



# Promoting social and ecological resilience in land-water-food systems in blue economy sectors in Benin

Review PIF and Make a recommendation

## Basic project information

**GEF ID**

11453

**Countries**

Benin

**Project Name**

Promoting social and ecological resilience in land-water-food systems in blue economy sectors in Benin

**Agencies**

AfDB

**Date received by PM**

10/19/2023

**Review completed by PM**

11/27/2023

**Program Manager**

Olusola Uchenna Ikuforiji

**Focal Area**

Climate Change

**Project Type**

FSP

## **GEF-8 PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF) REVIEW SHEET**

### **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

**28Oct2023 :**

- a) Yes
- b) Yes

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

**28Oct2023 :**

Not fully. We note the brief description of the challenges in the Benin fisheries sector and proposed project components, however the summary doesn't clearly articulate the adaptation objectives and expected results. The summary needs to fully emphasize the climate risks and hazards and their impact on making communities and ecosystems vulnerable. Additionally, the summary also fails to explicitly mention climate adaptation interventions, such as resilient infrastructure and adaptation planning, as essential elements of the transformational approach for climate resilience fisheries resources.

Please specify more clearly the climate problem as relates to the local vulnerability context, the proposed adaptation solutions and expected impacts at the local and/or national levels.

**24Nov2023 :**

Thank you for further elaboration of the adaptation dimension of the proposed interventions. Comment cleared.

### Agency's Comments

**23 Nov. 23**

Thank you for your comment. The project objective and the adaptation objective are aligned, which is ?To build the climate resilience of fisheries resources by implementing adaptive strategies and bolstering institutional capacities, with a strong focus on local community and woman?s empowerment, climate smart technologies and infrastructure, knowledge transfer, and policy reform?.

The project summary has been updated to include the adaptation objective and expected results, the climate risks and hazards, their impacts communities and the ecosystem (vulnerabilities) and adaptation interventions and the transformative approach taken in the project.

### **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

**28Oct2023 :**

a) Yes

b) Please revise outcomes and outputs to more specific and measurable scales. For example it's unclear how the LDCF-financed project activities will restore ecosystem resilience in marine, freshwater, lagoon and wetland habits (output 1.1). We suggest further distilling the project objective and activities to more focused and site-specific interventions.

What technologies and infrastructure improvements will be implemented? How will knowledge be transferred, and what policy reforms are envisioned?

**24Nov2023 :**

Thank you for revising the outcomes and outputs, which demonstrates a causal linkage to the achievement of the project objective. Comment cleared subject to further explanation at the CEO stage.

## Agency's Comments

**23 Nov. 23**

b) Thank you for the comment. The PIF outcomes, outputs and activities have been revised extensively in response to this comment. The old components 2 and 3 have been merged into what is now component 2. This has been done to better mirror the structure of the baseline project as an aid during the implementation stage. Kindly see the highlighted text in yellow in the PIF.

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

## Secretariat's Comments

Not fully.

Gender : The agency submitted a preliminary gender assessment, highlighting challenges and proposed activities, however these have not been effectively mainstreamed/integrated in the project design. Please reflect gender equality and women's empowerment in the project description and project components.

On Knowledge Management: We note that the project has whole component 4 dedicated to knowledge management, capacity building and exchange. Please, however, elaborate more clearly under the component, the specific knowledge activities, and how the knowledge will be created, managed and disseminated under the project. In the project description section, the proposal indicates that knowledge will be effectively managed through the establishment of a centralized digital platform that will ensure all stakeholders, from local communities to policymakers, can access real-time data, research findings, and best practices. However this activity isn't reflected in the component 4. Please reconcile and provide additional explanation.

M&E: The proposal indicates plans to periodically undertake evaluations to capture lessons and facilitate learning exchanges, however the mechanisms are not clearly elaborated. Please revise.

**24Nov2023 :**

Thank you for addressing the comments. We note the additional elements on gender and knowledge including the gender assessment and knowledge management plan that would

be prepared during the PPG at CEO stage. There's a reference to component 4, however there are only 3 components in the revised PIF, kindly reconcile.

