

Strengthening capacity in the agriculture, land-use and other sectors for monitoring and reporting on Afghanistan's mitigation and adaptation targets

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

10155

Countries

Afghanistan

Project Name

Strengthening capacity in the agriculture, land-use and other sectors for monitoring and reporting on Afghanistan's mitigation and adaptation targets

Agencies

FAO

Date received by PM

1/29/2020

Review completed by PM

11/13/2020

Program Manager

Satoshi Yoshida

Focal Area

Climate Change

Project Type

MSP

PIF

CEO Endorsement

Part I – Project Information

Focal area elements

1. Does the project remain aligned with the relevant GEF focal area elements as presented in PIF (as indicated in table A)?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

March 13, 2020 SY: Yes, as the main structure of the project remains the same.

Agency Response

1. Thank you for the feedback.

Project description summary

2. Is the project structure/ design appropriate to achieve the expected outcomes and outputs as in Table B and described in the project document?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

SY, Oct 7, 2020: Thank you for the revision and clarification. Comments cleared.

March 13, 2020 SY: Please elaborate to what extent the project will strengthen the transparency framework of the country and its capacity in three years addressing identified barriers and gaps, building on the experiences through the first (ongoing) BUR and previous NCs, and how the strengthened ETF through the project will contribute to the future BTR reporting in 2024 and beyond, in light of the Article 13 of the Paris Agreement and its MPGs.

In this connection, please also address the below points.

1. Please provide the breakdown of the number of direct beneficiaries who will receive capacity-building throughout the project: central (NEPA and line agencies) and provincial/local (Kabul and others) governments (no need to breakdown in each component). Then please provide a rationale that such numbers are sufficient enough to achieve the objective of the project and enhance country's transparency framework.
2. Component 1: Please clarify if this component addresses institutional arrangement (e.g. budget, organization, equipment) at NEPA, line agencies and other organizations to ensure structured/institutionalized reporting system, other than establishing Climate Change Division under NEPA as a focal point, which will last after the project duration.
3. Component 2: please elaborate, in terms of GHG inventory, the coverage of greenhouse gases and sectors (e.g. agriculture, LULUCF, energy) and other relevant information with a timeline taking into consideration the content of NDC and the country's plan for improvement of transparency overtime. Also, please elaborate the applicability of the 2006 IPCC guideline with a timeline based on the ongoing BUR process.

4. Component 2: please clarify if the GHG inventory will be updated every year on top of the record of existing GHG inventory as well as the reference years (e.g. x-4), during the project and beyond. Please provide clarification on what data gaps this component will address for each sector in three years.
5. Component 2: Please elaborate international and regional training programs and other events, including what exact prioritized areas of training are envisaged, and which organizations will be involved.
6. Component 2: in terms of IT hardware/software provisions, please elaborate how the project will ensure that data are securely stored while data errors are avoided by robust verification. Please clarify how the project ensures that the system will be properly maintained and updated overtime, without disruption.
7. Component 3: please clarify the scope of sectors for adaptation information (noting the change from “other sectors” at PIF to “other relevant sectors” both in component 2 and 3). Also, please clarify which UNFCCC guidance will be used for data collection for adaptation.
Regarding a public-available website, please clarify what the project will produce in light of the ETF, including the main target and components, rather than the reference to the US website.
8. Project description: For NDC EFT baseline (mitigation) (table 1) focuses on the AFOLU sector and does not identify limitations of other sectors, which are related to the baseline scenario. Please elaborate this section, considering the emissions estimation (BAU) and included sectors in the NDC.

Agency Response

2.1 This has been addressed. Please see section D (GEF 7 Core Indicators). **The 34 beneficiaries are the provincial staff of NEPA (1 staff from each province). Each central government ministry has its provincial department which is part of provincial government.**

2.2 The institutional arrangement will be adopted and institutionalized at NEPA and line agencies. This has been addressed by including “The collaboration and coordination mechanisms will be in the form of (a) capacity and needs identification of the line agencies for inventory data collection, updates and inventory preparation, (b) defining role of the line agencies based on the identified capacity and needs, agreeing to milestones and timelines, (c) establishing the protocols, budgetary allocation, and focal points of the line agencies for data collection, updates and inventory preparation, and (d) establishing data-sharing agreement with line agencies”.

2.3 The sectors that will be involved are agriculture, LULUCF, energy, waste and transport. As for the timeline, the project will support the preparation of the second BUR due in 2022 as well as the last BUR and the first BTR in 2024, though the project is scheduled to complete during 2023 if the project implementation is initiated during 2020. Regarding the 2006 IPCC guideline, it has been updated in the Table B Component 2 and also under the proposed alternative scenario section, Component 2.

