

Institutionalising transboundary water management between Tajikistan and Afghanistan for the Panj River Sub Basin

Basic Information

GEF ID

10714

Countries

Regional (Afghanistan, Tajikistan)

Project Title

Institutionalising transboundary water management between Tajikistan and Afghanistan for the Panj River Sub Basin

GEF Agency(ies)

FAO

Agency ID

FAO: 690364

GEF Focal Area(s)

Multi Focal Area

Program Manager

Christian Severin

PIF

Part I – Project Informatic

Focal area elements

1. Is the project/program aligned with the relevant GEF focal area elements in Table A, as defined by the GEF 7 Programming Directions?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

7th of October 2020 (cseverin): Yes, however please move \$3 mio of GEF grant to support water/environmental security in Afghanistan, as described in para 206 in the GEF IW strategy.

22nd of October 2020 (cseverin): Addressed

Agency Response Upon discussion with GEFSEC the Component 1 of the project has been reorganized to allocate US\$ 3M for: 1) Countries' data and information generation capacity for effective IWRM of the Panj River basin established; and 2) Countries' management capacity strengthened to support transboundary IWRM in the Panj River. It was decided that the allocation for each of the 2 countries will be decided during the project preparation phase based on a capacity assessment.

Indicative project/program description summary

2. Are the components in Table B and as described in the PIF sound, appropriate, and sufficiently clear to achieve the project/program objectives and the core indicators?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

7th of October 2020 (cseverin): No. please address following points:

- 1) Please make changes to table B to make it apparent that a considerable amount of GEF resources will be supporting data generation and management towards supporting improved water management in Afghanistan and the country's ability to engage successfully in transboundary IWRM. These activities may well have to sit in its own component.
- 2) Please include wording to the fact that the SAP will be endorsed at ministerial level in both countries, probably as part of output 2.3, or as its own separate output.
- 3) Even though this is a foundational investment, including a support to a fragile state, the output indicators need to be more quantifiable. to the extent possible.
- 4) considering the interconnectivity of the water resources in the wider Syr Darya basin, please include activities that will allow for coordination and cooperation with other investments active in transboundary water investments.

22nd of October 2020 (cseverin): Addressed

Agency Response

- 1) Done: Upon discussion with GEFSEC the Component 1 of the project has been reorganized to allocate US\$ 3M for: 1) Countries' data and information generation capacity for effective IWRM of the Panj River basin established; and 2) Countries' management capacity strengthened to support transboundary IWRM in the Panj River. It was decided that the allocation for each of the 2 countries will be decided during the project preparation phase based on a capacity assessment.
- 2) Done: wording included in Output 2.3: Strategic Action Program (SAP) with horizon of 5-10 years, consistent with the TDA findings and the Shared Vision and including revised agricultural development and water infrastructure investment plans if required **endorsed at ministerial level in both countries.**
- 3) Done: the outputs indicators have been rephrased to be more quantifiable and we added indicators for the new sub-component 1.1:
- Training a total of 100 key staff in the two countries to building national capacity to undertake quantitative and qualitative water analysis and broader IWRM analysis;
 - Data and capacity gap analysis approved by the countries.
- 4) Done:
We state under Innovation on page 22:
"The upscaling could target downstream countries of the Amu Darya and also include in a parallel approach the Syr Darya River (as the second large tributary of the Aral Sea). The specific focus on improving Afghanistan's capacity to manage transboundary waters can also be upscaled to the improved management of its three other transboundary river basins, the Harirud-Murghab, Kabul and Amu River Basins."
I personally believe Chris wanted to refer to the Amu Darya, which is why I made stronger references to the Amu Darya in several places.

Co-financing

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, with a description on how the breakdown of co-financing was identified and meets the definition of investment mobilized?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

7th of October 2020 (cseverin): Yes

27th of October 2020 (cseverin): Please address following: all co-financing is in the form of "recurrent expenditure" (i.e. operational/ operating expenditures), even though it includes large amount of "grant" and "public investment" co-financing. Please review the amounts of co-financing against this definition and describe the definition/ approach used to differentiate between "investment mobilized" and "recurrent expenditures".

