

Development of an integrated system to promote the natural capital in the drylands of Mauritania

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

10444

Countries

Mauritania

Project Name

Development of an integrated system to promote the natural capital in the drylands of Mauritania

Agencies

IUCN

Date received by PM

12/2/2021

Review completed by PM

10/31/2022

Program Manager

Jean-Marc Sinnassamy

Focal Area

Land Degradation

Project Type

FSP

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

October 28, 2022

Addressed.

October 14, 2022

- Since the last review, there are new Biodiversity and Land Degradation Rio Markers to provide. They are not mandatory at this stage, but you cannot select the option "no contribution 0" under LD. It is a LD project! Please, complete, or remove.

- The other points are addressed.

August 19, 2022

- Project information: "sector": this item is only applicable to projects with CCM resources (please, read the pop up information); remove the mention of "mixed & others.

- Rio Marker: referring to the project objective without a clear mention of CCM, it is not obvious to classify the projects as a CCM 2. Please, revise.

- Title, LoE, LD objectives: OK

January 11, 2022

- Please, confirm the project title between the PIF and the project document:

?Development of an integrated system to promote the natural capital in the drylands of Mauritania? versus ?Development of an integrated system to promote the neutrality of land degradation in three arid regions of Mauritania?.

- Provide a revised letter of endorsement signed by the GEF OFP.

- There is a text in the portal to explain/justify the change, but the text does not seem complete.

- The project document makes reference to LD1.1, LD1.4, and LD2.5. Please make information consistent with the portal. It seems better to focus the project on LD1.1.

Agency Response

24 October 2022

We understand that as it is only required for GEF-8 projects onward to marker projects under the Biodiversity and Land Degradation Rio Marker, this GEF-7 project is not required to provide a mark under these markers. The CEO Endorsement template for GEF-7 project has yet to reflect this. We have liaised with the GEF IT team and understand that this is being sorted out for this project and there is no further action our end.

28 Sept 2022

?mixed & others? changed and portal updated.

Rio Marker has been updated to CCM1.

July 26, 2022

Final title: ?Development of an integrated system to promote the natural capital in the drylands of Mauritania?

The LOE signed by the OFP is attached, reflecting the original title in the PIF, aligned with the CEO endorsement request as part of this submission.

The portal has been updated

PPG review underline alignment of the project with the three programming directions LD1.1, LD1.4 and LD2.5 (see **CEA Part A and CEO ?1a3 GEF focal area strategies**).

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

October 14, 2022

Addressed.

August 19, 2022

**Thanks for the significant improvements.
However, please address the following
issues:**

Component 2

Output 2.1.1: Regional Coordination of LDN multi-sectoral activities: : Please, revise the formulation to better reflect the expected result.

Output 2.1.3: Improve Local planning on LDN: Please, revise the formulation to better reflect the expected result.

Component 3

Output 3.1.2: Improving community rights on tenure for access to natural resources for women and marginalized groups: Please, revise the formulation to better reflect the expected result.

Output 3.3.1: Identifying opportunities of PSE: Please, revise the formulation to better reflect the expected result.

Output 3.3.2: Develop a self-sustainable LDN mining sector mechanism: we agree with the intent, but please revise the formulation to better reflect the expected result.

Output 3.3.3: Development of bankable projects for the LDN Fund: to be clarified; to be reformulated.

Component 4

Output 4.1.3: Regional exchange: Please, revise the formulation to better reflect the expected result.

Gender issues in the result framework

- We take note of the efforts in the Gender strategy to involve women and other vulnerable groups in land restoration activities and the monitoring of a disaggregated information between men and women (output 2.1.1, 2.2.2, 2.3, 2.1.4, 2.1.5, 3.1.2, 3.1.3, 3.1.4?). However, in the result framework itself, 'Women and marginalized groups' is only included in the output 3.1.2. Please, see if you can do better in the formulation of other outputs to include gender issues, especially in the component 3.
- Please, find a way to include gender issues in the formulation of at least one of the outputs under the component 4 on KM.

January 11, 2022

Table B

- The formulation of some outputs is unclear, not reflecting the value for money, or not expressing the expected results. Either it is a question of formulation, or a need for further explanation: 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.3.1, 2.1.2, 3.1.2, 3.1.4.
- Components 1 and 4: the level of cofinancing is very low, to not say anecdotic, giving the impression that the GEF project is stand-alone. Please, clarify and if possible, correct.
- In the prodoc, the list of activities is missing in the result framework (p64-65). Please complete
- Output 1.1.1 : We can understand the interest from the DEPREM for 1) the Establishment and equipment of the observatory, 2) Staffing the laboratory. However, you need to demonstrate the added value of the GEF on the top of an existing situation, with baseline and cofinancing opportunities. There is no way that the GEF can finance

these activities from scratch, without a better visibility of additionality and sustainability. Please, revise.

