



# Implementation of the La Plata Basin SAP priorities through regional and national actions

Review PIF and Make a recommendation

## Basic project information

**GEF ID**

11053

**Countries**

Regional (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay)

**Project Name**

Implementation of the La Plata Basin SAP priorities through regional and national actions

**Agencies**

CAF

**Date received by PM**

9/19/2022

**Review completed by PM**

12/1/2023

**Program Manager**

Taylor Henshaw

**Focal Area**

International Waters

**Project Type**

FSP

## **GEF-8 PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF) REVIEW SHEET**

### **1. General Project Information / Eligibility**

**a) Does the project meet the criteria for eligibility for GEF funding?**

**b) Is the General Project Information table correctly populated?**

### Secretariat's Comments

26th of September 2022 (thenshaw):

(1) As per GEF Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy, the GEF Secretariat will only be able to review this project once it is accompanied by the required Letters of Endorsement (LOEs). Please secure an LOE, in the proper format, from each project country's GEF OFP and upload it to the portal.

13th of January 2023 (thenshaw): Please upload to the portal the following documents:

(1) The Terminal Evaluation of the GEF bridging project "Preparing the Ground for the Implementation of the La Plata Basin Strategic Action Program" (GEF ID 10035).

(2) The major deliverables (documents) from the bridging project.

(3) A detailed memo on how this PIF responds to the results/outcomes of the bridging project and the recommendations in the Terminal Evaluation.

(4) A version of the SAP that is signed at the ministry level by each country endorsing the SAP. Please also include the national action plans, if available.

(5) Given the extensive indicative co-financing, much of which is public investment, a set of indicative co-financing letters from the recipient country governments and further detail on what the public investments are and how they will be utilized as co-financing in this project.

(6) An indicative breakdown of the costs of each activity under each component. Please present in table format.

Only after these documents are uploaded to the portal can a full technical review be carried out. Thank you.

4th of October 2023 (thenshaw): Please address upstream comments (emailed October 3, 2023) and resubmit the PIF through the Portal. A full technical review of the PIF will then be carried out. Thank you.

29th of October 2023 (thenshaw):

(a) Partly

(i) There are activities presented in the PIF that do not follow the GEF-8 IW Programming Directions (see below). Further, in some cases GEF funding is not commensurate with project outputs. Please reduce the GEF project financing to \$11M, which is a more appropriate funding envelope for what is proposed and eligible for IW funding and also **requested by GEF Sec** in the comments below. Please secure new LOEs accordingly. A \$15M funding envelope requires a much more ambitious and joint on-the-ground set of activities that deliver global environmental benefits.

\*Please reallocate significant budget from Components 1 and 2 to Component 3 to deliver on-the-ground activities that implement the SAP and deliver GEBs (as measured through the GEF Core Indicators). This is a requirement for GEF funding. Please see comment (iii) below.

(ii) The project countries appear to still have GEF-8 STAR resources available. If this project is a priority for the countries, has the use of STAR resources been considered?

(iii) GEF Sec would like to see more innovation and use of practical IW tools in Component 3 and activities that target the GEF Core Indicators.

Please include an activity that scales up the INMS demonstration in La Plata Basin (<https://www.inms.international/regional-demos/latin-america-demonstration>), where all five countries are working together. This activity should contribute real GEBs through Core Indicator 3 or 4.

Please consider including an activity on IAEA's isotope hydrology tools to support decision making in La Plata Basin for improved groundwater governance and conjunctive management. The activity would serve as a demonstration for the IW portfolio.

Per the bridge project TE recommendation, please consider demonstrations on artificial intelligence/industry 4.0 for SAP implementation.

(iv) This PIF is under consideration at the same time as a PIF for the Southwest Atlantic LMEs. It would make sense to include a similar activity in both projects that will ensure formal coordination among the projects in a source to sea continuum approach. What are the source to sea coordination linkages and opportunities under the proposed project between the CIC Plata and CARP and CTMFM? Has this been considered? Perhaps this comes through

the proposed coordination activity. This should be built into the project and made explicit in the submission. An activity to this end is a requirement for GEF support.

Further, please explain how this project will build off the GEF's previous work in the Maritime Front from a source-to-sea perspective.

(b) (i) Please explain why the Executing Agency has not been selected at PIF stage/what the institutional arrangements are for this proposed project.

Please explain in the review sheet how each of the GEF Sec comments have been addressed.

Some documents have been mistakenly added to the Southwest Atlantic LMEs submission. Please correct.

23rd of November 2023 (thenshaw):

(a) (i) Addressed. GEF Project Grant is \$10,605,000.

However, the co-financing and GEF grant contribution to PMC is no longer proportional. Please increase the co-financing contribution to PMC to 4.76% of total co-financing. Adjust other components accordingly.

(ii) Addressed. STAR funds pending.

(iii) Partly addressed.

Please clarify proponent response: "This is a generic recommendation not necessarily applicable to the proposed project." What does this refer to? Artificial intelligence? Please clarify.

(iv) Partly addressed.

"3.1.5 Synergies in a Source to Sea continuum framework" is not a measurable output. Please recast.

Seemingly, it should partially include "The output will design and establish a consultation mechanism to capture and enhance these synergies including through the involvement of CARP and CTMFM." What is a consultation mechanism? It is expected that the project will not just explore synergies but also act on them. Please revise.

(b) Addressed.

Per above: Please explain in the review sheet how each of the GEF Sec comments have been addressed.

Proponent responses "Done" are not sufficient for a review sheet response. The comment above is meant to ensure the reviewer understands what the proponents have done. In many

cases, it is difficult to see how comments are addressed. Please be more thorough with responses in the review sheet on next round.

Please remove all green highlights from the submission

30th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

(a) (i) Addressed.

(ii) Addressed.

(iv) Addressed.

Please list the countries in the countries field

Please remove all highlighted text from submission

1st of December 2023 (thenshaw): Addressed.

### Agency's Comments

26/09/2022

The Letters of Endorsement (LOEs) have been uploaded to the GEF-portal.

13/09/2022

Documents 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6 have been uploaded to the GEF portal,

4th of September 2023

1. The Terminal Evaluation of the GEF bridging project "Preparing the Ground for the Implementation of the La Plata Basin Strategic Action Program" (GEF ID 10035) has been uploaded.

2. The major deliverables of the bridging projects have been uploaded, as well.

3. The CIC report, cleared by its board, has been uploaded

4. Official communications from the CIC upon SAP status approval at the highest institutional level is uploaded. However, this recurrent issue has been satisfactorily answered to the GEF Secretariat before the GEF ID 10035 approval.

5. Information is uploaded in a detailed manner.

6.. Cost with indicative breakdown are uploaded.

**29th of October 2023**

- (a) i) Done. Please see Table B.
- ii) Consultations were made with the countries concerned, pending a response.
- iii) Done. Please see Comp 3, Output 3.1.2, 3.1.4. // INMS, Done please see output 3.1.2. At this stage no information on the Latin American demo were available to countries. Synergies will be defined during PPG through contacts with UNEP. // IAEA's isotope hydrology tools, Done, please see output 2.1.1. // Innovation: This is a generic recommendation not necessarily applicable to the proposed project. Further consideration will be given to it during PPG. Some examples of innovation considered in the project are: i) Satellite groundwater monitoring system. ii) Systemic management of surface water - groundwater. iii) Hydro-environmental Observatory (source of updated CIC data online with SAP), iv) Linkage with the SSTD server, as a source of updated information. v) satellite monitoring on the environmental health of water bodies. vi) Incorporation of the INMS project and isotope hydrology tools
- iv) Done. See new Output 3.1.5.
- (b) i) The selection of the executing agency will be carried out prior to the project inception by the CIC Plata through a selection process, based on a list of eligibility criteria: meeting CAF's fiduciary standards, experience in implementing GEF projects and CIC Plata's operational implementation requirements.
- ii) Done.
- iii) Done .

**23rd of November 2023**

- i) Please see table B. The PMC was adjusted to 5% in both financings. The WCP was adjusted to 5% in both financings. The co-financing of component 3 was reduced.
- ii) Countries have not confirmed the use of STAR resources.

iii) correctly, refers to Artificial Intelligence, this could be a tool addressed in the near future, when the CIC has the minimum technical capabilities to be able to apply AI to the management of the resource.

iv) Modified accordingly. 3.1.5 Mechanism for identifying and leveraging synergies in a Source to Sea continuum framework

b) Good. Each of the consultations received has been explained.

## 2. Project Summary

**Does the project summary concisely describe the problem to be addressed, the project objective and the strategies to deliver the GEBs or adaptation benefits and other key expected results?**

Secretariat's Comments

29th of October 2023 (thenshaw): Partly,

(1) The summary does not reference any global environmental benefits (GEF Core Indicators). Please revise accordingly.