2.4 This has been addressed under the proposed alternative scenario section, Component 2. Based on the submission of the latest BUR in 2019, the time gap between the inventory year and the reporting year will be 2 years. The ProDoc is updated accordingly.

2.5 This has been addressed under the proposed alternative scenario section, Component 2. We anticipate regional training/exchange activities, led by FAO's technical officers, with other CBIT projects such as in Bangladesh, Cambodia, and Mongolia as well as countries in the pipeline including Bhutan and Sri Lanka. International training includes events organized by UNFCCC, FAO's Global CBIT projects, IPCC etc. In both situations, the project will observe the travel restriction measures, and if appropriate, the in-person training will be replaced by webinars.

2.6 This has been addressed under the proposed alternative scenario section, Component 2. After the project, NEPA will continue to safeguard the assets procured by the CBIT project, as NEPA does currently with other projects.

2.7 The key sectors under this component will be agriculture, LULUCF, and energy.

We have referred to specific UNFCCC guidance and has been addressed under the proposed alternative scenario section, Component 3.

Component 3 has been updated by replacing the US website with Afghanistan's currently under-development website has been addressed under the proposed alternative scenario section, Component 3. The CBIT project does not aim to develop a sophisticated database from scratch, but rather to build on existing database and platforms. The relevant paragraph has been updated to clarify this point.

2.8 This has been addressed. Please see Table 1 and the paragraph above.

3. If this is a non-grant instrument, has a reflow calendar been presented in Annex D?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

Co-financing

4. Are the confirmed expected amounts, sources and types of co-financing adequately documented, with supporting evidence and a description on how the breakdown of co-financing was identified and meets the definition of investment mobilized, and a description of any major changes from PIF, consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

SY, Oct 28, 2020: Comment cleared.

SY, Oct 7, 2020: As the project timeline has changed, please confirm that the all co-financing contributions are still effective and each amount stays the same.

March 13, 2020 SY: Yes. The co-financier has been changed from the PIF with the same total amount of co-financing. s

Agency Response

RE 7 Oct 2020:

As the NTE has shifted to November 2023 (tentatively), we have obtained confirmation from the co-financiers (FAO, MAIL, and NEPA) that their co-financing amount will not change.

GEF Resource Availability

5. Is the financing presented in Table D adequate and does the project demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objectives?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request March 13, 2020 SY: Yes. For cost-effectiveness, please address relevant questions in the review sheet, making sure the project fully utilizes existing relevant projects and baseline capacity.

Agency Response

Thank you for the feedback and duly noted.

Project Preparation Grant

6. Is the status and utilization of the PPG reported in Annex C in the document?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
SY, Oct 7, 2020: Comments cleared.

March 13, 2020 SY: Current Annex C has a risk assessment table. Please replace with a PPG utilization report in this document (which is the same as in the project document of FAO).

Agency Response

6. Annex C has been updated.

Core indicators

7. Are there changes/ adjustments made in the core indicator targets indicated in Table E? Do they remain realistic?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request March 13, 2020 SY: Yes. The number has increased, while it is realistic given the timeline and budget. Please respond the structure-related comments.

Agency Response

Thank you for the feedback and duly noted.

Part II – Project Justification

1. Is there a sufficient elaboration on how the global environmental/ adaptation problems, including the root causes and barriers, are going to be addressed?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

SY, Oct 7, 2020: Comments cleared.

March 13, 2020 SY: Barriers and gaps on the country's transparency framework should be articulated with an explanation how the project will address them, somewhere in the project justification.

Agency Response

This has been addressed in the paragraph under Table 1.

2. Is there an elaboration on how the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects were derived?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

March 13, 2020 SY: Yes. NDC and BUR could be more focused compared with other plans or activities given the relevance with the project.

Agency Response

Thank you for the feedback and duly noted.

3. Is the proposed alternative scenario as described in PIF/PFD sound and adequate? Is there sufficient clarity on the expected outcomes and components of the project and a description on the project is aiming to achieve them?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

SY, Oct 28, 2020: Comment cleared.

SY, Oct 7, 2020: Although the theory of change is checked in taxonomy, it is not provided in the alternative scenario.

March 13, 2020 SY: Not at this stage. Please address comments in the structure/design above.

Agency Response

This has been addressed in line with the comments on the structure/design given in Question 2.

RE: 7 Oct 2020

The theory of change has been included in the project document.

4. Is there further elaboration on how the project is aligned with focal area/impact program strategies?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

March 13, 2020 SY: Yes.

Agency Response

Thank you for the feedback.

5. Is the incremental reasoning, contribution from the baseline, and co-financing clearly elaborated?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

SY, Oct 7, 2020: Comments cleared.

March 13, 2020 SY:

1. Incremental reasoning: please elaborate concisely what achievements the project will deliver from the baseline scenario.
2. Co-financing: UNEP is still there, while it is not a co-financier anymore (change from the PIF).

