

# Implementing Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) Site Conservation and Preventing Global Extinctions

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

## Basic project information

**GEF ID**

10581

**Countries**

Global (Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Madagascar)

**Project Name**

Implementing Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) Site Conservation and Preventing Global Extinctions

**Agencies**

UNEP

**Date received by PM**

9/27/2021

**Review completed by PM**

12/3/2021

**Program Manager**

Mark Zimsky

**Focal Area**

Biodiversity

**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  
10/5/2021

Yes. Cleared.

**Agency Response**  
**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  
10/5/2021

Yes. Cleared.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/5/2021

NA.

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

10/26/2021

i. American Bird Conservancy \$2M grant ? The co-financing letter indicates this amount combines cash and in-kind. Please split the amount in Portal accordingly.

ii. Please provide English translations of co-financing letters and the co-financing amount converted in USD - for (1) AZE Partners, (2 & 3) Gov't of Chile ? Ministry of Environment and National Zoo, (4) Gov't of Columbia, (5) Gov't of Madagascar, (6) Chilean Herpetological Association Network.

12/8/2021

Regarding cofinancing: The issue of the American Bird Conservancy was addressed and the letters were translated. However, with the English version of the Government of Chile ? Ministry of Environment, Table C has to be presented with 2 entries:

\* Grant, Investment Mobilized: \$287,064

\* In-kind, Recurrent Expenditures: \$514,110

12/14/2021

Cleared.

Agency Response

11/18/2021

- i. We re-calculated AZE's co-finance and clarified that it is a fully cash co-finance in a new letter.
- ii. English translations of the co-finance letters are provided after the original letter.

12/13/2021

We adjusted the cofinance commitment of the Government of Chile ? Ministry of Environment as: Grant, Investment Mobilized: \$287,064; In-kind, Recurrent Expenditures: \$514,110 in Table C.

**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

10/5/2021

Please adjust the ratio of project management costs borne by GEF when compared to cofinancing to be consistent with the overall ratio of the GEF grant to cofinancing for the entire project.

10/21/2021

Cleared, both ratios are 1:4.

**Agency Response**

We adjusted the PMC and it is \$750,000 about 10% of the project cost.

**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

10/5/2021

Yes. Cleared.

**Agency Response**

**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

10/26/2021

Please reflect GEF Core Indicators and the targets specified in the Core Indicators table in Annex A ?Project Results Framework?. Namely, GEF Core Indicator 1 (terrestrial protected areas), 4 (Areas of improved practices), 11 (number of beneficiaries).

11/30/2021

In Annex A, in the project results framework, please insert the core indicators under the relevant components and outcomes as was requested above.

12/8/2021

Targets for GEF Indicator 1 and 4 in Annex A are not the same as in Core Indicators table. Please align the figures and mark the core indicators in Annex A clearly.

12/14/2021

Cleared.

## Agency Response

11/18/2021

We reviewed the Core indicator numbers and reflected the correct calculations. We provided an explanation on page 6.

The targets should be read:

Indicator 1.2: 919,639 ha

Indicator 4.1: 978,749 ha

Indicator 11: 5,000 women, and 5,000 men

12/01/2021

We included the core ind. under the relevant components in the project results framework Annex A. See indicators 5 and 6 of Outcome 1.1 and indicator 2 of outcome 3.2

12/13/2021

We aligned the indicators in Annex A with the core indicators. Indicators are:  
5. GEF Core Indicator 1.2 Terrestrial Protected Areas Under improved Management effectiveness: 919,639 hectares of terrestrial protected areas under increasingly improved management  
6. GEF Core Indicator 4.1 Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity: 978,749 hectares of landscapes under increasingly improved management  
GEF Core Indicator 11 Number of direct beneficiaries as co-benefit of GEF investment: 5,000 women; 5,000 men.

## **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  
10/5/2021

Yes. Cleared.

### **Agency Response**

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
10/5/2021

Yes. Cleared.

### **Agency Response**

**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  
10/5/2021

Yes. Cleared.

### **Agency Response**

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
10/5/2021

Yes. Cleared.

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/5/2021

Yes. Cleared.

Agency Response

**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

10/5/2021

Yes. Cleared.

Agency Response

**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

10/5/2021

Yes. Cleared.

Agency Response

**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

10/5/2021

Yes. Cleared.

Agency Response  
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  
10/5/2021

NA.

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  
10/5/2021

Yes. Cleared.

Agency Response  
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  
10/5/2021

Yes. Cleared.



Agency Response  
**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  
10/5/2021

Yes. Cleared.

Agency Response  
**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  
10/5/2021

Yes. Includes climate risk and COVID-19 risk analysis and mitigation plans. Cleared.

Agency Response  
**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  
10/5/2021

Yes. Cleared.

10/26/2021

In the portal under the entry 'Other Executing Partners' both Government agencies and CSOs are listed but the "Type" only indicates 'CSO'. Under the Institutional arrangement section it indicates that the two CSOs i.e. ABC and Birdlife will be leading the execution of the project. If this is the case, then please remove all Ministries from the 'Other Executing Partners' under the portal entry.

