



RESILAND: ARMENIA RESILIENT LANDSCAPES PROJECT

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

11046

Countries

Armenia

Project Name

RESILAND: ARMENIA RESILIENT LANDSCAPES PROJECT

Agencies

World Bank

Date received by PM

12/1/2023

Review completed by PM

1/16/2024

Program Manager

Ulrich Apel

Focal Area

Multi Focal Area

Project Type

PIF

CEO

Part I - General Project Information

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/02/2023: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response Thank you.

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/02/2023: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response Thank you.

2. Project Summary.

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

b) Does the summary capture the essence of the project and is it within the max. of 250 words?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/02/2023: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response Thank you.

3. Project Description Overview

- a) **Is the project objective statement concise, clear and measurable?**
- 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?**
- c) **Are gender dimensions, knowledge management, and M&E included within the project components and budgeted for?**
- d) **Are the GEF Project Financing and Co-Financing contributions to PMC proportional?**
- e) **Is the PMC equal to or below 10% (for MSP) or 5% (for FSP)? If above, is the justification acceptable?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/02/2023: Not fully.

c) An overall approach to Knowledge Management and Learning has not been adequately described in the Project Description. Component 1 includes some training as part of institutional capacity building. Component 4 bundles "Project Management, M&E, and Communication"; but no details have been provided regarding proposed communication deliverables and there is no description of a Knowledge Management Approach for the project and no KM&L deliverables have been included.

The agency is requested to better describe the overall KM approach of the project by succinctly addressing key GEF KM&L expectations at the CEO Endorsement stage as a follows, and as appropriate:

- an overview of existing lessons and best practice that inform the project concept
- plans to learn from relevant projects, programs, initiatives & evaluations (funded by GEF and others)
- processes to capture, assess and document info, lessons, best practice & expertise generated during implementation
- tools and methods for knowledge exchange, learning & collaboration, including knowledge platforms and websites
- knowledge outputs to be produced and shared with stakeholders (at community, national and international levels as appropriate)
- a discussion on how knowledge and learning will contribute to overall project/program impact and sustainability
- plans for strategic communications and outreach, awareness raising and dissemination of project outputs/results/lessons
- itemized budget and timeline for the implementation of key KM&L deliverables, including the project's communications strategy

Please provide this information as part of the project description (in the portal section E) and also, in the KM section E in the portal, including, if possible, a table presenting itemized budget and timelines for the implementation of key KM&L deliverables. Please also include key KM&L deliverables in the project's results framework.

12/19/2023: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

Thank you.

Additional information have been added under components 1 and 4 to outline the K&L and M&E activities. Information added is outlined below:

Under comp.1 (i) public awareness program on sustainable landscape management will be developed and implemented (ii) there will be special emphasize on awareness activities on Wetland Management. (iii) to ensure the sustainability of the awareness program on wetland management a full fledged knowledge management system based on harmonized guiding principles for information management will be developed and implemented.

Under Com.4, Communication and KM products will be produced including (i) preparation of info notes, briefings, and public events on lessons, best practice and expertise generated during implementation. (ii) It will include knowledge and learning events, trainings, outreach, awareness raising and dissemination of project outputs through public service announcements, billboards, respective agencies' websites, and platforms. (iii) the audiences for knowledge and learning events and trainings include decision makers, forest communities, stakeholders, and practitioners, (iv) new information generated through the project implementation will be captured using remote sensing and other technologies. The information will be used to build capacities key stakeholders and establish sustainable transparent and accessible database.

4. Project Outline

A. Project Rationale

a) Is the current situation (including global environmental problems, key drivers of environmental degradation, climate vulnerability) clearly and adequately described from a systems perspective and adequately addressed by the project design?

b) Have the role of stakeholders, incl. the private sector and local actors in the system been described and how they will contribute to GEBs and/or adaptation benefits and other project outcomes? Is the private sector seen mainly as a stakeholder or as financier?

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/02/2023: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response Thank you.

5 B. Project Description

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

b) 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?

c) Are the project components (interventions and activities) described and proposed solutions and critical assumptions and risks properly justified? Is there an indication of why the project approach has been selected over other potential options?

d) Incremental/additional cost reasoning: Is the incremental/additional cost reasoning properly described as per the Guidelines provided in GEF/C.31/12? Has the baseline scenario and/or associated baseline projects been described? Is the project incremental reasoning provisioned (including the role of the GEF)? Are the global environmental benefits and/or adaptation benefits identified?

e) Other Benefits: Are the socioeconomic benefits resulting from the project at the national and local levels sufficiently described?

f) Is the financing presented in the annexed financing table adequate and demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objectives? Are items charged to the PMC reasonable according to the GEF guidelines?

g) How does the project design ensure resilience to future changes in the drivers and adaptive management needs and options (as applicable for this FSP/MSP)?

h) Are the relevant stakeholders (including women, private sector, CSO, e.g.) and their roles adequately described within the components?

i) Gender: Does the gender analysis identify any gender differences, gaps or opportunities linked to project/program objectives and activities and have these been taken up in component design and description/s?

j) Are the proposed elements to capture and disseminate knowledge and learning outputs and strategic communication adequately described?

k) Policy Coherence: Have any policies, regulations or subsidies been identified that could counteract the intended project outcomes and how will that be addressed?

l) Transformation and/or innovation: Is the project going to be transformative or innovative? Does it explain scaling up opportunities?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/02/2023: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response Thank you.