Agency Response

28 Sept 2022

Outputs have been revised to better reflect both activity and expected output:

Output 2.1.1: Increased awareness and coherency on LDN multisectorial cooperation through regular Regional Coordination

Output 2.1.3: Local management plans are elaborated integrating LDN processes and mechanisms

Output 3.1.2: Secured tenure rights for women and marginazed groups on project investment areas through community leader sensitization and local agreements

Output 3.3.1: Pilots PSE local mechanisms structured through participatory and inclusive approach with AGPO and NFZ

Output 3.3.2: Guidance reports elaborated on developing a self-sustainable LDN mining sector mechanism

Output 3.3.3: A project proposal gender sensitive andeligible for the LDN Fund is elaborated.

Output 4.1.3: LDN and gender lessons learned are spread among regional actors through GCF/NAP regional exchange

Gender.

Gender formulation has been integrated under

Output 3.1.1: Adoption and implementation of local agreement for inclusive and participatory sustainable use of shared natural resources by communities and stronger involvement of women and marginalized groups

Output 3.2.3: Financing production and IGA of products participating to a sustainable land management and targeting women and marginalized groups

The following C4 outputs have been changed to explicitly underline gender and marginalized groups targets:

Outputs:

Output 4.1.1: Publications on LDN and gender aspects lessons learned

Output 4.1.2: Inclusive National and Wilaya knowledge sharing on LDN best practices and gender mainstreaming

Output 4.1.3: LDN and gender lessons learned are spread among regional actors through GCF/NAP regional exchange

Indicator:

Notes on LDN and Gender published

July 26, 2022

Project outputs and activities have been modified substantially and activities description has been detailed (**see ProDoc ?4.3 and CEO ?1a3 Project structure changes**)

Project budget table has been updated and the project will deeply rely on MEDD resources: equipment, human resources, ProPEP programme (**see ProDoc ?8 p.111 and Appendix 5**). Limited local actors in the Arid zones, high will to support LDN international commitment under UNCDD and specific GEF requirement on knowledge management and project coordination will nevertheless lead to a relatively low cofinancing level on C4 and C5. GEF Financing are respectively for each components: C1: 39%; C2: 32%; C3: 37%; C4: 78%; PMC: 25%

Overall Project GEF Financing is 34%. **see ProDoc ?8 p.111.**

The Cofinancing rationale for operational components were to identify key activities under MEDD and partners activities which are directly related to LDN but would need to be strengthen: (i) C1 rationale is to support policy and coordination among central level to integrate LDN, as well as reinforcing ecosystem approach within the assessment methodology of Field DREDD and observatory staffs; (ii) C2 rationale is to build on existing investment on land restoration, and reinforcing the coordination among actors, local assessment, landscape and watershed level intervention. It also increases the consideration of traditional knowledge and local biodiversity (iii) C3 rationale is to ensure sustainable management of ecosystem and land through local community structure and participatory approach support (PRAGA), as well as raising interest of private sector for individual and companies through innovative mechanism (PSE, etc.).

Prodoc has been updated with the full description of activities and a complete result framework (**see ProDoc ?4.3**)

Atar Observatory was established by the REPSAHEL project with limited resource. MEDD dedicates human resource, informatic equipment, and data supply from others

MEDD departments for the observatory functionality on Tier 1 and Tier 2 analysis. Its inclusion within the DPREM and the provision of an annual functional budget ensure the sustainability of the investment. GEF resource will provide core expertise for ecosystem approach and field assessment training definition, and specific valuable material for Tier 3 analysis (meteorological and laboratory equipment) (see ProDoc ?4.3 Outcome 1.2 and ?4.7.2 p.97)

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response NA

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

October 28, 2022

Addressed.

October 14, 2022

- We take note of the breakdown from the different entities under the Ministry of Environment now included in the annex. However, it is not clear who provided this breakdown: is this breakdown validated by the Ministry of Environment? Is it an information that the consultants discussed with the Ministry? Please clarify.

- The other items are addressed.

August 19, 2022

- The letter of cofinancing from the MEDD is in French: please, provide an informal translation in English.
- We do not find any evidence to justify the breakdown for the cofinancing resources brought up by the Ministry of Environment and covering the first five lines in the table C (MEDD, DPREM, DPCIE, ProPEP, and GCF/NAP). Please, clarify, and provide the right evidence.
- Moreover, the letter mentions an amount of \$5,527,216 while the total of the five first lines makes 5,488,804. Please, clarify.
- The letter from the Ministry of Agriculture is in French. Please, provide an informal English translation.
- The letter from the Ministry of Agriculture mentions an amount of \$1,971,233 while the table C includes \$671,200 from the PARIIS project and \$1,299,971 from the PDDO, for a total of \$1,971,171. Please, clarify.
- We do not fully understand the nature of the PARIIS and the PDDO projects mentioned in letter from the Ministry of Agriculture. Please, clarify.
- Also, please explain why the PARIIS is considered as donor agency/public investment/Investment mobilized and the PDDO recipient country government/public investment/Investment mobilized
- You did not define the notion of investment mobilized under the table C. Please, complete.