29th of October 2020 (cseverin): addressed

Agency Response

NA

28th of October 2020 (FAO):The co-finance commitments have been identified in discussions with the Governments of Afghanistan and Tajikistan. First, all relevant baseline projects were identified (see Table 1 of the PIF). Then, a subset of investments was identified that has either the potential to contribute and can be directly informed/influenced by the proposed project. The listed investment was labelled "Recurrent expenditures" as these investments would be made even without the proposed GEF project. Consequently, these investments have not been labeled as specific new investments mobilized by the proposed project. To be consistent both contributions from the countries has been tagged as in-kind.

GEF Resource Availability

4. Is the proposed GEF financing in Table D (including the Agency fee) in line with GEF policies and guidelines? Are they within the resources available from (mark all that apply):

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

7th of October 2020 (cseverin): Partly, please make the adjustment as described earlier on, namely that a considerable share of the grant (\$3 mio) will be allocated to building capacity that will allow for inclusion of Afghanistan in transboundary IWRM.

Besides that, overall funding envelope has been cleared by IW and CW.

22nd of October 2020 (cseverin): Addressed

27th of October 2020 (cseverin): 1- There is not proportionality in the co-financing contribution to PMC – it should be around 5% as it is the GEF contribution. Hence, for a co-financing of \$54,000,000, the expected contribution to PMC must be around \$2,700,000 instead of \$300,000. Please make this adjustment.

29th of October 2020 (cseverin): Addressed.

Agency Response

Done: Upon discussion with GEFSEC the Component 1 of the project has been reorganized to allocate US\$ 3M for: 1) Countries' data and information generation capacity for effective IWRM of the Panj River basin established; and 2) Countries' management capacity strengthened to support transboundary IWRM in the Panj River. It was decided that the allocation for each of the 2 countries will be decided during the project preparation phase based on a capacity assessment.

28th of October 2020 (FAO): the co-financing contribution has been reorganized consistently. \$2,800,000 have been associated to PMC, i.e. slightly more than 5% of the overall co-financing commitment is now associated to the PMC.

The STAR allocation?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Agency Response NA

The focal area allocation?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Agency Response NA

The LDCF under the principle of equitable access

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Agency Response NA

The SCCF (Adaptation or Technology Transfer)?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Agency Response NA

Focal area set-aside?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Agency Response NA

Impact Program Incentive?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Agency Response NA

Project Preparation Grant

5. Is PPG requested in Table E within the allowable cap? Has an exception (e.g. for regional projects) been sufficiently substantiated? (not applicable to PFD)

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion 7th of October 2020 (cseverin): Yes

Agency Response NA

Core indicators

6. Are the identified core indicators in Table F calculated using the methodology included in the correspondent Guidelines? (GEF/C.54/11/Rev.01)

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

7th of October 2020 (cseverin): No, please reassess if the project will contribute to eg Core Indicator 1, 3, 4. Further, please change core indicator 7 to Panj river, instead of Aral sea. This investment is primarily a transboundary freshwater investment, that ultimately may have positive impacts on the downstream Aral Sea. Moreover, for an investment of this size in a river basin, core indicator 11 needs to be revised. Having an impact of ~ 1000 people is simply too low. Please reassess.

22nd of October 2020 (cseverin): Partly Addressed. The Panj river system is now available from the drop down menu. Please choose and resubmit.

23rd of October 2020 (cseverin): Addressed

27th of October 2020 (cseverin): Please address following:

- 1) For sub-indicator 1.2. please provide (indicative) break-down on the protected areas (nature parks/reserves) in Afghanistan and Tajikistan that will be included in the project.
- 2) Please also note that at CEO endorsement, baseline METT scores will have to be reported under this sub-indicator.
- 3) Please also confirm the target for sub-indicator 9.1 is 875 metric tons. The proposal provides justification for 475 metric tons.

29th of October 2020 (cseverin): Addressed.

