park, Príncipe Natural Park and 21 Special Reserves – supports globally important terrestrial and coastal ecosystems. These landscapes generate critical ecosystem services, including water regulation, soil protection, climate resilience and support to sustainable livelihoods in a small island developing state context. The central biodiversity-finance constraint is not only the level of resources, but their fragmentation, short duration and limited predictability. Protected-area management and biodiversity-compatible land use remain dependent on short-term project finance, limiting the country's ability to secure sustained global environmental benefits. This project directly contributes to the GEF-8 Biodiversity Focal Area by operationalising and capitalising EcoTéla as a national Conservation Trust Fund and biodiversity domestic resource mobilisation mechanism. Climate resilience, restoration and land-stewardship benefits may arise as indirect co-benefits of biodiversity finance, but the project's focal-area alignment and programming are Biodiversity only.

Description of Social-ecological Systems

2. The project operates within an integrated small-island social-ecological system where terrestrial, freshwater and coastal ecosystems are tightly interconnected. Forest landscapes regulate water flows, prevent erosion and sustain agricultural productivity, while coastal and marine ecosystems support fisheries, food security and tourism. These systems are increasingly exposed to climate variability, extreme rainfall events, coastal erosion and land degradation processes, which directly affect ecosystem integrity and rural livelihoods.
3. Economic activities – particularly smallholder agriculture (cocoa, subsistence crops), artisanal fisheries and expanding tourism – depend on these ecosystems but also generate pressures through land-use change, resource extraction and localized degradation. At the same time, opportunities are emerging for biodiversity-compatible value chains and nature-based tourism, as well as ESG/CSR engagement from private actors.
4. Socially, livelihoods are highly dependent on natural resources, with limited economic diversification and strong vulnerability to environmental change. Community-based stewardship systems exist but remain unevenly supported. Institutionally, the system combines central government leadership through MAJTS, sectoral implementation through the Direcção das Florestas e da Biodiversidade (including the Departamento do Parque Natural Obô de São Tomé), and autonomous governance on Príncipe through the Regional Secretariat for Biosphere, Environment, Agriculture and Rural Development and the Secção do Parque Natural Obô do Príncipe. Civil society and international partners play key implementation roles. The project is designed to strengthen coherence across these actors within an existing but fragmented governance and financing landscape.

Key System Drivers

Main drivers of environmental degradation and/or climate vulnerabilities:

5. Biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation and climate vulnerability in São Tomé and Príncipe are driven by a combination of unsustainable land-use practices, pressure on forest and coastal ecosystems, weak long-term financing for conservation, limited protected-area operating resources, and increasing climate variability affecting rainfall patterns, soil stability, and coastal resilience. Limited and unpredictable funding for protected area management has historically constrained monitoring, planning, inclusive stakeholder engagement, biodiversity-compatible livelihoods and continuity of conservation action. By addressing the financing architecture rather than a single site activity, EcoTéla tackles a structural driver that affects multiple protected areas and biodiversity priorities.
6. This project, centred on the capitalisation, domestic resource mobilisation and operationalisation of the EcoTéla Conservation Trust Fund, has been selected because it directly addresses one of the key structural drivers of biodiversity loss: the absence of predictable, sustainable conservation financing. By strengthening EcoTéla as a long-term biodiversity finance mechanism, the project provides a more durable solution than traditional short-term project grants. It will enable continuous support to protected area management, biodiversity monitoring,

community engagement, conservation planning and future low-risk biodiversity finance windows. The approach was prioritized because it tackles the systemic finance gap at its root and creates an institutional platform that can sustain GEF and non-GEF conservation gains beyond individual project cycles.

7. EcoTéla has already passed the concept-legitimacy stage. The Fund was legally established in 2023 and launched in 2025 following a multi-year national design and validation process involving government, civil society, private-sector and development partners. Its core governance concept is in place, but the Fund has not yet demonstrated operational readiness or capital deployment under approved systems. The project therefore, focuses on the next step: moving from legal creation to credible operational performance.

8. The remaining operational gaps include: (i) completion and approval of the operational manual, fiduciary, procurement, labour, grant-award and conflict-of-interest procedures; (ii) establishment of the host / sub-fund and investment arrangements, including an Investment Policy Statement and oversight structure; (iii) completion of EcoTéla's ESMF / ESMS, exclusion list, ESS screening, grievance and disclosure procedures; (iv) integration of gender-responsive governance and eligibility criteria; (v) preparation of a donor capitalisation package and EcoTéla Domestic Resource Mobilization and Capitalization Roadmap; (vi) definition of initial eligible low-risk financing mechanisms and results-based allocation criteria; and (vii) establishment of audit, M&E and conservation-impact reporting systems.

9. EcoTéla's creation followed a staged national process that moved from identification of the protected-area finance gap to legal, governance and operational preparation. A sustainable finance assessment identified a persistent financing need for the management of São Tomé and Príncipe's terrestrial and marine protected areas and recommended a national conservation trust fund as the appropriate vehicle to mobilise, pool and allocate long-term biodiversity finance. From 2023 onward, the EcoTéla process advanced through government-led and multi-stakeholder design work, including creation of an interministerial oversight process, validation of the fund concept, development of governance instruments, capacity-building and fundraising outreach, registration and public launch of the Foundation, and preparation of core operational documents. EcoTéla is now structured as a national foundation / conservation trust fund with a multi-stakeholder governance architecture, including a General Assembly, Board of Directors, Fiscal Council, advisory and patron structures, Technical and Scientific Committee, Grants Committee, Ethics Committee and an operational Secretariat led by an Executive Director. The MSP therefore finances the next step, moving the Fund from legal and political legitimacy to operational performance, fiduciary credibility, domestic resource mobilisation and initial deployment under approved rules.

Baseline understanding and projects

Baseline understanding and projects

Baseline projects (GEF & Non-GEF)

Table 1 shows how the project fits within the current landscape of investments; how the project will build on the baseline and ongoing investments (both GEF and non-GEF), and on lessons learned from previous projects in the country and region.

Table 1: List of Baseline Projects

Baseline Project	Period of Performance/Years active	Gaps and/or lessons learned from the baseline project	How this project builds on/leverages baseline initiatives
GEF-Projects			
GEF ID 11243 (IUCN): "São Tomé e Príncipe's intact forests - the Obô Natural Parks and their buffer	2024–2029 (ongoing)	Strengthens protected-area management, restoration and co-management systems and provides the main national platform for field implementation.	The MSP complements this project by operationalising and capitalising EcoTéla as the long-term financing architecture that can sustain and leverage field results generated in

<p>zones: a treasure to conserve and restore.”</p>		<p>Key lesson: strong on-the-ground delivery still requires a durable national financing mechanism to sustain gains beyond project cycles.</p>	<p>the Obô Natural Parks and buffer zones. The MSP will cooperate closely with the IUCN project through coordination in the same target landscapes, alignment of stakeholder engagement and community-based approaches, and sharing of technical expertise, lessons learned, biodiversity information and institutional platforms. Coordination between project teams and national stakeholders will help avoid duplication of capacity-building, consultations and conservation planning processes while strengthening long-term sustainability of investments initiated under the IUCN project.</p>
<p>GEF ID 11120 (FAO): “Ecosystem restoration for enhanced biodiversity, productive landscapes and sustainable livelihoods in São Tomé e Príncipe.”</p>	<p>2024–2029 (ongoing)</p>	<p>Supports large-scale ecosystem restoration, sustainable land management and value chains, including pilot financing mechanisms. Lesson: restoration and productive landscape investments require financing continuity beyond time-bound projects.</p>	<p>The MSP complements this project by establishing EcoTéla as a national financing mechanism to sustain and scale restoration and sustainable land-use investments beyond the project cycle, including in landscapes linked to Obô Natural Parks. It will cooperate with FAO-supported restoration initiatives through alignment of priorities and investment areas, ensuring continuity of interventions and reinforcing ongoing field activities, including coordination with partners on restoration and value chain pilots. This will support continuity of restoration gains while strengthening long-term financing pathways for ecosystem recovery.</p>
<p>GEF ID 10570 (IFAD): “Improving biodiversity mainstreaming in the agroforestry and fishery sectors in São Tomé and Príncipe.”</p>	<p>2023–2029 (ongoing)</p>	<p>Mainstreams biodiversity into agroforestry and fisheries through policy, value chains and pilot incentives. Lesson: sectoral mainstreaming alone does not resolve the broader financing gap for long-term conservation management.</p>	<p>The MSP complements these sectoral investments by establishing EcoTéla as a cross-sectoral conservation finance platform that consolidates and extends financing beyond individual sectors. It will cooperate with IFAD-supported interventions by aligning biodiversity mainstreaming in agroforestry and fisheries with conservation financing priorities linked to Obô Natural Parks landscapes, including coordination on incentive approaches and technical tools for sustainable production systems. This will strengthen coherence between sectoral mainstreaming</p>

			and long-term conservation financing needs.
GEF ID 10007 (UNDP): “Enhancing Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Land and Natural Resource Management.”	2020–2026 (ongoing)	Strengthened protected-area management, land-use planning and law enforcement, while highlighting structural financing gaps that constrain continuity and scale.	The MSP addresses structural financing constraints by operationalising EcoTéla as a durable mechanism for long-term biodiversity financing beyond project closure. It will cooperate with UNDP-supported protected-area governance systems in and around Obô Natural Parks through alignment of capacity-building and management support and sharing of technical expertise on protected-area management, monitoring, and enforcement. This will support continuity of investments and reduce fragmentation across conservation interventions.
GEF ID 9364 (World Bank / LDCF): “São Tomé and Príncipe Additional Financing - West Africa Coastal Area Resilience Investment Project.”	2020–2026 (ongoing)	Supports coastal climate resilience, infrastructure and adaptation planning. Lesson: coastal resilience investments benefit from linked financing systems that can support ecosystem stewardship over the longer term.	The MSP provides a complementary financing architecture aligned with coastal resilience and adaptation priorities supported under the World Bank programme in São Tomé and Príncipe, without duplicating implementation activities. It will cooperate through coordination of ecosystem-based adaptation approaches and sharing of technical experience on climate-resilient ecosystem management, ensuring coherence between coastal resilience investments and national biodiversity financing systems.
Non-GEF Projects			
European Union (EuropeAid): “Landscape management in São Tomé and Príncipe: an integrated approach that meets the challenges of climate change adaptation, biodiversity and ecosystems conservation for sustainable human and economic development.”	2021–2026 (ongoing)	Flagship landscape programme combining conservation, livelihoods and pilot financing, including exploration of conservation trust fund approaches. Lesson: pilot financing arrangements need a permanent nationally anchored vehicle to endure.	The MSP operationalises EcoTéla as that permanent national vehicle and carries forward lessons from landscape management, financing experimentation and institutional coordination, in coordination with ongoing landscape initiatives to ensure coherence and continuity of technical and institutional approaches.
UNDP – Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN)	2024–2027 (ongoing)	BIOFIN (2024-2027) is expected to generate or refine the biodiversity finance baseline, including expenditure review, finance-needs analysis, prioritisation and finance-solution work. At PIF stage the national BIOFIN process is ongoing, so a finalized national	The MSP will not duplicate BIOFIN but will build on available BIOFIN diagnostics, early recommendations, and finance solution work to develop an EcoTéla Domestic Resource Mobilization and Capitalization Roadmap. This will define realistic

		DRM plan may not yet be available. Lesson: upstream finance diagnostics need an operational vehicle capable of translating recommendations into capital mobilisation, recurrent revenues and finance-window rules.	public, private, philanthropic, and recurrent revenue pathways and support early testing through low-risk financing mechanisms under EcoTéla. The MSP will cooperate with BIOFIN-related processes through alignment of analytical work and financial planning, including the use of shared technical expertise in biodiversity finance and, where appropriate, engagement of common advisory capacities within national finance institutions to ensure coherence and avoid duplication.
Blue Action Fund / Fauna & Flora (FFI): “Strengthening networks: consolidating marine conservation in São Tomé and Príncipe.”	2024–2029 (ongoing)	Supports large-scale marine conservation and MPA development, including work on financing mechanisms. Lesson: marine finance solutions remain program-specific unless linked to a broader national architecture.	The MSP provides a cross-ecosystem national financing architecture and a future platform through which marine priorities can be aligned with terrestrial and coastal conservation finance.
AFD (Agence Française de Développement) / Nitidæ: “BioFlor+ – Projet d’appui aux filières, biodiversité et forêts à São Tomé-et-Príncipe.”	2026–2030 (ongoing)	Supports biodiversity-positive value chains and a micro-project financing facility. Lesson: facility-based support is useful for innovation but remains time-bound and project-bound without a permanent capital vehicle.	The MSP offers the long-term financial backbone and scaling platform that can complement value-chain and micro-project initiatives over time, in coordination with ongoing initiatives to ensure alignment of financing approaches and support coherent scaling of local-level interventions.
Cartier for Nature (via BirdLife International)	2023–2026, <i>renewable</i> (ongoing)	Provides flexible catalytic support to BirdLife’s national programme, but funding remains time-bound and non-structural.	The MSP helps convert time-bound catalytic support into a durable national financing architecture and a stronger donor capitalisation proposition.
BirdLife International / Global BirdFair: “Growing knowledge and capacity for São Tomé and Príncipe’s threatened endemic birds.”	2026–2029 (ongoing)	Builds knowledge and capacity for threatened endemic birds. Lesson: species-focused action generates evidence and capacity, but sustained financing is needed to maintain conservation gains.	The MSP creates the financing and institutional platform through which species-level conservation priorities can later be sustained and scaled.
Fondation Prince Albert II de Monaco / Programa Tatô: “Community conservation of marine biodiversity on the island of São Tomé.”	2024–2026 (ongoing)	Supports community conservation of marine biodiversity on São Tomé. Lesson: locally rooted marine initiatives need longer-term financing pathways and stronger linkage to national mechanisms.	The MSP can incorporate these lessons into future coastal and marine financing windows, community-access criteria, and national coordination arrangements, in alignment with ongoing coastal and marine initiatives to ensure coherence in implementation approaches and resource allocation.

