

UNCCD Mongolia COP17 Legacy Project

Review CEO Approval and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID
12309
Countries
Global (Mongolia)
Project Name
UNCCD Mongolia COP17 Legacy Project
Agencies
IUCN
Date received by PM
6/29/2026
Review completed by PM

Program Manager
Ulrich Apel
Focal Area
Multi Focal Area
Project Type
MSP

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
07/01/2026: Not fully.

- The Global Mechanism of the UNCCD is the correct executing partner, not the UNCCD Secretariat. Please correct.

07/30/2026: Not fully.

- Please remove IUCN Forest and Grasslands Team from the list of executing agencies now that IUCN is not requesting to execute the project anymore.

08/05/2026: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

7/27/26: The Project Information table has been corrected to name the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD as the executing partner for Components 2 and 3. The UNCCD Secretariat is referenced only in an advisory capacity, and the ProDoc institutional arrangements and stakeholder summary table have been amended to match.

8/4/26: IUCN Forest and Grasslands Team has been removed from the list of executing agencies.

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

07/01/2026: Not fully.

- CCM is not a principle objective of this project, please correct.

07/30/2026: Yes.

Agency Response 7/27/26: Portal correction made.

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 07/01/2026: Yes.

Agency Response

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

07/01/2026: Not fully.

a) Please revert to concise and approved project objective at PIF stage.

b) While the components and outputs are appropriate, this is not adequately reflected in the budget that is requested to implement them. For example, output 1.1 is not supported by a budget line. We

expect a meaningful budgetary support for the Global Alliance for Rangelands and Pastoralists for the IYRP.

c1) Please, clarify the specific measures related to IPLC inclusion and gender, especially women empowerment. This aspect is lacking in the description of outputs and activities. Moreover, the target under the core indicator 11 includes 50% of women. Please, clarify which measures will be applied to reach this ratio.

c2) M&E component lacks the definition on whether it is technical assistance or investment - also, it misses outcomes. Please amend.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) ⓘ						
M&E			Inception workshop; annual PIRs; mid-term review; terminal evaluation	GET	86,574.00	50,000.00
Sub Total (\$)					2,830,834.00	9,631,000.00

d) No, PMC co-financing is not proportional. Please amend. Co-financing resources allocated to PMC only represent 0.51%, while GEF resources represent 5%. For a co-financing of \$9,631,000, the expected co-financing resources allocated to PMC must be \$481,550 - please amend.

Sub Total (\$)					2,830,834.00	9,631,000.00
Project Management Cost (PMC) ⓘ						
				GET	141,541.00	50,000.00
Sub Total(\$)					141,541.00	50,000.00
Total Project Cost(\$)					2,972,375.00	9,681,000.00

e) Yes.

08/05/2026: Not fully addressed:

1. On the description overview table: M&E component lacks the definition of whether it is technical assistance or investment - also, it misses outcomes. Please amend.

08/10/2026: Has been amended.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) ⓘ						
M&E			Inception workshop; annual PIRs; mid-term review; terminal evaluation	GET	86,574.00	50,000.00
Sub Total (\$)					2,830,834.00	9,631,000.00

Agency Response

7/27/26:

a) Project objective replaced with the original statement as approved at PIF stage.

b) Every output is now mapped to at least one budget line in the revised Annex G. A dedicated line under Component 1 supports engagement of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and

accredited civil society organisations in the IYRP and the Rangelands Flagship Initiative, including the Global Alliance for Rangelands and Pastoralists (GA4RP).