Agency Response

Done: Core Indicators 1, 3, 4 and 11 have been re-assessed and new targets indicated.

Core Indicator 7 cannot be updated to Panj because this catchment is not among those available in the dropdown menu in the GEF portal. The Aral Sea was indicated because it is the closest related basin available.

23rd of October 2020: The Panj River Basin has been selected in the drop down menu.

28th of October 2020 (FAO):

- 1) Indicative break-down on the protected areas (nature parks/reserves) in Afghanistan and Tajikistan have been provided for the or sub-indicator 1.2. The revision process allowed to identify some misestimation of the target which as a consequence has been increased in terms of ha.
- 2) The baseline METT scores for sub-indicator 1.2 will be diligently reported at CEO endorsement stage.
- 3) The target for sub-indicator 9 1 is confirmed to be 875 metric tons. Text has been reviewed to provide consistent reference to this target

by the target for sub-indicator 2.1 is committed to be 0.7 metric tons. Text has been reviewed to provide consistent reference to this target across the entire PIF.

Project/Program taxonomy

7. Is the project/ program properly tagged with the appropriate keywords as requested in Table G?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

7th of October 2020 (cseverin): No, please add, nutrient pollution from all sectors except wastewater, Nutrient pollution from wastewater, Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis and Strategic Action Plan preparation.

22nd of October 2020 (cseverin): Addressed

Agency Response

Done

Part II – Project Justification

1. Has the project/program described the global environmental / adaptation problems, including the root causes and barriers that need to be addressed?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

7th of October 2020 (cseverin): Partly,

1) Please add description and illustration of Theory of Change for investment

2) Please include more description on the activities that will be undertaken to enable Afghanistan to fully participate in transboundary cooperation on the Panj River basin

cooperation on the Panj River basin.

22nd of October 2020 (cseverin): Addressed, but please diligently work on fleshing out the ToC during the PPG.

Agency Response

1) ToC added as appended document

2) Text added to explain how the technical capacity of the two countries will be supported to allow both of them to fully participate in transboundary cooperation management of the Panj River basin. This goes beyond just capacity building and includes new technology and infrastructure.

23rd of October 2020: Understood and agreed

2. Is the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects appropriately described?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

7th of October 2020 (cseverin): Yes

Agency Response NA

3. Does the proposed alternative scenario describe the expected outcomes and components of the project/program?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

7th of October 2020 (cseverin): Partly, please add more information on the investments that will be undertaken to bring Afghanistan up to par with Tajikistan

22nd of October 2020 (cseverin): Addressed

Agency Response

Text added to explain how the technical capacity of the two countries will be supported to allow both of them to fully participate in transboundary cooperation management of the Panj River basin.

4. Is the project/program aligned with focal area and/or Impact Program strategies?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

7th of October 2020 (cseverin): Partly,

- 1) Please include reference to CW program strategy
- 2) Please include specific reference to the fact that the investment will utilize the specific GEF 7 investment window to support for fragile states. This is currently missing and needs to be much stronger.

22nd of October 2020 (cseverin): Addressed

Agency Response

1) Done, on page 20 we state: "The GEF CW strategy targets the reduction of "agricultural chemicals that are listed as persistent organic pollutants under the Stockholm Convention ... Where the chemicals are in use, investments will be made to introduce alternatives. ... The program will target the reduction of Endosulphan, Lindane and highly/severely hazardous pesticides that enter the global food supply chain as well as address end of life, waste and obsolete POPs ... This program will also address restriction of DDT production and use..." The proposed project will support these goals and reduce the application and management of agrochemicals in Tajikistan and Afghanistan and, thereby, substantially reduce the level of POPs in the Panj River basin and the downstream environment of the Amu Darya basin and the Aral Sea."

2) On page 19 we state: "The GEF7 IW Strategy further supports "investments in a small number of fragile and/or conflict affected countries in transboundary basins both in foundational processes and SAP implementation ... to support actions by which decreasing natural resource pressures and water stress can contribute to decreasing fragility and allowing fragile areas and/or countries to stabilize and fully engage in regional processes, hence contributing to preventing larger regional conflict." The proposed project supports Afghanistan by supporting data generation and management towards supporting improved water management and the country's ability to engage successfully in transboundary IWRM."