The national BIOFIN process is an important upstream baseline for this MSP. São Tomé and Príncipe joined BIOFIN in 2024 with GEF-8 support and has launched the process to update the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and

prepare the Biodiversity Finance Plan for 2025–2030. The process is expected to include institutional and policy reviews, alignment of national biodiversity policy with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, review of biodiversity-related monitoring systems, expenditure and finance-needs analysis, and identification of priority biodiversity finance solutions. Since these products are still being developed at PIF stage, the MSP will not duplicate BIOFIN or wait for a fully finalised national plan before acting. Instead, EcoTéla will use available BIOFIN diagnostics, early recommendations and finance-solution work to prepare the EcoTéla Domestic Resource Mobilization and Capitalisation Roadmap, define the most realistic public, private, philanthropic and recurrent revenue pathways, and test initial low-risk financing procedures under Output 1.1.3. This creates a practical division of labour: BIOFIN strengthens the national biodiversity finance evidence base and finance-planning process, while EcoTéla becomes the operational vehicle through which selected biodiversity finance solutions can be structured, capitalised, safeguarded, tested and scaled.

Description of how this approach/project fits with country priorities

12. São Tomé and Príncipe benefits from a relatively rich portfolio of ongoing investments in biodiversity conservation, protected-area management, landscape management, marine conservation, climate resilience and sustainable livelihoods, supported by both GEF and non-GEF partners. Current GEF projects and major non-GEF initiatives collectively provide substantial support for protected area management, ecosystem restoration, sustainable land and marine resource use, biodiversity-compatible value chains and biodiversity finance diagnostics. These initiatives demonstrate strong engagement across terrestrial, marine and production landscapes, and increasingly incorporate elements of biodiversity finance, including pilot mechanisms such as PES, certification schemes, micro-project facilities and early-stage exploration of conservation trust fund approaches. However, this portfolio remains structurally fragmented and predominantly project-based. Financing mechanisms are being piloted across multiple initiatives (e.g. EU programme, BioFlor+, Blue Action Fund), and BIOFIN is advancing finance diagnostics and prioritisation, but these efforts are not yet consolidated within a unified, nationally anchored mechanism capable of mobilising, managing and allocating long-term biodiversity finance.
13. The proposed MSP directly addresses this gap by operationalising and capitalising the EcoTéla Fund as a national Conservation Trust Fund, building on EcoTéla’s multi-year national design and validation process and on existing investments while providing the missing financial architecture to sustain them. It does not duplicate ongoing interventions, but rather consolidates and amplifies them by enabling long-term, predictable financing across protected areas, restoration, and biodiversity-positive value chains. This approach is fully aligned with national priorities (NBSAP, “100% Bio” strategy, BIOFIN process) and responds to lessons learned from previous and ongoing projects in São Tomé and Príncipe and comparable small island contexts, where the absence of durable financing mechanisms has consistently limited the sustainability and scaling of conservation outcomes.

Baseline futures (Incremental Cost Reasoning)

14. The incremental cost rationale for this project is that, in the absence of the intervention, conservation financing in São Tomé and Príncipe would continue to rely on fragmented, short-term, and unpredictable funding streams that are insufficient to ensure the effective and sustained management of protected areas. Under the baseline, BIOFIN and other projects may generate diagnostics, field investments or pilot finance solutions, but the country would still lack an operational national mechanism able to mobilise, pool, invest and allocate resources at scale. The GEF alternative finances the incremental costs of making EcoTéla operational and capital-ready: governance, fiduciary, ESS, gender, grant-making, DRM, investment, audit and impact-monitoring systems; catalytic seed capital subject to readiness and cash-match conditions; and initial low-risk financing tests. This shifts the country from ad hoc project-based finance toward a stable biodiversity finance system that can support future protected-area and biodiversity investments beyond the MSP period.
15. **Barriers and Root Causes.** The process of capitalisation and operationalisation of the Eco Tela fund to be a functional, credible, and sustainable conservation financing mechanism will potentially be constrained by a set of interrelated institutional, financial, technical, and policy barriers that collectively limit the transition from fragmented conservation financing to a long-term, system-based model. The barriers that this project will address, and respective root causes, are described below:

BARRIER 1. *Weak enabling policy and limited political prioritization:* Although conservation is recognized as a national priority, sustained high-level political commitment to long-term conservation finance reform remains limited due to competing development priorities and constrained fiscal space. In addition, the existing legal and policy framework does not yet fully enable the establishment and operation of an independent or semi-autonomous conservation financing mechanism, limiting institutional anchoring and long-term policy continuity. The root cause of this barrier is short-term fiscal prioritization and incomplete integration of conservation finance into national planning and legal frameworks.

BARRIER 2. *Incomplete institutional readiness and governance consolidation:* Institutional arrangements for conservation financing remain fragmented, with unclear governance structures, limited stakeholder alignment, and varying levels of ownership and legitimacy among key actors. This weakens coordination and slows the establishment of a unified national financing mechanism. The root cause of this barrier is the absence of consolidated governance architecture and limited multi-stakeholder institutional alignment around a national conservation finance platform.

BARRIER 3. *Underdeveloped fiduciary, safeguard, and investment systems:* The systems required to manage, safeguard, and invest conservation funds at scale, including fiduciary management, environmental and social safeguards, and investment governance, are not yet fully developed. This limits the ability of national institutions to manage large-scale and multi-source funding flows transparently and efficiently. The root cause of this barrier is the limited national prior extensive experience with conservation trust fund structures and constrained financial governance capacity within relevant institutions.

BARRIER 4. *Absence of an operational and capitalized conservation financing mechanism:* There is currently no fully operational, credible, and capitalized national conservation financing mechanism capable of pooling, managing, and disbursing resources in a predictable and strategic manner. As a result, conservation funding remains fragmented, donor-dependent, and short-term. The root cause of this barrier is the lack of an established institutional vehicle with a proven capital base and operational track record.

BARRIER 5. *Insufficient fundraising credibility and capitalization strategy:* STP currently has limited demonstrated capacity to mobilize long-term conservation finance at scale, including a lack of structured capitalization strategies and insufficient documented co-financing commitments. This affects investor confidence and limits the ability to attract diversified funding sources. The root cause of this barrier is the absence of a structured fundraising pipeline and limited experience engaging blended finance and endowment-based mechanisms.

BARRIER 6. *Lack of defined financing windows and results-based allocation mechanisms:* There is an absence of clearly defined financing windows, eligibility criteria, and results-based allocation frameworks to ensure that resources are systematically linked to measurable conservation outcomes. This limits the strategic impact of available funding. The root cause of this barrier is the lack of early-stage development of performance-based conservation financing systems and the weak linkage between funding and results frameworks.

16. The project will address the aforementioned barriers by operationalising governance structures, validating and deploying fiduciary, grant-making and environmental and social safeguard, gender and investment systems, preparing an EcoTéla Domestic Resource Mobilization and Capitalization Roadmap informed by BIOFIN, securing and documenting catalytic capital and external cash match conditions, and testing initial low-risk financing mechanisms aligned with national biodiversity priorities and GEF-8 Biodiversity Objective 3.

Table 2: Key Stakeholders Consulted

Stakeholder Groups	Proposed Role in the project	Consultation Process to date
Local communities and community-based organisations	Inform future access criteria, grievance design, benefit sharing and downstream priorities in protected areas, special reserves and future coastal/marine windows.	Consulted through targeted local stakeholder discussions on future spending modalities and through the community consultation with the Special Reserves Management Committee of the South on 3 December 2025.
Women	Women professionals, women-led organisations and female community representatives help shape governance balance, access criteria, grievance design and communication. They are also potential future applicants and beneficiaries under EcoTéla funding windows.	Women participated throughout EcoTéla creation and validation processes (2023–2025), concepts’ development consultations in September/December 2025, and direct PIF consultations on 6 April 2026. These consultations highlighted the importance of balanced participation, future access pathways and women’s leadership in biodiversity finance.
Youth	Youth and early-career professionals can contribute to knowledge management, future applicant pools, communication and long-term national stewardship of EcoTéla.	Youth inclusion emerged as a recurring design priority during EcoTéla training, validation and fundraising events in 2024–2025 and was reiterated during concepts’ review discussions.
Indigenous group	No Indigenous Peoples have been identified in São Tomé and Príncipe for the purposes of this project. The project will nevertheless apply inclusive stakeholder engagement and consent-based good practice when documenting traditional knowledge or engaging local communities.	Screened at PIF stage as not applicable; to be reconfirmed during CEO endorsement through the stakeholder engagement process.
Private Sector	Tourism, fisheries, agroforestry, CSR/ESG partners and potential capital providers; relevant as co-financiers, knowledge partners and future beneficiaries of a private-sector innovation window.	Consulted through CSO/private-sector webinars (9 November 2023; 25 March 2024), EcoTéla validation and fundraising processes; priorities include realistic future-window design, blended-finance positioning and domestic resource mobilisation dialogue.
Government	MAJTS, DAAC, DFB, Ministry of Finance/planning counterparts and the Príncipe Regional Government provide policy leadership, institutional interface, endorsement and alignment with related initiatives.	Consulted throughout EcoTéla’s multi-year design process, consultations in 2025, and directly on 6 April 2026, when comments further refined the governance narrative, division of labour and complementarity with ongoing GEF initiatives.
Civil society / NGOs	BirdLife, Fundação Príncipe, Fauna & Flora, Marapa, Oikos, CBBG and other CSOs help shape inclusion, future window logic, local action pathways and accountability.	Engaged through EcoTéla design and validation activities from 2023 onward, concept’s development consultations in December 2025 and direct PIF review discussions on 6 April 2026.
Development partners (UN agencies and IFIs)	Provide upstream analytical, policy and technical support (e.g. UNDP BIOFIN, FAO TRI, IFAD COMPRAN) that informs national biodiversity finance priorities and sectoral investments; relevant for alignment, complementarity and future co-financing pathways, but not direct implementers or beneficiaries of EcoTéla.	Engagement took place through EcoTéla creation missions (2023–2024), GBFF consultations in 2025 and PIF preparation/review in 2026. alignment ensured with BIOFIN processes and major GEF and non-GEF programmes to avoid duplication and strengthen complementarity.

17. The Ministry of Finance and planning / economic counterparts have a specific role in the project because EcoTéla’s sustainability depends not only on donor capitalisation but also on domestic resource mobilisation and compatibility with national public-finance systems. The Ministry of Planning, Finance and Blue Economy was included in the interministerial process that supervised the design of sustainable financing mechanisms for protected areas and

biodiversity, and finance / planning counterparts will be re-engaged during PPG to review revenue-routing options, fiscal compatibility, matching-fund logic and domestic contribution pathways. This will include discussion of whether and how potential revenue sources such as protected-area fees, tourism or aviation-related contributions, fisheries-related revenues, biodiversity compensation mechanisms, CSR / ESG contributions or other recurrent public-private finance solutions could be legally collected, transparently reported and channelled to EcoTéla or to biodiversity priorities without creating parallel or non-compliant public-finance arrangements. The Ministry's role is therefore consultative and enabling: it will help assess fiscal feasibility, legal routing, public-finance compatibility and potential alignment with BIOFIN recommendations, while EcoTéla's governance bodies retain responsibility for Fund-level eligibility, safeguards, allocation and reporting procedures.