The UNCCD Global Mechanism executes this activity: GA4RP is engaged directly as a partner in the Rangelands Flagship Initiative, supporting Alliance-nominated representatives in Initiative convenings and knowledge processes; Indigenous Peoples and local communities participate through the Caucuses established under decision 5/COP.16 and the Gender Caucus; and civil society organisations through the accreditation procedure under decisions 5/COP.9 and 5/COP.10. Engagement through the Flagship Initiative preserves the GA4RP's character under UNCCD accountability arrangements, building on the Secretariat's work with GA4RP in the Silk Road Caravan initiative.

c1) Specific measures have been added to the output and activity descriptions in the ProDoc. These comprise gender-balanced selection criteria applied where representation falls below parity; targeted outreach through the UNCCD Gender Caucus, women's cooperatives and women-led pastoralist organisations; gender-responsive facilitation and safeguarding at project convenings; and gender criteria in investment screening and in the validation of knowledge products. IPLC inclusion measures are set out across Outputs 1.1, 3.1 and 4.2, including participation through the Caucus for Indigenous Peoples and the Caucus for Local Communities established under decision 5/COP.16.

The 50 per cent women target under Core Indicator 11 is delivered through the selection criteria and targeted outreach above, and monitored through sex-disaggregated participant registers maintained for every project-supported event, with corrective measures agreed through annual work planning where the benchmark is not met. These measures align with the UNCCD Gender Action Plan and its Implementation Road Map.

c2) M&E is now explicitly classified as technical assistance in both the Portal overview table and the ProDoc, and an outcome statement has been added: project performance, results and lessons are tracked and evaluated in a participatory, gender-responsive manner, informing adaptive management, accountability and knowledge sharing.

d) PMC co-financing has been raised to USD 481,550 (IUCN USD 50,000 plus MECC USD 431,550) by reallocating USD 431,550 from MECC Component 1 co-financing. The overview table, the Annex A.3 co-financing table and an explanatory A.3 note reflect this, and the same figures will be entered in the Portal PMC and co-financing tables. Reconciliation note: the GEFSEC figure of USD 9,631,000 is the co-financing subtotal excluding the PMC line, while total co-financing including PMC is USD 9,681,000; the 5 percent calculation has been applied on the basis used by GEFSEC.

8/10/26:

1. The Project Description Overview table has been amended to designate Monitoring and Evaluation as Technical Assistance and to include the associated outcome.

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 07/01/2026: Yes.

Agency Response

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

07/01/2026: Not fully.

Please elaborate on specific measures to engage with and support pastoralists groups and Indigenous Pastoralist groups in the project, particularly for further investment under the Rangelands Flagship Initiatives in Component 2.

07/30/2026: Please enter some language from the review sheet response under the description of: **Output 1.1: Inclusive participation of observer groups including IPLCs, pastoralist organisations, women, youth, and the scientific community in COP17 and UNCCD policy processes supported.**

"The project instead supports CSO, IPLC and pastoralist participation, including GA4RP members, through the mechanisms established by UNCCD COP decision 5/COP.9 as amended by decision 5/COP.10"

(so that it is clear on how the the support will be arranged).

08/05/2026: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

7/27/26: The project will promote inclusion and representation of pastoralists through knowledge products (Component 3) and the Global Coalition (Component 4) as well as in rangeland investment projects (Component 2). Specifically, Component 2 will develop projects aligned with the LDN Principles (Orr et al. 2017) which have been refined for use in rangeland restoration projects through a knowledge product developed under the Rangeland Flagship Initiative (draft document prepared in 2025 based on the LDN principles already used by the GEF).

The theory of change has been revised to carry the same measures: Pathway 2 now states explicitly that pastoralist organisations and Indigenous Pastoralist groups help shape the pathway. The theory of change has been further strengthened by anchoring all three pathways in the Steppe Action Agenda, with the Rangelands Flagship Initiative identified as its investment and knowledge pillar and the Coalition of Rangeland States as its intergovernmental cooperation pillar, clarifying the institutional route by which pastoralist engagement in Component 2 feeds into Presidency and Coalition processes.

8/4/26: Output 1.1 has been elaborated to include additional description of how the participation of pastoralist and rangeland constituencies will be arranged.

