



Sustainable Forest and Rangelands Management in the Dryland Ecosystems of Uzbekistan

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

10367

Countries

Uzbekistan

Project Name

Sustainable Forest and Rangelands Management in the Dryland Ecosystems of Uzbekistan

Agencies

FAO

Date received by PM

6/18/2021

Review completed by PM

11/24/2021

Program Manager

Asha Bobb-Semple

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

12/9/2021:

Cleared.

12/2/2021

Please see follow up comments below.

Expected implementation start already passed - please change Expected Implementation Start Date and End date as appropriate, so the elapsed time will be 60 months.

9/29/2021:

Cleared.

6/25/2021:

Yes

Please select a ?1? for the climate change mitigation RIO Marker.

Agency Response

10 Dec. 2021

No response required

8 Dec 2021

Point taken. Proposed start date will be March 2022 to account for signing of project document and account set up.

29 Oct 2021

No response required

09/16/2021

Rio Marker (CCM) has been set to 1.

Aug 2021

Point taken

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

11/8/2021:

Cleared.

9/29/2021:

See follow up comment below.

-Please ensure to include the targets and indicators in Table B.

-In reference to the follow up comment under Question 6, please ensure the total size of the target area for interventions is reflected in Table B.

6/25/2021:

Yes

Agency Response

18 Nov 2021

No response required

29 Oct 2021

Point taken. Indicators and targets have been included in Table B

Aug 2021

No response required

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

6/25/2021:

N/A

Agency Response

29 Oct 2021

No response required

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

12/13/2021:

Cleared.

12/9/2021:

Not fully. Please see below the changes to be made.

- ? State committee on forestry: change 'public investment' to 'in-kind'.
- ? 2nd line ministry of Agriculture: change 'public investment' to 'in-kind'.
- ? Last line ministry of Agriculture: change 'grant' to 'public investment'.

12/2/2021:

Please see follow up comments below.

-Ministry of Agriculture: please change 'grant' to 'public investment'.

9/29/2021:

Cleared.

6/25/2021:

-The FAO letter does not correspond to the information entered in the portal. The portion of co-financing assigned as in-kind and cash is different. Please revise where appropriate.

Agency Response

10 Dec 2021

The following changes were made:

- State committee on forestry: 'public investment' changed to 'in-kind'.
- 2nd line ministry of Agriculture: change 'public investment' changed to 'in-kind'.
- Last line ministry of Agriculture: change 'grant' changed to 'public investment'

8 Dec 2021

Point taken. Government co-financing is defined as 'public investment'

29 Oct 2021

No response required

Aug 2021

Point taken. FAO's contribution includes \$900,000 in investment mobilized (grants) and \$100,000 in-kind, for a total of \$1 million USD. This is reflected in the portal.

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

12/13/2021:

Cleared.

12/9/2021:

Thank you for the changes made, please see follow up comments below.

-As 'Other non-expendable items' and 'General Operating Expenses (GOE)' are tied to project execution, they will need to be covered by PMC. Please adjust the budget accordingly.

-Thank you for the change, please ensure the budget in the M&E table (Table 17) of the portal submission and the uploaded Annex A 2 also aligns with the revised figure. Both documents currently state \$258,880.

12/2/2021:

Please see follow up comments below.

-IT equipment for PMU and OP is charged to project component but not to PMC. Please charge to PMC.

-Please clarify what entails "Other non-expendable items" and "General Operating Expenses (GOE)", which are charged to components (if this is related with the project execution, these should also be charged to PMC, not to project components)

-M&E budget of \$258,880 at 7% of project cost is higher than the average level as recommended in the GEF Guidelines.

11/23/2021:

-The changes to the role of the Project Coordinator and subsequent changes to the budget are cleared.

-Justification from FAO and the national executing agencies have been provided for the purchase of 2 vehicles. Considering that i) the travel distances to access the targeted landscape for the project (in the target districts of the Navoi and Bukhara regions) cover more than 1.2 million hectares, ii) the project will be co-executed by two agencies who will be required to engage in site level activities and iii) the co-financing provided for the project will substantially cover the project activities and the work to achieve the project targets, the request is cleared.