January 11, 2022

- GEF projects cannot be cofinanced by other GEF projects: GEF is mentioned in the lines 2, 3, and 4. Please, clarify.
- Cofinancing opportunities can only be used for one project: please, confirm that the proposed cofinancing amounts have not been used by other GEF projects.
- No letter of cofinancing is available in the portal. Please, provide them.
- The cofinancing in the result framework and the table C is \$7,423,820. In the text, the explanations provided about the changes and decreases mention \$13,748,930. Please, make information coherent in the portal and between the portal and the prodoc.

Agency Response

24 October 2022

We confirm that exchanges have been ongoing since the very beginning of the project development process with the MEDD and the DPREM Director with a clear consensus on: (i) GEF finance with a role of incremental costs and therefore strongly building on MEDD activities and resources (logistics, human, etc.); (ii) GEF financing rules, especially on PMC and the need of strong MEDD contribution to ensure project implementation (logistic, etc.); (iii) co-financing entities, services and program, their role in the project and activities which are the baseline for the current project; (iv) Budget from MEDD, services and program to ensure project implementation.

28 Sept, 2022

Cofinancing letter from MEDD has been translated and annexed

Detailed breakdown of resources has been annexed to the cofinancing letter

The Financing letter amount is the correct one. The error has been corrected in Budget

Letter of Ministry of Agriculture has been translated and annexed.

The Financing letter amount is the correct one. The error has been corrected in the Budget

This was a mistake, PARIIS is now considered as a Recipient Country Government.

Both PARIIS and PDDO will support the project by putting the baseline investment for livelihoods diversification (waterpoint access for production, palmgroove creation and irrigation scheme creation and equipment). GEF will build on these investment to further emphasize the ecosystem approach, working on socio-environmental issues such as salinization, integrated practices, fodder production, etc.

Notion on investment mobilized in table C as been put in reference for each source of cofinancing.

July 26, 2022

GEF projects has been withdrawn (**see CEO Part C p3**).

Private sector negotiations did not lead to official cofinancing opportunities. Current proposal defines a cofinancing of US\$ 7,459,975 for a GEF budget of US\$ 3,913,627. (**see CEO Part B p2**)

Cofinancing opportunities have been checked, as for example Tasiast financing has been removed as already mobilized within AMSTRA.

All cofinancing letters have been integrated to the proposal (PDDO, PARIIS, MEDD)
(see ProDoc Appendix 8)

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

August 19, 2022

Addressed.

January 11, 2022

No. We are not sure that the GEF grant is correctly associated to cofinancing to meet the project objectives. These doubts are reinforced by the number of questions we have on the budget (see item below on the Annex E).

Agency Response

July 26, 2022

Project overall incremental costs reasoning has been restructured to ensure proper association of GEF cofinancing and meet project objectives (see **CEO 1a4 and ProDoc ?4.7.1 and ?4.7.2**)

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

August 19, 2022

Addressed.

January 11, 2022

No. Please see the Annex C in the portal. Please, provide.

Agency Response

July 26, 2022

Annex C has been updated (see CEO Annex C)

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

October 14, 2022

Addressed. We take note that the carbon calculation is a rough estimate. We will expect confirmation with better tools or models during project implementation. Please, confirm.

August 19, 2022

- The target under the indicator 3 (restoration) is 500 ha, while the breakdown is 940 ha (3.1), 500 ha (3.2), and 66,000 ha (3.3). Please, correct.
- The target under the indicator 4 (area of landscapes under improved practices) is 50,000 ha, representing areas under SLM (4.3). Please, explain the difference with the 70,000 ha targeted at PIF level.
- At PIF level, the indicator 4 was considering 70,000 ha of terrestrial landscapes under SLM (4.4), a classical indicator used for LD project. You changed to 50,000 ha under 4.1 (area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity). This is a significant change that needs to be explained and justify.
- The result framework (annex A) includes indicators in tCO₂e. If confirmed, please consider using the indicator 6 on carbon.
- Please see below the comment related to STAP comments. It seems that the table of indicators has not correctly been updated. Please, correct.

January 11, 2022

- The target under the 4.3 indicator on SLM has decreased from 70,000 ha to 6,600 ha - It is more than ten times less. Please, explain and justify.
- At the same time there are elements in the budget for much more than 6,600 ha: aerial sowing for 65,000 ha; dune fixation: 1,000 ha; RNA on 500 ha... Please, revise and make information consistent.
- Please, explain and justify a decrease from 5,460 to 1,500 beneficiaries.

