



SGP CSO Challenge Program

Review PIF and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

11757

Countries

Global

Project Name

SGP CSO Challenge Program

Agencies

IUCN

Date received by PM

9/20/2024

Review completed by PM

9/26/2024

Program Manager

Elsa Temm

Focal Area

Multi Focal Area

Project Type

FSP

1. General Project Information / Eligibility

a) Does the project meet the criteria for eligibility for GEF funding?

b) Is the General Project Information table correctly populated?

Secretariat's Comments

GRT: 9/26/2024

Yes. The project meets the criteria for eligibility for GEF funding, responding to GEF-8 Programming Strategy and the SGP 2.0 Implementation Arrangements for GEF-8.

Agency's Comments

2. Project Summary

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 results?

Secretariat's Comments

GRT: 10/23/2024: Cleared

GRT: 9/26/2024

Almost. Please, however

a) Reference and consider the proposal's alignment and adherence to the SGP 2.0 Implementation arrangements and Results Framework.

b) Provide indicative information on the expected scope of the project, including estimated number of countries and regions.

c) Considering the emphasis placed on youth, women and IPLC and consistent with the Implementation Arrangements, measures planned to prioritize youth, women and IPLCs should be further strengthened, specified and included in the narrative description of the project's components.

Agency's Comments

IUCN response: Project summary text revised as follows:

(a) Inclusion of explicit reference to GEF SGP 2.0 Implementation Arrangements and Operational Guidelines including use of SGP 2.0 Results Framework.

(b) an indicative estimate on the scope and distribution of the Program and supported CSO-led initiatives, including estimated number of countries, regions and anticipated GEBs has been included.

(c) Additional text on measures planned to prioritize youth, women and IPLCs has been included in the Indicative Project Overview Outcomes and Outputs, and in the narrative description of the project's components (below section).

3 Indicative Project Overview

3.1 a) Is the project objective presented as a concise statement and clear?

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?

Secretariat's Comments

GRT: 10/23/2024: Cleared

GRT: 9/26/2024

Almost.

a) Review wording of outcomes to express these as a result/direct outcome of the project intervention. It seems that a verb is missing in each one, such as, identified etc. See example of 1.1. *Cohort of high impact innovative CSO-led initiatives and pool of empowered CSO innovation champions.*

b) On component 2, Please clarify and/or consider the title. It is unclear what is meant by higher impact.

c) On component 1 and 2, please differentiate between youth, women and IPLCs (at CEO Endorsement it is expected that additional details are provided on measures to prioritize youth, women and IPLC related).

d) Please break-down each component by INV and TA accordingly with tentative budget allocation for both GEF financing and co-financing; and (2) From the table and the explanation provided, it seems ?Direct investment in innovative CSO initiatives? is allocated with \$6,897,000 from the project budget, accounting for only 69.7% of total project costs including agency fee. Please revise the budget to increase the grants to CSOs/CBO ratio to 72% of total project costs including agency fee in line with the SGP 2.0 Implementation Arrangements

Agency's Comments

IUCN Response: Indicative Project Overview has been revised to respond to comments as follows:

(a) All Outcomes have been revised to express as a result/direct outcome of the project intervention, including adding verbs as needed.

(b) Component 2 title revised

(c) Component 1, Output 1.1. revised to include explicit prioritization of women, youth, and IPLC-led initiatives and disaggregated reporting; Component 1, Outcome 1.2 revised to include direct reference to youth, women, and IP-led organizations; Component 2, Output 2.1.1 revised to include disaggregated reporting by women-, youth-, and IPLC-led initiatives; Component 2 now includes dedicated Outputs supporting CSO-led action to advance youth participation and empowerment in environmental decision making (Output 2.1.2); CSO-led interventions supporting advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment objectives (Output 2.1.3); and CSO-led interventions on Indigenous Peoples' participation and empowerment in environmental decision-making and action.

(d) Component 2 funding, Outcomes and Outputs broken down by Investment and Technical Assistance. GEF project budget has been revised to increase the GEF grant to CSOs/CBOs to 72% (\$7.2M) of total project costs including agency fee in line with the SGP 2.0 Implementation Arrangements.