B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project description

This section asks for a theory of change as part of a joined-up description of the project as a whole. The project description is expected to cover the key elements of good project design in an integrated way. It is also expected to meet the GEF's policy requirements on gender, stakeholders, private sector, and knowledge management and learning (see section D). This section should be a narrative that reads like a joined-up story and not independent elements that answer the guiding questions contained in the PIF guidance document. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

RATIONALE

1. The project's Theory of Change is that **IF** EcoTéla is capitalized, its governance, fiduciary, grant-making environmental and social safeguards, gender-responsive, investment and M&E frameworks are fully operationalised, its Domestic Resource Mobilization and Capitalization Roadmap is prepared using BIOFIN's emerging diagnostics, and its procedures are tested through initial low-risk financing mechanisms, **THEN** EcoTéla will transition from a legally established but not yet operational fund into a credible national biodiversity finance mechanism. EcoTéla will then be able to mobilise, steward and allocate domestic, international, public, private and philanthropic resources transparently for biodiversity conservation and protected-area priorities in São Tomé and Príncipe.
2. The ToC therefore treats EcoTéla's operationalisation as a reform of the national biodiversity finance system: BIOFIN and national planning processes provide the diagnostic and finance-solution basis; EcoTéla provides the governance, investment, fiduciary, safeguards and grant-making vehicle; the MSP provides the readiness, capitalisation and initial low-risk testing needed to demonstrate that this vehicle can operate transparently before larger-scale biodiversity finance is mobilised.

PATHWAY

3. The project's integrated approach reflects its Theory of Change and will facilitate the achievement of its objectives through four interlinked pathways:
 - a. **Capitalisation pathway:** The project will implement a structured capitalisation strategy for EcoTéla and prepare an EcoTéla Domestic Resource Mobilization and Capitalization Roadmap. The roadmap will draw on available BIOFIN diagnostics, NBSAP priorities, protected-area financing needs, public finance options, potential recurrent revenues, private-sector / CSR / ESG pathways, philanthropy and donor capital. This will define realistic sources of capitalization, sequencing, responsibilities, risk controls and decision points for EcoTéla, while strengthening investor confidence and long-term financial sustainability.
 - b. **Early implementation and operational testing pathway:** After readiness conditions are met, EcoTéla will test its operational procedures through initial low-risk, safeguards-screened financing mechanisms. These tests will demonstrate that the Fund can apply approved governance, fiduciary, grant-making, ESS, gender and

monitoring procedures in practice, while avoiding civil works, land acquisition, access restrictions, enforcement expansion, habitat conversion, pesticides or other high-risk activities.

- c. Operationalisation pathway: In parallel, the project will establish and operationalise EcoTéla's governance, fiduciary, grant-making, safeguards, gender and investment architecture. This includes consolidation of governance structures, deployment of fiduciary and environmental and social safeguard systems, operationalisation of the host/sub-fund arrangements, approval of the Investment Policy Statement, and establishment of rules for transparent, accountable, and results-based allocation of resources.
- d. Knowledge management, learning, and peer-exchange pathway: The project will support targeted knowledge management products and peer-to-peer exchange between EcoTéla and comparable conservation finance mechanisms. The emphasis will be operational learning rather than broad communications: donor and applicant guidance, safeguards and gender briefs, lessons from initial financing tests, protected-area finance case studies, and practical exchange on fund governance, capitalisation and fiduciary systems. This will enable EcoTéla to adopt best practices in fund governance, capitalisation strategies, fiduciary management, and investment structuring, while also sharing its own emerging experience. Through peer-to-peer exchanges, knowledge products, and regional platforms, EcoTéla will strengthen its operational effectiveness and positioning as a credible national conservation financing mechanism.
- e. Project monitoring, evaluation, and adaptive management: The project will establish robust monitoring, evaluation, and adaptive management systems to ensure transparency, accountability, and continuous performance improvement. Results-based tracking, reporting, and learning mechanisms will support evidence-based decision-making and enhance stakeholder trust.

ENABLERS

- 4. The ToC also identifies the key enablers, which are critical to addressing the identified barriers and ensuring successful project implementation. The enablers include:
 - 1. *Continued government recognition and institutional anchoring of EcoTéla as the national conservation finance mechanism* (addresses Barrier 1 and Barrier 4). This enabler strengthens political commitment and policy continuity, supporting the enabling environment required to overcome weak prioritization of conservation finance and the absence of an operational national financing mechanism.
 - 2. *Complementary initiatives in the country, especially UNDP BIOFIN and GEF ID 11243 (IUCN Intact Forests), supporting coordination, knowledge exchange and policy-finance linkages* (addresses Barrier 1 and Barrier 5): These initiatives reinforce policy integration, strengthen evidence-based planning, and support the development of structured financing strategies and capitalization frameworks. In particular BIOFIN will provide finance diagnostics and emerging finance-solution recommendations, while EcoTéla will provide the operational vehicle for capitalization and early implementation of biodiversity finance solutions.
 - 3. *Stakeholder willingness to engage with EcoTéla as a transparent and rules-based financing platform* (addresses Barrier 2 and Barrier 6): This enables improved coordination among institutions, strengthens governance consolidation, and supports agreement on financing windows and results-based allocation mechanisms
 - 4. *Availability of technical expertise to support fiduciary, safeguards and investment system development* (addresses Barrier 3 and Barrier 6): Technical capacity is essential to close gaps in fiduciary systems, ESS frameworks, and investment governance, while also supporting the design of performance-based allocation systems.

5. *Emerging donor and partner interest in programmatic and pooled conservation finance approaches (addresses Barrier 4 and Barrier 5):* This creates opportunities for capitalisation of EcoTéla and strengthens fundraising credibility by aligning with global trends in blended and pooled finance mechanisms.

ASSUMPTIONS

5. In the logical pathway, the underlying assumptions include:
- Continued government recognition of EcoTéla as the national conservation finance mechanism (addresses Barrier 1 and Barrier 4):* It is assumed that political and institutional support for EcoTéla remains stable throughout implementation, ensuring policy continuity and legitimacy of the mechanism.
 - Completion and adoption of ESS, fiduciary, grant-making, gender and investment procedures, (addresses Barrier 3 and Barrier 6):* It is assumed that the required safeguard, fiduciary, grant-making, gender-responsive and investment frameworks will be finalised and formally adopted before initial financing is deployed.
 - Timely documentation of the minimum external cash match (addresses Barrier 4 and Barrier 5):* It is assumed that co-financing commitments are secured and documented within the required timeframe to enable capitalization of EcoTéla.
 - Continued complementarity with GEF ID 11243, BIOFIN and other baseline initiatives (addresses Barrier 1 and Barrier 5):* It is assumed that coordination with BIOFIN and related initiatives is maintained so that EcoTéla's capitalization roadmap, financing tests and future windows are informed by national finance diagnostics and do not duplicate ongoing field projects.
 - Sufficient stakeholder confidence to allow EcoTéla to operate transparently and attract capital (addresses Barrier 2, Barrier 4, and Barrier 5):* It is assumed that stakeholders maintain trust in EcoTéla's governance and transparency, enabling effective coordination, capitalization, and long-term sustainability.

IMPACT DRIVERS/TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE

- Through the convergence of capitalisation, DRM planning, operational readiness, initial low-risk financing tests, knowledge exchange and adaptive learning systems, EcoTéla will evolve into a credible and functional national biodiversity financing mechanism. This will enable sustainable, predictable, and long-term financing for biodiversity conservation and protected-area priorities in São Tomé and Príncipe, reducing dependence on fragmented and short-term donor funding.
- Over time, this will shift the national conservation finance system from a fragmented, project-based and donor-dependent model to an institutionalised, capitalised, and performance-based biodiversity financing architecture. Future financing phases will be able to scale biodiversity investments and optimize conservation impact because the foundational governance, fiduciary, safeguards, gender, investment and M&E systems will already have been established and tested.

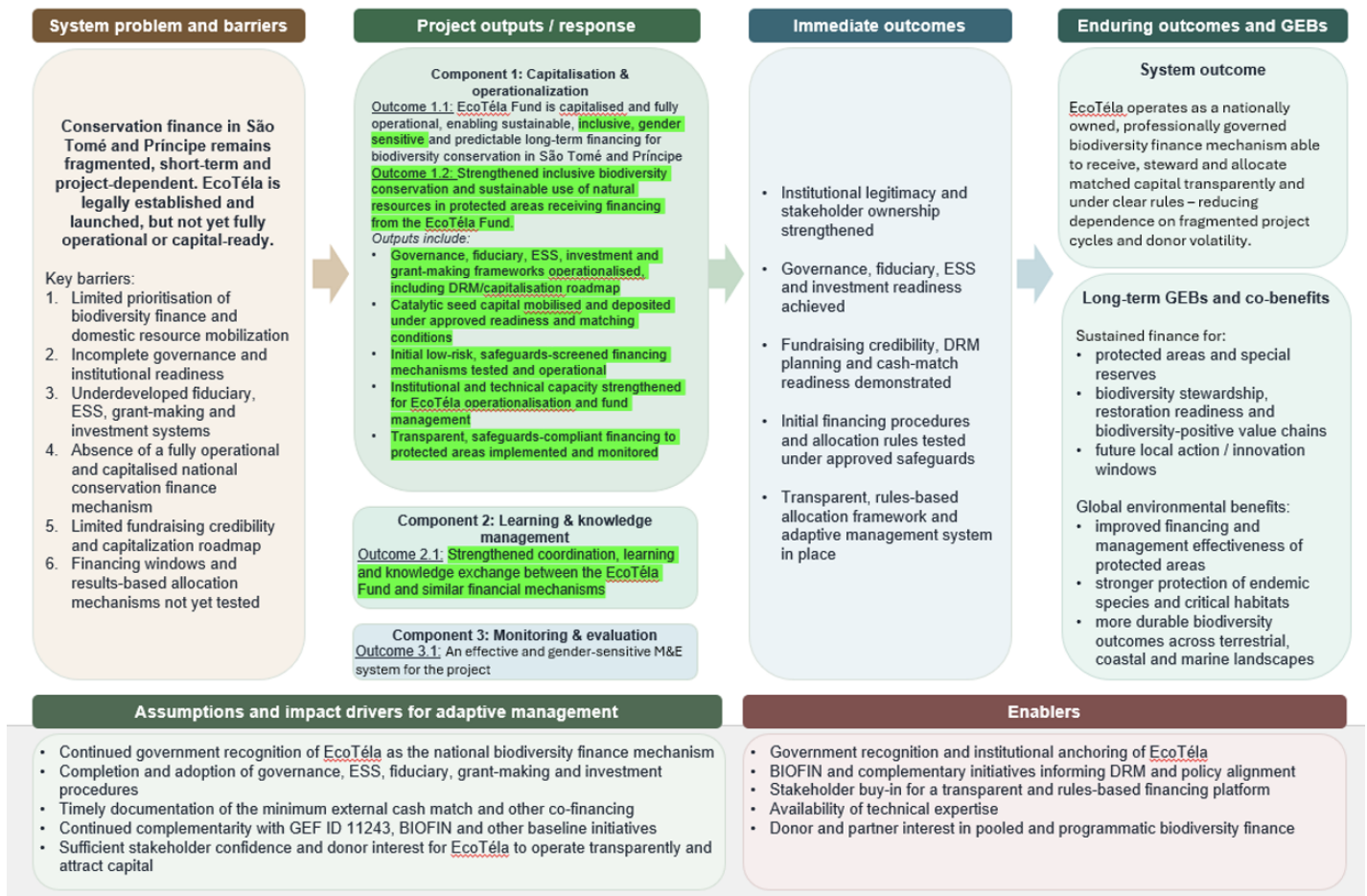


Figure 1 represents the diagrammatic representation of the ToC for this project.

Figure 1: Project's Theory of Change

PROJECT COMPONENTS

9. COMPONENT 1: Capitalisation and operationalization of the EcoTéla Fund: This component supports the capitalization, domestic resource mobilization, operational readiness and initial testing of EcoTéla as São Tomé and Príncipe's national biodiversity finance mechanism. It will address key barriers related to limited long-term financial resources, weak institutional readiness, underdeveloped governance and fiduciary systems, lack of a national DRM / capitalization roadmap, and absence of a tested track record in deploying resources. Through these interventions, EcoTéla will transition from a legally established fund into a credible, fully functional financing mechanism capable of receiving, managing, investing and allocating funds in support of national biodiversity and protected-area priorities under transparent, inclusive and gender-responsive rules.