**PPO Comments:**

1. Gender: Please integrate gender perspectives in Outcome 3 and in M&E. Please ensure also that the Gender Action Plan to be developed is budgeted, tracked and reported.

2. Knowledge Management: Agency is requested to correct the numbering for outputs listed under Component 3. Also, M&E has been bundled with KM&L in Component 3. So, please make sure that the outputs dedicated to M&E and adaptive management are more clearly titled and aligned with GEF M&E requirements. Alternatively, the agency may wish to present M&E and adaptive management as a separate component.

**01Dec2023**

Thank you for the additional details. Comment cleared subject to development of the gender action plan at CEO stage.

**Agency's Comments**

**23 Nov. 23**

Thank you for your comment.

**On Gender**

- the project description and project component 2 description have been updated to reflect the activities mentioned in the preliminary gender assessment.

- Outcome 2 has also been revised to strengthen the emphasis on women empowerment.

- The project objective statement was also updated to include 'woman's empowerment'.

- Additionally there are significant number of activities dedicated to gender inclusivity in the project

**On knowledge management:**

- Output 3.1 has been revised. The project in Benin plans to build upon the knowledge management approaches established by previous fisheries programs financed by the Bank, such as the Mono Integrated Rural Development Project, the Support Programme for the Participatory Development of Artisanal Fisheries, and the Support Project for the Development of Mono and Couffo. A detailed knowledge management plan is expected to

be developed during the project preparation grant (PPG) phase. This plan will outline the project's contribution to the overall impact, incorporating lessons learned from relevant previous and ongoing projects, as well as detailing the tools and methods for knowledge exchange and learning, knowledge outputs, strategic communication plans, and the associated budget and timeline. The project will focus on climate change adaptation knowledge specific to fisheries resources. This includes targeting the communication of climate change impacts and adaptation strategies within fisheries and aquaculture. The approach goes beyond mere monitoring and evaluation to ensure flexibility and responsiveness to the needs of climate change adaptation for fisheries resources, with a particular emphasis on gender equality and youth empowerment.

- To manage knowledge effectively, a centralized digital platform will be created for stakeholders ranging from local communities to policymakers, allowing access to real-time data, research findings, and best practices. Knowledge exchange will be facilitated through regular workshops, webinars, and community forums, encouraging interactive feedback and collaborative learning. The project will adopt a reflective approach, capturing lessons learned through periodic evaluations, feedback sessions, and third-party assessments, which will inform the project's iterative phases and guide future projects in similar domains.

- Component 3 in the project description has been updated to reflect this.

- The centralized digital platform has been added under output 4.1.

**On the M&E Mechanism:**

Component 4 of the PIF has been updated to elaborate on the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) mechanisms, which describes the establishment of a joint M&E system with dedicated specialists, detailed reporting processes, and allocated budgets within the project's operating funds. The M&E framework now clearly outlines periodic activities, such as bi-annual Bank missions, mid-term reviews, and a conclusive Government Completion Report to evaluate outcomes and assimilate lessons learned. Core indicators have been aligned with the monitoring plan to ensure gender-sensitive tracking and reporting of project impacts, fostering transparency and informed decision-making throughout the project lifecycle.

**30 Nov. 23**

Thank you for the comment on component 4. We identified two occasions where we needed to revise the mention of a component 4 to component 3 (sections knowledge generation and transformation and innovation). This has been corrected.

## Response to PPO Comments

### 1. Gender

Thank you for the comment

- Outcome three has been revised to integrate the gender perspective. The outcome title now reads "Empowered Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector through Enhanced Knowledge Flow, Adaptive Strategies, **and Gender-Inclusive Approaches**".
- The title of Output 3.1 has been revised to "Enhance the capacity of key stakeholders by implementing targeted knowledge transfer, research, and communication initiatives **that incorporate a gender perspective** (including of a centralized digital platform)?"
- Component 3 has been further revised to strengthen the integration of gender inclusivity in the project, as per the orange highlighted text in the portal PIF (the introduction and Output 3.1 description and activities)
- The M&E outcome has been revised to the following "Effective and efficient achievement of project objectives, **with an enhanced focus on gender inclusivity**, while continuously informing and improving future interventions **for equitable impact**".
- The M&E output title has been revised to "Achieve robust monitoring and a comprehensive, **gender-sensitive** evaluation of the project through regular progress reports, ensuring transparency and effectiveness, **and equitable consideration** in project activities."
  - Some slight revisions have been made to the description of the M&E mechanism and the proposed activities as indicated by the yellow highlights in the portal PIF.