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

07/01/2026: Please revise:

a1) The UNCCD secretariat can be included in steering or advisory committees/panels but should not be an executing partner. Please revise.

a2) Diagram: the GEF Secretariat does not supervise financing: it is the responsibility of the IUCN as the GEF Agency. Remove the GEF Secretariat from the institutional arrangements.

b) This type of project does not qualify for any of the exceptions listed in our guidelines that would allow for IUCN to provide execution support. Please revise the institutional arrangements accordingly. This includes acknowledgement by IUCN that as a Project Steering Committee (PSC) member, it will not be a voting member.

08/05/2026: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

7/27/26:

a1) The UNCCD Secretariat has been removed from all executing roles.

a2) The two sentences positioning the GEF Secretariat as providing overall oversight and as a Project Steering Committee participant have been deleted from the governance narrative. The text now shows the IUCN Multilateral Finance Unit as GEF Agency bearing full fiduciary responsibility and supervision of financing.

b) IUCN execution support has been withdrawn. The Project Steering Committee is now chaired by MECC alone, and the ProDoc states explicitly that IUCN, as GEF Implementing Agency, participates in the PSC as a non-voting member. IUCN technical and coordination support language has been removed from the Component 4 narrative, the component-charged salary lines have been removed, and project staffing is limited to a PMC-funded positions.

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 Request07/01/2026: Yes.

Agency Response

5.4 Risks

a) Is there a well-articulated assessment of risk to outcomes and identification of mitigation measures under each relevant risk category? Are mitigation measures clearly identified and realistic? Is there any omission?

b) Is the rating provided reflecting the residual risk to the likely achievement of intended outcomes after accounting for the expected implementation of mitigation measures?

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 Request07/01/2026: Yes.

Agency Response

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Requestn/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 Request07/01/2026: Yes.

Agency Response

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 Request07/01/2026: Yes.

Agency Response

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 07/01/2026: Yes.

Agency Response

7 D. Policy Requirements

7.1 Are the Policy Requirement sections completed?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
07/01/2026: Yes.

07/30/2026: However, please select "YES" for the question below.

Improving women's participation and decision-making; and/or

No

Generating socio-economic benefits or services for women.

08/05/2026: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response 8/4/26: "YES" selected for **Improving women's participation and decision-making; and Generating socio-economic benefits or services for women.**
7.2 Is the Gender Action Plan uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request 07/01/2026: Yes.

Agency Response

7.3 Is the stakeholder engagement plan uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
07/01/2026: Yes. However,

i. Please clarify what consultations took place with the Global Alliance for Rangelands and Pastoralists including Indigenous Peoples pastoralists groups, CSOs and others about the project design and how the results of consultations were integrated into the project design.

08/05/2026: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response7/27/26: The Global Mechanism (GM) consulted many members of the Global Alliance for Rangelands and Pastoralists (GA4RP) in a workshop convened in October 2023 in Rome when the Rangeland Flagship Initiative was first proposed. During 2024-2026 the GM has consulted more than 50 partners on the development of the Rangelands Flagship Initiative, including many Global Alliance for Rangelands and Pastoralists (GA4RP) members and many organisations that works closely with pastoralists and indigenous peoples. Furthermore, the UNCCD Secretariat has been engaging with the GA4RP in the Silk Road Caravan initiative and supported a number of pastoralists that have been nominated by GA4RP. However, the GA4RP is not a registered entity and is a loose alliance which limits the opportunities to work with them directly or enter into agreements.

7.4 Have the required applicable safeguards documents been uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request07/01/2026: Yes.

Agency Response

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 Request7/01/2026: Yes.

Agency Response

Focal Area allocation?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request7/01/2026: Yes.

Agency Response

LDCF under the principle of equitable access?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Requestn/a

Agency Response

SCCF A (SIDS)?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Requestn/a

Agency Response

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Requestn/a

Agency Response

Focal Area Set Aside?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request7/01/2026: Yes.