Agency Response

1 Paragraph is updated to include additional information.

2 We have updated the ProDoc to exclude UNEP. Additional information has been included under the Table C.

6. Is there further and better elaboration on the project's expected contribution to global environmental benefits or adaptation benefits?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

SY, Oct 7, 2020: Comments cleared.

March 13, 2020 SY: Not entirely clear. Please clearly describe how the strengthened capacity relating to ETF through this project will contribute to relevant GEBs, i.e. GHG emissions reduction, including the formulation/enhancement and the implementation of the country's NDCs and enhanced mitigation actions given the country's specific context.

Agency Response

This has been addressed under the Global environmental benefits (GET) and/or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF) section.

7. Is there further and better elaboration to show that the project is innovative and sustainable including the potential for scaling up?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

SY, Oct 7, 2020: Comments cleared.

March 13, 2020 SY: Please address the below points.

1. Innovation: please describe how the project ensures accuracy of data (incl. verification) and prevents from inaccurate data stored (incl. human errors), some of which seem to be in the Annex A but not entirely clear. Also, please elaborate, if appropriate, that innovative approaches/technologies to be institutionalized by the project including spatial data processing will help generating more accurate data with lower costs, for instance.
2. Sustainability: Focus should be put on continuous enhanced transparency framework after the project cycle from perspectives including human capital and institutional arrangement, technology and systems, and finance. Rotation of personnel in NEPA and line agencies (as well as provincial and local governments) will be a significant challenge to the success of the project as even good guidelines do not guarantee successful transitions. Replication of information management systems to other sectors – please clarify sector coverage in MRV systems and explain why other sectors are excluded.
3. Scale-up: relating to the sustainability, please elaborate how the project will ensure knowledge will be shared and enhanced within the targeted organizations as well as other provincial/local governments where applicable, and new staff in the future will be properly trained and gain necessary knowledge and know-how on handling systems to be developed.

Agency Response

1. Innovation section has been updated.
2. Additional information has been included in the last paragraph.
- 3 This has been addressed in the second paragraph to clarify that the provincial government officials' participation.

Project Map and Coordinates

Is there an accurate and confirmed geo-referenced information where the project intervention will take place?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

SY, Oct 7, 2020: Comments cleared.

March 13, 2020 SY: The country map is provided indicating the project intervention will take place in the entire county; please explain if ALL provinces are involved in capacity-building, and if so, please clarify the relationship between geographical areas and the indicator (the number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment). If not, please indicate provinces the project will intervene.

Agency Response To ensure the beneficiaries across the country, this project will aim for out of the 60 beneficiaries, 26 will be from Kabul and 34 will be from other provinces, covering all recognized provinces. At this moment in the ProDoc detail listing of provinces is not provided. However, the beneficiaries will be consisting of the members of National Study Team of GHG Inventory, and GHG data Compiling Team covering NEPA and line agencies from Kabul and other provinces. This has been explained in the section D (GEF 7 CORE INDICATORS).

Child Project

If this is a child project, is there an adequate reflection of how it contributes to the overall program impact?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

Stakeholders

Does the project include detailed report on stakeholders engaged during the design phase? Is there an adequate stakeholder engagement plan or equivalent documentation for the implementation phase, with information on Stakeholders who will be engaged, the means of engagement, and dissemination of information?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

SY, Oct 7, 2020: Comments cleared.

Please elaborate further addressing the below points.

March 13, 2020 SY: Please address the below points.

1. Roles of identified stakeholders are not fully elaborated, in terms of means and timing of engagement.
2. Roles and responsibilities of implementing the stakeholder engagement plan are not clear. Who will ensure a smooth and effective implementation?
3. While “several stakeholders at the national, provincial and district levels” is cited, local stakeholders are not included in the table. Please explain.
4. CSOs and gender-related stakeholders from the private sector are not identified and included in the table, although the section described CSOs will be engaged.

Also, please clarify if relevant industry associations other than the AFOLU sector will be engaged in “learn from private-sector experiences on CCA/CCM actions (if any),” and which organizations/sectors will be involved.

Agency Response

1 and 16.2 The roles of stakeholders have been elaborated in the Stakeholder’s table and the stakeholder engagement matrix.

3 The main local stakeholders are the provincial directorates’ staff from the participating ministries. Clarifications have been added in the text/table.

4 The project will coordinate with GCF Readiness team to establish and strengthen project activities with the CSO, such as Climate Action Network South Asia – Afghanistan (CANSAs) and Group for the Environment, Renewable Energy and Solidarity (GERES), and gender-related stakeholder engagement to avoid overlap and duplication of efforts. Both CBIT and GCF will jointly work with the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and gender team/unit of the line ministries on the gender-related stakeholders and beneficiaries.