Agency Response

24 October 2022

We confirm a baseline will be established at the beginning of the project, including Exact Software running. (cf. **ProDoc** page 90. Activity 4.2.1.1 GEBs Baseline establishment). As expected in the above activity, project will work from national statistic and local data to enhance Tier2 level analysis on SOC changes, using Exact and therefore reinforcing the current rough estimate.

28 sept, 2022

This is a mistake, the annex in the CEO provides for the indicator 3: 67 440ha. Portal has been updated.

The target has been updated to 70 000ha.

(previous response to STAP comment has been updated). These 70 000ha includes the 67 440ha of land restored, as the project will have two activities, either on restoration and on structuring local community management groups for SLM for these 70 000ha.

Total area SLM from table F has also been updated to 70 000ha and remain coherent with the initial PIF number of 79 000ha as the protected area of 9 000ha was not possible to mobilized in the project (Banc d'arguin and NFZ). The project activities have been therefore concentrated under these 70 000ha.

It was a mistake in indicators number. The indicator considered is now 4.3 SLM

We confirm the presence of a carbon indicator as it is one of the 3 sub-indicators for LDN monitoring.

July 26, 2022

This was an error. Indicator 4.3 is 67,440ha (see **CEO Annex A and Annex F** for disaggregation of the indicator). Sustainable land Management are targeted additional 50,000ha through sustainable management by communities (see **CEO Annex F**).

Number of beneficiaries ha been increased to 12,800 since the consideration of a holistic approach on 5 communes. (See **ProDoc ?4.2** objectives goal sand expected impacts)

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
August 19, 2022

Addressed.

January 11, 2022

- We are not disputing the Theory of Change in its main lines.

However, it would be better to focus the environmental diagnosis on the regions targeted by the project to have a chance to understand the starting point of the project rather than including relatively general, if not vague, information on all the country including areas out of the scope of this project. Information related to endemic birds in the Banc d'Arguin or the Monk Seal at Cap Blanc are out of the scope of the project. To be revised.

Agency Response
July 26, 2022

The theory of change has been updated, integrating environmental local barriers (land degradation acceleration, sand encroachment, poor water resources planning, limited knowledge of drylands, lack of institutional and technical capacities, etc) and reinforcing assumption (**see ProDoc Appendix 2**). Detail of Threat, Root Causes and Barrier have also been updated (**See ProDoc ?3.3**)

Local social and environmental information have been integrated, with particular attention on commune of interventions (**See ProDoc ?3.1.2.7 p.35**)

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
August 19, 2022

Addressed.

January 11, 2022

- Please, make the level of information between the portal and the prodoc coherent.

- We would like to also see an analysis of current or recently past GEF and LDCF projects to build this proposal on technical and operational lessons. See notably the GEFID 10176/FAO, 10103/UNEP, 9294/FAO, 5792/WB under the SAWAP/GGWI, 5580/UNEP.

Agency Response

July 26, 2022

Portal has been updated.

GEF on-going and precedents projects have been included in the analysis contributing to the project rationale (see **ProDoc 3.5.2**). lessons learned and collaboration have been emphasis to build on existing GEF knowledge.

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

August 19, 2022

Addressed.

January 11, 2022

- To be discussed at the next round with a complete project information package

Agency Response

July 26, 2022

N/A

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

August 19, 2022

Addressed.

January 11, 2022

- To be discussed at the next round with a complete project information package

Agency Response

July 26, 2022

N/A

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

August 19, 2022

Addressed.

January 11, 2022

- To be discussed at the next round with a complete project information package.

Agency Response

July 26, 2022

N/A

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

October 14, 2022

Addressed.

August 19, 2022

The text in the portal under the title "**1a5 global environmental benefits**" should help justifying the selection of the different indicators and the fixed targets. Please, revise. Comment also applicable to the project document (4.1 Project rationale and expected global environmental benefits: a text is missing to justify the different targets under the core indicators reflecting the Global Environment Benefits).

January 11, 2022

- To be discussed at the next round with a complete project information package

Agency Response

28 Sept, 2022

The three GEB have been further defined (Carbon sequestration, SLM and Beneficiaries), explaining the rationale to target from an ecosystem approach the overall beneficiaries of the area of intervention, as well as considering the key potential restorable area in the oasis context, where diversification and economic sustainability is possible (either through specific value chain development of PSE, etc.)

July 26, 2022

N/A

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

August 19, 2022

Addressed.

January 11, 2022

- To be discussed at the next round with a complete project information package

Agency Response

July 26, 2022

N/A

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

A map is available in the document with the geographical coordinates of the three targeted landscapes:

Adrar wilaya coordinates?: 20° 30' North, 10° 04' West

Inchri coordinates 20° 04' North, 15° 04' West

Daklet Nouadhibou coordinates 20° 57' North, 16° 14' West

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

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

August 19, 2022

Addressed.

January 11, 2022

Stakeholders

Please, provide the dates and nature of meetings with the different stakeholder groups (closed meetings, open consultation, workshop, number of participants, etc).