• Output 2.7. Capacity strengthening for women and youth, is the only output that is solely dedicated to gender equality, which is why a statement on the full gender assessment and action plan development to be undertaken during the PPG, is mentioned there. The action plan will layout all the gender related outcomes, outputs, activities and expected results for the project. The monitoring and evaluation of the gender action plan's implementation will be undertaken as part of the project's M&E activities. The specific statement mentioned there is *"To ensure that the proposed gender dimension is fully integrated in the project design and implementation, the development of the full gender assessment and action plan will be part of the PPG activities. The gender action plan will outline the budget and tracking and reporting mechanism to be implemented by the project. The gender related activities are intrinsically intertwined within the project components and outcomes and therefore each component will be implementing relevant gender-related outputs and activities. The gender action plan will present the consolidated budget, that is split across the components as relevant, to implement the gender action plan, i.e. the gender-related activities of the project. The gender action plan will also lay out the plan for tracking and reporting on progress, which will be integrated into the M&E mechanism of the project."*

- The statement "The monitoring and evaluation for the implementation of the gender action plan will be budgeted under the M&E budget" has been added to the section on the M&E mechanism.

## 2. Knowledge Management

Thank you for the comment.

- The numbering of the component 3 outputs has been corrected.

- For clarity purposes, the M&E output has been removed from component 3, in the detailed project description section. A new section "M&E Mechanism" has been added in the PIF, where the M&E activities are now described.

**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

**28Oct2023 :**

a) Yes

b) Yes

c) Yes

Agency's Comments

## **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

**28Oct2023 :**

a) The rationale behind the project needs to be revised in order to better support its climate adaptation objective. It is recommended that the project clearly outlines the climate vulnerabilities in the target areas, and explains how further environmental degradation is exacerbating the vulnerabilities of people and the ecosystem. The project should then propose how it will take a holistic approach to addressing adaptation by integrating various elements.

Please further elaborate.

b) Please further strengthen the barriers and enablers to focus on perspectives central to the project objectives. Avoid merely listing the points; and articulate briefly the main barriers and enablers.

**24Nov2023 :**

Thank you for the further elaborating the adaptation rationale, and analysis of the barriers and enablers in the context of the proposed project outcomes. Comment cleared.

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## Agency's Comments

**23 Nov. 23**

Thank you for these constructive comments. The entire project rationale has been reformulated to better support the climate adaptation objective, which is *"To build the climate resilience of fisheries resources by implementing adaptive strategies and bolstering institutional capacities, with a strong focus on local community and woman's empowerment, climate smart technologies and infrastructure, knowledge transfer, and policy reform"*. The project rationale now includes clear sections on:

1. Current Environmental and Climate Vulnerabilities
2. Benin's climatic characteristics and variability
3. Benin's climate risks and impacts
4. Exacerbation of environmental degradation
5. Climate induced vulnerabilities affecting Benin's fisheries resources and aquatic food systems vulnerabilities.

The holistic approach taken by the project is mentioned in the 3rd paragraph under the section *"project objectives and justification"*, as follows:

*The project adopts a holistic approach to climate change adaptation in Benin, recognizing the interconnected nature of ecosystems, human communities, and economic systems. This approach integrates the restoration of natural habitats with the development of climate-smart technologies and infrastructure, ensuring that adaptation measures are both ecologically sound and technologically advanced. It emphasizes the empowerment of local communities, particularly women, to engage in the stewardship of fisheries*

*resources, fostering resilience at the grassroots level. Through knowledge transfer, stakeholders will be equipped with the necessary skills and information to respond to climate challenges effectively. Policy reform will support these efforts by creating a conducive environment for adaptive strategies to thrive. Collectively, these strategies form a cohesive response to climate adaptation, ensuring that resilience is built into the very fabric of Benin's fisheries sector.*

The barrier and enablers have been revised to focus on the central focus of the project, which is to build climate resilience for Benin's fisheries resources at the ecosystem and aquatic food systems level.