The project will also engage AFOLU and non-AFOLU private sectors such as Dairy Unions, Farmers Association through MAIL; Energy and Mining companies, which will be coordinated through MoMP. Please see for more details under the Stakeholder section

Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment

Has the gender analysis been completed? Did the gender analysis identify any gender differences, gaps or opportunities linked to project/program objectives and activities? If so, does the project/program include gender-responsive activities, gender-sensitive indicators and expected results?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

SY, Oct 7, 2020: Comments cleared.

March 13, 2020 SY: Please address the below points.

1. Gender analysis seems to be included in the section and in Annex K.1 and K.2; however, detailed are not provided. For instance, while it refers to women's role in the AFOLU sector, it does not describe what are challenges/gaps in terms of data collection or other activities relevant to the project objectives. Likewise, K.3 describes "The project will include gender-sensitive and disaggregated data and information in all documents and publications" while priorities and gaps to be closed by the project are not clear.
2. While "GEF Gender Equality Action Plan" is cited in a few places, please check and apply Gender Equality Policy (SD/PL/02) and Guidelines on Gender Equality (SD/GN/02), approved in 2017.
3. Please review the gender action plan, Annex K.4; Only PMU seems responsible for the implementation of the entire plan. Activities under each component seem not directly linked with respective outputs in table B (no need to include outputs themselves), while some overlaps should be there between component 2 and 3 in similar gender-related actions. Some activities and performance/indicators are not relevant (e.g. Comp3, reporting vs leadership roles and decision making and Tanning (training?) needs identified). Although the project includes gender-sensitive and disaggregated data and information, no indicator is provided in the table.

Agency Response

1 We have elaborated the gaps and how the project will close the gap by the project under the section K.3. **It will benefit ETF transition, as the gender-disaggregated data can provide indication or further evidence of gender vulnerability and the government can take appropriate actions based on such data.**

2 We have elaborated how the project will apply Gender Equality Policy (SD/PL/02) and Guidelines on Gender Equality (SD/GN/02). Please see section K.3.

3 The gender action plan has been updated to include PSC member institutions that will be responsible to take relevant actions. PMU's role is to communicate, coordinate and consolidate information and actions. **The table in Annex K.4 is updated accordingly.**

Private Sector Engagement

If there is a private sector engagement, is there an elaboration of its role as a financier and/or as a stakeholder?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

SY, Oct 7, 2020: Comments cleared.

March 13, 2020 SY: Please further elaborate while addressing relevant comments on stakeholder engagement above. Also, please elaborate how the private sector engagement will contribute to strengthening the transparency framework.

Agency Response

We have elaborated the engagement of the private sector involvement in the list under the Stakeholders section.

Risks to Achieving Project Objectives

Has the project elaborated on indicated risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved? Were there proposed measures that address these risks at the time of project implementation?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

SY, Oct 28, 2020: Comment cleared.

SY, Oct 7, 2020: Previous comments cleared. Please make sure COVID-19 risks be included as well.

March 13, 2020 SY: Yes. Please consider organizational risks including staff rotation during and after the project cycle as well as risks that data producers outside the project (e.g. FEWSnet) cannot generate data, as appropriate. Risks relating to security in rural areas depend on the design of the project. Please elaborate provincial level activities of capacity-building and data collection in the relevant section.

Agency Response

1. Thank you for this suggestion. The risk table has been updated to include a risk related to high staff rotation.

2. A separate document for Figure 5 Implementation Structure has been uploaded in the Portal.

3. Please note that majority of donor-financed project budgets are managed by the donor agencies in Afghanistan. The GCF Readiness project under implementation is following the same fund flow based on the current fiduciary management capacity of the government office. During the CBIT project implementation, FAO will provide capacity building of the relevant government personnel, and at mid-term of the project implementation, we plan to conduct a HACT assessment again to evaluate if the remaining project budget can be transferred and managed by NEPA. All contracts and PMU staff recruitment will be conducted in consultation with NEPA, such as TOR preparation, long and short-listing candidates for interviews, and interview participation. Draft TORs of all PMU staff have been uploaded in the Portal.

RE 7 Oct 2020:

Since the COVID-19 global pandemic started to affect Afghanistan in April followed by a national lockdown, at least two new risk factors have been identified. Recently the Ministry of Health warned that the second wave of increased infection is most likely to hit the country in the coming autumn and winter.

1. Reduced financial support from co-financiers due to limited overall funding availability resulting from the COVID-19 economic downturn, and/or the reallocation of available funding to actions directly related to COVID-19.

Mitigation action: If there is a material decrease of co-financing, in consultation with the government, seek alternative options to ensure continuity of resource allocation to ongoing project activities.