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

7/01/2026: Not fully.

i. There are several budget lines namely "... stakeholder engagement" (see orange rectangles below) - please provide details of each one explaining who participated and what type of meetings were paid.

ii. Per Guidelines, costs associated with the work of government staff (see red rectangles below) cannot be covered with GEF resources - considering that these funds were already spent, they must be returned by following the Financial Procedures Agreement signed between the Agency and the Trustee. Please ask the Agency to present evidence that these procedure has been initiated so the total cost of the PPG will be \$100,000 minus \$8,000 (this must be reflected in the table and in the narrative of this section).

ANNEX D: STATUS OF UTILIZATION OF PROJECT PREPARATION GRANT (PPG)

Provide detailed funding amount of the PPG activities financing status in the table below:

Project Preparation Activities Implemented	GET/LDCF/SCCF Amount (\$)		
	Budgeted Amount	Amount Spent To date	Amount Committed
International Consultant - CER and Prodoc development	31,000.00	9,120.00	21,880.00
National Consultant - National stakeholder engagement, consultation, and validation	5,000.00	1,650.00	3,350.00
Travel - International/National Consultants travel for National stakeholder engagement, consultation, and validation	10,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00
Travel - Mongolia stakeholder engagement	6,000.00	6,000.00	0.00
Travel - stakeholder engagement of Mongolia Vice Minister to DC	4,000.00	4,000.00	0.00
Travel - stakeholder engagement of Mongolia Director General to DC	4,000.00	4,000.00	0.00
Travel - stakeholder engagement at the GEF Assembly	15,000.00	4,000.00	11,000.00
Workshops - Stakeholder engagement, National consultation and validation workshops	25,000.00	15,000.00	10,000.00
Total	100,000.00	48,770.00	51,230.00

08/05/2026: Not fully addressed:

1. Status of utilization of PPG: The review sheet indicates that the stakeholder engagement expenditures were further itemized, including participants, type of meetings, and the purpose of each activity. However, Annex D still presents this information in general terms. Please revise Annex D to include the requested level of detail in the table.

ANNEX D: STATUS OF UTILIZATION OF PROJECT PREPARATION GRANT (PPG)

Provide detailed funding amount of the PPG activities financing status in the table below:

Project Preparation Activities Implemented	GET/LDCF/SCCF Amount (\$)		
	Budgeted Amount	Amount Spent To date	Amount Committed
International Consultant - CER and ProDoc development	31,000.00	21,000.00	10,000.00
National Consultant - National stakeholder engagement, consultation, and validation	10,000.00	8,500.00	1,500.00
Travel - International/National Consultants travel for National stakeholder engagement, consultation, and validation	10,000.00	9,000.00	1,000.00
Travel - Mongolia stakeholder engagement	9,000.00	7,500.00	1,500.00
Travel consultants - international stakeholder engagement	15,000.00	15,000.00	0.00
Workshops - Stakeholder engagement, National consultation and validation workshops	25,000.00	23,000.00	2,000.00
Total	100,000.00	84,000.00	16,000.00

08/10/2026: Has been addressed.

Agency Response

7/27/26:

i.) The PPG utilization has been revised. Each budget line described as stakeholder engagement is itemized with the participants, the type of meetings financed and their purpose.

In summary: the Consultant line covers professional fees for designing, facilitating and documenting the consultation and validation process; the Mongolia stakeholder engagement line covers domestic travel and participation costs for soum level consultations with herders, Pasture User Groups and CBNRM groups and provincial consultations with aimag governments in.

The stakeholder engagement line covers travel and participation of project development consultants to engage Agencies, partner countries and prospective financing partners; and the workshops line covers venue, materials and local participation costs for the national consultation and validation workshops, including the civil society consultation, the youth consultation, the private sector and international NGO engagement meetings, and the international policy dialogue on rangeland governance attended by participants from 13 countries.

ii.) The PPG utilization has been revised. No government staff travel cost has been charged to PPG (IUCN will absorb the expenses).