(2) Please explain why a transboundary approach is needed. The summary references avoiding fragmentation, but it is not clear why the fragmented approach is not working and how a transboundary approach is preferred and will be transformative in La Plata Basin. Please ensure Component 3 includes elements of a transboundary approach and not just a series of national activities.

(3) As previously discussed, GEF IW does not finance WASH activities and academic research. Please remove these activities from the submission.

(4) Five major issues are presented, but the drivers and barriers to overcome the problems are not conveyed in the summary. Please summarize the drivers and barriers and justify how the project activities will work to overcome the barriers (and then what the outcomes are). The theory of change logic needs to be strengthened in the summary. The incremental cost reasoning needs to be explicit in the summary and elsewhere in the submission.

23rd of November 2023 (thenshaw):

(1) Partly addressed. Please add Core Indicator 11 target to the summary. Per comment below, the Core Indicator 11 target still needs to be revised. 100,000,000 direct beneficiaries is not possible. For an investment of this scope at approx. \$11M, about 200,000 direct beneficiaries seems reasonable.

## 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	50,000,000			
Male	50,000,000			
<b>Total</b>	100000000	0	0	0

(2) Addressed.

(3)

The GEF IW Programming Directions do not include access to water. This must be recast for this project to move ahead.

What is the purpose of this higher applied research? How will it be used to implement the SAP? The GEF can fund higher applied research if it is in the context of achieving the project objective. Please see comment below on women and youth engagement, per previous teleconference between GEF Sec and proponents.

(4) Not addressed. Please include in the project summary. The problems/issues to be addressed, including the barriers to overcome is a requirement for the summary "What is the problem and issues to be addressed". 250-word cap can be exceeded.

The barriers themselves are not quite captured in the theory of change. It looks like lack of awareness, low capacity, lack of current information on the basin are also barriers relating to outcomes 1.2, 2.1, 3.1 and 4.1. Please include these in the diagram and explain in text.

30th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

(1) Core Indicator 11 is addressed.

Core Indicator 4 is quite high at 7.7M ha. Please speak with GEF Sec to revise down.

(3) Please include the purpose of the University Fund in the Output in "Table B". Suggest "Design of a University Fund to fund applied research and development to overcome critical transboundary issues in the basin?and gather public and private financing for its establishment."



(4) Overexploitation of groundwater is the threat. What is the barrier to overcome groundwater overexploitation. This needs to be captured in the barriers section and the Theory of Change diagram. "Overexploitation of Groundwater" is listed as both the threat and the barrier in the theory of change. Please revise. Suggested change to "lack of good governance and observation and multipurpose monitoring networks for conjunctive management"

1st of December 2023 (thenshaw):

(1) Addressed.

(3) Addressed.

(4) Addressed.

#### Agency's Comments

**29th of October 2023**

1. Done. Please see summary
2. Please see explanation is provided in the Summary on need to enhance transboundary coordination and in the project justification ? SAP implementation, and in the Project description (box). National actions of Component 3, recommended as part of SAP implementation by the GEF8 Programming Directions, address issues of transboundary concern testing solutions at the national level.
3. Done, see description of outputs 1.2.1, and 3.1.1.
4. The Summary already exceeds the 250 words maximum. Please find response in the full text, project rationale.

#### **23rd of November 2023 (thenshaw):**

1. The targets of each indicator were indicated in the summary. IC 11 has been adjusted to 200,000 ha. IC 4 has been adjusted to 7.7 million ha. IC3 is indicated as "tbd".

2. N/A

3. The PIF does not fund infrastructure activities related to access to water, as we discussed previously in detail. The PIF funds Enabling activities related to access to water, what is one of the reasons of ?being? of the GEF. We'll make sure of specific wording. The project

justification mentions some sections that support the proposal that the project should design enabling conditions for the implementation of a university fund. Its purpose will be to strengthen capacities with a transboundary approach, reducing the fragmentation gap for the management of the shared resource in line with the achievement of sustainable development and water security in the basin. Item i) Transboundary issues of interest and obstacles, the weakness of transboundary institutions is mentioned as a barrier and the limitations in the mandate of the CIC due to its limited technical capacity as causes. ii) The Strategic Action Programme of the La Plata Basin, identifies "Research and Technological Development" as one of its strategic actions. iii) In the implementation of the SAP of the MSP, projects such as P 7. Improvement of knowledge and scientific development for environmental management, regional integration and economic development of the hydro-energy systems of the La Plata Basin, among others, were identified.

4. Text added in the summary: ?aimed at overcoming the barriers (weak transboundary institutions; overexploitation of groundwater; water use conflicts; uncoordinated dam management; lack of systematic stakeholder participation; lack of common standards), and addressing the threats (climate change; loss of water quality; excess sediment loads; loss of habitats) that hinder the basin sustainability?.

Low capacity etc. are not to be considered barriers. The need for capacity strengthening is captured in the barrier ? weak transboundary institutions

### **3 Indicative Project Overview**

**3.1 a) Is the project objective presented as a concise statement and clear?**

**b) Are the components, outcomes and outputs sound, appropriate and sufficiently clear to achieve the project objective and the core indicators per the stated Theory of Change?**

Secretariat's Comments

29th of October 2023 (thenshaw):

(a) (i) As previously discussed, GEF IW does not finance WASH activities. Please remove such activity from the overall project objective.

(ii) The objective does not make reference to cooperation/regional integration/shared water resources. It should better align with the SAP objective: "To promote the management of shared water resources, cooperation and regional integration, while seeking to achieve sustainable development in the La Plata Basin countries and the welfare of their inhabitants."

(b) No.

Please refer the GEF ID 9770 - Amazon SAP Implementation Table B. Below each Component title, please indicate which SAP strategic actions the Component is responding to. In the Amazon SAP, for example, in Table B under Component 1 it is noted that the component is "Responding to SAP Strategic Actions(SAs): ? 1a. Support the strengthening of institutional frameworks to improve the basinwide IWRM ? 1b. Implementation of an integrated regional information platform on IWRM. ? 1c. Promoting and developing regional cultural, educational and artistic activities related to water resources and climate change in the Amazon Basin".

This will help explain the project logic and present the activities as a cohesive unit for SAP implementation.

**(i) Component 1:**

(A) The request is \$3.7M to strengthen the CIC Secretariat and national institutions related to water. This funding envelope is not commensurate with the capacity building activities proposed. Please reduce this component allocation considerably. Please consult with the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization to understand the costs of designing, operationalizing and maintaining the Amazon Regional Observatory and communicate these costs to GEF Sec. Will the CIC be in a position to maintain the functionality of the La Plata Observatory once the project is completed? How will this be ensured?

(B) It is not clear what project outputs are mapped to Outcome 1.1 and which ones are mapped to Outcome 1.2. Please revise accordingly.

(C) Please explain what "voluntary guidelines on issues of transboundary concern" are. How are these different than the SAP/why are voluntary guidelines needed to implement the SAP, which GEF Sec understands is an endorsed document by the highest levels of government in each country to formally work to address issues of transboundary concern.

(D) Regarding Output 1.5, GEF IW does not fund research. Please remove the output "Establishment of a University Fund to support higher applied research and education on major topics of cross-border interest".

(E) The activity "Strengthening and harmonization of the human and technological capabilities of national institutions, and exchanges between academics and water administrators" needs to be more specific. What human and technological capabilities need strengthening? What types of national institutions are considered here? Is the idea to also promote better coordination between these national institutions and the CIC? Is the capacity building including training in operating the "Hydro-environmental Observatory"?

(H) How are the several listed trainings going to translate to action on the ground? This is largely missing from the proposal. How is success measured? Who (and how many) will receive this training? Please quantify capacity building outputs. Can the training be scaled,

and if so how will scaling be ensured? Specifically, how are these trainings implementing the SAP?

**(ii) Component 2:**

(A) Output 2.1 will update the TDA with aspects that the originally TDA did not consider. How would these updates be reflected in the SAP? Would there be a SAP addendum signed by the countries and new SAP actions agreed upon and implemented under this project? See next point.

(B) The TDA was completed in 2016. Yet the proposal calls for an update to the TDA on "the state and functioning of the ecosystems of the basin". Updating a very recent TDA on already covered elements is not an effective use of GEF resources. Please revise the scope of the update down. It would make more sense to do a situational analysis here or a basin score card instead, if an addendum to the TDA is required.

(C) Similarly, navigation, climate variability and change/extreme hydrological events, unsustainable use of aquifers, and vulnerability are all covered in the 2016 TDA. Therefore, this TDA update does not seem justified. Please revise the proposal accordingly.

(D) Regarding Output 2.2 and 2.3. Please justify the inclusion of these two outputs. Were anthropogenic causes of droughts and development of response policy proposals not part of the recent TDA-SAP process? Please explain why additional policy proposals are required. To respond specifically to the 2019-2022 drought?. Output 2.2 and 2.3 are also quite similar. Please consolidate into one output.