11/8/2021:

- Regarding the PMC costs, please explore other options and retain the PMC portion within the allowable limits indicated in the GEF Policy. You may consider co-financing contribution from FAO to cover the Audits and Spot checks and/or expanding the role of the Project Coordinator (Team Leader) to one that is more technical with responsible tasks under Components 1 and/or 3, and applying a portion of the costs under the components. In the case of the latter, this would need to be clearly indicated in the TOR.

-We note that the budget also includes office equipment and stationery. Please apply these expenses to the PMC.

9/29/2021:

- We unfortunately are unable to locate the justification letter with associated costs in the portal. Please upload. Please note that in keeping with the GEF policy, it is unlikely

that support will be granted for all 3 vehicles. Please explore other options through the co-financing available for the project, for at least 1 or 2 of the vehicles.

-On the PMC, it seems as if the % for the GEF portion stands at 5.8%. In keeping with the GEF policy we expect co-financing to also support PMC costs and we note for this project that there is a significant amount of investment mobilized grant co-financing of \$18.9M. We encourage you to explore other options to cover the PMC and retain the GEF % at the allowable portion.

6/25/2021:

Please see comments below.

-Audits should be covered by the PMC, please adjust.

-Please provide justification for the request for 3 vehicles. In keeping with GEF policy, these costs should be covered by co-financing in the first instance.

-We note that the M&E Expert is not included in the M&E Budget. Please clarify.

Agency Response

10 Dec 2021

-In consultation with the government, funds from GOE and non-expendable have been removed in order to not go beyond the 5% PMC mandated by GEFSEC. Instead funding will be used to support activities on the ground and capacity building.

-M&E table in the portal now totals 212,000

8 Dec 2021

-IT equipment charged to PMC

-?Other non-expendable items? refers for items that may be needed to support field activities (eg. Farming tools). GOE expenses refers to funding to support the establishment of offices both in Taskent and in the field (2 main partners), costs of internet and telephone service, and interpretation services

-M&E budget has been reduced to 5.5%. Only items remaining are Evaluations (\$80,000 as per FAO Independent Evaluation Office guidelines) and a full-time M&E expert (\$2,200 per month).

18 Nov 2021

Project Coordinator costs are now included in components 1 and 3. We have uploaded TORs in the portal to reflect these changes in responsibilities.

Office equipment is now under PMC, and stationary costs have been eliminated (now covered by cofinancing)

PMC is now under 5%.

29 Oct 2021

Letter with the justification has been uploaded in the portal. Nonetheless, the number of cars has been reduced to 2 given that we will have two executing partners for the project. A vehicle purchased by each partner will facilitate the planning of the field missions, providing flexibility needed to align project work with their technical agendas and cofinancing activities. We expect each field mission to involve on average 3 technicians.

Regarding PMC costs at 5.8%, we kindly ask you to reconsider and to authorize the amount proposed which is slightly above the limit established in the GEF policy. In preparing this budget, care has been taken to ensure salaries of the two persons proposed is in line with national standards. Kindly note that PMC only includes the following budget lines:

1- Project Coordinator (Team leader) @\$1,800 per month, for a total of \$108,000.

2- Project assistant, @1,198 per month, for a total of 71,800

3- Audits and spot checks for a total of \$40,000 during the life of the project. These are charged to PMC as mandated by GEF policy and carried out by independent auditing companies.

The significant amount in cofinancing will support the very ambitious targets (in terms of hectares/GEBS) proposed by this project. While close coordination will exist between the GEF project and co-financing programmes, the government has been clear that each

programme (including the GEF) should finance its own team. The government is also providing co-financing in the form of a National Project Director within the Scate Committee on Forestry, as well as a focal point within the Ministry of Agriculture.

09/16/2021

- Audits have been moved to PMC

-M&E expert has been included in M&E budget

-Regarding the purchase of vehicles, please consider that the project will take place in two districts covering more than 1.2million hectares. We will have 2 national partners which are expected to visit project sites (on average) once a month to ensure adequate project support. The cost of renting vehicles is much higher than purchasing them, with the added benefit that at the end of the project, the vehicles will remain in possession of the government. Please see justification letter uploaded with the calculations. Please note that vehicle costs include import fees as they would be purchased by the executing partners.

Aug 2021

-Budget has been adjusted to include Audits in PMC and M&E expert under the M&E budget.