5.2 Institutional Arrangements and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Project

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/02/2023: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response Thank you.

5.3 Core indicators

- a) Are the identified core indicators calculated using the methodology and adhering to the overarching principles included in the corresponding Guidelines (GEF/C.62/Inf.12/Rev.01)?**
- b) Are the project's targeted contributions to GEBs (measured through core indicators and additional listed outcome indicators) /adaptation benefits reasonable and achievable? Are the GEF Climate Change adaptation indicators and sub-indicators for LDCF and SCCF properly documented?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/02/2023: Yes. However, please include the core indicators and their targets in the results framework (Annex C). They are mandatory at CEO endorsement.

12/19/2023: Addressed by the agency as per below clarifications.

Cleared

Agency Response

Thank you.

The core indicators are all part of the Project Appraisal Document (PAD) RF, yet the indicators are either disaggregated (e.g., Area of land restored (Hectares) to capture both wetland restored & forest land restored) or aggregated (e.g. ?Total area under improved management? corresponds to the Corporate Results Indicator ?Land area under sustainable landscape management practices?. The reporting will disaggregate indicators respectively to ensure the progress is fully captured and tracked.

e.g. The indicator 'Land area under sustainable landscape management practices (CRI, Hectare(Ha))' corresponds to the GEF Datasheet indicator: 'Area of landscapes under improved practices' but also covers 'Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use' and, thus 'Total area under improved management.' The Landscape Restoration indicators, both wetland and forest correspond to GEF Datasheet indicator: 'Area of land restored.'

5.4 Risks

- a) Are climate and other main risks relevant to the project identified and adequately described (e.g. including these related to work in fragile locations and/or countries)? Are mitigation measures outlined and realistic? Is there any omission?
- b) Are the key risks that might affect implementation assessed and adequately rated?
- c) Are environmental and social risks, impacts and management measures adequately assessed and rated and consistent with requirements set out in SD/PL/03?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/02/2023: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response Thank you.

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request n/a

Agency Response

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

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/02/2023: Not fully.

- Please include objective LD-2 into the focal area elements table. The project has significant targets on restoration, therefore, an alignment with LD-2 "Landscape restoration" should be included to an adequate extent.

12/19/2023: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

Thank you.

LD-2 added in the programming directions.

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/02/2023: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response Thank you.

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/02/2023: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response Thank you.

7 D. Policy Requirements

7.1 Are the Policy Requirement sections completed?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/02/2023: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response Thank you.

7.2 Is the Gender Action Plan uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/02/2023: Please clarify if the Gender Action plan has been uploaded.

Further, the project does not clearly articulate / reflect gender perspectives in the Project Description (Section B) and in the project components, outputs and activities (in the "Project Description Overview"). A summary of the gender analysis or assessment should be presented (including in the Portal version).

12/19/2023: Addressed by the agency as per clarifications below.

Cleared

Agency Response

Thank you.

The Gender action plan is presented as an annex in the PAD. A summary of gender analysis is now included under project description (section B) and additional information have been added to the project description overview.

Gender aspects are covered in the PAD (Corporate Commitments/Gender section) as well as highlighted in the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) prepared as part of the Project. The project, through Components 2 and 3, will have direct impacts on women in the project target areas. Previous efforts have shown that women, and young women in particular, have less voice and access to decision-making in local decision-making. Gender equality will form part of the project implementation, such as (but not limited to) gender sensitive and participatory stakeholder engagement. The Implementing Agency will have a Gender and Community Specialist as part of the Project Implementation Team to ensure the Gender Action Plan is being followed. The PAD RF also have a gender-specific indicators that will be tracked.

7.3 Is the stakeholder engagement plan uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/02/2023: Please clarify if the plan has been uploaded, the reviewer couldn't locate it.

Further, the project does not clearly outline the consultations done with key stakeholders or provide a stakeholder engagement plan that clearly outline the means of engagement with different stakeholders taking into account their interests, roles and responsibilities in project implementation.

12/19/2023: Addressed by the agency as per clarifications below.

Cleared

Agency Response

Thank you.

Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) has been prepared and disclosed by the Recipient. SEP now uploaded in roadmap. The SEP includes a Summary of Stakeholder Engagement during Project Preparation.

7.4 Have required applicable safeguards documents been uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/02/2023: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response Thank you.

8 Annexes

Annex A: Financing Tables

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

STAR allocation?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/02/2023: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response Thank you.

Focal Area allocation?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/02/2023: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response Thank you.