Agency Response

July 26, 2022

A detail of the PPG Stakeholder consultation process has been updated, including the methodology, consultation sites, actors met and results from consultations. The mission report is available within a table in annex of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (**see ProDoc Appendix 12 Annex C**).

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

October 14, 2022

Addressed.

August 19, 2022

Addressed, but please see the item related to the result framework - there are two comments related to gender.

January 11, 2022

- To be discussed at the next round with a complete project information package, including a gender action plan.

Agency Response

28 sept, 2022

See above on all outputs rephrasing and including gender aspects.

July 26, 2022

Project includes a Gender analysis and a Gender Action Plan (see **CEO ?3. and ProDoc Appendix 13**).

Project integrates gender sex-disaggregated indicators (see **CEO Annex A**) and identify key activities to target gender barriers in LD (see **CEO ?3.**)

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
August 19, 2022

We take note of the changes since the PIF, the responses from MCM and Tasiast, and the focus on the local private sector.

Addressed.

January 11, 2022

- To be discussed at the next round with a complete project package and further information on the Small and Medium Enterprises.

Agency Response

July 26, 2022

Project reinforce local private sector involvement by targeting individual for producing activities, IGA and Green SMEs) which will work directly (land and water uses) or indirectly (value chain strengthen) on LDN. Innovative approach such as PSE will be developed to raise interest of additional private sector (see **CEO ?4**)

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
August 19, 2022

Addressed.

January 11, 2022

COVID-19 situation: we will need a more robust analysis of risks related to the COVID-19 situation with an understanding of immediate problems and potential long-term opportunities. See the GEF template for further details
(https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/GEF_COVID_Project_Design_Review_Considerations_20200925.pdf)

Agency Response

July 26, 2022

COVID 19 situation analysis and risk is identified in the risk table and detail are provided (see **ProDoc Appendix 17**).

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
August 19, 2022

Addressed.

January 11, 2022

Project Implementation

- Both in the portal and the portal, it seems there is a confusion between the GEF notions of Implementing and Executing agencies. See below. Please, make information coherent between the portal and the prodoc.
- We take note of the changes with the PIF and that a new governmental entity, DIPREM, will replace the CNOEZA. It seems a significant difference to change an agency by a Ministerial Direction. A justification and analysis would be needed.
- Is an assessment of technical and financial competencies available to reassure about the management and use of this significant GEF grant of \$4.4 million?

- The text under the section 6 'institutional arrangement and coordination' makes reference to several annexes all named XX: work plan, site selection process, IUCN's comparative advantage. We did not find these annexes. Please, provide.
- IUCN is mentioned as 'Executing Agency?', with the acronym IA, which is confusing and referring to 'Implementing Agency?'. Please, clarify. If IUCN is proposed as an Executing Agency, it would be an exception to the normal GEF procedure and would need documentation and letters from the GEF OFP. Further in the text, DEPREM is considered as the Executing Agency (EA)? Please, clarify.

Agency Response

July 26, 2022

The IUCN will be the Partner Agency of the project and will oversee the project and provide the technical assistance necessary to achieve the objective of the project. Therefore, IUCN will be responsible for supervising the project to ensure consistency with GEF and IUCN policies and procedures (see **CEO ?6 and ProDoc ?5.1**).

CNOEZA mandate has been officially integrated within the DPREM. DPREM capacities have been detailed in the ProDoc (human dedicated resource at DPREM and DREDD, Fiduciary knowledge on GEF fund management through MEDD support) (see **CEO ?6 ProDoc ?3.1.3.1.1**.)

Institutional annexes are available in the ProDoc (see **ProDoc Appendices 4, 6, 14 and 17**)

IUCN is the Implementing Agency (IA) and DPREM is the Executing Agency (EA)

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

August 19, 2022

Addressed.

January 11, 2022

National priorities

- As the GEF project is financed by the LD focal area, we are mainly interested in figuring out how the project fits with the National Action Programme under UNCCD, as

well as the recent LDN targets. A minimum of analysis would have been welcome rather than a list of documents and plans. Please, revise.

- It seems that the LDN targets are included in a technical document without a strong political commitment: Couldn't it be a complementary objective of this project to raise the profile of the LDN targets and obtain a higher and cross-sector endorsement?

Agency Response

July 26, 2022

Project alignment with national priorities on LDN have been integrated (**see ProDoc ?3.1.3.2.2 and ProDoc ?4.5)**)

LDN targets technical document define a preliminary baseline but does not define proper LDN indicators, targets and mechanisms, and is not yet politically validated. Project includes an update of this preliminary report, including raising of LDN targets. It is indirectly related to Project objective as it contributes to the 'enabling environment on LDN'. Cross-sector endorsement will be indirectly managed through the intersectoral CNEDD and CTEDD committees' mobilization (**see ProDoc ?4.3 Output 1.1.2)**)

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

Yes

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

October 14, 2022

Addressed.