The remaining USD 8,000 is committed to national consultant and Mongolia stakeholders engagement costs, originally absorbed by IUCN

8/10/26:

1. Annex D has been revised to itemize stakeholder engagement expenditures. For each activity the table now identifies the type of meeting or consultation, participants, and the associated expenditure.

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 7/01/2026: Yes.

Agency Response

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

7/01/2026: Not fully.

1. In the co-financing table, please complete the 'investment mobilized' category

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)	Upload letters of co-finance
GEF Agency	IUCN	Grant		1,000,000.00	
Others	UNCCD	Grant		2,931,000.00	
Recipient Country Government	Government of Mongolia (MECC)	Grant		5,000,000.00	
Others	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH	In-kind		750,000.00	
Total Co-financing(\$)				9,681,000.00	

08/05/2026: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response 7/27/26: The investment mobilized category has been completed as recurrent expenditures

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 7/01/2026: Yes.

Agency Response

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

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request 7/01/2026: Yes.

Agency Response

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 Request7/01/2026: Yes.

Agency Response

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 Request7/01/2026: Yes.

Agency Response

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

07/01/2026: Please enter the coordinates through the dedicated data entry table in the GEF Portal under the Annex E section in decimal degree format. Kindly add Geoname IDs as well.

(To help ensure project visibility, we request agencies to include the geographic location of project activities, such as workshops, events or knowledge-sharing activities. In global projects, this could be the countries or capital cities of each participating country.)

08/05/2026: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response7/27/26: Coordinates in decimal degree format and Geoname IDs will be entered in the Portal Annex E data-entry table for Mongolia and a representative set of participating countries (Botswana, Uruguay), reflecting the locations of project activities and/or where regional/global convenings would take place within this project. The ProDoc explains that the project is global in scope which is why no map is provided.

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

7/01/2026:

Comments of the budget:

(i) The submitted version does not comply with the GEF Budget Template found on page 58 of the [Guidelines on the Project Cycle](#). Please use the recommended budget template and include it as a file, not as an image.

(ii) While we will provide specific comments on the budget once resubmitted using the correct template, there are two preliminary observations:

(iii) GEF project financing resources are not eligible to finance Government staff (Ministers - see red rectangle - \$600,000)

(iv) GEF project financing resources are not eligible to finance attendance to COPs (see red rectangle \$600,000 + \$ 200,000)

(v) Budget line "Consultants and consultation to develop an investment pipeline with 3 + investment ready projects ..." (see blue rectangle) is presented as a regular activity that is covered by the Agency Fee. This activity (also included in the Project Description Overview Table) is not considered eligible. The Agency must indicate where the \$225,000 will be reallocated. If the funds are planned to be used to implement pathway 2 as described in the CEO endorsement document, the budget line needs to reflect that adequately, including clear indication that the investments to be developed are not be done by this project, and not used to prepare future GEF investments, but are part of a finance mobilization strategy for the Rangelands Flagship initiative.

Expenditure Category	Detailed Description	Component (USDeq.)							Total (USDeq.)	Responsible Entity
		Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	Component 4	Sub-Total	M&E	PMC		ftn1
		Mongolia COP17 Presidency and Stakeholder Engagement	Investment readiness and partnerships	Knowledge Integration and Rangeland Flagship Initiative	CO17 Presidency Legacy, South-South cooperation and Coalition of Rangeland States					
Sub-contract to executing partner/ entity	Travel costs for for Ministers to attend COP17	600,000				600,000			600,000	UNCCD GM
	Travel costs for Stakeholders to attend COP17	200,000				200,000			200,000	UNCCD GM
	Consultants and consultations to develop an investment pipeline with 3+ investment-ready projects, and establish 1+ technical assistance partnerships		255,000			255,000			255,000	UNCCD GM

(vi) Several TORs are missing (i. e. Policy Influencing Expert, all consultancies) - please include them

(vii) Please itemize all Presidency Political staff - IUCN staff can't be included because there are no merits to approve the dual role.