#### **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**

**28Oct2023 :**

- a) Not fully. The proposal lists alternative options for addressing the described environmental degradation and climate vulnerabilities, however, this narrative is insufficient to effectively justify the selection of the project approach. Please provide further explanation.
- b) Not clear. Please specify more clearly how the project approach will ensure resilience to future changes.
- c) Please elaborate more information on how the LCDF project will build on ongoing/previous investments (GEF and non-GEF), lessons and experiences in the country/region? and
- (d) Not fully. We note that a detailed stakeholder engagement plan will be developed during the PPG phase, however, please provide an elaboration of stakeholders (national and local levels) consulted during the development of the project concept, and how they will be engaged during the project design.

**24Nov2023 :**

Thank you for the additional details. We note reference to collaborating on the "Blue Ports Initiative (FAO, UNESCO, IOC) in component 1 (output 1.6), however the process of coordinating with FAO and other institutions on this activity isn't elaborated in the section on coordination with other partners. Comment cleared subject to further clarity on "coordination with other partners" and stakeholder engagement at the CEO stage.

## Agency's Comments

23 Nov. 23

Thank you for the comment.

- a) This section has been revised in the PIF. Kindly see the highlighted section in yellow.
- b) The PIF has been revised accordingly. Kindly see the section on "Ensuring resilience to future change?"
- c) The PIF has been revised accordingly. Kindly see the section on "Coordination with other partners?"
- d) This section already contained the stakeholders consulted during the project preparation phase. We added a clarification that these consultations included the proposed GEF project in addition to the AfDB baseline project. We added information on a few additional consultations that took place with organisations. Kindly see section D on stakeholder engagement.

## 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

28Oct2023 :

TOC and project logic is vague and broad, while the proposal lists examples of activities that could be implemented under each output. As indicated in the components above, please revise the outcomes and outputs, and clearly defined site-specific activities.

Output 1.1. Please clarify the scale of the ecosystem restoration activities. Focus the LDCF interventions to what is achievable within the context of the project.

Output 1.2. Please clarify the "blue port principles" and the bearings in building climate resilience

Output 2.1. Please specify the government agencies (fisheries, environment, etc) that would be involved, and the coordination mechanisms that would be put in place to ensure project outputs will be sustained

Output 2.2. Please clarify how the interventions on fishing practices in this output are different from proposed output 1.2

Output 2.3 Please clarify how the local community engagement will take place, including the mechanisms for community feedback and representation

Output 2.4: Please further elaborate how climate model outputs will be integrated into fisheries management applications, and the contribution to disaster preparedness. The narrative needs to be strengthened.

Output 3.1 What are these adaptation technologies that would be introduced in the target area? Have they been tested elsewhere in the country?

Output 3.2 Please clarify the promotional engagements that are envisaged to increase financial accessibility for aquaculture development? Has there been any primary consultations with SMEs and fish farmers in the project area, how have their inputs informed the design of this component?

Output 4.1 Please consider breaking down the component 4 into two outputs; 4.1 is a little too broad as an output. Please clarify the meaning of "adaptive management strategies" and how these will be implemented.

**24Nov2023 :**

Thank you for reformulating the project components, outputs and activities. Suggest streamlining the training activities in component 2 including Outputs 2.5, 2.6, and 2.7.

**01Dec 2023 :**

Comment cleared subject to further streamlining at the CEO stage.

Agency's Comments

**23 Nov. 23**

Thank you very much for your comment.

After undertaking a comprehensive review and reformulation and structuring of the project rationale, the theory of change, components, outcomes and outputs have been revised. The outcomes and outputs also now more clearly define the site-specific activities.

For example:

Output 1.1. the original output 1.1. has been broken down into more site-specific outputs. Furthermore, interventions relating to the restoration of ecosystems will be concentrated mainly in 03 ecosystems, namely Lake Nokou? and the Porto-Novo lagoon (RAMSAR site 1018) and Lake Ah?m? (RAMSAR site 1017). These three ecosystems communicate directly with the Atlantic Ocean. The restoration of biodiversity in these bodies of water through the creation of ?Biological Reserves? which are protected areas, protected from all exploitation and which contribute to the conservation, concentration of fishery resources and repopulation of these ecosystems.