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

7th of October 2020 (cseverin): Yes

Agency Response NA

6. Are the project's/program's indicative targeted contributions to global environmental benefits (measured through core indicators) reasonable and achievable? Or for adaptation benefits?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

7th of October 2020 (cseverin): Partly, As have been described above, please reassess the core indicators 1, 3, 4 to identify delivery towards these indicators and 7 to make sure right transboundary river is mentioned and 11 to ensure that the correct number of stakeholders has been included.

22nd of October 2020 (cseverin): Nearly Addressed, please resubmit and choose Panj river basin

Agency Response

Done: Core Indicators 1, 3, 4 and 11 have been re-assessed and new targets indicated.

Core Indicator 7 cannot be updated to Panj because this catchment is not among those available in the dropdown menu in the GEF portal. The Aral Sea was indicated because it is the closest related basin available.

23rd of October 2020: The Panj River Basin has been selected in the drop down menu.

7. Is there potential for innovation, sustainability and scaling up in this project?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

7th of October 2020 (cseverin): No, please develop a stronger set of arguments for innovation, sustainability and scaling up., what is currently included is not providing a convincing argument.

currently included is not providing a convincing argument.

22nd of October 2020 (cseverin): Addressed

Agency Response

Done: text added in section 7) innovation, sustainability and potential for scaling up

Project/Program Map and Coordinates

Is there a preliminary geo-reference to the project's/program's intended location?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

7th of October 2020 (cseverin): Partly, please include map of Panj River basin and a map that provides an overview of Panj's situation in the wider Amur Darya river basin

22nd of October 2020 (cseverin): Addressed

Agency Response

Done

Stakeholders

Does the PIF/PFD include indicative information on Stakeholders engagement to date? If not, is the justification provided appropriate? Does the PIF/PFD include information about the proposed means of future engagement?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

7th of October 2020 (cseverin): Partly, Please provide an overview of what local stakeholder groups, CSOs and NGOs that have been included in the preparation and particularly an overview of which stakeholder groups that the project intent to consult during the PPG phase.

22nd of October 2020 (cseverin): Addressed

Agency Response

Done

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Is the articulation of gender context and indicative information on the importance and need to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, adequate?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

7th of October 2020 (cseverin): Yes

Agency Response NA

Private Sector Engagement

Is the case made for private sector engagement consistent with the proposed approach?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

7th of October 2020 (cseverin): Partly, Private sector engagement is not strongly enough reflected upon in the results framework (Table B)

and in component/activity descriptions. Please address this and simultaneously enrich the private sector engagement description.

22nd of October 2020 (cseverin): Addressed

Agency Response

Done, text/information added in both Table B and in the 4. Private sector engagement section

Risks to Achieving Project Objectives

Does the project/program consider potential major risks, including the consequences of climate change, that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved or may be resulting from project/program implementation, and propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the project design?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

7th of October 2020 (cseverin): No, please provide a better overview of the short, medium and long term effects of COVID 19 on the project implementation. secondly, please also include a thorough Climate Risk Screening.

22nd of October 2020 (cseverin): Addressed

Agency Response

Done : text added after the table in 5. Risks

Climate Risk Screening for the Project appended in the portal

Coordination

Is the institutional arrangement for project/program coordination including management, monitoring and evaluation outlined?

Is there a description of possible coordination with relevant GEF-financed projects/programs and other bilateral/multilateral initiatives in the project/program area?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

7th of October: Partly. Please note that it is NOT allowed for an implementing agency to self execute. Hence the arrangement described under Executing Agency is not possible. Please work out an other arrangement.

22nd of October 2020 (cseverin): Addressed, however since the execution role will first be described and decided upon during ppg phase, it is essential to note that this technical clearance is not endorsing any arrangement that is not in compliance with GEF rules and policies.