(E) The TDA states that "The LPB is also rich in groundwater resources. It coincides in large part with the Guaraní Aquifer System (GAS)". Output 2.5 aims to design and install modern monitoring networks in selected national priority aquifers. The Guarani project (ID 10139) is under implementation and designing monitoring networks. Please explain how this output is not a duplication of what the Guarani project is undertaking.

Given the above comments, the request for \$4.2M to improve water security in the basin is not commensurate with the activities proposed. Please reduce this component allocation considerably.

**(iii) Component 3:**

(A) Output 3.1. GEF IW does not fund WASH activities. Please remove this output.

(B) This component requires a much more ambitious and on-the-ground set of activities (with multi-country activities) that deliver global environmental benefits. The component outcome should not be improved capacity of countries to address water security but actual enhancement of water security in the basin. Please revise accordingly, including presenting more detail on what the project will actually do in this component.

How are the proposed national activities going to be coordinated and scaled across the basin? This needs to be made explicit in the submission. How do these activities contribute to the theory of change? This is a requirement for GEF funding.

Please include an activity to scale up the INMS demonstration. Please consult/coordinate with UNEP on design/delivery of this activity.

(C) As mentioned above, this PIF is under consideration at the same time as a PIF for the Southwest Atlantic LMEs. It would make sense to include an activity that will formally coordinate the projects in a source to sea continuum approach. This component should host this activity. Please set a meeting with GEF Sec as soon as possible to discuss.

**(iv) Component 4:**

(A) Activity 4.2 ? Integration in all project activities of gender, indigenous peoples and traditional communities? perspectives should not be a standalone activity. These elements must be considered as part of each activity of the project and specific sub-activities of these perspectives for each activity should be documented in general at PIF stage and more specifically in PPG.

Integration of gender perspective goes beyond involving stakeholders, including women in consultations, trainings, awareness-raising events. Reflecting gender perspectives means designing the planned activities and interventions so that they respond to the differentiated needs, roles, contributions of women (and other genders) and that the interventions promote gender equality and not perpetuate inequalities.

(B) Please split knowledge management and monitoring and evaluation into separate components. Please include project M&E as a separate component 5. \$950,000 for an M&E component is too high and not an effective use of GEF resources.

(C) There is a major recommendation in the TE from the bridge project on technical innovation in future projects (Artificial Intelligence, blockchain, bid data). How is this recommendation being incorporated?

23rd of November 2023 (thenshaw):

(a) (i) Addressed in objective. Please see comment elsewhere regarding 3.1.1

(ii) Addressed.

(iii) Addressed. However, the formatting does not work. Please instead place this information in the "Please provide justification" field under the "Table B":

Component 1:

Responding to SAP Strategic Actions (SAs): 1.Expansion and consolidation of monitoring networks. 2. Design and implementation of a hydro-environmental monitoring system of the La Plata basin (CIC). 19. Environmental education and training program. 21. Support for research development, technological development, and innovation. 22. Strengthening the CIC as an institutional coordination and articulation body. 23. Strengthening binational or regional coordination bodies and instances. 24. Harmonization of legal frameworks for the management of transboundary water resources. 25. Development of technical guides and common protocols for actions that interfere with the management of shared water resources

Component 2:

Responding to SAP Strategic Actions (SAs) 1.Expansion and consolidation of monitoring networks. 3. Conjunctive management of surface and groundwater resources. 6.Risk management and contingency planning.

Component 3:

Responding to SAP Strategic Actions (SAs) 5. Water security program 14. Management of aquatic ecosystems; 15. Soil recovery and erosion control; 17. Reduction of polluting sources

Component 4:

Responding to SAP Strategic Actions (SAs) 20. Communication and dissemination program related to climate change to promote awareness and social participation

Component 1

(A) Partly Addressed. In the review sheet please respond to comment "Please consult with the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization to understand the costs of designing, operationalizing and maintaining the Amazon Regional Observatory and communicate these costs to GEF Sec. Will the CIC be in a position to maintain the functionality of the La Plata Observatory once the project is completed? How will this be ensured?"

(B) Addressed.

(C) Addressed.

(D) Not addressed. The comment is "Regarding Output 1.5, GEF IW does not fund research. Please remove the output "Establishment of a University Fund to support higher applied research and education on major topics of cross-border interest". Yet the response below states "The project will fund the design of the University Fund and the gathering of public and private support for its establishment."

As discussed via teleconference, please recast this output to youth /women engagement at the university level in water resources management (to be future leaders) to carry out applied research to achieve the project objective, rather than establishing a university fund for research/or gathering support for it.

(E) Addressed.

(H) Addressed, but must be well scoped during PPG.

#### Component 2

(A) Addressed.

(B) Please explain how this was "Done"

(C) Please explain how this was "Done"

(D) Addressed.

(E) Addressed.

#### Component 3

(A) Please explain where in the Programming Directions output 3.1.1 falls. Enabling environment for access to water is still in the spirit of WASH activities. This activity is still a problem and needs to be dropped in its current articulation.

(B) Proponents have added very little text to provide a convincing narrative that this is a much more ambitious and on-the-ground set of activities (with multi-country activities) that deliver global environmental benefits. Much more detail needed on what the project will actually do in this component. Please focus the bulk of effort in next 48 hours to strengthening this section. More than a few lines per output is required.

(C) What is a coordination mechanism in this context? Please elaborate. What will happen beyond meeting to discuss synergies?

#### Component 4

(A) Partly, while standalone activity removed, gender aspects are still not fully mainstreamed into project outputs. "Gender" is only mentioned once and "women" mentioned twice in the program components elaboration. There must be specific planned activities and interventions responding to the differentiated needs, roles, contributions of women. Explain how the results of the working sessions of the July 2023 gender meetings have been specifically taken up under the outputs. The new gender paragraph is not sufficient.

(B) Addressed.

(C) Addressed.

November 30, 2023

Component 1

A. Addressed.

D. Addressed.

Component 2

B and C. Addressed

Component 3

"Table B" still shows "3.1.5 Synergies in a Source to Sea continuum framework". Please refresh with new title.

Component 4

(A) Addressed.

1st of December 2023 (thenshaw): Addressed.

Agency's Comments

**29th of October 2023**

(a) (i) Done, see description of outputs 1.2.1, and 3.1.1

(ii) Done, see Table B/Objective.

(b) SAP Strategic Actions addressed for each output are indicated in the new Table and SAP Evolution page 17.

Component 1

A. Done. Please see Table B and Annex A.

B. Done.

C. Done, see Table B, the description of Output 1.1.3, and the box on Voluntary Guidelines.



- D. Done, see description of outputs 1.2.1, and 3.1.1. The project will fund the design of the University Fund and the gathering of public and private support for its establishment.
- E. Please see Description of component, output 1.2.1. The detailed design of this output will be made during PPG. Training will include the operation of the Observatory.
- H. Description of component, output 1.2.1. In the first instance, the institutions that are part of the Regional Thematic Groups that promoted the work of the SAP strategic areas during the Bridge Project (MSP) and those defined by the countries will be considered.

#### Component 2

- A. See Output 2.1.1. The conclusions of the updated TDA will be submitted for endorsement to the riparian countries' governments representatives in the Project Steering Committee, and inform actions described at 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.1.4, and Component 3. This information will feed the Hydro-environmental Observatory and will be an updated source for the SSTD.
- B. Done. See new description of the output 2.1.1.
- C. Done. See new description of the output 2.1.1.
- D. Done, please see description of output 2.1.2 . Addressing anthropogenic causes of droughts (after 2019) and integrating groundwater into the overall basin management are fundamental steps to increase resilience to climatic extremes considered by Basin countries, as well as globally, of the highest priority.
- E. See Output 2.1.1. Conjunctive surface - groundwater management is at the heart of the PIF. Including assessment of the existing groundwater resources, training and governance, applying the principles and methodologies Recommended by the GEF IW World Bank/FAO/UNESCO global project 'Groundwater Governance?'. The deep and confined Guarani transboundary aquifer is a major one, but only one of the many shallower ? and more easily accessible - national and transboundary aquifers present in the basin. // Done, see Table B.

#### Component 3.

- A. Please see description of outputs 1.2.1, and 3.1.1. The Component does not include infrastructural investments for water supply, but will focus instead on establishing the enabling conditions and technical approaches for facilitating the access of more vulnerable communities to water of adequate and sustainable quality.
- B. Done. Please Description of components and output 3.1.2.
- C. Done. Description of components and output 3.1.5

Component 4.

- A. Done.
- B. Done. See project description.
- C. It is noted. Further consideration will be given to it during PPG. Some examples of innovation considered in the project are: i) Satellite groundwater monitoring system. ii) Systemic management of surface water - groundwater. iii) Hydro-environmental Observatory (source of updated CIC data online with SAP), iv) Linkage with the SSTD server, as a source of updated information. v) satellite monitoring on the environmental health of water bodies. vi) Incorporation of the INMS project and isotope hydrology tools.