3.2 Are gender dimensions, knowledge management, and monitoring and evaluation included within the project components and appropriately funded?

Secretariat's Comments

GRT: 10/23/2024: Cleared

GRT: 9/26/2024

Almost.

However, considering the emphasis placed on youth, women and IPLC and consistent with the Implementation Arrangements, the considerations could be further strengthened, specified and included in the narrative description of the project's components and targeted funding as described above.

Please also elaborate in project outcomes and outputs on differentiated considerations on gender, youth and IPLCs. Also, please reference to the SGP 2.0 Results Framework in component on M&E.

Agency's Comments

IUCN Response: Indicative Project Overview has been revised to respond to comments as follows:

Component 1, Output 1.1. revised to include explicit prioritization of women, youth, and IPCL-led initiatives and disaggregated reporting; Component 1, Outcome 1.2 revised to include direct reference to youth, women, and IP-led organizations; Component 2, Output 2.1.1 revised to include disaggregated reporting by women-, youth-, and IPLC-led initiatives; Component 2 now includes dedicated Outputs supporting CSO-led action to advance youth participation and empowerment in environmental decision making (Output 2.1.2); CSO-led interventions supporting advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment objectives (Output 2.1.3); and CSO-led interventions on Indigenous Peoples' participation and empowerment in environmental decision-making and action.

These revised/additional Outputs and Outcomes are funded as shown in the revised Indicative Project Overview table and described in the narrative description of the Project components.

The SGP 2.0 Results Framework is now explicitly referenced in the Project's M&E Component.

3.3 a) Are the components adequately funded?

b) Are the GEF Project Financing and Co-Financing contributions to PMC proportional?

c) Is the PMC equal to or below 5% of the total GEF grant for FSPs or 10% for MSPs? If the requested PMC is above the caps, has an exception (e.g. for regional projects) been sufficiently substantiated?

Secretariat's Comments

GRT: 10/23/2024: Cleared

GRT: 9/26/2024

Almost, but please see above comment.

Agency's Comments**IUCN Response:** Component 2 funding, Outcomes and Outputs broken down by Investment and Technical Assistance. GEF project budget has been revised to increase the GEF grant to CSOs/CBOs to 72% (\$7.2M) of total project costs including agency fee in line with the SGP 2.0 Implementation Arrangements.

4 Project Outline

A. Project Rationale

4.1 SITUATION ANALYSIS

a) is the current situation (including global environmental problems, key contextual drivers of environmental degradation, climate vulnerability) clearly and adequately described from a systems perspective?

b) Are the key barriers and enablers identified?

Secretariat's Comments

GRT: 10/23/2024: Cleared

GRT: 9/26/2024

Almost, Considering the focus of this project on youth, women and IPLCs please add some additional analysis (this is expected to be further developed as part of the CEO Endorsement.

Agency's Comments **IUCN Response:** Project rationale has been revised to make more explicit the Program's focus on youth, women and IPLCs including the rationale for doing so. Additional analysis will be developed as part of the CEO Endorsement

4.2 JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT

- a) **Is there an indication of why the project approach has been selected over other potential options?**
- b) **Does it ensure resilience to future changes in the drivers?**
- c) **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?**
- d) **are the relevant stakeholders and their roles adequately described?**

Secretariat's Comments

GRT: 10/23/2024: Cleared

GRT: 9/26/2024

Almost. Please elaborate further on

- a) links to ongoing SGP programs/projects as well as the global SGP institutional arrangements.
- b) relevance related to relevant MEAs that the GEF serves
- c) measures to prioritize youth, women and IPLCs
- d) the roles of different stakeholders and partners in the development and implementation of the project is expected at CEO Endorsement.

Agency's Comments

IUCN Response: Project rationale has been revised to respond to comments as follows:

(a) Text amended to include explicit links to ongoing SGP projects, Core SGP, GEF8-IPs and the global SGP institutional arrangements

(b) Inclusion of paragraphs describing relevance of the CSO Challenge Program to the MEAs that GEF serves as well as the SDGs.

(c) Text amended to include additional text on rationale for prioritization of youth, women and IPLCs as well as measures to achieve these objectives

(d) CEO Endorsement Request will include additional text and specificity on the roles of Program stakeholders and partners in the development and implementation of the Program.