2. Closure of offices, transport etc. will delay project start-up and its implementation.

Mitigation action: Likely, periodic closures of transport and offices, as well as restrictions on organizing meetings and training with a large number of people, will impact project implementation. Therefore, the project will rely on virtual platforms, when possible, and holding training with a smaller number of participants at a time to ensure implementation of project activities. Detailed planning will be done with the government and stakeholders at the project inception based on the experience taking into consideration the most updated protocol, and the project will ensure that recommended safe practices are observed by the project team and stakeholders.

Coordination

Is the institutional arrangement for project implementation fully described? Is there an elaboration on possible coordination with relevant GEF-financed projects and other bilateral/multilateral initiatives in the project area?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

SY, Nov 13, 2020: Thank you for the clarification. We understand that FAO's executing functions are limited to those related to security issues where the national executing agency does not have capacity to execute.

SY, Oct 28, 2020: Further revisions including increase in NEPA's role in project execution are noted. In terms of the separation of responsibilities, noting established FAO's segregation of duties between corporate units and Decentralized Offices, it would be better to see a brief description on the arrangement on this particular project, including which office does what in Annex M. Please also provide full names of abbreviations for understanding. Please upload a letter of the OFP in conjunction of the resubmission.

SY, Oct 7, 2020:

1. Comment cleared.

2. Please revise based on the executing arrangements accordingly.

3. Thank you for the revision. We note that a third party is included to execute some functions, rather than by Implementing Agency. However, please further address the below points.

- FAO as the IA still covers many executing functions while some of them have weak justifications, including project management functions that are not necessarily related to the unstable and severe security situation where NEPA does not have the capacity to execute. Please remove project management functions from FAO. NEPA's executing functions still share only the smallest portion among executing entities but NEPA should lead executing the project even though there are some limitations as indicated by the justification paper. WHH may take some roles where NEPA does not have the capacity to execute, as a co-executing entity while increasing capacity of NEPA at the same time. FAO as the IA may execute only minimal functions, as an exceptional basis, that cannot be executed by NEPA, WHH, and other entities (otherwise the project cannot achieve the project objectives.)
- It is not clear whether a role on M&E (mid-term review and terminal evaluation) belongs to the IA originally or NEPA asked FAO to take up the role from NEPA, based on the M&E table's descriptions. Please clarify and adjust accordingly.
- For the vehicle cost, it is not clear what the co-financing portion is. Please clarify.
- Inclusion of WHH as an executing entity seems not to be officially endorsed by the OFP letter and further justification will be helpful to understand why this arrangement is needed. FAO's roles in the letter are too broad to be justified as indicated.
- The details of separation of its project implementation and execution duties is missing. It is necessary to establish a satisfactory institutional arrangement for the separation of implementation and executing functions in different departments of FAO, and clear lines of responsibility, reporting, monitoring and evaluation and accountability within FAO between the project implementation and execution functions.

March 13, 2020 SY: Please address the below points.

1. Elaboration on the planned coordination with other projects is missing. Please provide such coordination with ongoing projects if any.
2. Figure 5 of the implementation structure is too small to read. Please replace.
3. FAO's role on the execution function on paragraph 10: Although there is a letter from the OFP, justifications are not convincing. The fact that "the movement within Kabul and other locations are often restricted" is not only applicable to the fund administration in this project. Not having a bank account is not the specific issue for this project, and it is not clear if past projects in Afghanistan required such differentiated treatments. Also, contracting and recruitment processes are separated issues from administrating the fund. Please provide clearer explanation on the close linkage between security-specific issues and the role of the FAO staff who charges the project budget. The scope of tasks of the FAO staff is still not entirely clear without terms of reference.

Agency Response

1 There are at least 16 relevant projects that CBIT project will coordinate with directly with the PMU, government offices and development partners, though some projects have already completed. More detailed coordination mechanism will be established at the early phase of the project implementation.

2 Separate document of the implementation structure has been uploaded in the Portal.

3 All past and ongoing GEF projects as well as GCF Readiness projects' funds are managed by the international organizations in Afghanistan. However, the PMU is usually hosted in the lead executing agency's offices, and the PSC is chaired by the same agency. Therefore, important decisions for project implementation such as preparation and execution of AWPB is conducted in close consultation with the lead executing agency/government. All movements in Afghanistan require a prior security clearance from the UNDSS and deployment of armoured vehicles is part of the minimum operational protocol. Many non-UN organizations such as Europeans Commissions, WB, ADB, USAID staff are not allowed to move within Kabul and beyond, i.e. cannot leave the office/residential compound. PMU staff recruitment, which will be part of the AWPB, will be conducted jointly with NEPA based on the agreed TORs. Since we received the first Review Sheet, we have further consulted NEPA and other potential executing partners. After these consultations, we have agreed to include the NGO WHH as the main co-executing agency (FAO collaborated with WHH through GEF5 project) with NEPA playing a less prominent role in the execution at this stage. The justification note has been updated and uploaded in the Portal.