The output on "blue port principles" is now Output 1.6 Implementation of blue transformation approach in coastal ports, harbours, and fish landing/marketing jetties, and integrated coastal zone management measures across fisheries hotspots. The blue transformation approach (which includes the blue ports concept) is collaborative partnership between different international organisations to implement a roadmap for the transformation of aquatic food systems. this output will implement marine conservation and resilience measures against climate impacts for coastal ports. Activities under this initiative encompass marine spatial planning to optimize coastal resource use, stringent enforcement against illegal fishing, development of community-driven blue economy ventures with an emphasis on women empowerment and job creation, and the application of circular economy principles in waste management. These efforts collectively aim to realize a sustainable and resilient coastal infrastructure. This output further supports climate resilience by integrating sustainable port operations with Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM).

Output 2.1. The main stakeholders for this output are a coalition of key ministries and regulatory bodies, including the Ministry for the Living Environment and Sustainable Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, and Ministry of Decentralization and Local Governance, alongside the Benin Environmental Agency. These entities play pivotal roles in overseeing fisheries, the environment, and economic planning, ensuring regulatory compliance, and facilitating sustainable practices across fisheries and aquaculture sectors.

Output 2.2. clarify how different from output 1.2 - This section has been fully revised, among other to eliminate some of the existing overlap between the outputs and activities.

Output 2.3 clarify how local community engagement will take place, including the mechanisms for community feedback and representation - this is now output 2.4 and the focus has been slightly adjusted. Nonetheless, community engagement, including the

mechanism for community feedback and representation ?will be facilitated through participatory approaches to ensure community members are integral to the decision-making process. A series of community meetings and workshops will be convened to identify viable non-fisheries enterprises, with special committees formed comprising community representatives to provide feedback and oversee project implementation. These committees will be responsible for gathering community proposals, guiding the selection of sustainable income-generating activities, and ensuring that plastic avoidance and reuse initiatives are culturally acceptable and practically feasible. To incorporate community feedback and ensure representation, suggestion boxes, regular community forums, and feedback surveys will be established. Additionally, community liaisons will be appointed to maintain open lines of communication between the project team and the community, ensuring that all voices are heard and that the project activities are transparent and accountable to the needs and aspirations of the local population?.

Output 2.4: how climate model outputs will be integrated into fisheries management applications, and disaster preparedness - the introduction to component 2 has been updated with the following *"The climate information and disaster preparedness strategy involves incorporating predictive analytics from climate models into decision-making tools for fisheries management, directly enhancing relevant outputs. These tools will enable managers to adjust fishing quotas and protect vulnerable species during adverse climate conditions. Additionally, for disaster preparedness, the climate models will inform the relevant outputs by providing early warning systems for extreme weather events, guiding evacuation plans, and optimizing the allocation of resources for disaster response. This predictive insight will be crucial for developing strategic plans that can adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change, thus securing both the ecosystem and the communities dependent on it."*

Output 3.1 Adaptation technologies to be introduced? Have they been tested elsewhere in the country? ? this output has been eliminated as part of the overall section revision.

Adaptation technologies to be introduced are now as follows:

1. Solar-Powered Refrigeration and Ice Production Facilities: Mentioned in Output 2.3 as part of the equipment to be installed at pilot landing sites to improve the climate change resilience of fishermen. Solar-powered systems are innovative
2. Weather, Hydrological, and Water Quality Monitoring Equipment: As part of the pilot weather and water quality observing network established in Output 2.9. This technology is adaptive as it helps in gathering data essential for managing the effects of climate variability on fisheries, enabling better planning and response to weather-related events.

These technologies have not been tested elsewhere in the country yet.

Output 3.2 which is now Output 2.12. Increasing financial accessibility for fisheries and aquaculture development, has been scaled back to more achievable activities within the project period. Promotional engagement are no longer within the scope of this output.

Output 4.1 ? has been broken down into two outputs and more information on how adaptative management strategies will be implemented has been provided in the relevant section.