Agency Response

Done: Section 6 on Coordination updated to explain that the project execution will be decided during the PPG by the relevant ministries in each country. The process will involve the transparent and competitive selection of third parties for the main project components, including implementing the TDA, conducting capacity building, designing and implementing the SAP process (incl. visioning), running the PMU, and implementing pilot projects. Government agencies may be able to execute pilots within themselves while all transboundary activities will be executed by selected third parties.

23rd of October 2020: Understood and Agreed. The execution arrangements will be defined in full compliance with the GEF Rules and Policy.

Consistency with National Priorities

Has the project/program cited alignment with any of the recipient country's national strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

7th of October 2020 (cseverin): Yes

Agency Response NA

Knowledge Management

Is the proposed “knowledge management (KM) approach” in line with GEF requirements to foster learning and sharing from relevant projects/programs, initiatives and evaluations; and contribute to the project’s/program’s overall impact and sustainability?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

7th of October 2020 (cseverin): Yes

Agency Response NA

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 PIF/Work Program Inclusion

7th of October 2020 (cseverin): No, please provide a proper Environmental and Social Safeguard documentation and upload to portal

22nd of October 2020 (cseverin): Addressed

Agency Response

ESS for the project appended in the portal.

part III – Country Endorsements

Has the project/program been endorsed by the country’s GEF Operational Focal Point and has the name and position been checked against the GEF data base?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

7th of October 2020 (cseverin): No, please make sure both country LOEs have been properly uploaded to the GEF portal

22nd of October 2020 (cseverin): Addressed

Agency Response

Done: Both LOEs are appended in the portal

Termsheet, reflow table and agency capacity in NGI Projects

Does the project provide sufficient detail in Annex A (indicative termsheet) 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 in Annex B to assess the project capacity of generating reflows? If not, please provide comments. After reading the questionnaire in Annex C, is the Partner Agency eligible to administer concessional finance? If not, please provide comments.

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

NA

Agency Response

NA

EFSEC DECISION

RECOMMENDATION

Is the PIF/PFD recommended for technical clearance? Is the PPG (if requested) being recommended for clearance?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

7th of October 2020 (cseverin): No, please address comments and resubmit

22nd of October 2020 (cseverin): No please address comment and resubmit

23rd of October 2020 (cseverin): Yes, the PIF is recommended for technical clearance

27th of October 2020 (cseverin): No, Please address comments above and resubmit ASAP

29th of October 2020 (cseverin): Yes, PIF is recommended for Technical Clearance

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Additional recommendations to be considered by Agency at the time of CEO endorsement/approval.

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Review Dates

PIF Review Agency Response

First Review	10/21/2020
Additional Review (as necessary)	10/23/2020
Additional Review (as necessary)	10/23/2020
Additional Review (as necessary)	10/28/2020
Additional Review (as necessary)	

PIF Recommendation to CEO

Brief reasoning for recommendations to CEO for PIF Approval

The Panj River (aka Pyanj River) sub-basin defines large parts of the border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan. The Panj River is 1,125 km long with an average flow 1,000 m³ per second, and the river basin territory covers an area of ca. 114,000 km². The Panj River and Vakhsh River constitute the upper basins of the larger Amu Darya River Basin, which is one of the major tributaries leading to the Aral Sea. This project aims to establish and foster effective transboundary water management between Tajikistan and Afghanistan.

The project will integrate existing national basin development plans towards transboundary water management between Tajikistan and Afghanistan based on a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis – Strategic Action Program (TDA-SAP) process. This evidence-based planning process aims at creating mutual trust among riparian countries by joint fact finding, facilitating the consensus on overall long-term basin vision, and assisting governments and stakeholders as they agree on the strategies and actions needed to meet mounting water management challenges from a transboundary perspective.

The proposed project will improve the capacity of both countries to implement IWRM principles and develop effective transboundary water management links. Establishing coordination mechanisms for the Panj river basin is paramount for sustainable development of and management of water, biodiversity and forests and economic sectors such as agriculture, energy and tourism.