10. OUTCOME 1.1: The EcoTéla Fund is capitalised and fully operational, enabling sustainable, inclusive, gender sensitive and predictable long-term financing for biodiversity conservation in São Tomé and Príncipe. This outcome seeks to support EcoTéla to become a fully functional, credible, and capitalised national conservation financing mechanism that operates effectively in practice. This entails equipping the Fund with robust governance, fiduciary, grant making, environmental and social safeguards, gender responsive, investment and M&E systems, as well as securing resources and testing initial low-risk financing mechanisms. Through this, EcoTéla will provide sustainable and predictable long-term financing for biodiversity conservation, with credibility reinforced through independent audits, transparent disclosure and evidence that approved procedures can be applied in practice.

11. This output will also support the development and formal adoption of a comprehensive Operational Manual governing all aspects of fund operation. The manual will specify procedures for awarding grants, including eligibility criteria, proposal submission and appraisal processes, decision-making roles, fiduciary controls, safeguards screening, grievance mechanisms, and financial and technical reporting requirements. These procedures will ensure transparency, accountability, and alignment with national biodiversity priorities.

12. In addition, Output 1.1.1 will establish the fund's Domestic Resource Mobilization, Fundraising, and Communication Strategy. This strategy will articulate the fund's value proposition, identify priority funding windows, define target donor and investor segments (including public, private, philanthropic, and blended finance partners), and outline communication approaches to support sustained capitalization. Finally, this output will put in place a fund level monitoring and evaluation framework to track financial performance, disbursement efficiency, and biodiversity impact, forming the basis for accountability, learning, and continuous improvement.

Outcome Indicator 1.1: Number of annual independent audits conducted on the Eco Tela Fund with a satisfactory fiduciary compliance rating by the end of the project

Outcome Target 1.1: At least one annual independent audit conducted on the Eco Tela Fund with a satisfactory fiduciary compliance rating by the end of the project

13. Output 1.1.1: Inclusive and gender sensitive governance, fiduciary, and investment frameworks for the Eco Tela Fund established/strengthened and fully operationalised.

Output Indicator 1.1.1: Number of inclusive and gender sensitive governance, fiduciary and investment frameworks for the Eco Tela Fund established/strengthened and fully operationalised

Output target 1.1.1: At least 6 Inclusive and gender sensitive governance, fiduciary and investment frameworks for the Eco Tela Fund established/strengthened and operationalised

14. This output focuses on establishing and strengthening the governance, fiduciary, grant-making, safeguards, gender-responsive, domestic resource mobilization and investment frameworks required to operationalise EcoTéla. It will formalise institutional working arrangements and governance routines across relevant actors; consolidate fiduciary, procurement, grant-award, labour, grievance and environmental and social safeguards procedures; integrate gender-responsive eligibility and participation criteria; finalise and execute the host/sub-fund arrangement and Investment Policy Statement; prepare the capital transfer conditions memo; and prepare an EcoTéla Domestic Resource Mobilization and Capitalization Roadmap drawing on BIOFIN diagnostics, NBSAP priorities, protected-area financing needs, public finance options, potential recurrent revenues, private-sector / CSR / ESG pathways, philanthropy and donor capital.

15. Operationally, EcoTéla will apply a sequenced readiness model before any capital transfer or financing deployment. Capital will be managed through complementary financing windows: an endowment / capital preservation window for long-term investment and recurrent support to biodiversity priorities; a sinking or pass-through window for time-bound donor contributions and early operational financing; and a recurring-revenue window for future domestic sources such as fees, levies, payments for ecosystem services or other biodiversity-compatible revenue streams. The endowment or catalytic capital will only be managed after approval of the Investment Policy Statement, host / sub-fund or account arrangements, investment oversight responsibilities, permitted asset classes, liquidity requirements, responsible-investment criteria, reporting obligations and independent audit provisions. Disbursements will be made only through approved annual workplans, Board-approved rules and safeguards-screened financing windows.

16. The operational manual will define the full grant and financing cycle, including calls for proposals or targeted financing windows, eligibility and exclusion criteria, technical and fiduciary due diligence, scoring and approval procedures, conflict-of-interest checks, standard grant agreements, disbursement schedules, procurement and financial-reporting requirements, ESS screening, gender-responsive eligibility and monitoring, grievance channels, site or desk monitoring, close-out and lessons learned. The fundraising and communication package will translate

this operational model into donor-facing and applicant-facing materials, including the capitalisation prospectus, briefings for public and private contributors, applicant guidance, visibility tools and annual impact reporting. Conservation impact will be measured through EcoTéla's M&E / MEAL system, linking each approved financing mechanism to baseline information, expected biodiversity or protected-area results, sex-disaggregated beneficiary data, ESS and gender compliance, financial disbursement and audit data, and adaptive-management decisions.

17. The following activities will be undertaken as part of this project

- a) Establishment and formalisation of governance and institutional arrangements
 - (i) Operationalisation of statutory bodies
 - (ii) Clarification of the working interface with MAJTS (DAAC, DFB – PNOT) and the Príncipe Regional Government (RSBEARD-PNP)
- b) Development and operationalisation of fiduciary, procurement, and social safeguards systems (ESS) procedures
 - (i) Finalisation of fiduciary, procurement, grant-making, labour, grievance, and environmental and social safeguards procedures.
- c) Design and execution of the investment and fund governance framework
 - (i) Execution of the host/sub-fund arrangements
 - (ii) Development of an investment policy statement and oversight structure.
- d) Capital mobilisation, readiness verification, and conditional fund activation
 - (i) Preparation of donor capitalisation package and transfer conditions memo
 - (ii) Documentation of readiness conditions for capital transfer and of the 1:1 external cash-match requirement; catalytic seed-capital transfer will be conditional upon fulfilment of readiness conditions and co-financing requirements
 - (iii) Integration of gender-responsive governance, eligibility and monitoring criteria into the operational manual, grant-making procedures and future financing-window design, including sex-disaggregated reporting, transparent access criteria and measures to support women-led CSOs and community actors
 - (iv) Preparation and approval of an EcoTéla Domestic Resource Mobilization and Capitalization Roadmap, informed by available BIOFIN diagnostics and national biodiversity finance priorities, including public finance options, recurrent revenue pathways, private-sector / CSR / ESG opportunities, philanthropy, donor capital and sequencing for future financing windows
- e) Domestic Resource Mobilization, Fundraising, and Communication Strategy.
- f) Targeted technical and institutional capacity-building activities to strengthen governance, fiduciary, and investment frameworks, enabling the effective operationalisation of the EcoTéla Fund.

18. **Output 1.1.2: Catalytic seed capital deposited in the EcoTéla Fund in accordance with approved conditions.**

Output Indicator 1.1.2: Amount (USD) of catalytic seed capital deposited in the EcoTéla Fund in accordance with approved conditions.

Output target 1.1.2: At least USD 500,000 catalytic seed capital deposited in the EcoTéla Fund in accordance with approved conditions.

19. Under this output, the project will support the structured capitalization of the fund through the conditional deployment of seed resources once key operational systems are in place. Seed funding provided under the project will be used as catalytic capital to demonstrate the fund's operational readiness, test financial management and fiduciary systems, and build confidence among existing and potential contributors.

20. The capitalization approach will be fully aligned with the approved Capital Management and Investment Policy, ensuring that resources are managed in a conservative and financially sound manner during early operations.

Therefore, this output will also serve as a practical entry point for leveraging additional domestic and international contributions, reinforcing the fund's long-term financial sustainability beyond the project period.

21. Further, this output will support the development and implementation of a structured capitalisation strategy, including the mobilisation and documentation of external cash co-financing, securing catalytic seed capital of USD 500,000 from the GEF project grant subject to approved conditions, and establishing a credible pipeline for future resource mobilisation. The catalytic transfer will be conditional upon fulfilment of agreed readiness milestones, including approved fiduciary, ESS, gender, investment and governance procedures, an acceptable host / sub-fund arrangement, documented minimum 1:1 external cash match, and CI-GEF review of safeguards and fiduciary readiness. This will enable EcoTéla to build a diversified and sustainable financial base and strengthen its attractiveness to donors and partners. Activities that will achieve this include:

- Establishment of capitalization agreements with contributing partners
- Completion of fiduciary due diligence and readiness assessments
- Development and approval of governance, fiduciary, and disbursement procedures
- Fulfilment of agreed conditions precedent for fund activation
- Mobilisation and documentation of co-financing commitments
- Coordination with financial institutions for transfer and deposit arrangements
- Verification of compliance with environmental, social, and investment safeguards
- Confirmation of operational readiness of EcoTéla Fund management systems
- Formal approval and execution of catalytic seed capital transfer
- Deposit of catalytic seed capital into the EcoTéla Fund account under agreed conditions

22. Output 1.1.3: EcoTéla Fund operationalized and tested through the deployment of initial financing mechanisms.

Output Indicator 1.1.3: Number of financing transactions/mechanisms deployed by the EcoTéla Fund in line with its approved inclusive and gender sensitive governance and investment framework.

Output target 1.1.3: At least 3 financing mechanisms tested and operational, with funds disbursed in accordance with approved inclusive and gender sensitive governance and investment framework.

23. This output will move the fund beyond capacity development and into early implementation by piloting initial, low-risk financing mechanisms. Under this output, the project will support controlled, safeguards-compliant grant-making or financing cycles that apply the operational manual, fiduciary controls, investment policies, and governance procedures developed under Output 1.1.1.

24. The purpose of these pilot financing activities is to test the fund's systems under real operating conditions, generate practical lessons, and demonstrate the fund's ability to channel resources effectively to priority biodiversity conservation interventions. Results and lessons learned from these early financing cycles will be used to refine procedures, strengthen institutional performance, and inform scaling-up of operations beyond the life of the project.

25. This output will therefore test EcoTéla indicator's operational readiness by deploying initial financing mechanisms / transactions through approved governance, fiduciary, grant-making, ESS, gender and monitoring procedures. Initial financing will be limited to low-risk biodiversity finance activities, such as protected-area management effectiveness support, management planning, biodiversity monitoring, stakeholder engagement, capacity-building, operational systems, and other activities that do not involve civil works, land acquisition, access restrictions, enforcement expansion, habitat conversion, pesticides or other high-risk activities. All initial financing will be screened under EcoTéla's ESMF / ESMS before approval.

26. Proposed activities include:

- Design pilot financing or grant-making windows aligned with national biodiversity priorities and safeguards requirements.

- Launch and manage at least one controlled pilot call for proposals or financing round using the approved operational manual.
- Appraise and approve pilot grants or financing using established fiduciary safeguards and governance procedures.
- Disburse funds to selected protected areas (beneficiaries) and monitor implementation of funded activities.
- Document lessons learned from pilot financing cycles and refine procedures, tools, and decision-making processes accordingly.

27. Output 1.1.4: Inclusive Institutional and technical capacity building on the operationalisation and management of the EcoTéla Fund

Indicator 1.1.4: Number of national and protected area staff trained and applying enhanced skills in biodiversity finance, fund management, and protected area management effectiveness (disaggregated by sex).

Target 1.1.4: At least 100 technicians trained, of whom 45% females, with demonstrated application of skills in EcoTéla Fund operationalisation, including financing mobilisation, fiduciary management, and protected area resource allocation.

28. This output will strengthen the institutional and technical capacities required to ensure the effective, transparent, and inclusive operationalisation of the EcoTéla Fund, including its domestic resource mobilization (DRM), fundraising, communication, and results-based management functions. Building on the fiduciary, governance, safeguards, investment, DRM, and operational systems established under Outputs 1.1.1, 1.1.2, and 1.1.3, the project will support targeted capacity development for fund governance bodies, the fund management team, representatives of protected area authorities, and other relevant national stakeholders. Particular emphasis will be placed on inclusive participation, gender responsiveness, safeguards compliance, and accountability in public-interest financing.