-Justification for the purchase of the 3 vehicles has been uploaded. These will be vehicles purchased by the government (executing partner), so they include taxes and nationalization costs. The main argument is that the 3 executing institutions

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

6/25/2021:

Yes

Agency Response

Aug 2021

No response required

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

12/13/2021:

Cleared.

12/9/2021:

We note that the changes have been made in the uploaded version of the Project Results Framework (Annex A1), however they do not appear in the portal submission of the project. Please make the changes in the portal as well.

12/2/2021:

Please see follow up comments below:

-Please align the CEO-endorsement targets for GEF Indicator 6 (GHG emissions mitigated) between Core Indicator table (6.1m ton) and Annex A ?Project Results Framework? (5.1m ton)

-Annex A ?Project Results Framework?: Gender indicator is only misaligned by 20 people between two tables.

-Annex A ?Project Results Framework? : GEF Indicator 3 ?Land of areas restored? is not reflected in ?Final target? column

-Annex A ?Project Results Framework?: Please specify which indicator is which GEF Core indicator, e.g. by saying ?(GEF Indicator x)? ? this will greatly help us with monitoring results

11/8/2021:

Cleared.

9/29/2021:

-The note below the core indicator table mentions 6.1Mt CO2eq for Core Indicator 6, however the table shows 5.1MtCO2eq. Please correct.

-Please clarify the total hectares of the project target sites. Reference is made to the response under question 5 which refers to 1.2million hectares, however we do not see this information reflected in Table B or explicitly stated in the description of the projects sites. We do note Para 102 makes reference to *Navoi region has eight districts, five cities, and its 942,800 inhabitants occupy the area of 11 million ha. Bukhara region borders Turkmenistan to the South, has 11 districts, and its 1.85 million inhabitants occupy the area of 4.2 million ha.* however please include in the project documentation (portal and project document) the size of the area that will be targeted for interventions under this project.

6/25/2021:

-Please include below the core indicator table additional explanation on targets, other methodologies used.

-Please upload the FAO-Ex ACT tool for Core Indicator 6

Agency Response

10 Dec 2021

Changes have been uploaded in the portal.

8 Dec 2021

- GHG emissions have been corrected to 6.1m tons

- Noted. Gender Indicator 1.3 reduced from 220 to 200 beneficiaries

- Please note that the 13,000 ha restored are distributed between 10,000 with significantly reduced LD, and 3,000 ha reversed as presented in the final target.

- Noted. Indicators have been marked as Core Indicators

18 Nov 2021

No response required

29 Oct 2021

Apologies for the oversight.

-The correct amount is 6.1Mt of CO₂eq avoided/captured. This has been corrected.

-Apologies for the confusion. The 1.2M hectares mentioned in our response to the Project Review Sheet (below) refer to the whole area of the target districts within the Navoi and Bukhara regions. Project activities will take place in 238,000 hectares within the target districts. Project indicators refer to the 238,000 ha. There are no references in the PRODOC to 1.2M hectares--this was mentioned to highlight that travel distances will be significant for project monitoring and implementation.

09/16/2021

The following text has been added to the core indicator table:

Core Indicators were calculated based on government restoration commitments (Presidential decrees and Bonn challenge commitments by the State Committee on Forestry) for the target regions and covering the period of execution of the project. This includes:

- 13,000 ha under Core Indicator 3 (Area of land restored), including the restoration of (i) 6,500 ha of forest and forest land (Core Indicator 3.2), and (ii) 6,500 ha of natural grass and shrublands (Core indicator 3.3) as supported by Presidential decree #5742 dd 17.06.2019.

The proposed target will be achieved through promotion of sustainable pasturelands management, forest and agroforestry management practices, efficient soil and water management, and sustainable cropland management practices.

- 225,000 ha under Core Indicator 4 (Area of landscapes under improved practices), all of which are accounted for under landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems (Core Indicator 4.3).

The 225,000 hectares were estimated considering government commitments on the promotion of SLM/SFM, land restoration and prevention of land degradation. The specified target is expected to be achieved within the proposed integrated land-use plans

for Jondor and Nurata using a participatory approach and based on priorities identified by the DSS.