5 B. Project Description

5.1 THEORY OF CHANGE

a) Is there a concise theory of change that describes the project logic, including how the project design elements will contribute to the objective, the expected causal pathways, and the key assumptions underlying these?

b) Are the key outputs of each component defined (where possible)?

Secretariat's Comments

GRT: 10/23/2024: Cleared

GRT: 9/26/2024

Almost. the theory of change describes the logic and causal pathways of the project, including how activities will address barriers and contribute to the outcomes and goal of the project. However, please revise to the ToC diagram and accompanying narrative to include some specific linkages to the GEBs and core indicators expected to be achieved with this project.

Agency's Comments **IUCN Response:** Theory of Change diagram and narrative text revised to include specific linkages to GEBs and core indicators expected to be achieved.

5.2 INCREMENTAL/ADDITIONAL COST REASONING

Is the incremental/additional cost reasoning properly described as per the Guidelines provided in GEF/C.31/12?

Secretariat's Comments n/a

Agency's Comments

5.3 IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

a) Is the institutional setting, including potential executing partners, outlined and a rationale provided?

b) Comments to proposed agency execution support (if agency expects to request exception).

c) is there a description of potential coordination and cooperation with ongoing GEF-financed projects/programs and other bilateral/multilateral initiatives in the project area

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

Secretariat's Comments

GRT: 10/23/2024: Cleared

Please note, we expect further clarification/discussion on any potential role of private firms serving as executing agency for this project prior to CEO approval (see below).

GRT: 9/26/2024

Not yet. please see the below.

a) Clarify reference to "*a suitable private firm?* to play a potential role as executing agency, *managing and coordinating the Program, producing events and workshops, communications, contracting with CSOs?etc?*). Engaging a private sector entity seems counterproductive to the idea of this program and please explain this further and provide information on any assessment to engage regional/national CSOs as executing entity.

b) Please provide a diagram describing the institutional arrangements, description of planned coordination with SGP core Implementing Agencies, ongoing SGP national programming, broader KM, communication and learning efforts etc.), the GEF Sec and relevant regional/national partners.

Agency's Comments

IUCN Response: Proposal text has been revised as follows:

(a) Clarification that the public Call for Proposals to manage this Program and deliver core supports is open to all suitable firms/organizations including CSOs and that IUCN will use its partnership network to ensure wide dissemination of the EOI and generation of interest and proposal submissions. Additionally, as noted in the text, a scoping exercise conducted with support from GEF and SGP partners will be done prior to the launch of the EOI, to ensure potentially well aligned firms/organizations are notified of the EOI and encouraged to apply.

(b) A diagram describing the institutional arrangements, coordination with SGP Core IAs and programming, and narrative description of the roles and responsibilities of key program partners is now included.

5.4 a) Are the identified core indicators calculated using the methodology included in the corresponding Guidelines (GEF/C.54/11/Rev.01)?

b) Are the project's indicative targeted contributions to GEBs (measured through core indicators)/adaptation benefits reasonable and achievable?

Secretariat's Comments

GRT: 10/23/2024: Cleared

GRT: 9/26/2024

Almost. But please note that the Indicator 3 ? 12,000ha seems low cost/benefit comparatively. More detailed calculations are expected at CEO Endorsement

Agency's Comments

IUCN Response: More detailed calculations on anticipated GEBs will be provided at CEO Endorsement stage.

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

Secretariat's Comments n/a

Agency's Comments

5.6 RISKS

a) Is there a well-articulated assessment of risk and identification of mitigation measures under each relevant risk category?

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 screened and rated at this stage and consistent with requirements set out in SD/PL/03?

Secretariat's Comments

GRT: 10/23/2024: Cleared

GRT: 9/26/2024

Almost. The overall risk rating has been set as Moderate. The key risks, their rating and a Rating Explanation of risk and mitigation measures are addressed in the project concept design. However,

Related to stakeholder, there are no mentioning of youth. Since youth, youth led organizations and networks are a key priority of this program please revise. Also, please consider as a risk the potential of ensuring ways to reach out to these groups and measures to ensure transparent and inclusive outreach and selection process to engage these stakeholder groups.