August 19, 2022

Not addressed.

Please confirm the risk classification and provide the adequate documentation.

January 11, 2022

Please, provide the environmental and social safeguards.

Agency Response

28 sept, 2022

Risk categorization is confirmed as 'moderate'?

The IUCN ESMS has been updated and is provided in Annex of the proposal. (**see separate ESMS screening annex**).

July 26, 2022

A ESMP is included in the project document (**see ProDoc 4.11**). The IUCN screening E&S safeguard checklist is also provided (**see ProDoc Appendix 11**).

IUCN is finalising an ESMS screening for this project and based on this a more elaborated ESMP will follow with the next round of reviews.

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

August 19, 2022

Addressed.

January 11, 2022

There is a budgeted M&E plan:

- Please, clarify the purpose of a baseline study of \$40,000 at project inception? It is pretty unusual and does not make any sense.
- The costs of the MTE and TE are each \$35,000 in the table. However, there are \$72,000 for four consultants. Their role is not clear. Please, justify.

- Please, confirm the total costs (last line of the table).

Agency Response

July 26, 2022

Overall budget has been updated (see **ProDoc Appendix 5**).

M&E Plan has been updated with regards to state of art on GEF project M&E. Baseline study has been aligned with other country project costs (US\$ 4 000 at inception). MTE, TE and Consultant costs were an error and have been updated (see **ProDoc Appendix 5**).

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

August 19, 2022

Addressed.

January 11, 2022

Benefits: the text makes reference to 'a target group of the project' of 181,545 people, including 103,857 men and 77,687 women. Please, explain these numbers in comparison with the targets under the core indicator 11.

Agency Response

July 26, 2022

Project will support 12 800 direct beneficiaries, of which 50% are expected to be women, which represent the population of the 5 targeted communes. The project will indirectly benefit for the 3 Wilayas population through better strategic tools (planification and coordination among actors) (see **ProDoc ?3.4.1**)

Annexes

Are all the required annexes attached and adequately responded to?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

October 14, 2022

Addressed. We will let the control quality check if the laying out in the portal is acceptable.

August 19, 2022

Annex A: Project result framework

- The column 'baseline' and 'Targets' in the portal are not readable. Please, revise their width.
- As it is the practice, please include the baseline and the targets related to the different indicators (it seems the case in the tables in the project document, but we cannot read the tables under the current layout in the portal).
- Please, ensure that the targets are coherent with those included in the table of indicators (see indicators 3, 4, 11, and maybe 6).
- The indicator 6 could also be considered. Please, note that the baseline is expected at CEO endorsement (and not during project implementation as written in the document). We may consider some flexibility about the information provided on carbon, as it is a recommended indicator, very complementary to those expressed in areas (ha), but not mandatory for LD projects.

Budget

- The GEF budget includes 'PMU indemnity for operational component officer (C1, C2, and C3)'. We are not sure to well figure out what this indemnity covers. It is probably a question of language, but please, check the guidelines on the GEF project cycle: 'Government salaries remain listed as ineligible expenses, to which associated benefits, bonuses and emoluments are added for clarity'. Under the current formulation, these items do not seem eligible.
- Fiduciary external audit (O.4.2.2, 16,400\$) should not be covered by M&E, but by pmc. Please, correct (see p19, item 17, Guidelines on the GEF project cycle policy).
- What is the purpose and the justification of an intern audit for an amount of \$67,200 (taken by the cofinancing)?
- Vehicles: We understand from the responses that four vehicles would be needed: 2 provided by the DPREM and one by the Propep. However, based on the available budget, it seems that no vehicle would be covered by the GEF grant. This is indeed the preferred option (no vehicle from the GEF grant and contribution from cofinancing). Please, confirm.
- Please, justify the inclusion of Office supplies in the component 1? (\$2,000)

- We understand that there are \$349,162 of travels? \$171,094 from the GEF and \$178,068 from cofinancing? Please, justify this relatively high need for travel.

January 11, 2022

- ANNEX A: PROJECT RESULTS FRAMEWORK: the proposed table is getting out from the margins. Please, adjust the table.

- Annex E budget: The proposed budget in the portal is not readable. Please, provide a readable budget within the existing margins.