RE 7 Oct 2020:

1. Based on further consultation with the key stakeholders, the revised budget for NEPA consists of 49% of the total project budget including recruitment of the national staff and arrangement of their travel, procurement, and organizing meetings and workshops. While WHH will execute all training activities related to procurements and the budget allocation is 36%. Finally, FAO's budget includes the recruitment of an international consultant and his/her travel costs, evaluations, and vehicle operations costs, which represent 15% of the total project budget. Institutional arrangements and coordination section has been updated to reflect the revised structure.
2. Regarding the role of MTR/final evaluation, FAO's evaluation policy is to let FAO's Office of Evaluation to lead all evaluation to avoid conflict of interest. All supervision costs are charged to the fees while the inputs of the evaluation are charged to the project budget and agreed with NEPA and partners, in line with the provisions of the new guidelines to project and program cycle policy.
3. The co-financing portion is the deployment of existing (armoured) vehicles to be used for the CBIT project team members.
4. The revised OFP letter is in the process of obtaining OFP signature based on the further consultations with NEPA, OFP and WHH to include WHH as an executing entity. As soon as the signed letter becomes available, it will be uploaded in the Portal.
5. FAO's internal control framework and accountability framework set out clear segregation of duties between corporate units and Decentralized Offices (FAO country representations) who would play minor executing functions in case of exceptions to the GEF policy. In addition to the very rigorous firewalls set by FAO's reporting lines under the internal control framework, each project task force segregates execution and implementation roles between Decentralized Office, lead technical officer, and funding liaison officer (GEF technical officer). These aspects have already been assessed with a great level of detail during the GEF SEC review of FAO's compliance to GEF Minimum Fiduciary Standards (MFS) so Project Review Sheets may not be the most appropriate channel to assess compliance with the GEF MFS. For more detail, kindly refer to the "Annex M: Financial management and reporting" of the uploaded project document.

RE: 28 Oct

The Annex M has been updated by spelling out the acronyms and including a brief description of the arrangement on this particular project, including which office does what.

In reference to FAO's internal firewall as described in FAO's internal control framework and accountability policy – assessed in compliance with GEF MFS in October 2020 - the segregation of duties between the offices in charge of execution and implementation functions relevant to a small portion of the project where there is an overlap can be applied as follows: (i) FAO Representation in Afghanistan performs the execution functions; and (ii) the oversight functions of

Implementing Agency will be performed under a different line of management by the FAO GEF Coordination Unit, Regional Office's HR Unit, HQ Office of Evaluation, and HQ Reporting/Finance Units. The financial audits for specific projects are conducted by an authorized audit firm contracted by FAO. This is the standard requirement of FAO policy applicable to all FAO GEF projects to ensure independency of the audits and avoid the risk of conflict of interest of the EA.

Revised OFP letter have been uploaded in the Portal.

Consistency with National Priorities

Has the project described the alignment of the project with identified national strategies and plans or reports and assessments under the relevant conventions?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

SY, Oct 7, 2020: Comments cleared.

March 13, 2020 SY: Yes. However, please address the below points.

1. The list of plans and strategies is different from the PIF stage and the narrative of the relevance with the project is not provided.
2. While supporting (future) NCs and BURs are referred, BTR is not there. The project will not support the past reporting (INC, SNC, and BUR).
3. Please also check if "National Priority Programmes" is an independent strategy/plan.

Agency Response

1. This has been addressed under the Consistency with national priorities section.
2. This has been addressed under the Consistency with national priorities section.
3. National Priority Programs refer to a set of 22 priority programs. The proposed CBIT project can contribute towards Goal 13 Climate Change. This has been addressed under the Consistency with national priorities section.

Knowledge Management

Is the proposed “Knowledge Management Approach” for the project adequately elaborated with a timeline and a set of deliverables?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Oct 7, 2020, SY: Comment cleared

March 13, 2020 SY: Please elaborate what knowledge from other CBIT projects and relevant projects (incl. NC/BUR) the project utilizes and what shared knowledge products the project will produce in the end of the project with a budget, in addition to a domestic knowledge management plan.

Agency Response

The Global AFOLU CBIT project as well as the CBIT Platform project jointly provide forum and opportunities to all national CBIT countries to benefit from sharing experiences and knowledge products. In some cases, workshops are organized in collaboration with UNFCCC.

At country level, Afghanistan has established a National Study Team composed of designated technical officers from nine ministries and academia working on NC and BUR with a support from GEF and GCF. This mechanism will be further strengthened and capacitated through the CBIT project by technical training on ETF requirements, data collection and analysis of AFOLU sectors, filling the technical gap of non-AFOLU sectors, and inter-ministerial and internal ministry coordination.