State commitments include (i) commitments made by the State Forestry Committee under the Bonn Challenge and (ii) Commitments under Presidential Decree 3405 dd 27.11.2017 including the use of water saving technologies, the establishment of shelterbelts, the reduction of land area with high and medium soil salinity, the reduction of land area with groundwater table less than 2 m, and the maintaining of land ameliorative state.

Sequestration of 6,1Mton of CO₂eq thanks to SLM/SFM within an LDN framework

In addition, strengthening of key value-chains will lead to improved income generation opportunities and more diversified livelihoods for around 1,200 people (of which 30% are women) in the target landscape .

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

11/8/2021:

Cleared

9/29/2021:

Thank you for the additional information provided. However it is not clear where in the project document or portal submission this information has been included. Para 124 and 125 refer to *LDN baseline assessment in Bukhara and Navoi*. Please clarify or include the information.

6/25/2021:

Yes

Please indicate the current context at it relates to COVID 19 impacts on Uzbekistan and the targeted project site.

Agency Response

18 Nov 2021

No response required

29 Oct 2021

Apologies for the oversight. Contextual information (text below) con COVID-19 has been included in paragraphs 124 and 125.

09/16/2021

The following text was included in section 1.a (paragraphs 124 and 125)

COVID-19 pandemic adversely affected livelihoods of rural smallholders at the target sites. It mainly affected the existing supply chains of agricultural products during the lockdowns and reduced remittances of migrant workers, as most of them had to return to their homeland. Government of Uzbekistan applied measures to absorb all returned migrants through establishment of the additional employment opportunities and/or distribution of agricultural lands to the unemployed. In general, the situation is stable and COVID-19 pandemic does not seem to lead to a dramatic negative impact on rural population at the target sites.

Given this background, the project will directly support the smallholder farmer communities to improve their livelihoods through dairy, bee-keeping, and medicinal plants value chains as well as participatory SLM measures. Particularly for the dairy VC, the PPG preliminary assessments target reduction in the production costs by 20 % and increasing incomes by 25% compared to the baseline levels.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

6/25/2021:

Yes

Agency Response

29 Oct 2021

No response required

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

11/8/2021:

Cleared.

9/29/2021:

Thank you for the responses provided.

However it is not clear how the comment on the ToC has been addressed, as the ToC does not seem to include Assumptions. Please clarify.

6/25/2021:

Thank you for the comprehensive information on the project interventions. Please see comments below.

-TOC- Please include assumptions in the Theory of Change. Please refer to STAP guidance.

-Given that a barrier identified was access to credit/finance by small farmers. What sustained mechanisms are being put in place to ensure small farmers are able to continue the SLM activities after the project has ended?

-Please indicate how the project can assist with green recovery in Uzbekistan. Please refer to the COVID guidance provided by the GEF.

Agency Response

18 Nov 2021

No response required

29 Oct 2021

Apologies for the oversight. Assumptions have been included to the TOC (separate document in the portal)

09/16/2021

Government of Uzbekistan tries to support farmers and other agricultural producers including smallholders through promotion of bank loan programs through the commercial banks. However, such model often works as a bottleneck given that many of the resource poor smallholders fail to provide sufficient collateral for obtaining a loan.

The project will work on mobilizing communities through development of business-plans or establishing groups of smallholders for collective applications for bank loans. Such approach will be used in particularly for loan programs established within the 500 mln USD World Bank Agriculture Modernization Project

Finally, the project will assist with green recovery in Uzbekistan, particularly in agriculture sector. The project will support capacity building and implementation of activities that will make agriculture more sustainable and that will support the sustainable management of natural resources. Specifically, and in line with will strengthen by strengthening the development of In line with UNECE's 3rd environmental performance review of Uzbekistan, the project will support green recovery by supporting the implementation a series of environmental priorities, including (i) Making data and information on the environment available to the public and enabling meaning public participation in environmental and land use planning matters, (ii)

Collecting data on gender and environment, (iii) Developing data and approaches to support reporting to SDG 15.3, (iv) increasing efforts to address water losses in agriculture, including supporting water efficiency and enhancing the promotion of water-saving irrigation techniques, (v) embedding water-efficient principles in land use planning, and (vi) adopting agricultural policies and plans that consider environmental matters,

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

6/25/2021:

Yes

Agency Response

29 Oct 2021

No response required

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

6/25/2021:

Yes

Agency Response

29 Oct 2021

No response required

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

6/25/2021:

Yes

Agency Response

29 Oct 2021

No response required

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

9/29/2021:

Cleared.