11/30/2021

Cleared.

Agency Response

11/18/2021

We removed all Ministries from the 'Other Executing Partners' entry

**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

10/5/2021

Yes. Cleared.

Agency Response

**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

10/5/2021

Yes. Cleared.

Agency Response

**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  
10/5/2021

Yes. Cleared.

Agency Response  
**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  
0/26/2021

The M&E budget table is missing in Portal. Please include it.

11/30/2021

Budget lines for M&E are included, but the entire budget is off margin. Please resubmit with the budget on margin.

12/8/2021

The budget table is within the margins and the totals between the budget table uploaded in Annex E in Portal and Table B in the Portal entry match. However, we mentioned that with the resubmission we would provide detailed additional comments if appropriate. As it is presented in the budget table (see below), it looks like the Executing Agency (Birdlife International) is sub-contracting the same Executing Agency, which is not permitted. The Executing Agency can carry out activities, but these activities need to be itemized and costed - what it is not allowed is to subcontract one of the Executing Agencies through a lump sum. Please present the itemized activities with their correspondent costs in the resubmission.

Expenditure Category	Detailed Description	COMPONENT (US\$eq.)				Sub-Total	M&E	PMC	Total	Responsible Entity
		COMP 1	COMP 2	COMP 3						
		O1.1	O2.1	O3.1	O3.2					
Sub-contract to Executing Partner	For all technical work for Component 2 and outcome 3.1, including planning and leading necessary webinars, meetings and capacity building efforts, and all relevant database and website updates	0	123,980	39,750	0	163,730		15,000	178,730	BirdLife International

12/14/2021

Cleared.

#### Agency Response

11/18/2021

We added the M&E Budget on the portal. We also aligned the project budget, the M&E budget and Table B so that component allocations are also aligned.

12/01/2021

We adjusted the entire budget to fit in Annex E.

12/13/2021

The Birdlife International and the ABC are the two executing agencies of the Project. However, UNEP will sign the Project Cooperation Agreement with ABC. ABC will then coordinate the subcontracts including Birdlife International. In order to provide full transparency we also itemized the budget of Birdlife International. The budget of the Birdlife international will be utilized for "Salary and Benefits and Staff costs" and "Travel" and it is detailed in Annex E.

#### 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

10/5/2021

Yes. Cleared.

## Agency Response

### Annexes

**Are all the required annexes attached and adequately responded to?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/5/2021

No. Please insert Annex C in the portal on the PPG.

10/26/2021

The budget table under Annex E is off margin ? we will be in a position to provide detailed comments on the budget whenever Budget is properly re-submitted. However, we note differences between the budget table uploaded in Portal (which has to be the same in Annex E in Portal) and Table B in the Portal entry. Please review carefully and ensure there is consistency.

11/30/2021

The budget table under Annex E remains off margin. Please resubmit on margin.

12/3/2021

Cleared.

## Agency Response

We inserted the PPG expenditure in Annex C on the portal.

11/18/2021

We uploaded a corrected version of the budget. We aligned component allocations in the budget and the Table B.

12/01/2021

We adjusted the entire budget to fit in Annex E

## Project Results Framework

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/5/2021

In the results framework, please list the protected areas and their baseline total METT scores.

10/21/2021

Yes. Cleared.

Agency Response

We included METT scores.

**GEF Secretariat comments**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/5/2021

Yes. Cleared.

Agency Response

**Council comments**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/5/2021

NA.

Agency Response

**STAP comments**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/5/2021

NA.

Agency Response

**Convention Secretariat comments**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/5/2021

NA.

Agency Response

**Other Agencies comments**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
10/5/2021

NA.

Agency Response

**CSOs comments**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
10/5/2021

NA.

Agency Response

**Status of PPG utilization**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
10/5/2021

Please include Annex C in the portal on the PPG utilization.

10/21/2021

Yes. Cleared.

Agency Response

We inserted the PPG expenditure in Annex C on the portal.

**Project maps and coordinates**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
10/5/2021

Yes. Cleared.

Agency Response

**Does the termsheet in Annex F provide finalized financial terms and conditions? Does the termsheet and financial structure address concerns raised at PIF stage and that were pending to be resolved ahead of CEO endorsement? (For NGI Only)**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/5/2021

NA.

Agency Response

**Do the Reflow Table Annex G and the Trustee Excel Sheet for reflows provide accurate reflow expectations of the project submitted? Assumptions for Reflows can be submitted to explain expected reflows. (For NGI Only)**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/5/2021

NA.

Agency Response

**Did the agency Annex H provided with information to assess the Agency Capacity to generate and manage reflows? (For NGI Only)**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/5/2021

NA.

Agency Response

**GEFSEC DECISION**

**RECOMMENDATION**

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/5/2021



No. Please make the revisions required and resubmit as soon as possible.

10/26/2021

Please address the remaining issues identified above and summarized here for ease of reference:

In the portal under the entry "Other Executing Partners" includes both Government agencies and CSO, but the Type only indicates "CSO". Under the Institutional arrangement section it indicates that the two CSOs i.e. ABC and Birdlife will be leading the execution of the project. If this is the case, then please remove all Ministries from the "Other Executing Partners".