## **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

**28Oct2023 :**

Yes

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

**28Oct2023 :**

a) No. Please elaborate the institutional arrangement for the LDCF project

c) Not fully. Please further strengthen the coordination mechanism of the project with other initiatives.

d) Not fully. A detailed communication plan has not been articulated. Please elaborate more about the proposed elements to capture and disseminate knowledge and learning outputs and strategic communication.

**24Nov2023 :**

Thank you. Comments cleared.

Agency's Comments

23 Nov. 23

Thank you for this comment.

- a) A section on the institutional arrangement has been added to the PIF.
- b) The section "Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Project" has been revised to describe the projects coordination mechanism
- c) Output 4.1 has been revised to describe an approach to capture and disseminate knowledge
- d) A strategic communication plan has now been articulated under output 4.1, as well as the proposed elements to capture and disseminate knowledge and learning outputs.

**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

28Oct2023 :

Yes

Agency's Comments

**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) Are climate risks and other main risks relevant to the project described and addressed within the project concept design?**

**b) Are the key risks that might affect the project preparation and implementation phases identified and adequately rated?**



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

**28Oct2023 :**

a) Yes

b) Yes

c) Yes

Agency's Comments

**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

**28Oct2023 :**

The proposal provides an integrated and multi-stakeholder approach to fostering climate resilience in the fisheries sector, however it lacks specifics on the innovative solutions that would be deployed for transformative impact. Please revise

**24Nov2023 :**

Thank you for the additional details on the innovative and transformative dimensions of the project. Comment cleared subject to further elaboration at the CEO stage.

Agency's Comments

**23 Nov. 23**

Thank you for your comment. This section has been revised to better highlight the specific innovative solutions for Benin that are proposed by the project, and that support the deployment of transformative impact.

These include:

**Hotspots-Based Intervention Approach:**

- Innovation: The project proposes a targeted intervention in three types of 'hotspots': aquaculture development, inland water fishing, and aquatic fauna biodiversity conservation. These hotspots will be pinpointed through feasibility studies.
- Transformative Impact: This approach allows for concentrated efforts where they are most needed, directly addressing the drivers of climate vulnerability and environmental degradation, promoting climate-resilient practices, and enhancing sustainable fishing. By focusing on specific hotspots, the project can create significant localized impacts that contribute to larger systemic changes.

**Integrated Two-Ways Approach:**

- Innovation: The project will simultaneously tackle inland fishing restoration and the promotion of sustainable and climate-resilient aquaculture systems, contrasting with past interventions that have only addressed one of these interconnected issues.
- Transformative Impact: This integrated approach recognizes and acts upon the interconnected nature of ecosystems and human activities, leading to a more holistic improvement of the fisheries sector and its resilience to climate change.

**Shift from Lake-Based to Floodplain and Lagoon-Based Aquaculture:**

- Innovation: Supporting the transition from traditional, climate-vulnerable aquaculture systems to those that are more resilient to climate variability, such as floodplain and lagoon-based systems.

**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

**28Oct2023 :**

The alignment with the two LDCF priorities of scaling up finance and private sector/innovation is mentioned but not sufficiently embedded in the project rationale, components, outcomes and outputs. The multi-stakeholder approach (involving government agencies, NGOs and local communities) also has the potential to contribute to the whole of society. Please further elaborate.

**24Nov2023 :**

Thank you for addressing the comments. Cleared.

Agency's Comments

**23 Nov. 23**

Thank you for the comments.

Project priority 1:

**The following paragraphs were added to the project rationale, section ?Project Objectives and Justification?:**

- Reinforcing Policy Coherence: *"To ensure the project's success, it is essential to reinforce policy coherence by aligning environmental goals with financial strategies. This alignment will facilitate the mobilization of additional resources and foster a supportive policy environment for innovative financing. By integrating climate finance into national development plans, we can enhance the project's enduring results, to support a better financial robustness, ensuring that the climate resiliency objectives are supported by sustainable financial mechanisms moving forward."*