**23rd of November 2023**

**Component 1**

A. Yes. The CIC Plata keeps links with the OTCA and will be a valuable space for exchange and consultation in order to achieve the mentioned output. In terms of sustainability, this project proposes the design and implementation of an operational and financial mechanism that will provide sustainability to the CIC Plata for planned and future interventions.

B. N/A

C. N/A

D. GEF funding will only support design and gathering of other sources of funding. As answered above, the project will finance enabling conditions and/or activities for the design and feasibility of a university fund related to manage and access to water, which is one of the reasons d'etre of the GEF. Please review the rationale for this approach: The project justification mentions some sections that support the proposal that the project should design enabling conditions for the implementation of a university fund. Its purpose will be to generate capacities with a transboundary approach, reducing the fragmentation gap for the management of the shared resource in line with the achievement of sustainable development and water security in the basin. Item i) Transboundary issues of interest and obstacles, the weakness of transboundary institutions is mentioned as a barrier and the limitations in the mandate of the CIC due to its limited technical capacity as causes. ii) The Strategic Action Programme of the La Plata Basin, identifies "Research and Technological Development" as one of its strategic actions. iii) In the implementation of the SAP of the MSP, projects such as P 7. Improvement of knowledge and scientific development for environmental management, regional integration and economic development of the hydro-energy systems of the La Plata Basin, among others, were identified.

E. N/A

H. it is noted.

## **Component 2**

A. N/A

B y C. It was designed considering the recommendations of the GEF8 IW Programming Guidelines (page 180, paragraph 597), based on the projects prioritised by the countries in the MSP, and particularly, on the latest effects generated by the latest threats suffered in the basin (drought), and the need to address a systemic assessment where groundwater plays a relevant role for water security and its link with various activities in the basin, such as navigation and power generation, in order to update the existing information to the emerging issues.

D.N/A

E. N/A

## **Component 3**

A. Please see new text explaining the rationale for the Component, and the new description of the output. The output is aimed at building resilience of more vulnerable populations to extreme droughts events, in line with GEF8 IW Programming Directions. New text, output 3.1.1 *Creating the conditions to enable most vulnerable populations in selected areas of the main drought-prone sub-basins, to secure availability of water of adequate and sustainable quality by introducing policies and practices for improving water productivity, reducing pollution, build small hydraulic infrastructure, expanding the use and productivity of groundwater, and others nature-based means?*.

B. See new description of the Component *Creating the conditions to enable most vulnerable populations in selected areas of the main drought-prone sub-basins, to secure availability of water of adequate and sustainable quality*

C. This output was modified according to an earlier comment that requested it to be measurable. .1.5 Mechanism to identify and leverage synergies in a continuous framework from source to sea. The mechanism will be analysed in the next phase when the project to

be considered is approved, however the mechanism will consist of defining lines of action that allow the linkage and synergies of the projects both in the design phase and in the implementation phase, avoiding duplication of efforts, homogenizing shared scopes and maximizing benefits.

#### **Component 4**

A. Accordingly, gender issues were mainstreamed into each component. See project description. Mainstreaming was done in terms of: Closing gender gaps, including the gender approach -women and girls-, empowerment, participation and decision making of women, promoting awareness raising trainings, indicating that the plans to be developed under the project should incorporate the gender approach, highlighting the value of the workshop held during the MSP. It was also indicated that component 5 will consider the recording of the project's progress and contributions to reducing gender gaps and the empowerment of women and girls at all levels, particularly in the public sector..

B. N/A

C. N/A

#### **3.2 Are gender dimensions, knowledge management, and monitoring and evaluation included within the project components and appropriately funded?**

##### Secretariat's Comments

29th of October 2023 (thenshaw): No

(1) As mentioned above Integration in all project activities of gender, indigenous peoples and traditional communities? perspectives should not be a standalone activity (4.2). These elements must be considered as part of each activity of the project and specific sub-activities of these perspectives for each activity should be documented in general at PIF stage and more specifically in PPG. Please revise accordingly. This is a requirement for GEF funding.

Integration of gender perspective goes beyond involving stakeholders, including women in consultations, trainings, awareness-raising events. Reflecting gender perspectives means designing the planned activities and interventions so that they respond to the differentiated needs, roles, contributions of women (and other genders) and that the interventions promote gender equality and not perpetuate inequalities.

(2) As mentioned above, please split knowledge management and monitoring and evaluation into separate components. Please include project M&E as a separate component 5. Knowledge management is largely missing in list of outputs outside [IW:LEARN](#) activities. Please expand the knowledge management aspect of the project. Knowledge management should have its own dedicated outcome and series of outputs. Please revise accordingly.

(3) M&E should also have its own further specific outputs, including a MTR and TE and PIRs. Please revise accordingly.

26th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

(1) Please explain in detail how this was "Done". It is not clear from the submission. This needs to be significantly strengthened. Please see comment above.

(2) Addressed.

(3) Addressed.

30th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

(1) Addressed.

#### Agency's Comments

**29th of October 2023**

1. 1. Done.
2. 2. Done. Added component 4
3. 3. Done. Please see project description, component 5.

**29th of November 2023**

1. Gender, indigenous peoples and vulnerable communities have been integrated into each component. See project description. This has been done taking into account the results of the gender and intercultural workshop held by the CIC and OAS during July 2023 in the framework of the MSP. There, a matrix with strategic guidelines and actions defined by the country participants was identified, which have been taken into account in the development of the project. It has also been indicated that a Gender and Indigenous

Peoples Action Plan will be developed during the PPG phase, which will also consider vulnerable communities and which will follow, among others, the outcomes of the above-mentioned workshop. The main stakeholders considered in the achievement of each outcome have also been incorporated to ensure the required focus.

2. N/A

3. N/A

**3.3 a) Are the components adequately funded?**

**b) Are the GEF Project Financing and Co-Financing contributions to PMC proportional?**

**c) Is the PMC equal to or below 5% of the total GEF grant for FSPs or 10% for MSPs? If the requested PMC is above the caps, has an exception (e.g. for regional projects) been sufficiently substantiated?**

Secretariat's Comments

29th of October 2023 (thenshaw):

(a) No, as mentioned earlier, there are activities presented in the PIF that do not follow the GEF-8 IW Programming Directions (see below). Further, in some cases GEF funding is not commensurate with project outputs. Please reduce the GEF project financing to \$11M, which is a more appropriate funding envelope for what is proposed and eligible for IW funding and requested by GEF Sec.

Please explain in the PIF how the \$220.8M of public investment co-financing relates to implementing specific actions identified in the SAP. The link is not made in the present write up. This is an exceptionally large co-financing figure and needs to be more precisely identified to be included at this indicative stage.

It is not clear why a CAF investment is not serving as the co-financing backbone of the project on which the SAP implementation activities are leveraging. Please explain.

(b) No, the co-financing contribution to PMC is not proportionate compared with the GEF contribution to PMC. If the GEF contribution is kept at 5.0%, for a co-financing of \$220,200,000 the expected contribution to PMC must be around \$11,010,00 instead of \$2,600,000 (which is 1.18%). As the costs associated with the project management must be covered by the GEF portion and the co-financing portion allocated to the PMC, the GEF contribution and the co-financing contribution must be proportional, which means that the GEF contribution to PMC might be decreased and the co-financing contribution to PMC might be increased to reach a similar level. Please amend either by increasing the

co-financing portion and/or by reducing the GEF portion. A more definitive estimation of PMC will be presented and adjusted at CEO Endorsement stage.

(c) Yes

26th of November 2023 (thenshaw);

(a) Partly. Funding has been adjusted down.

It is extremely difficult to understand how \$220M in Public Investment does not include infrastructure measures, but only "the components of planning, assessment, and non-structural solutions relevant in the Plata Basin". This is a very ambitious level of co-financing. The request is for more information to determine whether this figure is realistic. The description of investment mobilized needs to be much more elaborate/granular in the CEO Endorsement Request Document. Comment is cleared for PIF but investment mobilized will be scrutinized in PPG. Please acknowledge.

(b) No, please revise accounting for new funding envelope. GEF grant and co-financing contributions to PMC must be proportional.

30th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

(a) Addressed.

(b) Addressed.

### Agency's Comments

**29th of October 2023**

a. Done, please see Table B.

Done. The large amount of investments with elements relevant to the project in terms of improved knowledge on physical aspects of the Basin, as well as experiences and best practices, is inherent to the large size of the Basin, the world fourth largest.

CAF is a major funding source of mobilized investments (Bolivia). In the PIF, CAF in kind co-financing of \$2m was erroneously attribute to ?investments mobilized? instead of ?recurrent expenditures?.

b. The co-financing contribution to PMC is derived from recurrent expenditures only, and not mobilized investments. It amounts to USD 3.7 million, despite the overall reduction in GEF funding for the project.