6/25/2021:

Not fully.

Please see comment above related to access to finance and sustainability.

Agency Response

29 Oct 2021

No response required

09/16/2021

Please see response to question 3 above.

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

9/29/2021:

Cleared.

6/25/2021:

Please include the required maps under Section 1b of the portal submission.

Agency Response

10 Oct 2021

No response required

09/16/2021

Map and App have been included.

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

N/A

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

12/9/2021:

Cleared.

12/2/2021:

Please see follow up comments below.

-The portal section on stakeholder engagement is a bit unclear. Please provide a more succinct summary of consultations that have taken place in project preparation as well as other components of the stakeholder Engagement Plan.

-Please also include a Table for the stakeholders to be involved in the project. At the moment Table 16, is referenced, however there is no table showing and the information is difficult to read.

6/25/2021:

Yes

Agency Response

8 Dec 2021

Please note that the information required was in the PRODOC. It has been added to the portal as follows:

-Stakeholder section has been edited to (i) describe the process followed during the pandemic, (ii) summarize the consultations (in a table) that took place during project preparation.

-Table of stakeholders has been included, including the process that will be followed to consult with them.

29 Oct 2021

No response required

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

12/9/2021:

Cleared.

12/2/2021:

Please see follow up comments below:

-It is noted that the gender analysis draws mainly on the 2019 Country Gender Assessment by the FAO as well as the PPG socio-economic baseline report, field consultations and desk research. It is noted also, the project states that there were limited field consultations due to COVID restrictions. As such, please further elaborate on any plans to address this in early implementation as well as any additional efforts to collect up-to-date-district level sex-disaggregated data.

-Also, if no field consultations were conducted, as explained, please clarify on what basis it is determined that the project builds on the recognition of women's practical needs associated with their traditional gender roles .

-First, the project should think beyond women's needs and also include women's interests and priorities. In addition women's and men's needs, priorities and priorities change over time and the gender assessment was conducted in 2019 might not be current. Please provide an explanation the reasoning and plans further as related to the project objective and components.

6/25/2021:

Yes

Agency Response

8 Dec 2021

-The project will continue working with local communities, just as it did during the preparatory phase. FAO will use tools such as RuralInvest and Collect Earth to finalize the community-based planning process and investment planning. This will include the collection of sex-disaggregated data on project partners and beneficiaries (in line with the project framework). Please also see below.

-The project did carry out field consultations and evidence is provided in the PRODOC. Project was designed according to the needs identified during the socio-economic assessment and field visits, including by the PPG national gender consultant. Please also see below.

-Indeed, this is an important point. As mentioned above, FAO did carry out a socio-economic assessment that also looked at women's need and priorities. Also, as discussed above, FAO uses a bottom up approach when designing investment plans and site interventions. Moving forward, FAO will continue its dialogue with local communities and project beneficiaries to ensure that any activities that are financed by the project will continue to respond to the women's needs and priorities. Furthermore, the gender action plan and analysis would be re-visited and validated at the start of implementation, and may be updated if new/ different issues arise. This would be informed by field visits by the project gender expert, and would also take place towards mid-term. This is something that we do with all projects as start-up can take time.

29 Oct 2021

No response required

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

9/29/2021:

Thank you for the additional information. Cleared.

6/25/2021:

Please elaborate further on the profile of the private sector stakeholders involved in the targeted value chains, beyond the small farmers.

Agency Response

10 Oct 2021

No response required

09/16/2021

The following text was included in section 4 (Private sector engagement), paragraph 270.

Smallholders and household owners at the target sites will be the principal target group for the project interventions. As smallholders make their living mainly from the agricultural activities, the project will establish a community-based pasture management to promote more sustainable approach in pastoralism. The project will also involve local community in developing of the dairy, bee-keeping, and medicinal plants target value chains. These value chains are expected to provide concrete livelihood opportunities while releasing the pressure on land resources and are accessible to both women and men. The project will also engage private farm enterprises in the consultation process on Components 1 and 2, and trainings (Component 2).

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

11/8/2021:

Cleared.

9/29/2021:

Thank you for the additional information provided, however the information does not seem to have been included in the risk table. Please include.