Annex E budget:

- The proposed budget in the portal is not readable. Please, provide a readable budget withing the existing margins.
- In the excel table, the budget seems incomplete: the last column (responsible entity) is empty. Please, complete.
- Line 11 to 15: It is potentially interesting to see the role of cofinancing for water infrastructures. Please, explain.
- The formulation and costs of certain activities raise questions about the value for money. In addition some very similar activities are included twice, showing a possible duplication. Please, clarify and correct:
 - o A1.2.1.1 (redrafting the LDN program) for \$12,000 and A1.2.2.2 ?Integration of LDN in Projects & Programs also for \$12,000;
 - o 3.1.5.1: SLM pland for \$125,000 and 3.1.5.3 Strategic Investment Framework for SLM for \$111,000
 - o 4.2.2.2 ?identify best practices? for \$61,000 and 4.4.2 for 18,000
- The budget lines from 38 to 61 are for consultants, for a total of \$643,678. The number of consultants seem high for this project, and especially the need for international consultants is not fully clear (to develop a plan for each Wilaya? To ?update? a strategic investment framework? To identify best SLM practices?). Please, justify them and pay attention to the value for money.
- The purpose of some budget lines for consultants is not clear: line 38: \$21,400 for an international consultant; line 50: 4 consultants for \$78,000;
- There are three specialists budgeted under the pmc which terms of reference are not available. Please, clarify their missions and why they are budgeted under pmc.
- Provide the terms of reference for each position (technical positions and project management).
- Line 82: \$82,000 are budgeted or logistics: please, clarify.

- Line 86: Activity A.1.3.1.2. Creation of management committees for NR management: \$72,000: please, explain the use of this budget and the sustainability of the approach.

- There is a strict policy for vehicles: First, you need to demonstrate the status of the existing fleet of executing partners and cofinancing partners. Depending on the situation, you need to explain the need for a vehicle and estimate its costs (purchase and maintenance). The role of cofinancing is preferred for this kind of expenses. Please, clarify.

Agency Response

28 sept, 2022

Annex A:

Portal has been updated

We updated indicators in table F and Annex F to make them coherent.

We noted your flexibility and decided to proceed with this indicator as it is a sub-indicator of LDN indicator under SDG 15.

Budget.

We consider ?per diems? budget for field for the key project positions which are not covered under specific activities. Lines have been updated accordingly

Fiduciary external audit has been considered under PMC

Internal auditor has been removed, as IUCN and MEDD are used to work with GEF financing.

No car are considered under the GEF grant (previous response has been updated)

Office supply in C1 have been deleted

The Travel is integrating trip costs either airplane, cars, per diems for specific activities of project. It is high as the following activities are key and rely essentially on the presence of people on the field. Importance of MEDD co-financing is explained by the mobilisation of MEDD in this approach. Here are the main technical reason for such high travel costs:

(i) Annual field involvement of the overall steering committee for a strong linkage between high level and field level; (ii) Heavy mobilization of civil agent, and national consultant to a long field training to ensure right implementation of the ecosystem approach (90 peoples for more than 1 month with additional supervision), which

include both material and human mobilisation; (iii) Specific international and national consultancy on IT, LDN, etc, including the international travel costs.

July 26, 2022

Annex A has been updated according to the Guidelines on the GEF Project and Program Cycle Policy.

Budget file has been updated (**see ProDoc Appendix 5 and excel file**)

GEF Cofinancing on Water infrastructures will be punctual support of adapted infrastructures (drystones weirs and gabion) in addition to the existing planned Filter bunds under MEDD. Therefore, it will support an integrated and landscape level approach as well as more efficient investment through proper infrastructure in confront to the type of environmental stressors. (**see ProDoc 74.3 and Appendix 5**)

Overall Plan budgets have been split and updated (**see ProDoc 74.3 and Appendix 5**)

Overall Budget lines for consultants have been updated (**see ProDoc 74.3 and Appendix 5**)

Project budget has been updated considering support from one international consultant specialized on the LDN Scientific Framework and Ecosystem approach within the Counterbalancing mechanism. National consultants will provide assistance in updating and finalizing LDN target and will have specific expertise in social and political mobilisation to be used within the extraordinary session of CNEDD and CTEDD, as well as mobilising coordinators and staffs from environment and agriculture programs (**see ProDoc 74.3 and Appendix 5**)

Project staff ToR have been integrated (**see ProDoc Appendix 14**).

Logistics budget has been slip and detailed.

Creation of management committees for NR management have been split between international consultancy on social mobilization to ensure proper inclusiveness of consultation and process (gender, youth, users of resources), and consultation costs (**see ProDoc Appendix 14**).

Out of 4 vehicles needed by the project, the DPREM will provide 2 functional vehicles and the ProPEP will provide 1 vehicle which is affected to the DREDD of Atar. PPG reinforce the need of an additional GEF financing to ensure proper implementation of the project : (i) Existing vehicles resources from DPREM and DREDD have already been mobilized and will support project intervention in its day-to day intervention and collaboration with DREDD and others ministries without creating handicap for DREDD

and DPREM mandate realization; (ii) Project is working in arid context, with degraded roads and difficult access to communities and vehicles will be rapidly degraded and non-functional; (iii) Dryland Project and GEF incremental reasoning costs and intervention rely on external expertise to ensure proper implementation of LDN, gender considerations, and inclusiveness which may handicap day to day actions from DREDD civil servant agent; (iv) Limited actors in the regions limits the additional opportunities in mobilising vehicles financing.