Climate is risked is cited as substantial, which potentially jeopardizes the project's implementation capacity. Considering that each proponent project should have ample experience in identifying and managing climate risks, as well as mitigation measures in place, it is suggested that further screening of these are undertaken at the selection stage to further manage/mitigate such risks.

Agency's Comments

IUCN Response: Text on risks related to stakeholder engagement revised to include explicit reference to all priority groups including youth, and Program design features to achieve robust engagement and participation of priority groups

Climate risk reassessed as Moderate, given CSO-led project proponents will likely have ample experience in identifying and managing climate risks as well as mitigation measures. A risk assessment including climate risks will be undertaken at the selection stage to further manage and mitigate climate risks.

5.7 Qualitative assessment

a) Does the project intend to be well integrated, durable, and transformative?

b) Is there potential for innovation and scaling-up?

c) Will the project contribute to an improved alignment of national policies (policy coherence)?

Secretariat's Comments

GRT: 10/23/2024: Cleared

GRT: 9/26/2024

Almost. The transformative approach of this project, as GEF SGP Challenge Program, should be further developed prior to CEO Endorsement, based on stakeholder consultations and engagement and speak to the GEF-8 increased ambition around the "the whole of society" approach.

Agency's CommentsIUCN **Response:** Refinement based on stakeholder consultations and engagement to further enhance the transformative approach of the project will be undertaken prior to CEO Endorsement. Additional text on the Project's transformative approach and alignment with GEF "whole of society" approach has been added to the section on Alignment with GEF-8 Programming Strategies.

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

6.1 Is the project adequately aligned with focal area and integrated program strategies and objectives, and/or adaptation priorities?

Secretariat's Comments

GRT: 10/23/2024: Cleared

GRT: 9/26/2024

Almost. Again, the transformative approach of this project and GEF SGP Challenge Program responds to the GEF-8 programming strategy, SGP 2.0 and overall ambition around the "the whole of society" approach should be further developed

Agency's CommentsIUCN **Response:** Refinement based on stakeholder consultations and engagement to further enhance the transformative approach of the project will be undertaken prior to CEO Endorsement. Additional text on the Project's transformative approach and alignment with GEF "whole of society" approach has been added to the section on Alignment with GEF-8 Programming Strategies.

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's Comments

GRT: 10/23/2024: Cleared

GRT: 9/26/2024

Almost. Please provide some additional details on how this project will support the MEAs that GEF serves and the important role that CSOs, youth and women groups, and IPLC play related to advocacy at the global and national levels and providing local solutions contributing to their implementation.

Agency's CommentsIUCN **Response:** Proposal now includes text in this section describing how the Project will support the MEAs that the GEF serves and the important role that CSOs, youth and women's groups and IPLCs play related to advocacy at the global and national levels and providing local solutions contributing to their implementation.

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's Comments

GRT: 10/23/2024: Cleared

GRT: 9/26/2024

Almost. Please elaborate on the 23 Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework targets.

Agency's Comments **IUCN Response:** Proposal now includes text in this section describing how the Project is closely aligned with the goals of the KMGBF and which GBF targets we anticipate the Program will make contributions towards achieving.

7 D. Policy Requirements

7.1 Is the Policy Requirements section completed?

Secretariat's Comments

GRT: 9/26/2024

Yes.

Agency's Comments

7.2 Is a list of stakeholders consulted during PIF development, including dates of these consultations, provided?

Secretariat's Comments

GRT: 10/23/2024:

Noted attached stakeholder engagement plan and cleared

GRT: 9/26/2024

Yes. Please note, however, that is expected that inclusive and broad stakeholder consultations should be carried out in project development to inform key elements of this project, and that this is clearly described in the CEO endorsement, accompanied with an analysis on gender, youth and IPLC stakeholders' interests and feedback, as well as a detailed stakeholder engagement plan to guide project implementation.

Moreover, it is noted that it is suggested that a full Stakeholder Engagement Plan is being developed and will be uploaded to the GEF Portal in October 2024. This would be welcomed but as of today it is not uploaded.