**29th of November 2023**

- a. Explanatory text has been added in the co-co-financing section. Structure of 'mobilized Investments' will be finalized during PPG. Please see indicative Co Financing.
- b. The PMC has been adjusted under the criterion of proportionality to 5%.

#### **4 Project Outline**

##### **A. Project Rationale**

##### **4.1 SITUATION ANALYSIS**

- a) is the current situation (including global environmental problems, key contextual drivers of environmental degradation, climate vulnerability) clearly and adequately described from a systems perspective?**
- b) Are the key barriers and enablers identified?**

##### **Secretariat's Comments**

29th of October 2023 (thenshaw)

(a) Partly, please provide scientific evidence to support claims via footnotes or brackets in the situation analysis section.

(b) Partly. The PIF notes a number of threats/causes, which are identified in the TDA. But the submission seems to be conflating threats/causes and barriers. Please separate these aspects and make more explicit the exact barriers this project aims to work to overcome and provide a short description of each. This will help make the case for incremental cost reasoning.

It is unclear how "uncoordinated models for dam management at the basin scale" is being addressed in this project. Please explain.

26th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

(a) Addressed, although the footnoting is thin. It is expected that a fully scientifically-supported project rationale will be included in PPG.



(b) Partly. PIF now lists barriers, threats and general causes in table format. The pathways are unclear here. Barriers are listed in the far left column, then threats under the barriers? Then general causes, which it is not clear whether they are mapped to the threats or to the barriers. Please clarify the text.

Ensure these barriers are separate from threats in the ToC diagram. This is not the summary section, so word count does not apply.

30th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

(b) Please see barriers/threats comment above.

1st of December 2023 (thenshaw): Addressed.

#### Agency's Comments

**29th of October 2023**

- a. Done
- b. The Summary already exceeds the 250 words maximum. Please find response in the full text, project rationale. Table barriers/threats/general causes.

The strengthened coordinating role of CIC, the harmonization of monitoring protocols and the establishment of the Hydro-environmental Observatory will foster the adoption of dam management protocols and models coordinated within a basin-wide context.

**29th of November 2023**

- a. it is noted
- b. The table has been modified according to recommendation. ToC diagram now shows barriers separated from Threats

## 4.2 JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT

- a) Is there an indication of why the project approach has been selected over other potential options?
- b) Does it ensure resilience to future changes in the drivers?
- c) Is there a description of how the GEF alternative will build on ongoing/previous investments (GEF and non-GEF), lessons and experiences in the country/region?
- d) are the relevant stakeholders and their roles adequately described?

### Secretariat's Comments

29th of October 2023 (thenshaw):

- (a) Partly, please explain why a transboundary approach is needed. The PIF mentions avoiding fragmentation, but it is not clear why the fragmented approach is not working and how a transboundary approach is preferred and will be transformative in La Plata Basin.
- (b) Partly, please note where in the submission resilience to future changes in the drivers is captured. If not described, please revise the submission accordingly.
- (c) Yes.
- (d) Partly, the stakeholders description includes nearly every stakeholder type. Please list specific stakeholders and describe what their roles in the project are, not only in water resources management in La Plata Basin.

26th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

- (a) Addressed.
- (b) Addressed.
- (d) Proponents point to Annex H, which references stakeholders consulted. The comment is: Please list specific stakeholders and describe what their roles in the project are. If this is partly in Annex H, please bring the text into the submission.

30th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

- (d) Addressed.

### Agency's Comments

29th of October 2023

- a. Please see summary and project description. Explanation is provided in the Summary on need to enhance transboundary coordination and in the project justification ? SAP implementation, and in the Project description (box). National actions of Component 3, recommended as part of SAP implementation by the GEF8 Programming Directions, address issues of transboundary concern testing solutions at the national level.
- b. Resilience to the major drivers of change (climate, erosion etc.) is captured in Component 2.
- c. N/A
- d. Please see Annex H.

**29th of November 2023**

a. N/A

b. N/A

c. N/A

d. Please see new text Stakeholder Engagement item. The engagement of specific stakeholders was originally incorporated in the project description, but in view of this comment, it has been moved to the Stakeholder Engagement item. There you can see the stakeholders considered relevant to the project and the ways in which their involvement is envisaged. Stakeholders consulted during the PIF phase were also included. However, as mentioned earlier, a detailed stakeholder engagement plan will be developed during the PPG phase.

The main stakeholders involved in the achievement of each output have also been indicated in the project description. You can see it below the explanation of each output.

## **5 B. Project Description**

### **5.1 THEORY OF CHANGE**

**a) Is there a concise theory of change that describes the project logic, including how the project design elements will contribute to the objective, the expected causal pathways, and the key assumptions underlying these?**

**b) Are the key outputs of each component defined (where possible)?**

Secretariat's Comments

29th of October 2023 (thenshaw):

(a) Partly, please address the following:

(i) Please renumber the project outcomes to correspond with the component table (former Table B).

(ii) Please include assumptions in the theory of change diagram and explain the assumptions in the text.

(iii) How are the proposed national level actions coordinated for regional impact? Please explain in the text.

(iv) The Theory of Change diagram needs a clearer articulation of the threats, causes and barriers. These are mixed together, making it difficult to understand the project logic. What are the barriers to overcome the threats and how is this project going to help the countries to overcome the identified barriers and achieve transformation?

(b) Partly, please address the comments listed under 3.1 of the review sheet.

For Activity 4.3, please include participation in GEF International Waters Conferences.

26th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

(a) (i) Addressed.

(ii) Partly. Assumptions are not in the theory of change diagram. Please revise.

(iii) Please explain where this is in component 3. Not convincing.

(iv) The TOC seems to indicate that lack of systematic and gender sensitive stakeholder participation is the only barrier to be addressed by the majority of the project. This is also not compelling. ToC is still mixing threats and barriers.

(b) IWC portion of comment is addressed.

30th of October 2023 (thenshaw):

(ii) Addressed.

(iii) Addressed.

(iv) Addressed.

#### Agency's Comments

**29th of October 2023**

(a) (i) Done.

(ii) Done. Please see Diagram Toc.

(iii) Done. Please see component 3.

(iv) Done. Please see Diagram Toc.

**29th of November 2023**

a. i N/A

ii. Assumptions are clearly described in the text describing the ToC. They would not fit into the diagram.

iii. See expanded description of Component 3.

iii. Please See new amended ToC diagram

b.N/A

(b) Done. Please see Output 4.1.2

#### **5.2 INCREMENTAL/ADDITIONAL COST REASONING**

**Is the incremental/additional cost reasoning properly described as per the Guidelines provided in GEF/C.31/12?**

Secretariat's Comments

29th of October 2023 (thenshaw): No, please address the following:

(1) Please describe how the GEF increment is mobilizing co-financing to deliver this project.

(2) Please describe what will likely happen without the GEF increment.

\* The incremental costs section should summarize the "business as usual" scenario that would take place without the GEF intervention; the "GEF Alternative" (project interventions) that explains how the project will address key barriers and build on the baseline; and what global environmental benefits will be derived as a result of the GEF funding and project interventions.

26th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

(1) No. Note this incremental cost reasoning in the submission. The GEF increment is leveraging a ratio of 1:20 in co-financing. Note, this is very high and will need to be confirmed in PPG.

(2) Addressed.

30th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

(1) Addressed.

## Agency's Comments

**29th of October 2023**

1. The ratio is 1:20
2. Please see project description.

**29th of November 2023**

1. Yes, please see added text in the co-financing section

2. N/A

e see project description.

## **5.3 IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK**

**a) Is the institutional setting, including potential executing partners, outlined and a rationale provided?**

**b) Comments to proposed agency execution support (if agency expects to request exception).**

**c) is there a description of potential coordination and cooperation with ongoing GEF-financed projects/programs and other bilateral/multilateral initiatives in the project area**

**d) are the proposed elements to capture and disseminate knowledge and learning outputs and strategic communication adequately described?**

### Secretariat's Comments

29th of October 2023 (thenshaw):

(a) No, the institutional setting and potential executing partners is not captured in the submission. Please revise accordingly.

(b) N/A

(c) Partly. Reference is made re: coordination with other projects but there is no description on how the proposed project and the ongoing GEF projects/initiatives will coordinate.

As mentioned earlier, what are the source to sea coordination linkages and opportunities under the proposed project between the CIC Plata and CARP and CTMFM? Has this been considered? This should be built into the project and made explicit in the submission. An activity to this end is a requirement for GEF support.

(d) No, as mentioned above, while the box has been checked to confirm that an approach to KM and Learning has been clearly described in the Project Description, the KM approach/strategic communication approach is not adequately reflected in the text itself. Please revise accordingly.

26th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

(a) Partly addressed. It is acknowledged that executing entity will be selected during PPG. However, the institutional setting is still not captured. Please explain whether there will be a steering committee (including composition), project management unit ... etc. An organogram would be helpful.