A gender-sensitive/responsive knowledge management and communications strategy will be developed at the start of the project, building on the existing GEF5 and GEF6 strategy, to support implementation and replication of project activities. The strategy will include recommended products for public awareness and other knowledge management, including training material and manuals, and communication materials.

Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS)

Are environmental and social risks, impacts and management measures adequately documented at this stage and consistent with requirements set out in SD/PL/03?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

SY, Oct 28, 2020: Comment cleared.

SY, Oct 7, 2020: Please add a supporting document related to ESS.

Agency Response

RE 7 Oct 2020:

The ESS document has been uploaded in the Portal.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Does the project include a budgeted M&E Plan that monitors and measures results with indicators and targets?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

SY, Oct 28, 2020: Comment cleared.

Oct 7, 2020: Thank you for reducing the budget. Please review responsible parties in the table to reflect the latest arrangements.

March 13, 2020 SY: Yes. However, please address the below points.

1. The amount of budget (\$170,150) is much larger than other CBIT projects or similar size MSPs. Please consider reasonable budgeting, taking into account the nature of the project.
2. Please also review budget types because some activities (e.g. MTR and TE) seem to charge PMCs, instead of M&E budget (as per guidelines of the project and program cycle policy, annex 8).

Agency Response

1 We used the approved Bangladesh CBIT project's M&E budget as our benchmark which had USD 111,500. We believe that for Afghanistan CBIT which has larger budget, the current estimate seems reasonable.

2 The budget table and M&E table have been adjusted accordingly.

RE 7 Oct 2020:

The M&E table has been updated accordingly (responsible parties' section).

RE 16 Nov 2020:

Comment 3: The M&E and budget tables have been updated by removing the Terminal Report. The budget has been reallocated to the international travel cost for an international consultant's security-related costs.

Comment 4: The monitoring activities have been reallocated to M&E section in the budget table accordingly.

Benefits

Are the socioeconomic benefits at the national and local levels sufficiently described resulting from the project? Is there an elaboration on how these benefits translate in supporting the achievement of GEBs or adaptation benefits?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

March 13, 2020 SY: Yes.

Agency Response

Annexes

Are all the required annexes attached and adequately responded to?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

SY, Oct 7, 2020: Comments cleared.

March 13, 2020 SY: Please review Annexes to make sure relevant information is attached.

Agency Response

The Portal has been updated accordingly.

Project Results Framework

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

SY, Oct 28, 2020: Comments cleared.

SY, Oct 7, 2020: Thank you for the revision. Please consider numerical targets for some indicators (e.g. Number of staff from NEPA and other relevant inter-ministerial agencies) where appropriate. Please also make sure institutional capacity for transparency is included.

March 13, 2020 SY: Please review the indicators and targets in conjunction with other comments in the review sheet, in particular in the design/structure box. Objective 1 only covers the AFOLU sector.

Agency Response

This has been addressed including section 2.1. Please see Annex A1: Project Results Framework.

RE 7 Oct 2020:

The relevant section has been updated accordingly.

GEF Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

Council comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

STAP comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

Convention Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

Other Agencies comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

CSOs comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

Status of PPG utilization

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request SY, Oct 7, 2020: Yes.

Agency Response

Calendar of expected reflows (if NGI is used)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

Project maps and coordinates

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

SY, Oct 7, 2020: Comment cleared.

March 13, 2020 SY: Please address the relevant comment in the above.

Agency Response

Question 15 has been addressed accordingly.

Termsheet, reflow table and agency capacity in NGI Projects

Does the project provide sufficient detail in Annex A (indicative termsheet) 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 in Annex B to assess the project capacity of generating reflows? If not, please provide comments. After reading the questionnaire in Annex C, is the Partner Agency eligible to administer concessional finance? If not, please provide comments.

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

GEFSEC DECISION

RECOMMENDATION

Is CEO endorsement recommended? (applies only to projects and child projects)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

SY, Nov 18, 2020: Thank you for the revisions. PM recommends the project for technical clearance.

1. We note the change of dates/month of both start and end of the project in both Portal and ProDoc.
2. We note the removal of "processing terminal report" budget on the M&E budget and the budget table, recognizing the reallocation of the budget which would require more budget as described in the comment box on M&E above.
3. We note the move of the workshop-related budget from PMCs to the M&E budget in the budget table.

SY, Nov 16, 2020: Thank you for your revision. Please address the below three points.

1. Please adjust an expected implementation start date on the CEOER document (Portal) as done on the Prodoc.
2. Please remove "Processing terminal report" budget line from the M&E plan and the budget table since the terminal evaluation must include everything including the steps necessary for submitting the terminal report (The M&E budget will be \$122,200 without this budget line). Please revise these on the CEOER document (Portal) and the Prodoc.
3. There are some monitoring activities (project start-up, mid-term and closing workshops) that are charged to the PMC instead of the M&E Plan in the budget table. Please revise the budget table to charge them to the M&E plan.