- Strengthening Institutional Capacity: *" Building upon the baseline understanding of Benin's fisheries, the project will invest in strengthening institutional capacities to manage and scale up finance for enduring results. This entails developing the capabilities of local institutions to access and deploy innovative financial instruments, such as green bonds or climate funds, which are essential for the long-term sustainability and expansion of the fisheries sector in the face of climate change."*

- Enhancing Tools and Metrics as Enablers for Adaptation Impact: *"A key component of the project's approach to scaling up finance is enhancing tools and metrics that serve as enablers for measuring and maximizing adaptation impact. Investment in data collection and analysis systems will inform evidence-based decision-making, ensuring that financial resources are directed towards interventions with the highest return on adaptation investment, both in terms of ecological benefits and socio-economic development."*

- Outcome 2 has been revised to include policy coherence and strengthening institutional capacities.

- Output 2.1. Strengthen the institutional and regulatory capacity of key governmental fisheries agencies has been updated to incorporate activities on reinforcing policy coherence and institutional capacity building. This is reflected in the proposed output activities, as per the bold text below:

- Conduct comprehensive training sessions for governmental fisheries agencies **to strengthen institutional capacities to align with climate resilience objectives in fisheries and aquaculture, while also ensuring policy coherence with national and international environmental and financial frameworks.**

- Facilitate periodic regulatory reviews in collaboration with legal experts to ensure that adaptive strategies are effectively enforced through robust regulations, **emphasizing policy reform for greater coherence across sectors.**
- **Develop and implement a framework for institutional capacity strengthening, focusing on aligning diverse policies and actions towards a common goal of sustainable fisheries management and climate resilience.**
- Organize gender sensitivity workshops, integrating gender equality in institutional protocols to empower all societal segments, particularly women, to contribute to and benefit from climate resilience actions.
- Enforce international measures against illegal fishing.
- **Establish a cross-sectoral coordination mechanism to foster policy coherence and institutional collaboration, ensuring that fisheries management strategies are in line with national development goals and international commitments.**

Project priority 2:

The following paragraph was added to the project rationale, section ?Project Objectives and Justification?

- *"In the face of escalating environmental and climate vulnerabilities, it is imperative to integrate strengthening innovation and private sector engagement. Advancing technology transfer and innovation within the fisheries sector is crucial for adapting to the changing climate. Private sector engagement is essential, not only for enabling the conditions for action but also for utilizing grant finance mechanisms to share risks and catalyze significant investments. The incubation and acceleration of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, as well as the promotion of inclusive microfinance, will create a more robust and innovative fisheries industry, equipped to overcome the socioeconomic and ecological impacts of climate change."*

The following paragraph was added to the introduction of component 2:

- *"The project will also focus on strengthening the innovation ecosystem and fostering private sector involvement. This will include the creation of supportive environments for the transfer of cutting-edge technologies and innovative practices into the fisheries and aquaculture sectors. Conditions will be established to facilitate private sector actions that contribute to the project's objectives, using grant finance to share risk and catalyze private sector investments. Moreover, incubating and accelerating Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises through targeted support mechanisms will empower local entrepreneurs and enable sustainable industry growth."*

The following outputs were updated with relevant activities accordingly:

Output 2.8. Support aquaculture producers in 5 villages to sustain their productivity as an example for integrative aquaculture for the country:

- **Incorporate innovative financial tools and inclusive microfinance models to enhance the economic viability of aquaculture practices.**

Output 2.12. Increasing financial accessibility for fisheries and aquaculture development

- **Facilitating the transfer of cutting-edge technologies and innovative practices into the fisheries and aquaculture sectors.**
- **Enhancing financial accessibility for fisheries and aquaculture development by improving access to inclusive financial services and products tailored to the needs of the sector.**

We agree that the project has the potential to contribute to the whole-of-society approach, however this aspect has not been sufficiently investigated as this approach requires the engagement of non project beneficiaries as well, which has not been undertaken at PIF stage. The project does present opportunities for whole-of-society approach and we have committed to investigating these opportunities during the PPG stage by including the following statement in PIF section ?C. ALIGNMENT WITH GEF-8 PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES AND COUNTRY/ REGIONAL PRIORITIES?: *"While the project approach is conducive to contribute to Priority Area 3: Fostering Partnership for Inclusion and Whole-of-Society Approach, among other, as part of the project's cooperation with the ?blue ports initiative?, which is a global partnership to encourage and assist fishing ports to implement a blue transformation approach in their strategic and operational processes, this aspect was not sufficiently investigated during the PIF preparation stage, hence the determination for how the project will contribute to this LDCF priority area, among other by engaging with non-project beneficiaries, will be undertaken during the PPG"*

**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

**28Oct2023 :**

Yes.