29. Capacity-building activities will focus on enabling stakeholders to correctly and consistently apply the EcoTéla Fund's operational manual, capital management and investment policies, DRM and fundraising strategy, communication tools, grant-making procedures, and monitoring and evaluation systems. The participation of protected area representatives will ensure that potential beneficiaries understand access requirements, fiduciary and safeguards obligations, as well as monitoring and reporting standards associated with EcoTéla financing. This will strengthen compliance, transparency, and performance in the use of funds by protected areas. By reinforcing institutional competencies and shared understanding across fund managers, governance bodies, and implementing partners, this output directly enables the delivery of Output 1.2.1 by ensuring that the EcoTéla Fund is operationalised with robust fiduciary, governance, safeguards, and financial management systems that support transparent and effective financing to protected areas.

30. Proposed activities include:

- a. Conduct an inclusive capacity needs assessment for EcoTéla governance bodies, fund management staff, and protected area (PA) authorities, focusing on fiduciary management, safeguards compliance, reporting, DRM, and results-based financing.
- b. Design and deliver targeted training programmes for fund administrators, Board/committee members, and PA representatives on:
 - Roles and responsibilities under EcoTéla's governance framework;
 - Application of fiduciary controls, financial management, and investment policies;
 - Environmental and social safeguards, gender sensitivity, and grievance mechanisms;
 - Grant-making procedures, eligibility requirements, and approval processes;
 - Monitoring, evaluation, financial reporting, and performance reporting requirements.
- c. Provide dedicated training and coaching for protected area representatives to ensure they understand EcoTéla access requirements, fiduciary and safeguards obligations, and monitoring and reporting standards associated with fund financing.

- d. Deliver targeted capacity building on domestic resource mobilization (DRM), fundraising, and communication, including engagement of domestic public and private actors and effective communication of conservation finance results.
- e. Support hands-on mentoring and technical assistance for fund staff and PA authorities during early grant-making and financing cycles to ensure correct application of systems in practice.
- f. Develop practical training materials, guidance notes, templates, and checklists to institutionalize learning and ensure consistent application of EcoTéla procedures.
- g. Facilitate joint learning sessions among EcoTéla staff, governance bodies, and PA beneficiaries to reinforce shared understanding of accountability, transparency, and performance expectations.
- h. Integrate capacity-building outcomes into EcoTéla's institutional knowledge systems to support continuity and sustainability beyond the project period.

31. OUTCOME 1.2: Strengthened inclusive biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in protected areas receiving financing from the EcoTéla Fund: Outcome 1.2 focuses on strengthening inclusive biodiversity conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources in protected areas that receive financing from the EcoTéla Fund. Through transparent and performance-based funding, the outcome supports targeted investments that improve management effectiveness, governance, and on-the-ground conservation practices in both terrestrial and marine protected areas. Progress toward this outcome will be measured using improvements in Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) scores, reflecting enhanced planning, enforcement, stakeholder engagement, and monitoring.

Outcome Indicator 1.2: Number of Hectares of protected areas with improved METT Score

Outcome Target 1.2.1.1: 22,600 Ha of Terrestrial protected areas with at least 5% increment in METT Score (hence the target is reaching 64 METT Score)

Outcome Target 1.2.1.2: 4,500 Ha of Marine protected areas with at least 5% increment in METT Score (hence the target is reaching 58 METT Score)

32. Output 1.2.1: EcoTéla Fund operationalised with robust fiduciary, governance, safeguards, and financial management systems enabling transparent financing to protected areas: This output focuses on the operationalisation of the EcoTéla Fund through ensuring the effective application of its fiduciary, governance, safeguards, and financial management systems, enabling protected areas to receive, utilise, and account for financing in a transparent and accountable manner. Under this output, eligible protected areas access EcoTéla funding through clearly defined procedures and implement approved conservation and sustainable use interventions in line with agreed conditions. EcoTéla Fund staff continue to play a central role in enforcing funding conditions, monitoring compliance, and overseeing the correct application of fiduciary controls, gender and safeguards measures, and monitoring and reporting requirements. Protected area authorities would be required to meet these standards and submit timely financial and technical reports, ensuring that resources are used as intended and that conservation results are verifiable.

Indicator 1.2.1: Percentage of funds disbursed through the EcoTéla Fund to protected areas transparently tracked, utilised, and reported in accordance with approved governance, fiduciary, and safeguards systems.

Target 1.2.1: 100% of funds disbursed to 2 protected areas through the EcoTéla Fund transparently tracked, utilised, and reported in accordance with approved governance, fiduciary, and safeguards systems.

33. Proposed activities:

- a. Establish and operationalise procedures for issuing calls for proposals and/or financing windows for eligible protected areas, in line with approved governance and fiduciary frameworks.
- b. Appraise funding proposals from protected areas using approved eligibility criteria, safeguards screening, fiduciary risk assessments, and decision-making processes.
- c. Approve and disburse EcoTéla financing to selected protected areas in accordance with agreed funding conditions and financial management requirements.

- d. Support protected area authorities to implement funded conservation and sustainable use interventions in compliance with approved workplans, budgets, and safeguards measures.
- e. Enforce funding conditions through regular oversight by EcoTéla Fund staff, including verification of compliance with fiduciary, safeguards, and governance requirements.
- f. Monitor financial execution and technical progress of funded protected area interventions through desk reviews, field visits, and performance assessments.
- g. Require and review periodic financial and technical reports from protected area authorities, ensuring timely corrective actions where compliance gaps are identified.
- h. Track conservation performance results, including management effectiveness improvements, and document lessons from implementation to inform adaptive fund management.
- i. Maintain transparent records and reporting on fund allocations, disbursements, and results for accountability to governance bodies and stakeholders.

34. COMPONENT 2: Strengthening knowledge sharing, learning and synthesis of best practices and lessons learnt

35. Component 2 will complement the operationalization of the fund by supporting documentation, learning, and communication related to its early implementation. Lessons from the establishment of governance systems, pilot grant-making, and early financing results will be systematically captured and disseminated through targeted communication and knowledge products. The activities in the component will focus on generating and applying lessons from early implementation and from complementary initiatives (including BIOFIN and other GEF/non-GEF programmes) to strengthen adaptive management, donor engagement, and the scaling of biodiversity finance solutions. These activities will reinforce the fund's fundraising and communication strategy by increasing visibility among stakeholders and potential contributors, strengthening transparency, and showcasing early conservation impacts. Component 2 will thus support both institutional learning and external engagement, enhancing the credibility and replicability of the fund model.

36. Target audiences include EcoTéla governance bodies and future Secretariat; MAJTS, DAAC, DFB and the Príncipe Regional Government; the Ministry of Finance and planning counterparts; civil society and community-based organisations; women and youth groups; private-sector, tourism, fisheries and CSR/ESG actors; bilateral, multilateral and philanthropic donors; and relevant technical and knowledge partners such as universities and research institutes where appropriate.

Indicative activities include:

- Development and implementation of a targeted knowledge management and communications strategy focused on donor confidence, applicant guidance, transparency and practical learning from EcoTéla's operationalisation;
- Preparation of targeted knowledge products and case studies, including donor capitalisation materials, applicant guidance, safeguards and gender briefs, DRM / capitalization lessons, protected-area finance case studies and lessons from initial low-risk financing tests;
- Organisation of peer-to-peer exchanges and learning events with comparable conservation trust funds and biodiversity finance mechanisms, with attention to women's participation and inclusion of national institutions;
- Documentation, synthesis, and dissemination of lessons learned to national, regional, and global platforms;
- Facilitation of knowledge exchange and coordination with complementary initiatives, including GEF ID 11243 and BIOFIN.

37. Component 2 is therefore structured as a practical learning and knowledge platform to support EcoTéla implementation and broader biodiversity finance learning. It will generate targeted outputs such as knowledge management and communications strategy, donor capitalisation and applicant guidance materials, safeguards and gender briefs, biodiversity finance and DRM learning products, and documented lessons from pilot financing transactions and protected-area financing experiences. The component will also support structured peer learning and dissemination of results to relevant national, regional, and global audiences to inform replication and scaling.

38. **OUTCOME 2.1: Strengthened coordination, learning and knowledge exchange between the EcoTéla Fund and similar financial mechanisms.** This outcome seeks to improve coordination, learning, and knowledge exchange between the EcoTéla Fund and similar financial mechanisms in region thereby facilitating the sharing of best practices, strengthening institutional capacity, and enhancing the effectiveness and credibility of EcoTéla as a national conservation financing platform.

Outcome Indicator 2.1: Number of financial mechanisms / initiatives coordinating, learning and exchanging with the EcoTéla Fund.

Outcome Target 2.1: The São Tomé & Príncipe EcoTéla Project coordinating, learning and sharing with at least 5 initiatives at national and regional levels

39. **Output 2.1.1: Knowledge management and communications strategy developed and implemented:** A knowledge management and communications strategy will be developed and implemented for the project to ensure systematic capture, synthesis, and dissemination of lessons learned, results, and best practices.

Output Indicator 2.1.1: Number of knowledge management and communications strategies for the Project developed and implemented.

Output Target 2.1.1: At least 1 knowledge management and communications strategy for the project developed and implemented

40. **Output 2.1.2.: Knowledge products on conservation finance, governance, safeguards and inclusion generated and disseminated at national and regional levels.** Knowledge products on conservation finance, EcoTéla governance, DRM, safeguards, gender-responsive financing, protected-area finance and lessons from initial financing tests generated and disseminated: Knowledge products on conservation finance, governance, safeguards, and inclusion are developed, synthesized, and disseminated at national and regional levels to support learning

Output Indicator 2.1.2: Number of knowledge products generated and disseminated.

Output Target 2.1.2: At least 3 policy/technical briefs, 4 applicant or donor-facing fact sheets and 2 short learning stories / videos prepared and disseminated by the end of the project.

41. **Output 2.1.3: Gender-sensitive learning, exchange and coordination events between EcoTéla and similar financial mechanisms in the region, with at least 45% women representatives.** Gender-sensitive learning, exchange, and coordination events will be organized between the EcoTéla Fund and similar financial mechanisms in the region to promote peer learning and collaboration on conservation finance.

Output Indicator 2.1.3: Number of learning and exchange events between EcoTéla and financial mechanisms in the region.

Output Target 2.1.3: At least 2 learning and exchange events between the Eco-Téla Fund with at least 45 total participants, of which at least 45% are women.

42. **COMPONENT 3: Monitoring and Evaluation:** This component establishes a results-oriented system to track project performance, ensure accountability, and support adaptive management.

43. **OUTCOME 3.1: An effective and gender-sensitive M&E system for the project:** An M&E Framework will be developed, and it will define baselines and targets, monitor progress against indicators, and produce regular project quarterly and annual technical and financial reports to inform decision-making and learning. The framework also includes a terminal evaluation conducted by an independent consultant.

Outcome Indicator 3.1: Number of annual Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) approved by CI-GEF and submitted to the GEF.

Outcome Target 3.1: At least 3 Annual Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) approved by CI-GEF and submitted to the GEF.

44. **Output 3.1.1: Periodic M&E reports submitted to CI-GEF Agency.** This output will track the project's progress and effectiveness through technical and financial annual and quarterly reports, provide stakeholders with timely insights on the performance of the project and facilitate evidence-based decision-making, allowing for adjustments and improvements to enhance project outcomes and resource allocation.

Output Indicator 3.1.1: Number of periodic M&E Reports submitted to CI-GEF Agency.

Output Target 3.1.1: 3 Annual Workplans and Budgets, 10 technical and financial quarterly reports, and 3 Core Indicator Worksheets.

45. **Output 3.1.2:** Independent evaluations conducted in accordance with the GEF and CI-GEF Evaluation Policies: Terminal Evaluation will be conducted at the end of the project by independent consultants to assess overall performance, measure the achievement of outcomes and objectives, evaluate efficiency and effectiveness, and capture lessons learned and recommendations for future programming and scale-up.

Output Indicator 3.1.2: Number of Terminal Evaluation Reports

Output Target 3.1.2: One Terminal Evaluation Report approved by CI-GEF and submitted to the GEF

Global environmental benefits

46. The project will generate significant long term global and environmental benefits by capitalising and operationalising EcoTéla as a sustainable biodiversity finance mechanism for São Tomé and Príncipe. By securing predictable and long-term financing and testing low-risk financing mechanisms under approved procedures, the Fund will enable continuous and scaled investment in the conservation and effective management of globally significant ecosystems, including critical terrestrial, coastal and marine habitats that support high levels of endemism and threatened species. Indicative protected areas to be considered during PPG / CEO endorsement include Parque Natural Obô de São Tomé (WDPA 124355; 262.0 km² / 26,200 ha) and Parque Natural Obô do Príncipe (WDPA 555592842; 45.0 km² / 4,500 ha), subject to confirmation by EcoTéla governance bodies, MAJTS / DAAC / DFB, the Príncipe Regional Government, ESS screening and co-financing readiness.
47. In addition, the establishment of a functional conservation trust fund will strengthen institutional capacity and financial sustainability for protected area management, ensuring more effective implementation of conservation measures over time. By shifting biodiversity finance from short-term, fragmented donor support to a structured, long-term and performance-based mechanism, the project will enhance the resilience of biodiversity conservation systems and reduce the risk of biodiversity loss in key ecological landscapes. Final core indicator values, WDPA IDs, baseline METT scores and management-effectiveness targets will be confirmed at CEO endorsement.