Project Results Framework

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
October 14, 2022

Addressed.

August 19, 2022

See above.

January 11, 2022

- To be discussed at the next round with a complete project information package

Agency Response
July 26, 2022

N/A

GEF Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
August 19, 2022

Addressed.

January 11, 2022

At PIF level, the following comments were made in anticipation of the project document. These comments have not been addressed yet:

- Confirm cofinancing;

- Confirm core indicators;
- Confirm the connection with the UNCCD NAP and LDN targets;
- Provide a comprehensive risk analysis;

Agency Response

July 26, 2022

Cofinancing are Confirmed (**see ProDoc Appendix 8**)

Core Indicators have been updated (**see CEO Annex G**)

Linkages with LDN targets and UNCCD NAP are provided (**see CEO Annex A impact indicators and ProDoc ?3.1.3.2.2**)

Council comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

August 19, 2022

Addressed.

January 11, 2022

Please, respond the comments from Germany and US.

Agency Response

July 26, 2022

please see above and Annex B

STAP comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

October 14, 2022

Addressed.

August 19, 2022

- Thanks for the table of responses to STAP comments.

- Please, check the responses made under the STAP comment #5: the responses provided on the targets do not match with the tables of indicators: 67,440 ha under SLM, 235,000 tons CO2e? If you confirm these numbers as it seems the case in the responses provided to GEFSEC comments, it means that the table of indicators has not been updated the right way. Please, correct.

January 11, 2022

Please, respond the STAP comments.

Agency Response

July 26, 2022

please see above and Annex B

Convention Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

Other Agencies comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

CSOs comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

Status of PPG utilization

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

August 19, 2022

Addressed.

January 11, 2022

- To be provided in the complete project information package.

Agency Response

July 26, 2022

please see CEO Annex C

Project maps and coordinates

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request Addressed.

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

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 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 NA

Agency Response

GEFSEC DECISION

RECOMMENDATION

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

November 14, 2022

Addressed. The project is technically cleared and recommended for Council consultation.

October 28, 2022

Addressed. The project is technically cleared and recommended for Council consultation.

Please, address the three following points raised by the Quality Control:

1) There is a 1 USD difference between PIF and CEO endorsement. Please request the agency to revert to the numbers approved at PIF stage.

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

Agency	Trust Fund	Country	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Amount(\$)	Fee(\$)	Total(\$)
IUCN	GET	Mauritania	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation	3,913,626	352,226	4,265,852.00
Total GEF Resources(\$)					3,913,626.00	352,226.00	4,265,852.00

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

Agency	Trust Fund	Country	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Amount(\$)	Fee(\$)	Total(\$)
IUCN	GET	Mauritania	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation	3,913,627	352,226	4,265,853.00
Total Grant Resources(\$)					3,913,627.00	352,226.00	4,265,853.00

2) The budget is off margins, please request the agency to make sure the table fits within the Portal margins. If not, once circulated Council members will not be able to review the budget. Same comment applies to Annex A (results framework). The column of responsible entity is missed ? please ask the Agency to include it.

ANNEX E: PROJECT BUDGET TABLE

Please attach a project budget table.

Items	GEF Funding Budget (\$/Year)						Sub Total	Component 4: R&I and Institutional Management		PNC	Total	
	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3			Component 4: R&I and Institutional Management		Component 4: R&I and Institutional Management				
	Subline 1.1	Subline 1.2	Subline 2.1	Subline 2.2	Subline 3.1	Subline 3.2	Subline 3.3	Subline 4.1	Subline 4.2			
	145,526	233,476	119,246	2,073,860	186,776	632,862	16,421	118,886	153,400	276,286	485,368	3,913,627

3) Per the budget table provided above the M&E + KM components = \$270,200. This seems to differ from the budget provided in Section 9: Monitoring and Evaluation (\$296,200). Please request the agency to review.

Project M&E and knowledge management work plan and detailed costed

M&E activity	Description	Frequency	Responsible	Budget (GEF funded)	Budget (Co-financing)
TOTAL indicative COST				US\$ 296 200	US\$ 83 000

October 14, 2022

Please, address the remaining minor issues and the project will be recommended upon receipt of a revised package.

August 19, 2022

The project document has significantly improved. However, the project cannot be recommended yet. Please, check the comments above.

January 11, 2022

The project cannot be recommended yet. Please, submit a complete project information package and respond the comments above.

Review Dates

	Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review	1/11/2022	
Additional Review (as necessary)	8/19/2022	
Additional Review (as necessary)	10/14/2022	

**Secretariat Comment at
CEO Endorsement**

**Response to
Secretariat
comments**

**Additional Review
(as necessary)**

10/28/2022

**Additional Review
(as necessary)**

CEO Recommendation

Brief reasoning for CEO Recommendations