(viii) We expect direct budgetary support for the Global Alliance for Rangelands and Pastoralists to facilitate the engagement of CSOs and IPLCs in the IYRP and the Rangelands Flagship Initiative of at least \$200,000. This budget could be channeled to the Alliance as a sub-contract with the Yolda Initiative, which is a member and serving as the Secretariat of the Alliance.

ix) Costs associated to annual PIRs cannot be assigned to a project grant: these costs should be covered by the Agency fees. Costs related to the MTR and TE can be assigned to the project, but not the staff time to manage them (here again, the fees cover these expenses).

x) Salary for staff outside PMC is not an eligible expenditure.

08/05/2026: Not fully addressed. The outstanding issues are:

1. Please use the template included in Annex 7 of the Guidelines (accessible [here](#), page 58) and ensure that the budget ?categories? and ?subtotals? follow the required format exactly.

2. Support for CSO, IPLC, pastoralist, women and youth representatives in convenings/events requires clarification. If this covers participant travel/DSA/event participation, it may be better reflected under travel/workshops/meetings rather than sub-contract.

Support for CSO, IPLC, pastoralist, women and youth observer representatives in COP17 Presidency convenings and other events including UNCCD policy processes (Output 1.1)	214,000					214,000			214,000	UNCCD GM
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3. ?Consultants and consultations to deliver webinars and knowledge exchange? includes ?consultants and consultations,? which may fit better under consultants or workshops/meetings. Please amend.

4. ?Stakeholder Inclusion and Engagement Officer? should not be charged to PMC. Please amend.

Salary and benefits / Staff costs	Project manager with overall responsibility for the efficient delivery of the project							75,000	75,000	MECC
	Technical Implementation, Policy and MEL Officer					40,000				
	Stakeholder Inclusion and Engagement Officer						25,000	25,000		MECC
	Finance, Administration, Procurement and Logistics Officer							41,541	41,541	MECC

5. The position ?Technical Implementation, Policy and MEL Officer? is charged 100% to M&E. Technical implementation/policy work should normally be charged to project components unless clearly limited to M&E. Please amend.

Technical Implementation, Policy and MEL Officer						40,000				
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6. Potential category mixed categories. Convening/workshop costs should ideally be charged under training/workshops/meetings. Please amend.

	Travel and convening costs for regional investment dialogues, donor roundtables and partner consultations under the Rangelands Flagship Initiative (Outputs 2.1 and 2.2)		214,000			214,000			214,000	UNCCD GM
	Travel and convening costs for knowledge exchange events, technical validation workshops and Steppe Action Agenda meetings, including participation of pastoralist and IPLC representatives (Outputs 3.1 to 3.4)			214,000		214,000			214,000	UNCCD GM

08/10/2026: Has been addressed. New budget table submitted.

Agency Response

7/27/26:

i-ii) The budget has been rebuilt in the official GEF Budget Template and is submitted as a working document rather than an image.

iii-iv) The Ministers travel line (USD 600,000) and the Stakeholders COP attendance line (USD 200,000) have been removed. The USD 800,000 is redistributed across components as participation, engagement and convening support tied to specific outputs: USD 250,000 in Component 1 for stakeholder representatives in policy dialogues, roundtables and Presidency events (Outputs 1.1 and 1.3); USD 150,000 in Component 1 for CSO, IPLC, pastoralist, women and youth observer representatives' participation in project events and convenings in line with UNCCD accreditation and selection procedures (Output 1.1, Outputs 2.1 and 2.2); USD 200,000 in Component 2 for regional investment dialogues, donor roundtables and partner consultations (Outputs 2.1 and 2.2); and USD 200,000 in Component 3 for knowledge exchange events and technical validation workshops including pastoralist and IPLC participation (Outputs 3.1 to 3.4).