Stakeholder

48. The EcoTéla project will ensure inclusive and continuous stakeholder engagement throughout design and implementation to strengthen national ownership, legitimacy, and operational effectiveness. Key government institutions, including MAJTS, DAAC, DFB, the Príncipe Regional Government and the Ministry of Finance / planning counterparts, will provide strategic guidance, institutional interface, policy oversight and input on domestic resource mobilisation, revenue-routing options and public-finance compatibility. EcoTéla Fund will anchor fiduciary accountability and decision-making, reinforcing national ownership of the Fund. BirdLife International will provide technical implementation and coordination support. Civil society and community stakeholders will be engaged to inform inclusion mechanisms, grievance approaches, accessibility and future financing-window design, while private-sector and marine stakeholders will contribute to realistic capitalisation pathways, including tourism-linked and coastal financing opportunities. Women and youth will be explicitly integrated into governance, consultation processes, communication feedback loops and eligibility considerations..

Knowledge sharing and Learning

49. The project will establish structured knowledge generation, management, and exchange mechanisms to support continuous learning and strengthen conservation finance practice. Knowledge products will include operational

tools, governance templates, lessons learned, donor engagement materials, and communications outputs documenting EcoTéla's development and operationalisation. These will be systematically shared with national institutions (MAJTS, DAAC, DFB, and the Príncipe Regional Government), EcoTéla governance structures, BIOFIN, and relevant GEF and non-GEF initiatives.

50. A central feature of the knowledge approach will be peer learning and exchange with similar conservation financing mechanisms, enabling EcoTéla to adopt and adapt regional and global best practices in fund governance, fiduciary systems, and capitalisation strategies, while also contributing emerging lessons from São Tomé and Príncipe to broader conservation finance learning platforms.

Policy coherence

51. The EcoTéla project will strengthen policy coherence by aligning the Fund with national biodiversity finance planning frameworks, protected-area governance processes, BIOFIN's emerging diagnostics and finance-solution work, and terrestrial, coastal and marine biodiversity priorities. Coordination with MAJTS, DAAC, DFB, the Príncipe Regional Government and the Ministry of Finance will ensure that EcoTéla is embedded within national policy and public-finance architecture while maintaining its autonomy as a conservation trust fund.
52. Linkages with BIOFIN and other complementary initiatives will reinforce alignment between policy development, financing strategies and implementation mechanisms. The project will prepare an EcoTéla Domestic Resource Mobilization and Capitalization Roadmap to translate available BIOFIN diagnostics and national biodiversity finance priorities into practical fund structuring, revenue-pathway analysis, donor engagement and initial low-risk financing tests.

Gender considerations

53. The EcoTéla project will integrate gender considerations across all components, including Component 1, to ensure inclusive, equitable and socially responsive biodiversity finance. Women will be explicitly included in EcoTéla governance, stakeholder consultations, capacity-building, future access criteria and learning processes, with minimum participation targets applied where appropriate. Gender-responsive provisions will be incorporated into the operational manual, grant-making procedures, eligibility criteria, grievance mechanism, ESMF / ESMS and M&E system.
54. Gender-sensitive approaches will be embedded in knowledge management, communications and the project's M&E system to capture differentiated roles, needs and contributions of women, men and youth in biodiversity conservation. The Gender Mainstreaming Plan / Gender Action Plan to be prepared during PPG will be based on the gender analysis, include budgeted measures, gender-specific and sex-disaggregated indicators, regular monitoring and adaptive management, and reporting on gender-specific results in PIRs, the MTR where applicable and the Terminal Evaluation. The project will promote inclusive access to information and future financing opportunities, ensuring that EcoTéla's design and operationalisation strengthen women's, youth and local community participation in environmental decision-making and equitable access to conservation finance.

Innovation

55. The EcoTéla Fund project is transformative because it shifts biodiversity financing in São Tomé and Príncipe from fragmented, short-term project funding to a permanent, capitalised and nationally anchored conservation finance mechanism. The capitalisation and operationalisation of EcoTéla introduces financial innovation by combining catalytic seed capital, a 1:1 external cash-match requirement, a BIOFIN-informed DRM / capitalization roadmap, approved investment and grant-making procedures, and initial low-risk financing tests that demonstrate the Fund's ability to deploy resources transparently for biodiversity conservation and protected-area management.
56. The project is also innovative in its institutional and investment design, establishing strengthened governance, fiduciary, environmental and social safeguards, gender, grievance and investment systems alongside a host/sub-fund structure and results-based allocation logic. This enhances transparency, accountability and investor confidence, enabling EcoTéla to mobilise additional public, private and philanthropic capital over time. Scaling and

transformational change will be achieved through phased capitalisation, demonstration effects from initial financing mechanisms and replication of EcoTéla’s biodiversity finance model in other small island developing states.

Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Project.

Does the GEF Agency expect to play an execution role on this project?

If so, please describe that role here. Also, please add a short explanation to describe cooperation with ongoing initiatives and projects, including potential for co-location and/or sharing of expertise/staffing

1. Ongoing national and sectoral initiatives support the enabling environment for EcoTéla, offering opportunities for coordination and resource leveraging in institutional strengthening, sustainable finance, and protected area management.
 - a. **Cooperation with ongoing initiatives is central to the project design** - The project will leverage institutional frameworks, stakeholder platforms, and consultation processes supported under the Intact forests GEF-funded project (ID 11243, implemented by IUCN), including mechanisms for stakeholder engagement, protected-area planning and institutional strengthening. EcoTéla will not duplicate field implementation financed by that project; it will provide the long-term finance architecture that can sustain selected biodiversity and protected-area results after project cycles close.
 - b. **Building on and operationalising existing analytical and policy work** - The project will build on UNDP BIOFIN’s biodiversity finance analyses, expenditure review, needs assessment, prioritisation and finance-solution work as these become available. The EcoTéla DRM / Capitalization Roadmap will translate BIOFIN’s upstream diagnostics into practical fund structuring, revenue pathway assessment, capitalization strategy, grant-window rules and initial low-risk financing tests aligned with the NBSAP and protected-area priorities.
 - c. **Leveraging partnerships, knowledge, and financing opportunities** - The project will draw on ongoing initiatives, including Fauna & Flora and related marine programmes, FAO restoration initiatives, IFAD agroforestry and fisheries work, AFD / BioFlor+, the EU landscape portfolio and private-sector / tourism-finance discussions, to ensure coherence between terrestrial, coastal and marine conservation financing. It will identify co-financing opportunities, potential revenue streams and a pipeline of eligible low-risk activities that can be screened under EcoTéla’s approved procedures.
 - d. **Adaptive learning from lessons and experiences** - Lessons from ongoing initiatives, including the Intact Forests Project (GEF project ID 11243), UNDP BIOFIN, and related conservation and finance programmes, will inform the design and operationalisation of EcoTéla, particularly in areas of institutional coordination, stakeholder engagement, and sustainable financing mechanisms. An inception-phase division-of-labour and coordination note will formalise roles, sequencing, information sharing, use of consultation platforms, and non-duplication arrangements across GEF and non-GEF partners, while maintaining clear mandates and budgetary separation.

Core Indicators

Indicator 1 Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
26200	0	0	0

Indicator 1.1 Terrestrial Protected Areas Newly created

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
0	0	0	0

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA 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)
26200	0	0	0

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)
Obô Natural Park of São Tomé	124355	National Park	26,200.00						

Indicator 2 Marine protected areas created or under improved management

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
4500	0	0	0

Indicator 2.1 Marine Protected Areas Newly created

Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
0	0	0	0

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA 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 2.2 Marine Protected Areas Under improved management effectiveness

Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
4500	0	0	0

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total 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)
Parque Natural	555592842	National Park	4,500.00						

Obô do Príncipe									
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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)
0	0	0	0

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)

Indicator 4.2 Area of landscapes under third-party certification incorporating biodiversity considerations

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

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)

Indicator 4.4 Area of High Conservation Value or other forest loss avoided

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

Indicator 4.5 Terrestrial OECMs supported

Name of the OECMs	WDPA-ID	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)

Documents (Document(s) that justifies the HCVF)

Title

Indicator 11 People benefiting from GEF-financed investments

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Female	45			
Male	55			
Total	100		0	0

Explain the methodological approach and underlying logic to justify target levels for Core and Sub-Indicators (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

CORE INDICATOR 1: Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management (hectare)

Core Indicator 1.2: Terrestrial protected areas under improved management effectiveness.

The total area of the Terrestrial protected area that will be under improved management effectiveness is 26,200 Hectares.

CORE INDICATOR 2: Marine protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use (Hectare)

Core Indicator 2.2: Marine protected areas under improved management effectiveness

The total area of the target Marine protected area that will be under improved management effectiveness is 4,500 Hectares.

CORE INDICATOR 11: People benefiting from GEF-financed investments

75. Core indicator 11 is estimated at 100 direct beneficiaries (45% women), including members of EcoTéla governance bodies and secretariat, government technical counterparts from São Tomé and Príncipe and Príncipe, civil society and community representatives, and private-sector stakeholders directly engaged in protected area management. This also includes participants benefiting directly from targeted technical and institutional capacity-building activities, as well as those engaged in structured learning, exchanges, and peer-to-peer engagement with similar conservation financing initiatives in the region. The target reflects a conservative estimate of individuals directly involved in strengthening governance, fiduciary, and investment systems for EcoTéla during the project period. This estimate is preliminary and will be refined upon CEO Endorsement, based on finalised implementation arrangements and confirmed participation plans.

Key Risks

	Rating	Explanation of risk and mitigation measures
CONTEXT		
Climate	Moderate	<p>Risk: The project is a low-footprint technical assistance operation, but climate hazards may disrupt travel, meetings and future prioritisation.</p> <p>Mitigation Measure: Flexible scheduling, remote participation where needed, and integration of climate-related criteria into EcoTéla's future financing windows and investment narrative</p>
Environmental and Social	Low	<p>Risk: This is a low-footprint technical assistance and conservation finance operation with no civil works, no land acquisition, no resettlement, no access restrictions and no high-risk downstream activities. The project includes initial EcoTéla financing mechanisms, but these will be limited to low-risk, safeguards-screened biodiversity finance activities after approved governance, fiduciary, ESS, gender and grievance procedures are in place.</p> <p>Mitigation Measure: Adopt and operationalise an ESMF / ESMS, exclusion list, ESS9 capacity assessment, screening and categorisation procedures, gender-responsive eligibility criteria, Inclusive Stakeholder Engagement processes, Accountability and Grievance Mechanism (AGM) and monitoring requirements before any initial financing is approved; exclude civil works, habitat conversion, pesticides, land acquisition, enforcement expansion or</p>

		access restrictions; maintain CI-GEF oversight and update the categorisation if project scope changes.
Political and Governance	Moderate	Risk: Institutional changes or unclear roles could slow decisions. Mitigation Measure: Use EcoTéla's existing governance structure, formalise working arrangements, correct institutional nomenclature and anchor implementation through existing Ministry of Environment, Youth and Sustainable Tourism (MAJTS) and Príncipe Regional Government structures.
INNOVATION		
Institutional and Policy	Moderate	Risk: Delays in approvals of host arrangements, policies or procedures could affect readiness. Mitigation Measure: Front-load legal and procedural work, maintain a documented fallback host option, and sequence capital transfer only after readiness milestones are met
Technological	Low	Risk: The project has minimal technological dependence. Mitigation Measure: Use simple, low-risk digital tools for knowledge management and reporting.
Financial and Business Model	Substantial	Risk: The largest risk is failure to secure the required external cash match or to complete the investment architecture in time. Mitigation Measure: Front-load FFEM and second cash endowment negotiations, prepare a donor capitalisation package, and apply strict conditionality to any catalytic transfer.
EXECUTION		
Capacity	Moderate	Risk: EcoTéla remains at start-up stage. Mitigation Measure: Keep implementation lean, use BirdLife backstopping, and sequence targeted capacity development early.
Fiduciary	Moderate	Risk: Capitalisation of a conservation trust fund requires strong controls. Mitigation Measure: CI oversight, adoption of fiduciary procedures, documented host/sub-fund arrangement, and transfer conditions tied to readiness evidence.
Stakeholder	Moderate	Risk: Perceptions of institutional capture or duplication with related initiatives could reduce legitimacy. Mitigation Measure: Stakeholder compact, transparent roles and disclosures, inclusive engagement, and a formal division-of-labour note with GEF ID 11243.
Other		
Overall Risk Rating	Moderate	JUSTIFICATION: The project's overall risk profile is Moderate. This overall project risk rating is distinct from the preliminary environmental and social categorisation, which remains Category C / Low because the project has no civil works, no land acquisition, no access restrictions and only low-risk, safeguards-screened initial financing mechanisms. The key risks relate to institutional readiness, fiduciary arrangements, fundraising and timely