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Co-financing:

i. American Bird Conservancy \$2M grant "The co-financing letter indicates this amount combines cash and in-kind. Please split the amount in Portal accordingly.

ii. Please provide English translations of co-financing letters and the co-financing amount converted in USD - for (1) AZE Partners, (2 & 3) Gov't of Chile "Ministry of Environment and National Zoo, (4) Gov't of Columbia, (5) Gov't of Madagascar, (6) Chilean Herpetological Association Network.

Core indicators: Please reflect GEF Core Indicators and its targets specified in Core Indicators table, in Annex A "Project Results Framework". Namely, GEF Core Indicator 1 (terrestrial protected areas), 4 (Areas of improved practices), 11 (number of beneficiaries).

11/30/2021

Some of the issues raised above were addressed, but not all. Please revise the submission in the portal as requested above and resubmit.

12/8/2021

These issues still require resolution. Please revise and resubmit:

1) The budget table is within the margins and the totals between the budget table uploaded in Annex E in Portal and Table B in the Portal entry match. However, we mentioned that with the resubmission we would provide detailed additional comments if appropriate. As it is presented in the budget table (see below), it looks like the Executing Agency (Birdlife International) is sub-contracting the same Executing Agency, which is not permitted. The Executing Agency can carry out activities, but these activities need to be itemized and costed - what it is not allowed is to subcontract one of the Executing Agencies through a lump sum. Please present the itemized activities with their correspondent costs in the resubmission.

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2. Regarding cofinancing: The issue of the American Bird Conservancy was addressed and the letters were translated. However, with the English version of the Government of Chile ? Ministry of Environment, Table C has to be presented with 2 entries:

\* Grant, Investment Mobilized: \$287,064

\* In-kind, Recurrent Expenditures: \$514,110

3. Core Indicators: Targets for GEF Indicator 1 and 4 in Annex A are not the same as in Core Indicators table. Please align the figures and mark the core indicators in Annex A clearly.

12/14/2021

CEO endorsement is recommended.

#### Review Dates

Secretariat Comment at  
CEO Endorsement

Response to  
Secretariat  
comments

**Secretariat Comment at  
CEO Endorsement****Response to  
Secretariat  
comments**

<b>First Review</b>	<b>10/5/2021</b>
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>10/26/2021</b>
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>11/30/2021</b>
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>12/3/2021</b>
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>12/14/2021</b>

**CEO Recommendation****Brief reasoning for CEO Recommendations**

The GEF-7 AZE proposal builds on and expands the GEF-5 AZE project, Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE): Conserving Earth's Most Irreplaceable Sites for Endangered Biodiversity. The GEF-7 AZE project has three components: Component 1. Improvement of the conservation status of 20 AZE sites and associated AZE trigger species in the four countries of Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, and Madagascar. Component 2. Mainstreaming AZE site conservation at global and national levels. Component 3. Knowledge management to enhance understanding of and interest in AZE site conservation across sectors. The Project's financial sustainability will be based on four revenue streams, including public funds, private sector partnerships, nature-based livelihoods in local communities, and market-based mechanisms, such as Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) approaches. The project will result in 916,066 ha. of terrestrial protected areas under improved management for conservation and sustainable use. This project will also include a strong focus on habitat restoration and wider landscape management targets to prevent species extinctions at the roughly 843,674 ha in buffer zones of the eleven AZE sites included as priority sites in this project. The total area under improved management will be 982,322 ha (843,674 + 138,648, the latter figure being the area covered by the remaining 9 AZE sites). Mainstreaming AZE site conservation will also support improved management at AZE sites, since conservation plans, policies and safeguards will prohibit impacts degrading the management of AZE sites.

To guarantee the continuation of the project despite prolonged social distancing requirements due to COVID-19, project meetings and the engagement processes could transition on-line or to a combination of in-person and virtual participants to minimize contagion risks. Remote technological infrastructure would be used to facilitate this type of engagement including easily accessible videoconferencing services. For those who cannot participate remotely, in-person meetings could be held with a reduced number of participants. The development of the crisis will be closely monitored, and creative responses will be explored and implemented along the way focused on advancing project outcomes through alternative forms of engagement, and flexibility in case meetings and field visits must be rescheduled. Similarly, innovative ways of ensuring co-financing funds can be effectively deployed under a COVID-19 risk scenario may also have to be explored. The project will exercise extreme caution in ensuring that its activities do not increase the risk of transmission and spread. COVID-19 may affect the physical availability of technical expertise to provide in-situ support due to travel restrictions. Proposed mitigation measures and limitations on physical gatherings imposed by countries. As suggested above, virtual means of delivery will be used in such cases and required adjustments to the timeline to accommodate the effects of the pandemic will be given due consideration during the project's annual planning processes.

The project provides an opportunity for green recovery and building back better through the development of nature-based income option in the vicinity of AZE sites and by engaging the private sector and lending institutions to embrace consideration for protecting AZE and KBA sites in their development models and lending instruments.