SY, Nov 1, 2020: Please address the comment in coordination.

SY, Oct 7, 2020: Please address the remaining comments above.

March 13, 2020 SY: Not at this stage. Please address all the comments. Please contact PM before submitting revised documents for a smooth review process. Next submission of the document: Please check whether Annexes in the document contain the relevant information. Annex B, C, D and E seem to have wrong information (something wrong may have happened through uploading documents in the portal). While this is relatively well documented, please do proofreading again since there are still a few typos in the document. Concise description is welcome in the revision.

Review Dates

	Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review	3/13/2020	
Additional Review (as necessary)	10/7/2020	
Additional Review (as necessary)	10/28/2020	
Additional Review (as necessary)	11/16/2020	
Additional Review (as necessary)		

CEO Recommendation

Brief reasoning for CEO Recommendations

Afghanistan ratified the Paris Agreement in 2016 and is eligible to access the CBIT support by the GEF. The project will be funded \$ 1,350,000 (and \$ 128,250 Agency fee) from the CBIT set-aside under the GEF Trust Fund, leveraging \$ 1,500,000 co-financing from the Government and FAO as in-kind recurrent expenditures.

- Past transparency reports and challenges

Afghanistan submitted the initial national communication in 2012 and the second national communication in 2017. It further submitted First Biennial Update Report (BUR) in 2019 along with the National GHG Inventory Report up to 2017 with some improvements in the GHG inventory including using methodologies of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2006 Guidelines in some sectors, expanding sector coverages.

Despite such improvements, Afghanistan still faces many challenges to meet the requirements of the Paris Agreement. Key capacity gaps related to MRV of climate change mitigation, and measurement and reporting of adaptation activities relate to: (i) establishing nationally specific emissions factors and activity data (for IPCC 2006 Tier 2 reporting in key categories); (ii) full determination of key sub-categories; (iii) uncertainty estimates; (iv) establishing metadata and quality-control protocols; (v) reliable measurement of activity data for key IPCC AFOLU categories; (vi) feasibility studies for adaptation-related interventions; (vii) prioritization and specification of adaptation-related metrics; and (viii) ensuring the financial and operational sustainability of MRV initiatives.

- Project interventions

Against this background, the CBIT project will help Afghanistan meet enhanced transparency requirements under the Paris Agreement and enhance its ability to implement the Paris Agreement on top of the efforts made by previous reporting activities. The project will enhance institutional coordination for the preparation of Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) reports in all relevant sectors, with a particular focus on the AFOLU sector, including the establishment of a NEPA (National Environmental Protection Agency) Climate Change Division for coordination and data sharing for ETF reporting in collaboration with other relevant ministries and national agencies a collaboration and coordination mechanism among stakeholders for GHG inventory data collection, updates and inventory preparation. The project will further strengthen capacity for monitoring and reporting on mitigation targets in the AFOLU and other relevant sectors. It will improve the existing MRV system and GHG inventory system, minimizing data gaps by supporting data generation, management and technical capacity and enhancing methodologies. Finally, the project will strengthen capacity for monitoring and reporting on adaptation targets in the AFOLU and other relevant sectors.

- Executing arrangement

While previous GEF funded projects in Afghanistan were largely executed and supported by implementing agencies, this project minimizes such roles by implementing agency through a series of consultations between the PM and the Implementing Agency. NEPA, a national executing agency, takes up the largest executing functions while a partner executing agency (WHH, local NGO) as a third party will support a part of functions with a view to enhancing capacity of the national executing agency. The execution functions by FAO are limited to the cases where national executing agency (NEPA) does not have capacity to execute and there are security issues that may prevent smooth execution of the project (namely, recruiting international consultants and their international travel arrangements and their transportation within the country).

- COVID-19 risks

One of the COVID-19 related risks is a possibility of reduced financial support from co-financiers due to limited overall funding availability resulting from the COVID-19-related economic downturn, and/or the reorientation of available funding to actions directly related to COVID-19. If there are negative changes in co-

financing, in consultation with the government, seek alternative options for and ensure continuity of resource allocation to support the ongoing initiatives. The co-financing types are in-kind so the impact will be less than those of investment mobilized.

Another risk is closure of offices, transport etc. will delay launch of project and its implementation. It is likely that periodic closures of transport and offices as well as restrictions on organizing meetings/training with large number of people will impact project implementation. Therefore, the project will institute mechanisms such as virtual meetings and holding training with smaller participants at a time to ensure that some work can continue. Detailed planning will be done with the government and stakeholders, and the project will ensure that all recommended safe practices are followed by the project team and by stakeholders.