	<p>operationalisation of EcoTéla’s financing architecture, including mobilisation of the required external cash match. The project’s success also depends on strengthening the operational capacity of EcoTéla staff and protected area authorities to understand and apply the fund’s operational modalities, including reporting, fiduciary, environmental, gender and social safeguards, compliance and accountability requirements, DRM etc. While robust governance, fiduciary and safeguards structures can be established during project implementation, effective execution and long-term compliance will also depend on external variables and institutional performance factors that may not be fully within direct project control. These risks are nevertheless considered manageable because the project applies a phased and conditional implementation approach. Capitalisation and any initial financing mechanisms will only proceed after governance, fiduciary, environmental and social safeguards, gender and grievance procedures are operationalised and readiness milestones are met. The project further reduces risk exposure through CI-GEF oversight, BirdLife technical backstopping, targeted early-stage capacity development, formalised institutional arrangements, safeguards screening procedures, enforcement of operational and compliance requirements, exclusion of higher-risk financing activities during initial implementation, and coordination mechanisms with related initiatives. While financial sustainability, institutional maturity and operational compliance remain important implementation risks, the project design incorporates appropriate mitigation, capacity support and adaptive management measures to maintain risks at a Moderate level.</p>
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C. ALIGNMENT WITH GEF-8 PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES AND COUNTRY/REGIONAL PRIORITIES

Describe how the proposed interventions are aligned with GEF- 8 programming strategies and country and regional priorities, including how these country strategies and plans relate to the multilateral environmental agreements.

Confirm if any country policies that might contradict with intended outcomes of the project have been identified, and how the project will address this.

For projects aiming to generate biodiversity benefits (regardless of what the source of the resources is - i.e., BD, CC or LD), please identify which of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework the project contributes to and explain how. (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

1. The project is aligned with GEF-8 programming strategies under Biodiversity Focal Area, specifically Biodiversity Objective 3 to increase mobilization of domestic resources for biodiversity. Climate resilience, land restoration or sustainable land-use benefits may arise as indirect downstream co-benefits of biodiversity finance, but they are not used as focal-area alignment or programming justification.

a. Under Diagnostics and planning for biodiversity finance, the project will use available BIOFIN diagnostics, NBSAP priorities, protected-area financing needs and stakeholder inputs to prepare an EcoTéla Domestic Resource Mobilization and Capitalization Roadmap. This roadmap will identify public, private, philanthropic, donor and recurrent revenue pathways, define sequencing and responsibilities, and support EcoTéla’s role as the national biodiversity finance mechanism. Under early implementation, the project will operationalise and capitalise EcoTéla and test its procedures through initial low-risk, safeguards-screened financing mechanisms. This corresponds to Component 1 (Output 1.1.1, and 1.1.3), including the conditional deposit of catalytic seed capital, application of approved governance / fiduciary / ESS / gender procedures, and initial deployment of financing transactions aligned with biodiversity priorities.

- b. Under early implementation, the project translates planning into concrete Domestic Resource Mobilization action through the operationalisation and capitalisation of the EcoTéla Fund. This is captured under Component 1 (Output 1.1.2), which supports the mobilisation and deposit of catalytic seed capital into the Fund. This enables the initiation of real biodiversity investments on the ground, ensuring that early-stage Domestic Resource Mobilization priorities are implemented through functional financing flows. The Fund therefore serves as a practical mechanism to pilot biodiversity financing approaches, crowd in additional resources, and demonstrate the viability of long-term domestic and blended resource mobilisation strategies.
- c. Under Capacity building and institutional set-up for implementation and monitoring, the project will strengthen EcoTéla's governance bodies, secretariat, fiduciary systems, investment arrangements, ESMF / ESMS, gender and grievance mechanisms, M&E framework, audit systems and peer-learning arrangements. This is reflected in Component 2 (Outputs 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3), which supports the development and implementation of a knowledge management and communications strategy, the production and dissemination of knowledge products on conservation finance and governance, and structured learning and exchange events with similar financial mechanisms. In addition, Component 3 (Outputs 3.1.1 and 3.1.2) establishes a robust monitoring and evaluation system, including periodic reporting, Project Implementation Reports, financial reporting, and a terminal evaluation.

2. The proposed contributes primarily to Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework^[2] Target 19 by strengthening domestic resource mobilization, biodiversity finance planning, private / philanthropic finance mobilisation, innovative finance and transparency of resource use. It also contributes to Target 3 by enabling sustained financing for effectively managed protected areas; Target 14 by aligning financial flows and decision-making with biodiversity priorities; Target 20 through capacity-building, institutional strengthening and knowledge exchange for biodiversity finance; and Target 23 through gender-responsive governance, participation and monitoring.

3. The proposed project aligns with the following national strategies and policies.
 - a. National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP II, 2015–2020): The project supports NBSAP implementation by strengthening long-term biodiversity financing mechanisms and improving institutional capacity for the sustainable management of ecosystems and protected areas.^[2]^[3]³
 - b. Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC 3.0, 2025): The project contributes to NDC 3.0 by enabling nature-based solutions through strengthened financing systems that support ecosystem restoration, resilience, and climate mitigation co-benefits^[4]⁴.
 - c. National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy: The project aligns by enhancing institutional and financial capacity to support climate-resilient ecosystems and integrate adaptation considerations into long-term land and biodiversity management.^[5]⁵
 - d. Sao Tome and Principe country strategic plan (2024–2028): The project supports the Country Strategic Plan by strengthening sustainable natural resource management systems and mobilising innovative financing for climate and biodiversity outcomes.^[6]⁶

- e. Strategic Plan for São Tomé & Príncipe 2021-2030: The project contributes to national development priorities by reinforcing environmental sustainability, institutional strengthening, and domestic resource mobilisation for resilient and inclusive growth^[7]

^[1] <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-04-en.pdf>

^[2] <https://obapao.org/policy/sao-tome-and-principe-nbsap-2015-2020>

^[3] <https://www.cbd.int/nbsap/about/latest/default.shtml>

^[4] https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/2025-09/NDC3.0_Sao_Tome_Principe_F.pdf

^[5] <https://www.adaptation-undp.org/resources/sao-tome-and-principes-national-strategy-climate-change-adaptation-december-2004-french>

^[6] https://executiveboard.wfp.org/document_download/WFP-0000151719

^[7] [https://ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/usys/ites/ecosystem-management-dam/documents/EducationDOC/EM_DOC/SaoTomeCaseStudy/BirdLife%20International%20\(2021\).%20Strategic%20Plan%202021-2030.%20Sao%20Tome%20and%20Principe.pdf](https://ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/usys/ites/ecosystem-management-dam/documents/EducationDOC/EM_DOC/SaoTomeCaseStudy/BirdLife%20International%20(2021).%20Strategic%20Plan%202021-2030.%20Sao%20Tome%20and%20Principe.pdf)

D. POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment:

We confirm that gender dimensions relevant to the project have been addressed as per GEF Policy and are clearly articulated in the Project Description (Section B).

Yes

Stakeholder Engagement

We confirm that key stakeholders were consulted during PIF development as required per GEF policy, their relevant roles to project outcomes and plan to develop a Stakeholder Engagement Plan before CEO endorsement has been clearly articulated in the Project Description (Section B).

Yes

Were the following stakeholders consulted during project identification phase:

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities:

Civil Society Organizations: Yes

Private Sector: Yes

Provide a brief summary and list of names and dates of consultations

- This draft PIF has been informed by a three-layer consultation process. First, it builds on the broader nationally owned EcoTéla creation and validation process carried out since 2023, including bilateral meetings during the first mission (19-24 June 2023), a national kick-off workshop (21 June 2023), CSO/private-sector webinars (9 November 2023; 25 March 2024), an interministerial and technical consultation mission (15–19 April 2024), a CTF concept validation workshop (18 October 2024), an operational-manual workshop (21–22 May 2025), media and fundraising engagement activities (20-22 May 2025; 10-12 November 2025), and targeted consultations with local NGOs, community-based organisations and sector actors on future spending windows.

- Second, the draft draws on consultations conducted for previously developed related project proposals, including presentation of the concept to the Minister of Environment, the Director of Forests and Biodiversity and the GEF Operational Focal Point on 17 September 2025, a community consultation with the Special Reserves Management Committee of the South on 3 December 2025, and a thematic consultation with NGOs and technical partners on 5 December 2025.
- Third, direct PIF consultations were held on 6 April 2026 with: (i) technical partners – Marquinho Martins and Barbara Campos (BirdLife International), Carlos Vangente (DAAC / GEF-UNDP project), Victor Bonfim (DAAC / GCF-UNEP project), Geisel Menezes (UNDP/BIOFIN) and Ana Sofia Castro (IFAD/COMPRAN); (ii) institutional partners – Acácio Elba Bonfim (EcoTéla), Nilda da Mata (MAJTS), Darnel Baía (GEF Operational Focal Point), Emílio Lima (DAAC) and Adilson da Mata (DFB); and (iii) marine and sustainable-finance partners – Ricardo Freitas, Kat McGavin, Abiudy Mapagera and Pedro Ramos (Fauna & Flora). Across these engagements, stakeholders supported EcoTéla as a nationally owned long-term conservation finance mechanism; emphasised the need for clear government leadership, institutional autonomy of EcoTéla, fiduciary readiness and a minimum 1:1 external cash match; and requested strong complementarity with BIOFIN, ongoing GEF initiatives, marine protected-area processes and emerging tourism-related financing discussions. Supporting records are provided in the uploaded stakeholder engagement assessment and consultation documentation.

(Please upload to the portal documents tab any stakeholder engagement plan or assessments that have been done during the PIF development phase.)

Private Sector

Will there be private sector engagement in the project?

Yes

And if so, has its role been described and justified in the section B project description?

Yes

Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) Risks

We confirm that we have provided indicative information regarding Environmental and Social risks associated with the proposed project or program and any measures to address such risks and impacts (this information should be presented in Annex D).

Yes

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
Low			

E. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Knowledge management

We confirm that an approach to Knowledge Management and Learning has been clearly described in the Project Description (Section B)

Yes

ANNEX A: FINANCING TABLES

GEF Financing Table

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

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Grant / Non- Grant	GEF Project Grant(\$)	Agency Fee(\$)	Total GEF Financing (\$)
CI	GET	Sao Tome and Principe	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: BD-3	Grant	823,069.00	74,076.00	897,145.00
Total GEF Resources (\$)						823,069.00	74,076.00	897,145.00

Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

Is Project Preparation Grant requested?

true

PPG Amount (\$)

45852

PPG Agency Fee (\$)

4127

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Grant / Non- Grant	PPG(\$)	Agency Fee(\$)	Total PPG Funding(\$)
CI	GET	Sao Tome and Principe	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: BD-3	Grant	45,852.00	4,127.00	49,979.00
Total PPG Amount (\$)						45,852.00	4,127.00	49,979.00

Please provide justification

Sources of Funds for Country Star Allocation

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Sources of Funds	Total(\$)
CI	GET	Sao Tome and Principe	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	947,124.00
Total GEF Resources					947,124.00

Indicative Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing(\$)	Co-financing(\$)
BD-3-1	GET	435,700.00	520121
BD-3-2	GET	387,369.00	461240
Total Project Cost		823,069.00	981,361.00

Indicative Co-financing

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)
Civil Society Organization	BirdLife International	Grant	Investment mobilized	500000
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Environment, Youth and Sustainable Tourism (MAJTS), including DAAC and DFB, Government of São Tomé and Príncipe	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	230000
Civil Society Organization	BirdLife International	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	120000
GEF Agency	Conservation international	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	131361
Total Co-financing				981,361.00

Describe how any "Investment Mobilized" was identified

Stakeholders, including Protected Area Authorities and operators within the CMP, will be further engaged during the PPG phase to strengthen ownership and leverage additional co financing, with the objective of increasing the overall co financing ratio toward 1:7 in line with GEF guidelines.