Agency's Comments IUCN **Response:** Inclusive and broad stakeholder consultations are ongoing and will be continued throughout project development through to the development and submission of the CEO Endorsement Request, including an analysis on gender, youth and IPLC stakeholders' interests and feedback. A Stakeholder Engagement plan has been developed and uploaded to the GEF Portal along with this October PIF submission.

8 Annexes

Annex A: Financing Tables

8.1 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's Comments

GRT: 9/26/2024

Yes.

Agency's Comments

Focal Area allocation?

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

LDCF under the principle of equitable access?

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

SCCF A (SIDS)?

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

Focal Area Set Aside?

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

8.2 Is the PPG requested within the allowable cap (per size of project)? If requested, has an exception (e.g. for regional projects) been sufficiently substantiated?

Secretariat's Comments

GRT: 9/26/2024

Yes. The PPG requested is within the allowable cap

Agency's Comments

8.3 Are the indicative expected amounts, sources and types of co-financing adequately documented and consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines?

Secretariat's Comments

GRT: 10/23/2024: Cleared

GRT: 9/26/2024

Not yet. Please, consider the following

- a) Provide indicative information on co-financing sources
- b) As part of the CEO Endorsement consider that the estimated co-financing for this project is only 45% of the total budget. Considering the capacity of IUCN and other supporting NGOs to

mobilize their own operational capacity, technical assistance etc; contribution by CSOs themselves in terms of in kind and direct cofinancing; others ? ministries, academia, private sector etc.), it would be expected that additional co-financing would be secured for this project.

Agency's Comments

IUCN Response: Indicative information on co-financing sources added. Mobilizing significant, additional co-financing for this Program is a principle aim of ongoing development work. IUCN will work through our Union to mobilize co-funding including from philanthropic and private sector partners, many of whom we have identified as having potentially well-aligned programming and basis for partnership.

Annex B: Endorsements

8.4 Has the project been endorsed by the country? (ies) GEF OFP and has the OFP at the time of PIF submission name and position been checked against the GEF database?

Secretariat's Comments

GRT: 9/26/2024

Not applicable at this stage. But the discussion on OFP endorsements should be elaborated at CEO Endorsement.

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments

GRT: 9/26/2024

Not applicable at this stage

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments

GRT: 9/26/2024

Not applicable at this stage

Agency's Comments

8.5 For NGI projects (which may not require LoEs), has the Agency informed the OFP(s) of the project to be submitted?

Secretariat's Comments n/a

Agency's Comments

Annex C: Project Location

8.6 Is there preliminary georeferenced information and a map of the project's intended location?

Secretariat's Comments

GRT: 9/26/2024

Not applicable at this stage, but please consider comment above and provide additional information at CEO endorsement

Agency's Comments

Annex D: Safeguards Screen and Rating

8.7 If there are safeguard screening documents or other ESS documents prepared, have these been uploaded to the GEF Portal?

Secretariat's Comments

GRT: 9/26/2024

yes.

Agency's Comments

Annex E: Rio Markers

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

Secretariat's Comments

GRT: 9/26/2024

yes.

Agency's Comments

Annex F: Taxonomy Worksheet

8.9 Is the project properly tagged with the appropriate keywords?

Secretariat's Comments

GRT: 9/26/2024

Yes.

Agency's Comments

Annex G: NGI Relevant Annexes

8.10 Does the project provide sufficient detail (indicative term sheet) to take a decision on the following selection criteria: co-financing ratios, financial terms and conditions, and financial additionality? If not, please provide comments. Does the project provide a detailed reflow table to assess the project capacity of generating reflows? If not, please provide comments. Is the Partner Agency eligible to administer concessional finance? If not, please provide comments.

Secretariat's Comments n/a

Agency's Comments

9 GEFSEC Decision

9.1 Is the PIF and PPG (if requested) recommended for technical clearance?

Secretariat's Comments

GRT: 10/23/2024: Yes, this project is now recommended for technical clearance

GRT: 10/1/2024

Almost but please address comments above.

Agency's Comments

9.2 Additional Comments to be considered by the Agency at the time of CEO Endorsement/ Approval

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

Review Dates

	PIF Review	Agency Response
First Review	9/26/2024	
Additional Review (as necessary)	10/23/2024	
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		