6/25/2021:

Not fully.

We note the inclusion of information on the risks of COVID to Uzbekistan in general. Please include in the risk table, the potential COVID related risks to the implementation of the project and the potential mitigation measures that will be implemented. These risks may include potential limitations in co-finance from the government, challenges with restrictions in mobility etc.

Agency Response

18 Nov 2021

No response required

29 Oct 2021

Apologies for the oversight. Risks are now reflected in the risk table.

09/16/2021

The following text has been added:

Additional risks to project implementation include (i) limitations in co-finance from the government, though this risk is considered low given that the programs used as cofinancing are either backed by presidential decrees or linked to international commitments. In addition, the project will seek to develop pilot activities that can be upscaled via the World Bank Agriculture Modernization Project; (ii) challenges related to restrictions in mobility, which are considered a medium risk given the low vaccination rate at the time of project preparation. In order to address these challenge, the project will adhere to UN and national norms related to travel security and interpersonal distance.

In addition, lessons learnt from other programs and projects implemented in the country (including GEF-financed) by the project's executors and implementation agency under COVID 19 restrictions contribute to better planning, as well as to the identification and implementation of appropriate risk-mitigation measures and remote tools and methodologies in order to reach project beneficiaries, including carrying out face-to-face activities.

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

9/29/2021:

Cleared.

6/25/2021:

-A link should be made to the Drylands IP and specifically to the planned Regional Exchange Mechanism (REM) in Central Asia. We note the link CACILM, but we need to see credible efforts (not only a statement in the project document) to link the project to the Drylands IP.

Agency Response

29 Oct 2021

No response required

09/16/2021

The following text was added (paragraph 291):

The project will coordinate with the Regional Exchange Mechanism for Central Asia established under the Drylands Sustainable Landscapes Impact Programme (DSL). It will actively collaborate with DSL countries in the region (Kazakhstan and Mongolia) as well as with stand-alone LDN (Turkey, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia) and FOLUR projects (eg. Uzbekistan) in the region. The proposed project will help build knowledge in the region by (i) sharing experiences on land use planning methods both nationally and regionally, (ii) by ensuring that SLM/SFM technologies and approaches are shared with WOCAT and the REM, and (iii) by making its pilot sites available for knowledge exchange (i.e. field visits to and from other projects in Uzbekistan and in the region). Finally, project management and beneficiaries will participate in knowledge exchange activities organized under the DSL.

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

6/25/2021:

Yes

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

6/25/2021:

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

6/25/2021:

Yes

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
6/25/2021:

Yes

Agency Response
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
6/25/2021:

Yes

Agency Response
Annexes

Are all the required annexes attached and adequately responded to?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
6/25/2021:

Not fully.

Agency Response
29 Oct 2021

All documentation has been uploaded

Project Results Framework

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
6/25/2021:

Yes

Agency Response
GEF Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response
Council comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
6/25/2021:

Yes

Agency Response
STAP comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
6/25/2021:

Yes

Agency Response
Convention Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response
Other Agencies comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response
CSOs comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response
Status of PPG utilization

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
6/25/2021:

Yes

Agency Response
Project maps and coordinates

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
9/29/2021:
Cleared

6/25/2021:

No. Please include the maps under Annex D.

Agency Response
29 Oct 2021

No response required

09/16/2021

Maps and link to app have been uploaded.
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

N/A

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 N/A

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 N/A

Agency Response

GEFSEC DECISION

RECOMMENDATION

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/13/2021:

Cleared.

12/9/2021:

Please address the follow up comments below.

12/2/2021:

Not at this time. Please address the additional comments above.

11/23/2021:

The project is technically cleared and recommended for CEO endorsement.

11/8/2021:

Not at this time. Please address the comments above on the budget.

9/25/2021:

Not at this time. Please address the comments above.

6/25/2021:

Not at this time. Please address the comments above.

Review Dates

**Secretariat Comment at
CEO Endorsement**

**Response to
Secretariat
comments**

First Review	6/25/2021
Additional Review (as necessary)	9/29/2021
Additional Review (as necessary)	11/8/2021
Additional Review (as necessary)	11/23/2021
Additional Review (as necessary)	12/13/2021

CEO Recommendation

Brief reasoning for CEO Recommendations