Co-financing at PIF stage is indicative and includes both institutional readiness support and mobilized finance. The only co-financing intended to satisfy the minimum 1:1 cash-match condition for catalytic capital transfer to EcoTéla is the external cash contribution being mobilized by BirdLife International and partners, including prospective philanthropic and donor sources such as FFEM (to be confirmed). Government and partner co-financing listed at PIF stage reflects a mix of staff time, policy coordination, technical assistance, convening, legal/procedural support and complementary readiness inputs; these contributions are important to overall project delivery but are not assumed to substitute automatically for the required external cash match unless subsequently documented in cash during PPG. The PIF co-financing figure is therefore conservative, while the EcoTéla capitalization ambition remains to build a broader pipeline toward at least USD 1.5 million over the first three years and a larger long-term capitalization goal, subject to confirmation of firm co-financing letters during PPG.

ANNEX B: ENDORSEMENTS

GEF Agency(ies) Certification

GEF Agency Type	Name	Date	Project Contact Person	Phone	Email
GEF Agency Coordinator	CI	4/17/2026	Orissa Samaroo		osamaroo@conservation.org
GEF Agency Coordinator	CI	4/17/2026	Charity Nalyanya		cnalyanya@conservation.org

Record of Endorsement of GEF Operational Focal Point (s) on Behalf of the Government(s):

Name	Position	Ministry	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)
Dernel Helio de Sousa	GEF OFP for Sao Tome and Principe	Republica Democratica de Sao Tome e Principe	4/6/2026

ANNEX C: PROJECT LOCATION

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

Geo Name ID <i>Required field if the location is not an exact site</i>	Location Name <i>Required field</i>	Latitude <i>Required field</i>	Longitude <i>Required field</i>	Location Description <i>Optional text field</i>	Activity Description <i>Optional text field</i>
	São Tomé and Príncipe	0°27'16.20"N	6°44'37.29"E	Nationwide, covering São Tomé and Príncipe, including protected areas, conservation landscapes, and marine zones	Operationalisation and capitalisation of EcoTéla as São Tomé and Príncipe's national biodiversity finance mechanism, including governance, fiduciary and ESS systems, DRM / capitalisation planning, policy alignment, donor engagement, knowledge management, M&E, and testing of initial low-risk, safeguards-screened financing mechanisms.
	São Tomé city	0°20'14.69"N	6°44'9.07"E	National coordination hub on São Tomé, including EcoTéla, MAJTS, DAAC, DFB, and key partners.	National coordination and operational-readiness hub for EcoTéla, including project coordination, governance meetings, fiduciary, procurement, grant-making, ESS, gender and grievance procedures, DRM / capitalisation dialogue, donor engagement, knowledge management, audit / readiness verification and reporting. No physical works are financed.
	Obô de São Tomé Natural Park	0°15'51.59"N	6°32'44.31"E	Core terrestrial protected area within São Tomé's protected-area system and a principal long-term biodiversity financing priority.	Indicative biodiversity-finance priority area for testing EcoTéla's low-risk financing procedures and informing future recurrent support to protected-area management effectiveness. MSP-stage support will be limited to safeguards-screened, non-physical activities such as planning, monitoring, stakeholder engagement, capacity-building and operational systems. No civil works, land acquisition, resettlement, access restrictions, enforcement expansion or habitat conversion will be financed.
	Príncipe Natural Park • terrestrial zone	1°34'47.29"N 1°34'15.44"N 1°36'35.60"N	7°22'55.74"E 7°20'48.51"E 7°23'32.67"E	Core protected-area complex on Príncipe, including terrestrial, marine and buffer-zone elements under	Same as above.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● marine zone ● buffer zone 	<p>the Príncipe Regional Government.</p>
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Indicative map note: Because this MSP is a national, institutional and finance-structuring operation with no civil works, land acquisition, access restrictions or high-risk site-level investments, Annex C combines (i) administrative coordination hubs and (ii) indicative ecological coverage areas relevant to initial low-risk EcoTéla financing mechanisms and future financing windows. Polygon-based areas shown on the map (protected areas, buffer zones, High Conservation Value areas and proposed marine areas) has been geo-referenced using representative centroids. Specific eligibility geographies, WDPA IDs, METT baselines and management-effectiveness targets will be confirmed at CEO endorsement if EcoTéla financing-window design becomes more spatially explicit.

ANNEX D: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS SCREEN AND RATING

(PIF level) Attach agency safeguard screen form including rating of risk types and overall risk rating.

Title

20260504 Stakeholder Engagement Assessment and Preliminary Plan (PIF Stage) _ clean

20260513 GEF-8 ESS Screening Form _ EcoTela STP

20260513_EcoTela Preliminary ESS Screening Report

ANNEX E: RIO MARKERS

Climate Change Mitigation	Climate Change Adaptation	Biodiversity	Land Degradation
No Contribution 0	No Contribution 0	Principal Objective 2	No Contribution 0

ANNEX F: TAXONOMY WORKSHEET

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
x Focal Area/Theme	xBiodiversity		
		xProtected Areas and Landscapes	
			Productive Seascapes
			Productive Landscapes
			x Coastal and Marine Protected Areas
			Community Based Natural Resource Management
			x Terrestrial Protected Areas
		Species	
			Livestock Wild Relatives
			Threatened Species
			Plant Genetic Resources
			Wildlife for SustainableDevelopment
			Animal Genetic Resources
			Illegal Wildlife Trade
			Invasive Alien Species (IAS)
			Crop Wild Relatives
		Supplementary Protocol to the CBD	
			Access to Genetic Resources
			Benefit Sharing
			Biosafety
		xFinancial and Accounting	
			Payment for Ecosystem Services
			Conservation Finance
			x Conservation Trust Funds
			Natural Capital Assessment and Accounting
		Mainstreaming	
			Agriculture C agrobiodiversity
			Certification (National Standards)
			Tourism
			Certification (International Standards)
			Infrastructure
			Fisheries
			Extractive Industries (oil, gas, mining)

			Forestry (Including HCVF and REDD+)
		Biomes	
			Mangroves
			Sea Grasses
			Tropical Dry Forests
			Paramo
			Rivers
			Lakes
			Coral Reefs
			Temperate Forests
			Tropical Rain Forests
			Grasslands
			Wetlands
			Desert
	Forest		
		Forest	
			Amazon
			Congo
			Drylands
		Forest and Landscape Restoration	
			REDD/REDD+
	International Waters		
		Fisheries	
		Ship	
		Freshwater	
			Aquifer
			Lake Basin
			River Basin
		Pollution	
			Persistent toxic substances
			Plastics
			Nutrient pollution from wastewater
			Nutrient pollution from all sectors except Wastewater
		Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis and Strategic Action Plan Preparation	
		Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction	
		Strategic Action Plan Implementation	
		Coastal	
		Biomes	
			Polar Ecosystems
			Coral Reefs
			Mangrove
			Seagrasses
			Constructed Wetlands
		Marine Protected Area	
		Aquaculture	

		Learning	
		SIDS : Small Island Dev States	
		Large Marine Ecosystems	
	x Climate Change		
		United Nations Framework Convention on ClimateChange	
			Enabling Activities
			Paris Agreement
			Nationally Determined Contribution
			Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency
		x Climate Change Adaptation	
			Private Sector
			Community-based Adaptation
			Livelihoods
			Disaster Risk Management
			Least Developed Countries
			Adaptation Tech Transfer
			Sea-level rise
			Climate information
			National Adaptation Plan
			Innovation
			Climate Finance
			Small Island Developing States
			National Adaptation Programme of Action
			Ecosystem-based Adaptation
			Complementarity
			Climate Resilience
			Mainstreaming Adaptation
		x Climate Change Mitigation	
			Agriculture, Forestry, and otherLand Use
			Sustainable Urban Systems and Transport
			Energy Efficiency
			Technology Transfer
			Renewable Energy
			x Financing
	x Land Degradation		
		Land Degradation Neutrality	
			Land Cover and Land cover change
			Land Productivity
			Carbon stocks above or below ground
		x Sustainable Land Management	
			Ecosystem Approach
			Sustainable Fire Management
			Income Generating Activities

			Sustainable Forest
			Drought Mitigation
			Sustainable Pasture Management
			Integrated and Cross-sectoral approach
			Restoration and Rehabilitation of Degraded Lands
			Improved Soil and Water Management Techniques
			Community-Based Natural Resource Management
			Sustainable Livelihoods
			Sustainable Agriculture
		Food Security	
	Sustainable Development Goals		
	Chemicals and Waste		
		Open Burning	
		Eco-Efficiency	
		Waste Management	
			e-Waste
			Industrial Waste
			Hazardous Waste Management
		Emissions	
		Pesticides	
			DDT - Other
			DDT - Vector Management
		Ozone	
		Persistent Organic Pollutants	
			Polychlorinated Biphenyls
			Unintentional Persistent Organic Pollutants
			New Persistent Organic Pollutants
		Disposal	
		Sound Management of chemicals and Waste	
		Plastics	
		Best Available Technology / Best Environmental Practices	
		Green Chemistry	
		Industrial Emissions	
		Mercury	
			Cement
			Artisanal and Scale Gold Mining
			Coal Fired Power Plants
			Non-Ferrous Metals Production
			Coal Fired Industrial Boilers
x Influencing Models			
	Transform policy and regulatory environments		
	x Deploy innovative financial instruments		
	x Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making		

	x Convene multi-stakeholder alliances		
	Demonstrate innovative approaches		
x Stakeholders			
	x Private Sector		
		SMEs	
		Financial intermediaries and market facilitators	
		x Capital providers	
		Individuals/Entrepreneurs	
		Large corporations	
		Non-Grant Pilot	
		Project Reflow	
	x Type of Engagement		
		Partnership	
		Participation	
		Consultation	
		Information Dissemination	
	x Civil Society		
		Community Based Organization	
		x Non-Governmental Organization	
		Trade Unions and Workers Unions	
		Academia	
	Communications		
		Awareness Raising	
		Strategic Communications	
		Education	
		Behavior Change	
		Public Campaigns	
	Indigenous Peoples		
	Beneficiaries		
	Local Communities		
x Gender Equality			
	x Gender Mainstreaming		
		Women groups	
		xSex-disaggregated indicators	
		xGender-sensitive indicators	
		x Beneficiaries	
	x Gender results areas		
		Capacity development	
		Access and control over natural resources	
		Awareness raising	
		Access to benefits and services	
		Participation and leadership	
		Knowledge generation and exchange	
	Food Security in Sub-Sahara Africa		
		Small and Medium Enterprises	

		Integrated Land and Water Management	
		Diversified Farming	
		Crop Genetic Diversity	
		Gender Dimensions	
		Land and Soil Health	
		Multi-stakeholder Platforms	
		Food Value Chains	
		Resilience to climate and shocks	
		Sustainable Production Systems	
		Agroecosystems	
		Smallholder Farming	
	Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration		
		Integrated Landscapes	
		Sustainable Food Systems	
		Food Value Chains	
		Sustainable Commodity Production	
		Comprehensive Land Use Planning	
		Smallholder Farming	
		Landscape Restoration	
		Deforestation-free Sourcing	
	Sustainable Cities		
		Transport and Mobility	
		Integrated urban planning	
		Green space	
		Urban sustainability framework	
		Buildings	
		Global Platform for Sustainable Cities	
		Urban Food Systems	
		Energy efficiency	
		Urban Resilience	
		Municipal Financing	
		Municipal waste management	
		Urban Biodiversity	
	Commodity Supply Chains		
		Deforestation-free Sourcing	
		Adaptive Management	
		Sustainable Commodities Production	
		High Conservation Value Forests	
		Financial Screening Tools	
		Oil Palm Supply Chain	
		Beef Supply Chain	
		Soybean Supply Chain	
		High Carbon Stocks Forests	
		Smallholder Farmers	
Capacity, Knowledge and Research			

	Enabling Activities		
	Learning		
		Adaptive Management	
		Indicators to Measure Change	
		Theory of Change	
	Knowledge Generation		
		Professional Development	
		Master Classes	
		Training	
		Workshop	
		Course	
		Seminar	
	Innovation		
	Capacity Development		
	x Knowledge Exchange		
		Twinning	
		Conference	
		Field Visit	
		Exhibit	
		x Peer-to-Peer	
		North-South	
		South-South	
	Targeted Research		
Focal Area/Theme			