LDCF under the principle of equitable access?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request n/a

Agency Response
SCCF A (SIDS)?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request n/a

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request n/a

Agency Response
Focal Area Set Aside?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request n/a

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
12/02/2023: Yes. However, the amount of \$42,000 indicated is less than the total amount received \$55,000. Please account for the remaining \$13,000.

12/19/2023: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response
Thank you.

The table has been revised to account for the missing amount.

8.3 Source of Funds
Does the sources of funds table match with the amounts in the OFP's LOE?? Note: the table only captures sources of funds from the country's STAR allocation

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/02/2023: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response Thank you.

8.4 Confirmed co-financing for the project, by name and type: Are the amounts, sources, and types of co-financing adequately documented and consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines? e.g. Have letters of co-finance been submitted, correctly classified as investment mobilized or in-kind/recurring expenditures? If investment mobilized: is there an explanation below the table to describe the nature of co-finance? If letters are not in English, is a translation provided?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/02/2023:

On Co-financing table: Please include the "investment mobilized" category for Caucasus Nature Fund. The field is currently blank.

12/19/2023: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

Thank you.

Field updated.

Annex B: Endorsements

8.5 a) If ? and only if - this is a global or regional project for which not all country-based interventions were known at PIF stage and, therefore, not all LOEs provided:

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/02/2023: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response Thank you.

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/02/2023: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response Thank you.

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/02/2023: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response Thank you.

Annex C: Project Results Framework

8.6 a) Have the GEF core indicators been included?

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

c) Are all relevant indicators sex disaggregated?

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/02/2023: Not fully.

a) Please include the core indicators in the Logframe.

Please also include key KM&L deliverables in the project's results framework, as appropriate, after addressing the comments on KM&L made above.

12/19/2023: Addressed by the agency as per clarifications below.

Cleared

Agency Response

Thank you.

On KM&L deliverables, an indicator on ?Beneficiaries with improved knowledge and skills on integrated landscape management? and respective sub-indicators will allow to track the progress. There will be Beneficiaries Surveys carried out at project start, mid-point and project-end to capture how many trainings, events, workshops and other capacity building and KM&L activities delivered under the project and their impacts. Respective indicator on Beneficiaries Surveys is also part of the RF.

Annex E: Project map and coordinates

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/02/2023: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response Thank you.

Annex G: GEF Budget template

8.8 a) Is the GEF budget template attached and appropriately filled out incl. items such as the executing partner for each budget line?

b) Are the activities / expenditures reasonably and accurately charged to the three identified sources (Components, M&E and PMC)?

c) Are TORs for key project staff funded by GEF grant and/or co-finance attached?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/02/2023: Yes.

12/19/2023: Please address the following comments:

- For several positions (Director or Coordinator, Technical Coordinator, as well as project field coordinators and component coordinators), the project will finance procurement, FM, M&E, technical (for example, forestry, wetland, protected area management, ecotourism), and environmental and social/gender specialists] are charged to PMC. However, some of these positions should be changed to either M&E, or to the project components [(forestry, wetland, protected area management, ecotourism), and environmental and social/gender specialists)]. Please provide these positions itemized with specific costs per each of the following: project components, M&E and PMC.

- International and Domestic Travel is charged to PMC. However, as this travel is ?as needed, directly related to the major activities.?, it should be charged to the Project?s components.

- As currently presented, unspecified ?costs associated with project operation on a day-to-day basis related to technical and M&E activities and administrative management, among others.? Is not an eligible activity to be charged to PMC. Please amend / specify.

01/16/2024: Addressed.

Agency Response

Thank you.

- The team has Updated the estimated budget of staff positions/ specialists respectively for each component as we initially considered those as part of TA costs, etc. The estimates are based on the expected staff time over the project lifetime. Technical Coordinators/ specialists will fall under respective components (forest, wetland, work with community), M&E specialist under M&E, and core Project Implementation Unit staff under PMC.

- Travel budget has been removed from the PMC and updated the budget lines under relevant components.

- Other costs have been removed from PMC, the team added budget for Office Supply with a description.

Annex H: NGI Relevant Annexes

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

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

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request n/a

Agency Response

Additional Annexes

9. GEFSEC DECISION

9.1.GEFSEC Recommendation

Is the project recommended for approval

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/02/2023: No. Please address comments made in this review.

Please note that we were unable to review the budget during this review while we are constituting the work program for the next Council meeting. This will be done after the re-submission.

12/19/2023: Agency has addressed comments made in the first review. Additional comments were made on the budget table in this review, please address. Please also insert responses to Council comments and STAP in Annex I in the portal template.

01/16/2024: Yes. Program Manager recommends CEO endorsement.

9.2 Additional Comments to be considered by the Agency during the inception and implementation phase (please confirm Agency has provided adequate responses to comments from GEF Secretariat and GEF Agencies, and responses to comments from Council at work program inclusion and the Convention Secretariat and STAP at PIF/PFD stage, as applicable).

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

9.3 Review Dates

	CEO Approval	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review	12/2/2023	
Additional Review (as necessary)	12/19/2023	
Additional Review (as necessary)	1/16/2024	
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		