v) Replaced "Consultants and consultations to develop an investment pipeline with 3+ investment-ready projects, and establish 1+ technical assistance partnerships" with "Scoping studies and cost-benefit analyses to inform the development of new rangeland restoration investment projects with innovative financing mechanisms and partnerships"

vi) ToRs of the key staffs and consultants have been revised and submitted.

vii) The Presidency staff positions have been itemized and a revised Annex H with ToRs of key staffs and consultants submitted.

viii) The project reverts to the design approved at PIF stage, which did not include a GA4RP or Yolda budget line. GA4RP functions as an all-volunteer international network and coalition and is not a registered legal entity. The project instead supports CSO, IPLC and pastoralist participation, including GA4RP members, through the mechanisms established by UNCCD COP decision 5/COP.9 as amended by decision 5/COP.10,

UNCCD COP decision 5/COP9 amended by decision 5/COP10 established the mechanisms for determining the CSOs that will receive the financial resources to attend COPs for example. This is based on work of the UNCCD CSO panel and secretariat based on 5 established criteria (geographical balance, gender balance, membership to a network, turnover and expertise on

the topic for the COP). This is the only way the UNCCD have to ensure that the CSOs are accredited and work on the implementation of the UNCCD. The UNCCD Secretariat launched a call for expression of interest during the PPG Stage, receiving more than 250 requests. The UNCCD Secretariat has been engaging with the Global Alliance for Rangelands and Pastoralists (GA4RP) in the Silk Road Caravan initiative and supported a number of pastoralists that have been nominated by GA4RP. The UNCCD Secretariat is currently supporting the GA4RP co-chair to travel to COP17 based on the Alliance's request. Dedicated participation support for the stakeholders in project activities and Steppe Action Agenda events is budgeted under Output 1.1.

ix-x) Annual PIR preparation has been removed from the M&E budget description. The M&E budget covers only the inception workshop, the mid-term review, the terminal evaluation and the stakeholder satisfaction surveys. Salaries outside PMC have been eliminated.

8/10/26:

1. The budget table has been reconstructed using the Indicative Project Budget Template at Appendix A of Annex 7 to the Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy (GEF/C.70/Inf.18, page 58).
2. The budget line referred to in the August 5 GEF Sec review, "Support for CSO, IPLC, pastoralist, women and youth observer representatives in COP17 Presidency convenings and other events including UNCCD policy processes (Output 1.1). The cost includes participant travel, DSA and associated costs", has been reclassified under the "Travel" budget line as suggested.
3. The "Consultants and consultations to deliver webinars and knowledge exchange" budget line has been amended and classified under contractual services.
4. The "Stakeholder Inclusion and Engagement Officer" position has been removed from the budget. The Project Manager is responsible for project management, coordination and fiduciary functions and stakeholder engagement delivery.
5. The "Technical Implementation, Policy and MEL Officer" position has been retitled M&E Officer and its scope narrowed accordingly. The revised terms of reference are limited to monitoring and evaluation functions.
6. All convening and workshop costs have been consolidated under the Trainings, Workshops and Meetings category

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
01/7/2026: No. Please address comments made in this review.

07/30/2026: Please address the three comments (1) removing IUCN as executing agency in Part 1, (2) further describing output 1.1 in the component description, and (3) selecting "YES" for women's socio-economic benefits). Afterwards, the project will be fully reviewed by GEF OP.

08/05/2026: Please address outstanding issues in three areas: M&E empty fields, PPG details, Budget table / categories.

08/10/2026: Agency has addressed the three outstanding issues. Requesting OP check before recommending the project.

08/11/2026: All OP comments cleared. PM recommends the project for CEO endorsement.

9.2 Additional Comments to be considered by the Agency during the inception and implementation phase

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

9.3 Review Dates

	CEO Approval	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review	7/9/2026	7/27/2026
Additional Review (as necessary)	7/30/2026	8/4/2026
Additional Review (as necessary)	8/5/2026	8/10/2026
Additional Review (as necessary)	8/10/2026	
Additional Review (as necessary)	8/11/2026	