(c) Partly. How the proposed project and each of the identified ongoing GEF projects/initiatives will coordinate? On what La Plata project activities?

(d) No, this is not adequately reflected. All KM and learning is delivered through the annual stocktaking meetings? This is not sufficient.

30th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

(a) Addressed.

(c) Addressed.

(d) Addressed.

### Agency's Comments

**29th of October 2023**

- a. The selection of the executing agency will be carried out prior to the project inception by the CIC Plata through a selection process, based on a list of eligibility criteria: meeting CAF's fiduciary standards, experience in implementing GEF projects and CIC Plata's operational implementation requirements.
- b. N/A
- c. Done. Please see output 3.1.5
- d. Done. Please see project description and Table B ? Component 4.

**29th of November 2023**

a. An Annex I "institutional arrangements" has been added with a description of the scope and an organisation chart.

b. N/A

c. Coordination with other GEF projects and initiatives will, be done through Output 3.1.5, output 4.1.1

d. See added text to Component 4 description. ?The CIC will also be a main actor in the management, storage and dissemination of the knowledge generated by the project through the yearly Bulletins (output 1.1.3), and more so through the Hydro-environmental Observatory that will make the information accessible to all (output 1.1.4).?

**5.4 a) Are the identified core indicators calculated using the methodology included in the corresponding Guidelines (GEF/C.54/11/Rev.01)?**



**b) Are the project's indicative targeted contributions to GEBs (measured through core indicators)/adaptation benefits reasonable and achievable?**

Secretariat's Comments

29th of October 2023 (thenshaw):

(a) Partly.

(i) Per below, please provide new methodology for Core Indicator 11.

More targeted GEBs are required for this investment to move forward. Please provide indicative targets for Core Indicator 3 and or 4 and describe how these targets are indicatively calculated. These GEBs should come from a more ambitious set of activities under Component 3. Output 3.4 Environmental revitalization "Short and medium-term environmental recovery projects, aimed at reducing erosion/sedimentation and flooding, and increase water infiltration, including possible incentive mechanisms" and Output 3.2 Improved health of freshwater ecosystems: "In selected vulnerable wetlands, reduced risks of eutrophication achieved through pollution mitigation in nutrient hotspots" are allocated a combined \$2.8M and are not delivering GEBs. These outputs must target GEBs for this investment to move ahead. Please include an activity on scaling up the INMS work in the basin.

(b) (i) No, Core Indicator 11: 100,000,000 direct beneficiaries is far too high for this investment. Please revise this target to direct beneficiaries only, not the entire basin population. Pages 24-25 of the GEF-8 Results Measurement Framework Guidelines (GEF/C.62/Inf.12/Rev.01) provide examples of what might be counted as direct beneficiary.

(ii) Are there any co-benefits that can articulated at this time?

Please consult the new STAP document, INCORPORATING CO-BENEFITS IN THE DESIGN OF GEF PROJECTS.

[https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/2023-06/EN\\_GEF.C.64.STAP\\_Inf\\_03\\_Incorporating\\_cobenefits\\_in\\_the\\_design\\_of\\_GEF\\_projects .pdf](https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/2023-06/EN_GEF.C.64.STAP_Inf_03_Incorporating_cobenefits_in_the_design_of_GEF_projects.pdf)

Please identify the "prerequisite co-benefits" and the "incidental co-benefits". Co-benefits are positive effects of GEF investments that are not included in its formal set of GEBs. Co-benefits are categorized into prerequisite or incidental co-benefits. Prerequisite co-benefits are local benefits that must be achieved to realize the mandated GEF GEBs and ensure their durability. Examples include livelihood benefits that engage local communities in biodiversity conservation, or enhanced skills and education that create job opportunities and strengthen the ability of beneficiaries to implement solutions that generate desired GEBs. Incidental co-benefits are environmental and socio-economic benefits outside of GEFs mandate. They are not critical to achieving GEBs but could help increase the overall impact of GEF investment. Examples include reduced freshwater pollution and the consequent human health benefits from reduced use of harmful chemicals in agriculture, and improved air quality and associated health benefits arising

from transitioning to renewable energy or avoiding bad practices (e.g., open burning) in agriculture or waste management.

26th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

(a) (i) It is noted that at this stage of project development however, it is not possible to provide sound estimates of the values of CI3 and CI4.

(b) (i) No, Core Indicator 11: 100,000,000 direct beneficiaries is far too high for this investment. Please revise this target to direct beneficiaries only, not the entire basin population. Pages 24-25 of the GEF-8 Results Measurement Framework Guidelines (GEF/C.62/Inf.12/Rev.01) provide examples of what might be counted as direct beneficiary.

10 ha under CI 3 is far too low. The summary does not mention CI 3. Please include it in summary. Indicative CI3 target is fine for this stage.

CI4 target in the Core Indicator table is 15.5M ha. This is far too high for the scope of activities under Component 3. Please include a revised indicative CI4 target, which can be made precise in PPG.

(ii) Partly. The PIF notes that "Incidental Co-benefits will also be generated by the project, in particular through Component 3 activities, whose values will be estimated during PPG." For co-benefits, please list in the PIF the types of co-benefits, rather than any specific targets.

Co-benefits must be significantly expanded upon in PPG. Please acknowledge.

30th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

(i)(1) Core Indicator 11 is addressed.

Please populate Core Indicator 3. Core Indicator 4 is quite high at 7.7M ha. Please speak with GEF Sec to revise down.

Please update methodology text below Core Indicator field

(ii) Addressed.

1st of December 2023 (thenshaw): Addressed.

Agency's Comments  
**29th of October 2023**

- (a) (i) Please see Core Indicator Table. The project will also produce results to be measured under Core Indicators 3 and 4. At this stage of project development, it is not possible to specify the values (hectares) of the sub-indicators. This will be done during the project preparation phase (PPG). Added text with core indicators table.
- (b) (i) (ii) Done. Core indicator Table. Added text with core indicators table.

### 29th of November 2023

- a. i) Estimates for IC 4 have been made and will be defined during the PPG phase. IC 4 7.7 million ha. IC3 "tbd".
- b. i) IC 11 has been adjusted to 200,000 ha. IC 4 has been adjusted to 7.7 million ha. IC3 is indicated as "tbd".
- ii) Yes it is noted, analysis and description of co-benefits

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

Secretariat's Comments N/A

Agency's Comments

### **5.6 RISKS**

- a) Are climate risks and other main risks relevant to the project described and addressed within the project concept design?**
- b) Are the key risks that might affect the project preparation and implementation phases identified and adequately rated?**
- c) Are environmental and social risks, impacts and management measures adequately screened and rated at this stage and consistent with requirements set out in SD/PL/03?**

Secretariat's Comments

29th of October 2023 (thenshaw): Partly,

\*The Agency has carried out a preliminary analysis of environmental and social risks.

The project overall ESS risk is classified as low and preliminary climate risk analysis said the project is categorized as moderate climate risk. CAF attached the matrix of preliminary analysis of environmental and social risks and Environmental and preliminary climate risk analysis. Regarding the climate risk, the PIF mentioned that "[a] deeper and extent analysis is intended to do, during the prodoc construction." However, it is not clear that the project will conduct further environmental and social assessment including sensitive issues such as "capacity improvement of countries to address water security issues with an emphasis on indigenous peoples and local communities" once they know more detail project design during the PPG stage. How does the project address water security issues with indigenous peoples and local communities through consultations with them? Please elaborate more about further environmental and social assessment and risk management plans for the PPG stage.

26th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

Addressed, but please include this information in the PIF itself.

30th of November 2023 (thenshaw):Addressed.

## Agency's Comments

### **29th of October 2023**

According to the agency's analysis the project has been categorised as "no environmental and social risk", this project will not cause or allow any negative environmental or social impacts. Based on the project purpose, supported by the components, outcomes and outputs that define its structure, during the PPG phase, an in-depth environmental and social assessment will be conducted in terms of i) Analysis of systemic vulnerability to climate variability and change, ii) Social and stakeholder analysis and iii) Analysis of gender, indigenous peoples and vulnerable communities, in line with the geographical location, hazards, barriers and general causes identified in the FIP. The analysis will be carried out on the basis of existing information and in consideration of the terminal evaluation of the preceding project (MSP), to strengthen and define the strategic context of the project. Once the main intervention pathways of the project have been pre-identified - according to the established components and outputs - the identification of potential social and environmental risks and impacts can be adjusted, and if appropriate, the necessary plans for their management will be designed with an emphasis on generating resilience in the communities to the risks and impacts to which they may be exposed. These will include:

i) Stakeholder Engagement Plan, ii) - Gender, Indigenous Peoples and Vulnerable Communities Action Plan, iii) Plan for alignment with international frameworks, Agenda 2030, GBF, iv) Plan for the reduction of systemic vulnerability to major hazards.