Agency's Comments

**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 N/A

Agency's Comments

**7 D. Policy Requirements**

**7.1 Is the Policy Requirements section completed?**

Secretariat's Comments

**28Oct2023 :**

Yes

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments

**28Oct2023 :**

No

**24Nov2023 :**

Thank you for additional details on stakeholders consulted during preparation of the PIF.  
Cleared

Agency's Comments

**23 Nov. 23**

Thank you for this comment. We provided an elaborate list of stakeholders consulted during the project preparations, which are listed in Section D under stakeholder engagement. We added a column to the two tables listing the details of the stakeholders met to clarify the organisations that they were affiliated to. We clarified in the PIF that these two sets of consultation missions involved consultations on both the AfDB baseline project but also the GEF project.

**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 N/A

Agency's Comments

**Focal Area allocation?**

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

**LDCF under the principle of equitable access?**

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

**SCCF A (SIDS)?**

Secretariat's Comments N/A

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments N/A

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 Yes

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 Yes

Agency's Comments

**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 Yes

Agency's Comments

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

Secretariat's Comments Yes

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 Yes

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

Specific location of target areas not indicated.

**24Nov2023 :**

Agency's Comments

**23 Nov. 23**

Thank you for this comment. More information on the specific target location of the project has been provided in the PIF and Annex C: Project location.

The project location reflects that of the baseline project. The project location is national in scope (however with a stronger focus on Benin's fisheries zone, which is in the south and along the coast. The projects will focus on three main areas of the country: (i) the seafront (Mono, Atlantic, Littoral and Ouémé departments); (ii) inland water bodies and rivers, low-lying areas, artesian boreholes and flood plains scattered across the catchment areas of the South and Centre (Mono, Atlantic, Ouémé and Zou); and (iii) reservoirs and rivers in the Centre and North (Collines, Zou, Alibori, Atacora, Donga and Borgou).

We clarified in the PIF that the exact project locations will be confirmed during the PPG.

**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 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 N/A

Agency's Comments

**Annex F: Taxonomy Worksheet**

**8.9 Is the project properly tagged with the appropriate keywords?**

Secretariat's Comments

**24Nov2023** : 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

Agency's Comments

## **9 GEFSEC Decision**

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

#### Secretariat's Comments

Not yet. Agency needs to address all comments.

Overall, the proposal provides a comprehensive plan for building climate resilience in fisheries resources, but it can benefit from more specific details and target intervention to further strengthen the adaptation rationale and justification. The LDCF project is currently broad in its narration, and needs to be tailored to a specific local context.

- The project's adaptation rationale needs to be further strengthened.
- Proposal lacks clearly defined and site-specific project outputs and activities.
- Institutional arrangement and implementation framework is missing.

#### **24Nov2023 :**

Yes. There is a significant improvement in the project design and formulation of the adaptation rationale. Agency to address additional comments from PPO.

#### **01Dec2023 :**

Yes. All comments have been addressed.

#### Agency's Comments

**23 Nov. 23**

Thank you very much for the very constructive comments. The project rationale of the PIF has been extensively reformulated to demonstrate a stronger foundation on which the project bases its proposed adaptation interventions. The 4 main vulnerabilities that climate change is exacerbating within Benin's fisheries resources and aquatic food systems have been highlighted.

While we have updated the PIF to include more site-specific information, we have also reduced the scope for some outputs to limit the interventions to what is realistically achievable within the duration of the project.

Information on the institutional arrangement has now been provided.

### **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**

	<b>PIF Review</b>	<b>Agency Response</b>
<b>First Review</b>	<b>10/28/2023</b>	<b>11/23/2023</b>
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>11/24/2023</b>	<b>11/30/2023</b>
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>		
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>		
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>		