The project must ensure that all its procedures, structures, activities and deliverables are integrated within a culture of prevention and risk reduction, supporting its beneficiaries and stakeholders in building broad and deep social capacities, both public and private, for emergency response at all levels in support of the project's GEBs.

**29th of November 2023**

Was added in annex d: environmental and social safeguards screen and rating

#### **5.7 Qualitative assessment**

**a) Does the project intend to be well integrated, durable, and transformative?**

**b) Is there potential for innovation and scaling-up?**

**c) Will the project contribute to an improved alignment of national policies (policy coherence)?**

#### **Secretariat's Comments**

29th of October 2023 (thenshaw):

(a) It is not clear how the project intends to be durable and transformative at the basin level. Please make this more explicit in the text. How is this project integrating through a source to sea perspective with the work/Commissions in the Maritime Front?

(b) Potential for innovation and scaling up is missing from the submission. Please include these elements.

(c) Please clarify whether/how the project will contribute to an improved alignment of national policies

23rd of November 2023 (thenshaw):

(a) Partly. A sustainability/financial strategy will be designed. However, Output 3.1.5 is not convincing. What is a consultative mechanism in this sense and how will it lead to

integration/transformation? There must be something more than just discussing synergies. What happens after that?

(b) Partly, it is still not clear how the demonstrations in Component 3 will be scaled up across the basin. Please elaborate, other than saying knowledge will be disseminated. What is the strategy that makes these demonstrations transformative? This stems from the lack of information on what this component will deliver. It must be much stronger for PIF clearance.

(c) Addressed.

30th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

(a) Addressed.

(b) Addressed, but this needs to be significantly elaborated on in PPG.

#### Agency's Comments

**29th of October 2023**

- a. Done. See new output 3.1.5.
- b. Please see descriptions of Component 3 and output 4.1.1.
- c. Component 1 will amongst others facilitate consideration of policy reforms in basin countries.

**29th of November 2023**

a. Throughout the PIF text there are several references to sustainability of project outcomes. In particular in Component 1, related to the

long term sustainability of the reformed CIC. Output 3.1.5 seeks to maximise benefits in the basin, looking for synergies with other planned projects.

b. Please see added text to Component 3 description (replication strategies)

c. N/A

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

**6.1 Is the project adequately aligned with focal area and integrated program strategies and objectives, and/or adaptation priorities?**

Secretariat's Comments

29th of October 2023 (thenshaw): Partly, please address the following:

(1) Please note the above comments regarding activities that the GEF cannot fund and revise the project outputs accordingly.

26th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

(1) Addressed.

Agency's Comments

**29th of October 2023**

1. Done.

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

Secretariat's Comments

29th of October 2023 (thenshaw): Yes, but please address the following:

(1) The submission notes that the project will "foster (i) compliance with the UN Convention on the Protection and use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes", yet none of the participating countries are signatories. Please explain/revise.

26th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

(1) Addressed.

Agency's Comments

**29th of October 2023**

1. Done, see corrected text in the ?tem C. Alignment with GEFf-8 programming strategies and country/regional priorities.

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

Secretariat's Comments

29th of October 2023 (thenshaw):

Component 1 seems to target biodiversity benefits. Please explain why the project does not contribute to one or more of the GBF targets. Surely this project targets GBF, so the appropriate linkages should be made. Please revise accordingly.

26th of November 2023 (thenshaw)

Partly. The proponents mention contribution to GBF targets 21 and 22 but does not explain how the project contributes to the identified targets. Please clarify in the submission.

30th of November 2023 (thenshaw): Addressed.

Agency's Comments

**29th of October 2023**

1. Done. Summary and comp. 4

**29th of November 2023**

a. Please see footnote 1 ?21: in terms of availability of information and knowledge on freshwater ecosystems; 22: in terms of mechanisms for the enhanced involvement of indigenous communities, women etc?.

## **7 D. Policy Requirements**

**7.1 Is the Policy Requirements section completed?**

Secretariat's Comments



29th of October 2023 (thenshaw): No, please address the following:

(1) Given the nature of the project, it is expected that the private sector will play a major role in project implementation. Private sector is checked as a group that was consulted during project identification. Please describe these consultations and how the private sector will contribute to project outcomes.

(2) Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities is checked as stakeholders that were consulted during project identification. Please describe these consultations.

(3) Specific stakeholders and their relevant roles to project outcomes needs to be articulated in the Project Description.

(4) Gender. Gender is not adequately articulated in the project description. Please reflect gender perspectives in the section on Project Description/Project Components, in line with good gender mainstreaming practice.

26th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

(1) The proponents suggest this information is in Annex H. Annex H does not seem to reference any private sector consultation. Please clarify.

(2) It is not clear whether Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities were actually consulted or whether there were virtual consultations on IPLCs with non-IPLC stakeholders only. Please clarify. Please also note how many people in the Annex H list are civil society stakeholders.

(3) Not addressed. Please better map stakeholders to project outputs. What stakeholders are going to play a role in project outcomes. What role will they play? This needs to come through in the description section.

(4) Gender. A description on gender is noted. But gender aspects need to be attached to the project outputs themselves. Please include this detail. This is a requirement for PIF approval. See comments above.

30th of November 2023 (thenshaw)

(1) Addressed.

(2) Addressed.

(3) Addressed.

(4) Addressed.

## Agency's Comments

**29th of October 2023**

1. Please see Annex H. During PPG consultations with the private sector, in particular hydropower companies, will clarify willingness to contribute to project activities, and amounts.
2. Done. Please see Annex H.
3. Please see Project description, Stakeholders engagement and Annex H.
4. Please see Project description, Focus on gender and Indigenous people

**29th of November 2023**

1. Please see expanded section on stakeholders? engagement. During PPG consultations with the private sector, in particular hydropower companies, will clarify willingness to contribute to project activities, and amounts.
2. Please see expanded section on stakeholders? engagement, details of their engagement will be defined during PPG phase, workshops will be organised with Indigenous Peoples and local communities. This phase of the FIP builds on the activities and inputs from the workshops conducted by the CIC on gender and interculturality, with the participation of local actors and communities from the five countries.
3. The main stakeholders and their role in each of the outputs have been incorporated.
4. The gender approach has been mainstreamed in all components and reporting on progress and contribution to indicators and the project's policy framework, with a focus on gender, has been incorporated in Outcome 5.1.1.

**7.2 Is a list of stakeholders consulted during PIF development, including dates of these consultations, provided?**

## Secretariat's Comments

29th of October 2023 (thenshaw): No, please address the following:

- (1) Please provide a list of stakeholders consulted during PIF development, including dates of these consultations.

26th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

(1) Addressed. A detailed accounting of stakeholder consultations, including specific meetings on gender aspects, is presented in "Annex H" in the Documents tab of the submission. A summary of stakeholder consultation/approval of project structure is present in the PIF itself.

#### Agency's Comments

**29th of October 2023**

1. Please see Annex H. **29th of November 2023**

1. N/A

#### **8 Annexes**

##### **Annex A: Financing Tables**

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

**STAR allocation?**

#### Secretariat's Comments

29th of October 2023 (thenshaw):

The project countries appear to still have GEF-8 STAR resources available. If this project is a priority for the countries, has the use of STAR resources been considered?

26th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

Pending.

30th of November 2023 (thenshaw): Addressed.

Agency's Comments

**29th of October 2023**

Consultations were made with the countries concerned, pending a response.

**29th of November 2023**

ii) Countries have not confirmed the use of STAR resources.

**Focal Area allocation?**

Secretariat's Comments

29th of October 2023 (thenshaw):

There are activities presented in the PIF that do not follow the GEF-8 IW Programming Directions (see below). Further, in some cases GEF funding is not commensurate with project outputs. Please reduce the GEF project financing to \$11M, which is a more appropriate funding envelope for what is proposed and eligible for IW funding and requested by GEF Sec.

26th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

FA allocation reduction is addressed. Further comments on eligibility are noted above.

Agency's Comments

**29th of October 2023**

Done. Please see Table B.

**29th of November 2023**

it is noted

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

Secretariat's Comments N/A

Agency's Comments  
**SCCF A (SIDS)?**

Secretariat's Comments N/A

Agency's Comments  
**SCCF B (Tech Transfer, Innovation, Private Sector)?**

Secretariat's Comments N/A

Agency's Comments  
**Focal Area Set Aside?**

Secretariat's Comments N/A

Agency's Comments  
**8.2 Is the PPG requested within the allowable cap (per size of project)? If requested, has an exception (e.g. for regional projects) been sufficiently substantiated?**

Secretariat's Comments 29th of October 2023 (thenshaw): Yes

Agency's Comments  
**8.3 Are the indicative expected amounts, sources and types of co-financing adequately documented and consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines?**

## Secretariat's Comments

29th of October 2023 (thenshaw): No, please address the following:

- (1) "Sources will be a number of ongoing or recently completed investments in the five project countries". Project co-financing cannot come from completed projects. Please see co-financing policy and revise the co-financing figures accordingly.
- (2) The government investment mobilized descriptions are very generic and investment mobilized seems somewhat tangential to the proposed project. Is this truly a realistic funding amount? Please provide a detailed annex that documents the specific public investments and justifies their inclusion as project co-financing. Please include specific co-financing figures next to each specific public investment to properly document the accounting.
- (3) OAS is not a Donor Agency. Please revise the classification in the co-financing table.
- (4) Please explain why there is no private sector co-financing identified. Please also explain what the plans are to secure private sector co-financing in PPG.
- (5) Other projects supported with GEF resources (i.e., FOLUR) cannot be counted as co-financing. Please revise accordingly.

23rd of November 2023 (thenshaw):

- (1) Addressed.
- (2) Incorrect. Per paragraph 5 of the Co-financing Guidelines, "The Secretariat, in its review of PIFs and PFDs submitted for Work Program entry or CEO Approval, assesses whether the indicative, expected amounts, sources and types of co-financing and Investment Mobilized are adequately documented and consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy". It is extremely difficult to understand how \$220M in Public Investment does not include infrastructure measures, but only "the components of planning, assessment, and non-structural solutions relevant in the Plata Basin".  
  
This is a very ambitious level of co-financing. The request is for more information to determine whether this figure is realistic. The description of investment mobilized needs to be much more elaborate/granular in the CEO Endorsement Request Document. Comment is cleared for PIF but investment mobilized will be scrutinized in PPG. Please acknowledge.
- (3) Addressed.
- (4) Addressed.
- (5) "The dollar amount shown as "Public Investment" for a total of USD 222,800,000 represents..." is a figure that is higher than the total co-financing. Please revise down.

Please include a description of what the CAF "Other" "Investment Mobilized" is. Please ensure this is not a double counting of the Pluri-National Water Resources Plan.

30th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

(2) Addressed.

(5) Addressed.

### Agency's Comments

#### **29th of October 2023**

1. Done. All sources of co-financing are derived from ongoing investments. The words ?? or recently completed? were added by mistake. Please check the explanatory text in Indicative Co Financing.
2. This level of detail is not required at PIF level (detailed annex will be provided during PPG). CAF has reviewed countries? submissions of ?mobilized investments?, i.e.: investments not including recurrent expenditures, totalling over \$ 1 billion, and selected those more likely to benefit the project.
3. Done. Please see Annex A.
4. During PPG consultations with the private sector, in particular hydropower companies, will clarify willingness to contribute to project activities, and amounts.
5. Done. Amount of mobilized investments has been modified accordingly. Please see Indicative Co Financing.

#### **29th of November 2023**

1. N/A

2. Yes. Explanatory text has been added in the co-financing section. Structure of ?mobilized Investments? will be finalized during PPG. Indicative co financing.

3. N/A

4. N/A

5. Corrected

**Annex B: Endorsements**

**8.4 Has the project been endorsed by the country? (ies) GEF OFP and has the OFP at the time of PIF submission name and position been checked against the GEF database?**

Secretariat's Comments

29th of October 2023 (thenshaw): Yes

26th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

No, new LOEs have not been uploaded to portal. Please secure on resubmission.

30th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

LOEs pending

1st of December 2023 (thenshaw): Addressed.

Agency's Comments

**29th of November 2023**

**The LoEs updated to the corresponding amounts for Argentina and Paraguay have been uploaded and the missing ones will be submitted as soon as possible.**

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

Secretariat's Comments

29th of October 2023 (thenshaw): Yes

26th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

No, new LOEs have not been uploaded to portal. Please secure on resubmission.



30th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

LOEs pending

1st of December 2023 (thenshaw): Addressed.

### Agency's Comments

**29th of November 2023**

The LoEs updated to the corresponding amounts for Argentina and Paraguay have been uploaded and the missing ones will be submitted as soon as possible.

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

### Secretariat's Comments

29th of October 2023 (thenshaw): No, please address the following:

(1) As commented above, please secure new LOEs for a GEF project financing of \$11M .

(2) Please ensure the new LOEs are in the correct format, including exact figures, and signed by current OFPs. The GEF-8 Letter of Endorsement template is here: <https://www.thegef.org/documents/gef-8-operational-focal-point-endorsement-letter>

(3) Further to above, please ensure footnote 1 in the letters is not missed. Some of the current letters omit this important footnote.

\*To note when securing new LOEs:

The LoE from Brazil and Argentina stipulates different numbers than in the portal and in other LoEs.

The template utilized for this project removed the footnote that conditions the selection of the executing partner to the following: "Subject to the capacity assessment carried out by the GEF Implementing Agency, as appropriate". Per previous communications with the GEF Agencies, LoEs "with modifications cannot be accepted and will be returned." This footnote reduces the chances of having an executing partner that does not meet the

fiduciary and procurement standards required to safely execute the project. Please ensure this footnote is present in the five revised LOEs.

26th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

(1) (2) (3): No, new LOEs have not been uploaded to portal. Please secure on resubmission, ensuring footnote is present in each.

30th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

LOEs pending

1st of December 2023 (thenshaw): Addressed.

#### Agency's Comments

**29th of October 2023**

1. In progress.
2. In progress
3. In progress

**29th of November 2023**

1, 2, 3. The LoEs updated to the corresponding amounts for Argentina and Paraguay have been uploaded and the missing ones will be submitted as soon as possible.

**8.5 For NGI projects (which may not require LoEs), has the Agency informed the OFP(s) of the project to be submitted?**

Secretariat's Comments N/A

#### Agency's Comments

**Annex C: Project Location**

**8.6 Is there preliminary georeferenced information and a map of the project's intended location?**

Secretariat's Comments 29th of October 2023 (thenshaw): Yes

Agency's Comments

**Annex D: Safeguards Screen and Rating**

**8.7 If there are safeguard screening documents or other ESS documents prepared, have these been uploaded to the GEF Portal?**

Secretariat's Comments 29th of October 2023 (thenshaw): Yes

Agency's Comments

**Annex E: Rio Markers**

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

Secretariat's Comments

29th of October 2023 (thenshaw): No, please address the following:

(1) All Rio Markers are selected, yet this project does not include a suite of activities that correspond to all Rio Markers. Please explain/revise accordingly.

26th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

(1) It looks like climate change mitigation is also a significant objective, based on the revision. Please tag climate change mitigation "1".

30th of November 2023 (thenshaw):

(1) Addressed.

Agency's Comments

**29th of October 2023**

Done.

**29th of November 2023**

Completed.

**Annex F: Taxonomy Worksheet**

**8.9 Is the project properly tagged with the appropriate keywords?**

Secretariat's Comments 29th of October 2023 (thenshaw): Yes

Agency's Comments

**Annex G: NGI Relevant Annexes**

**8.10 Does the project provide sufficient detail (indicative term sheet) to take a decision on the following selection criteria: co-financing ratios, financial terms and conditions, and financial additionality? If not, please provide comments. Does the project provide a detailed reflow table to assess the project capacity of generating reflows? If not, please provide comments. Is the Partner Agency eligible to administer concessional finance? If not, please provide comments.**

Secretariat's Comments N/A

Agency's Comments

**9 GEFSEC Decision**

**9.1 Is the PIF and PPG (if requested) recommended for technical clearance?**

Secretariat's Comments

26th of September 2022 (thenshaw): No, please secure LOEs and resubmit. Thank you.

13th of January 2023 (thenshaw): No, please upload requested documents and resubmit. Thank you.

4th of October 2023 (thenshaw): Please address upstream comments (emailed October 3, 2023) and resubmit the PIF through the Portal. A full technical review of the PIF will then be carried out. Thank you.

15th of October 2023 (thenshaw): Please address upload issues and resubmit. Thank you.

29th of October 2023 (thenshaw): No, please address above comments and resubmit.  
Thank you.

26th of November 2023 (thenshaw): No, please address above comments and resubmit.  
Thank you.

30th of November 2023 (thenshaw): No, please address above comments (in orange) and  
resubmit. Thank you.

1st of December 2023 (thenshaw): Yes

#### Agency's Comments

13/09/2022

Documents uploaded

#### **9.2 Additional Comments to be considered by the Agency at the time of CEO Endorsement/ Approval**

#### Secretariat's Comments

#### Agency's Comments

#### **Review Dates**

	<b>PIF Review</b>	<b>Agency Response</b>
<b>First Review</b>	<b>10/29/2023</b>	<b>9/26/2022</b>
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>11/26/2023</b>	<b>1/13/2023</b>
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>11/30/2023</b>	<b>10/4/2023</b>
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>12/1/2023</b>	<b>10/29/2023</b>
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>		<b>11/29/2023</b>